



BLUE BOOK



MARCH, 1934

MAGAZINE

VOL. 58, NO. 5

A Spirited Novel—Complete

- Blood Brothers** By George Allan England 100
A tremendous adventure in search of buried Mayan gold, by an able writing man who has himself led a buried-treasure search in the jungles of Yucatan.

Specially Attractive Short Stories

- Round the Clock** By Leland Jamieson 4
A stirring story of the air mail in winter, by the pilot who wrote "Lost Hurricane."
- The Garden of T N. T.** By William Makin 14
An Intelligence officer defeats a plotted wholesale murder in the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- Tony, Mario and Zeke** By Robert Mill 27
A lively story of the State police by the man who gave us "The Wild Man of Wolf Head."
- Killing No Murder?** By Percival Christopher Wren 60
The famous author of "Beau Geste" is at his best in this powerful drama.
- Black Lightning** By Jay Lucas 72
An engaging story of the range country, and of friendships among horses and men.
- Mr. Jennis Disappears** By Clarence Herbert New 78
A mystery of the Sea by the author of Free Lances in Diplomacy.
- Wrong Number** By Arthur K. Akers 91
A dark and desperate man turns a street-sweeping machine into a war tank.
- Fists Across the Sea** By Charles Layng 135
Wherein a searchlight battalion entertains an angel unawares.

A Much Discussed Serial

- After Worlds Collide** By Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie 36
This unique novel grows in power and fascination with each chapter.

Prize Stories of Real Experience

- Twenty-four Days Adrift** By Theron Bean 140
Suppressed by the war-time censors, the story of the Dumaru's destruction and of the dreadful open-boat voyage of the survivors can now be told.
- The Crevasse** By Mrs. Imogene Humphrey 144
A woman mountain-climber is carried away by a landslide.
- The Graveyard Shift** By Brendish Harrison 145
An oil-refining expert's terrific experience in a Rumanian still accident.
- Mars Ahoy!** By Robert De Vines 147
The unexplained result of an attempt to signal another planet.
- The Land of the Long Night** By Charles D. Brower 148
The foremost of Arctic pioneers brings his record down to date.

Cover Design

Painted by Henry Soulen

Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events.

THE McCALL COMPANY,

William B. Warner, *President and Treasurer*
John C. Sterling, *Vice-President*
Francis Hutter, *Secretary*



Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—March, 1934, Vol. LVIII, No. 5. Copyright, 1934, by The McCall Company, in the United States and Great Britain. Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Subscription Price, \$1.50 per year. Canadian postage 50c; foreign postage \$1.00. For change of address, give us four weeks' notice and send old address as well as new. Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted. Any republication of the matter appearing in the magazine, either wholly or in part, is not permitted except by special authorization. Special Notice to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in The Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts or art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.



Mr. Jennis

*A mystery of the sea, by
the author of the celebrated
Free Lances in Diplomacy.*

THE *Srinagar* had warped out of the Royal Albert Dock just before noon—was past the Goodwin Sands by four o'clock, and running into dirty weather. Not the rising gale and heavy seas which somehow never seem to worry a seaman badly, but one of those thickening "pea-soups" with little breeze and flat water which make the English Channel so dangerous. For it is crowded water—with the cross-Channel ferries, the boats of some fifty great steamer-lines running through in both directions, and flotillas of cargo-boats to and from the world's outports. And when the fog shuts down, they talk—in hoarse bellows, piercing squeals, siren-screams: sometimes so close by that averting a collision approaches a miracle.

The gangways were deserted—chairs and rail had become too dripping wet, the canvas-covered planking too slippery. In the saloon, social-halls and music-room, passengers were trying to play bridge or other games—starting nervously with each monstrous bellow of the chime-whistle. Three or four of the men, knowing from long experience that heaving decks and a howling gale were preferable to the absence of all motion and the deathly stillness between the tooting of the fog-horns, were pacing up and down the gangways in mackintoshes. One of them, with privileges not accorded the others, climbed to the bridge where a wetly glistening figure recognized his face as he lowered it to peer at the gyro-compass and "metal-mike." Medford was one of the most competent masters in the merchant marine—and had phone-receivers over his ears, listening to the radio-detector in a recess of the hull, under water. It was registering the beats of screws at various distances from them—one mile to twenty miles—and occasionally the musical note of a submarine bell.

"Anything very close, Medford?"

"Little chap was somewhere around here a few minutes ago—but he got scared an' stopped his engines—has no submarine bell. Why the devil he doesn't sound his siren I can't understand. One of the older Channel-boats, I fancy. . . . Ah! That'll be him startin' up again! My word! The little beggar's fairly close aboard of us!"

Medford stepped into the wheel-house and sounded the great chime-whistle in three peevish grunts. Close aboard on the starboard side came little answering yaps signifying that the boat had right-of-way and was proceeding. Protesting bellows from the *Srinagar* and a sudden stoppage of her engines. More yaps—a little farther aft—sounding as though the smaller craft was heading to strike the big liner squarely abeam. Sudden activity in the *Srinagar's* engine-room, where the big quadruple-expansions were now racing ahead at full speed.

Sir Edward Coffin slid down the port ladder and ran aft along the boat-deck. At the after-rail, with the "well" between him and the stern, he couldn't see ten feet through the fog, but a chorus of confused shouts indicated that the smaller craft was just about scraping the *Srinagar's* stern-rail. Her engines had been stopped so that she was barely moving. Had it not been for the sudden push ahead from the liner's powerful screws, she would have smashed squarely into her on the quarter. However—a miss is as good as a mile. Yet there was one minor occurrence which nobody would have imagined possible, and which took quick thinking upon the part of a man whom nobody on the cross-Channel boat had noticed since he came aboard with a large suitcase. He had taken no cabin—belonged to the class who doze in a chair and go ashore, casually, as merely a bird of passage.

When the sharper tooting began, close aboard, he had come out on deck with his suitcase and walked up forward,

Disappears

By CLARENCE
HERBERT NEW



along the flush gangway, to the bows. Coiled near the anchors, there was something over a hundred feet of inch manila to which a small four-pronged grapnel was attached—used to grapple and hold any small boat coming alongside. As shouts from the bridge of the liner indicated her position sufficiently to show that the boats would touch somewhere,—probably no more than a bad scrape,—the man lashed one end of the grapnel-line to the straps of his suitcase and swung the grapnel from his right hand—waiting. When the phosphorescence from the churning screws faintly outlined the *Srinagar's* stern, he hove the little grapnel toward it and lifted his suitcase on the top of one anchor. The grapnel caught firmly upon something—and held. When the Channel-boat's stem slowly scraped off a section of the liner's stern rail, the man swung himself aboard her with the aid of the line, and quickly hauled in the slack so that he just prevented his suitcase from dropping into the water. Before any of the deck-hands reached the spot, he had disappeared with his suitcase, leaving the grapnel—where they found it a few minutes later and wondered what anybody's idea could have been in heaving such a thing aboard.

WHEN the Channel-boat docked at Dieppe, the Customs officials made her master search his craft for two passengers who were on the list and had surrendered their tickets after leaving port, and assure himself that they were nowhere to be found. In the light of the collision in the fog, it appeared self-evident that the men had been knocked overboard and presumably drowned.

In his temporary hiding-place at the stern, the man was considering what to do next. By sheer accident he had two passports in his pocket—one describing his present appearance, under a hastily assumed name which was not his own; the other belonging to some passenger on the Channel-boat who must have dropped

it in the gangway just before he had gone up forward to see if there really was going to be a collision. He had taken a hasty glance by the light from a saloon-window to see what it was, but had no recollection of it beyond the photograph, which had been sticking in his mind as just about the way he used to look before he grew a beard. While considering what his next procedure was going to be, he saw three alternatives: The first, of course, was to see the master or purser at once and explain how he came to be aboard—taking whatever accommodation he could get, and proceeding wherever the *Srinagar* happened to be going. But a report of this would be wirelessed back, destroying any supposition of his death in the barely averted collision—and the idea of being posted in the news-sheets as dead appealed to him, for reasons of his own. By stowing himself away on the boat, coming out during the night for whatever food he might steal, until they made the first port, and then going calmly ashore, the death supposition would be clinched. But he wasn't so sure he could manage it without being caught or nearly starved before they stopped anywhere.

There was another course requiring a good deal more nerve to carry out, but if he did get away with it, by all odds the most desirable scheme. He had noticed the name of the boat stenciled upon a life-preserver; he had indeed seen her builders' plans before she was put in commission—and so remembered that the rooms of the mates and engineers were on the two main-deck gangways going through the midship-house from the after to the forward well-decks. Some of those men would be on duty for another hour or two. A room with no light showing through the slats of the door-blind might contain a sleeping man or be vacant—it wasn't taking so much of

a chance to open the door a crack and look in.

Watching his opportunity when the deck-hands had gone forward again, he slipped into the starboard gangway and softly turned the knob of a door. Evidently the occupant of the room was below somewhere, on duty; so the man slipped in, locked the door, turned on the bulb and hung his mackintosh over the door-slats so that no light shone through. Then he took the other passport from his pocket and skimmed rapidly through the description. It was so close to his own in general appearance and coloring that he closely examined the smooth face in the photograph, holding his beard tight against his chin.

PASSPORT photographs being notoriously as misleading as those of taxicab chauffeurs, it seemed to him there was little risk of anybody's questioning it. But he very carefully made two slight erasures and changed the height to six feet instead of five feet five—the weight to 198 instead of 148. Yanking open his big suitcase, he had his razor, brush and shaving-stick out in five seconds. In just seven minutes more, that beard was off, and the clean-shaven man who emerged bore no resemblance whatever to the one who had entered the room.

Putting on his mackintosh and switching off the light, he picked up his suitcase and quietly went up a small boxed-in companionway to the "B" or saloon-deck. Along the covered gangway were stateroom windows—with those of the main saloon, forward. Some of the windows were lighted as the occupants washed up for dinner, which was at seven. Some were partly open for ventilation. In one of these a couple of women were asking their room-steward if "that horrid man in the green mackintosh" had the room across from them at the other side of the little passage—but he was reassuring them.

"No, ladies—the gent as was booked for Number 64 'asn't turned h'up as yet. The chief steward an' h'I was a-thinkin' mebbe 'e might 'ave gorn an' got left when we was a-warpin' h'out of the R'yal h'Albert. 'E might turn h'up, d'ye see—wot with the fog or mebbe stoppin' wi' some chap in the smoke-room. Purser won't be 'avin' h'all the tickets until h'after dinner, prob'ly. But 'e'll not be the chap h'in the green rain-coat—so ye'll not be worritin' about that, d'ye see."

The man outside chuckled—and deliberately lighted a very good cigar. This was almost unbelievable luck. He hoped it would hold. Sauntering in through the main-companionway with his big suitcase, he walked aft along the inside gangway until he came to the right passage branching off from it, then turned and went into Number 64 as if he had booked it in the regular way at the company's offices in Moorgate St. He shoved the suitcase under the lower berth, brushed his clothes clean of all traces of his scramble over the stern, put on his steamer-cap and locked the door as he came out. Then he sauntered along to the purser's office. Two or three passengers were still at the window getting their tickets checked up. When they left, the man presented a smiling face and a hand filled with bank-notes.

"I'm Samuel J. Marston, Purser—in sixty-four. You haven't me booked for it—an' I've no ticket. I found at the last moment, this morning, that I could just about catch the *Srinagar* if I looked sharp. Telephoned Moorgate Street, but they had nothing except in the second class. Just then they got a message that the chap booked for sixty-four couldn't make it in time—delayed somewhere; I caught some of the talk over the wire. Told 'em not to book the room for anyone else, as I was taking it—if I could reach the Royal Albert in time. Taxi-driver nearly smashed us—but I was about the last on the plank, I fancy. So—if you'll make out the ticket, I'll just hand you the cash. Better make it Singapore, I fancy; then if I get a wireless to drop off at the Canal or Colombo, you can give me a refund—eh? What?"

IT was the sort of thing which frequently happens on any passenger line. So the purser smilingly remarked:

"You don't look like a criminal, Mr. Marston—an' that wouldn't int'rest me anyhow, unless the police were after you. Got a passport about you?"

"Naturally—though it's not required at any British port."

Frome gave the document a careless glance and handed it back. The mere production of the passport indicated that the man couldn't very well be escaping from Scotland Yard.

"Suppose the other chap makes up his mind to go overland an' catch us at Gib?"

"He'd get either a refund or a transfer of his ticket to the next boat, wouldn't

he? You can't be expected to hold the room unless you're notified by this time. Did he have the whole room—or a berth?"

"Only the lower berth—but nobody else was booked in with him. Looked as though he might be some friend of the owners—on the list that way."

"Quite possibly. For that matter—I'm a friend of Mr. Seldon Jennis myself. He's the majority shareholder."

"But it's Sir Michael Smarrt who is managing director."

"Subject—very much subject to Jennis' orders. It's Jennis who runs the line an' who can elect a new board at any time he pleases. He owns an' controls a good sixty-five per cent of the capital. If Smarrt tried to put over anything durin' Jennis' temp'ry absence, he'd be dropped from the board the moment the owner returned."

"Aye—we've been given to understand something of the sort. But Sir Michael, d'ye see, is a sort of chap who likes to have his way—an' generally gets it, I fancy. He'll be aboard of us, now—goin' as far as Port Saïd. That's why I wished to avoid any mix-up about your room. But I don't see how there can be any. If t'other chap had any idea of comin' overland, I'd have had a wireless from the office before this. You'll be wishin' just the lower berth, I suppose?"

"W-e-l-l—you'd book some other fellow in with me at Gib or Port Saïd, if you had to—an' I do like my bit of privacy. D'ye know, I fancy I'll just take the entire room as far as Singapore, anyway. Runs to something like seventy-five pounds—not? When I've paid my money an' got my ticket, there'll be no further argum'nt, as I understand it—from Smarrt or anyone else. What?"

"Oh, none whatever, Mr. Marston! I fancy you'd best see the chief steward at once about your table-seat—the bugle will go in a few minutes. Fancy he'll not have anything desirable at Captain Medford's table. Sir Edward Coffin an' Sir Michael are next to him—an' it's pretty well filled below them. Possibly you'll not mind bein' at the Chief's table—next to him an' the Doctor—both fine chaps? I'm at the other end, myself."

"That'll suit me very well."

"Very good, sir—I'll go with you to the steward's office, an' arrange it."

WHEN the supposed "Marston" got back into Stateroom 64 and locked the door, he sat on the cushioned transom

a few minutes—thinking. The situation in which he found himself was so amazingly unexpected that he could scarcely believe it.

"Sir Michael—here—on the same boat! Hadn't even heard he was contemplatin' bein' out of London just now! Wonder if it's some sort of alibi? Wonder if some friend of his, or tool, was the chap who missed out on travelin' in this stateroom? An' Coffin? One of the finest seamen alive—retired, with a title an' fortune—settled down ashore. Supposed to be enjoyin' life—pleasin' himself, wherever the fancy takes him to go. But possibly havin' some under-cover affiliation with—well—what? Not Scotland Yard or the Foreign Office. Might be Lloyd's. Now—what possible combination between Coffin an' Sir Michael? Between Coffin an' Cap'n Medford, which'd be a deal more likely because they're both as straight as they make 'em? My word! Fancy I'm due to acquire some education this trip—an' quite possibly enjoy myself, at that! What?"

THE supposed Mr. Marston took his seat at dinner next to Rintoul, the chief engineer, and proved to be a welcome addition—good company, evidently an extensive traveler, undoubtedly interested in some branch of commercial business. After dinner he met Sir Edward Coffin in the smoke-room—saying that they had come together before in the Orient when Coffin was in command of a Brock liner. Although there seemed to be something familiar about the man, Coffin couldn't place him, but there was nothing odd about that—a shipmaster meets so many thousands of persons that it is practically impossible to pigeonhole them all. And when Captain Medford dropped in for a few moments, Marston spoke of meeting him also—and produced the same impression of familiarity.

When Sir Michael Smarrt came in and they introduced Marston to him, the man was courteous but not genial, as he had been with them before, and presently excused himself to go below. Smarrt had maintained his usual superior manner, which was at times offensive, and had no idea he ever had seen the man before. Presently, Coffin and the Captain went out together and climbed to the boat-deck, where they went aft to the wireless-house and looked in upon "Sparks" as he was listening to bits of Channel gossip among the various boats bound in or out.



"Tatham," said the Captain, "I've fetched along a 'wireless-bug' to chat with ye—quite int'rested in the game, d'ye see: Sir Edward Coffin."

"I'll be pleased to chat with Sir Edward when I'm off-duty, sir—but you'll be knowin' our regulations, of course. Marconi station, you know—not a 'ship-an'-comp'ny' outfit."

Coffin and the Captain grinned as they stepped inside and closed the door—and the Baronet tossed a folded document upon the operating-bench.

"They're kind enough to mail a license-renewal to me as chief operator, each year, Tatham—fancy I'd rank you several notches if we bothered to look it up. Frankly, old chap, it's quite possible that I may need to do some talking with your outfit during the voyage—so I asked the Cap'n to introduce us. Do you know, I seem to recall that somebody mentioned your name to me as doing a good bit in the line of experimentation—trying out diff'rent hook-ups, all that sort of thing?"

"Don't know who it could have been, Sir Edward—fancied nobody had been keeping track of me as closely as that! Of course I do a bit of experimenting in off-hours—many of us do, you know."

COFFIN had been glancing around the cabin's interior, and noticed three or four "sets" and other equipment he had not seen before in any Marconi station.

"Then all this extra installment will be your own personal property—eh?"

"Aye, sir. I fancy you may be int'rested in it. If you can tell me what sort of a hook-up I have over yon at the end of the bench, I'll say you've gone on a good bit in your own experimentation. What?"

"Well, I've never seen anything exactly like it before, far as I can tell from panel and mike—but I'd say it's a short-wave transmitter using about six different waves in order to get your various ranges by utilizing the 'skip-stops' and 'dead-

spots.' With that sort of equipment you can produce a modulated carrier-wave that will broadcast the human voice with very little power. I'd say five hundred watts would do it, easily—requiring only what you have in this wireless-house for generation and everything. I know of one chap who is talking in code between New York and Egypt with a mere fifty watts—the power of your Mazda lamp, there. Does it three days in every week. If he can get that far in code on fifty watts, you certainly can get more than five thousand miles broadcasting voice on ten times that power."

Tatham grinned.

"I was fairly certain you were a radio-shark, sir. You're quite right. I'd a most int'restin' an' pleasant chat with the London manager of the telephone comp'nies, d'ye see—an' because all that sort of thing helps 'em in workin' out a perfect service system for transoceanic talk, he suggested my callin' up his offices at any time, from wherever I happened to be, at sea—an' gave orders to the exchange that when I called any of their ship or shore stations equipped to talk, they would give me any connection I wished—with-out charge, if it was my personal experimentin', or chargin' the regular rates if it was an outsider wishin' the communication, provided some one guaranteed the tolls."

"By Jove! And you've been doing that, successfully, from this shack—with these instruments you've built yourself?"

"Aye, sir—from as far away as the China Sea—from the Bay of Bengal, Red Sea, Mediterranean, North Atlantic. For the past six months. Built everything but the small motor-generator which runs on a hundred an' ten volts from any light-socket—that I purchased in London, secondhand, for twenty pounds. Listed at seventy-five when new."

"Ever had a passenger use your transmitter for a shore connection—and pay the tolls?"

"No sir—too much bother figurin' how much of the toll would belong to the Marconi Comp'ny—didn't care about gettin' into that, because I'd not taken it up with them—might get myself in trouble. But I got the Cap'n's house for him, in Surrey, so he could talk with his wife—several times. An' I've had the Chief talkin' with Aberdeen. Of course they charged him but the toll from London up—but when an Aberdonian pays one pound three for a ten-minute talk, it's like tearin' the inside out of him. I was

the Doctor he was talkin' with—his wife was havin' her fourth, an' there'd been complications."

"H-m-m. I say, Tatham! If I talk with one of the Lloyd's managers, it would come pretty close to being under the same official status as Cap'n Medford's talking with his home—wouldn't it?"

"Wait a bit! You're a regularly licensed chief operator in our comp'ny—have been for years? They must know you very well—would certainly approve anything you do as an operator. As you said before, you rank me—any orders you give as chief operator, I'm supposed to carry out, an' if I accommodate you with my own experimental set, I'd say I should be credited instead of censured. Aye—go ahead, Sir Edward! We're not two hundred miles from their phone-receiving masts—I'll call London an' get whatever number you wish."

"Let's see. Six bells haven't gone yet—he'll not have turned in if he's at home. If not, he'll be playing bridge at the club. Of course he's not at the Lloyd's offices this time of night—we'll try the club first. Call Central 5657—City of London Club. If he's not there, he'll be at his place in Hants, not far from Aldershot—the number's Aldershot 1260. He's also a member of the National Maritime in Rangoon Street, but that's a smaller club—not often there except for tiffin."

SETTING his dial at forty-two meters, Tatham began calling the General Post Office Telephone letters—and in a few moments got an acknowledgment:

"Telephone Exchange. Who is calling?"

"Experimental 20X96. Will you kindly put me through to Mr. Francis Yelverton—of Lloyd's, Central 5657, City of London Club. Official."

"Stand by and hold the line—we'll call you in a few moments."

In twenty minutes one of the pages at the club was saying that Mr. Yelverton would be in the phone-booth directly—which was much better service than Tatham had hoped for.

Tatham shoved the mike along to Sir Edward, who already had a duplicate set of head-phones over his ears.

"Are you there, Yelverton? Coffin speaking."

"Oh—I say! My word! An' where'll you be, now?"

"South of Bolt Head, I fancy. We should round Ushant by morning."

"By Jove! I get you as distinctly as if you were here in the city."

"This is experimental equipment—not in general use. As you see, I decided to book passage on the chance of turning up something—following out the line of investigation we were discussing. Man is on board, booked to Colombo—but may drop off at Gib or the Canal according to his wireless advices. Now—don't mention names of any sort, but tell me if anything has turned up since we pulled out."

"Aye—one or two important occurrences an' bits of evidence. We've learned that the owner has had a suspicion, based upon apparently trivial evidence, that if he were to sell out an' the control pass to the other chap, four new boats would be laid down at once, and the line's foreign activities secretly extended to something which might be very much outside of maritime law. With the control in his hands, t'other chap stands to make millions in two or three different ways. If he plays safe an' keeps off these dangerous activities, the line has been making good money under owner's handling—so that, getting absolute control, t'other chap makes all the profit there is. If he goes into the risky business an' gets away with it, he makes a lot both ways. Incidentally, we learned today that his wife is an adopted daughter of the present owner—has a large block of the shares standing in her name which she can't sell or transfer during her father's lifetime because they're tied up that way in his executors' hands. But she has given her husband an option, and in case of her adopted father's death, she will transfer her shares to him an' let him handle 'em."

"HMPH! That's interesting!" Coffin commented. "Might explain—or partly explain—that insurance!"

"Fancy it does—one way or another. Well—a month ago the owner begins to get threatening sort of letters—tellin' him to get out of the shippin' business if he wants to live. Owner certainly has got away with a good bit of trade from other lines in the Orient, though in perfectly straight competition. Letters supposed to have got on his nerves. Went up to see old shipbuildin' friends on the Clyde—talkin' over a new boat or so, presumably. That'll be three weeks ago. They saw him but two days. Nobody has seen or heard of him, since. T'other chap comes to us with a case of nerves

—says the owner's continued absence is hurtin' the line—several Eastern shippers won't make big deals with anyone else. T'other chap thinks it a reasonable precaution to take out a hundred thousand pounds' insurance on owner's life—in favor of the Line—to give 'em that much extra workin' capital in case owner dies. Had the chap taken it out in his own favor, we'd have been suspicious at once—but the extra-capital idea seemed to be reasonable. He paid the premiums himself, saying he'd charge 'em up to the comp'ny. We made one stipulation: no paym'nt in case of murder. Suicide, yes, if clearly proved; but not murder—too demmed much incentive! We've had this other chap under constant espionage, but he put one over on us by sailin' with you—we'd no report of that. Unless the owner also is on board, it seems to be a perfectly innocent proceeding—an' we're quite sure, d'ye see, that owner was *not* aboard of you."

"**H**OW'S that?" Coffin asked alertly. "When last seen, he'd a milit'ry mustache an' the tuft of imperial he's worn for several years past," said Yelverton. "This morning a man answering his description closely, an' with a Van Dyck of just about the growth he would have sprouted in three weeks, booked on the Newhaven-Dieppe packet for France—no rail-ticket beyond Dieppe. Then along comes Scotland Yard with information that they've been keepin' a certain acquaintance of t'other chap's under observation for some time because he's been in rather shady comp'ny in London an' may have a criminal record—though they haven't a shred of proof in that direction. This man, they say, was traced to the Newhaven-Dieppe packet an' is supposed to have left on her today. He'd no ticket—but three days ago he took out a passport under the name of Samuel J. Marston. If our supposition is correct, the owner also took out a passport—under the name of William B. Shields. Of course duplicates of the identifying photographs are kept at the Passport Bureau when the passports are issued. The man Marston had a smooth face—rather fine, responsible-lookin' chap somewhat under medium height—probably a crook, but doesn't look it. Shields, as I said, had a Van Dyck and was a good six feet in height.

"Now we get, this evening, two final bits of news which may have a bearing on the proposition: The Newhaven-Dieppe

was in collision during a pea-soup fog—early this evening, an hour before dinner—with some big liner not identified. Section of the starboard rail and a few of the upper plates at the bow scraped off. Damage to liner, if any, has not been reported—probably negligible. Report from master of Newhaven boat to his comp'ny by wireless, didn't mention any casualties, but he said that point couldn't be checked up until his passengers went ashore at Dieppe. We'll get that later. All day there have been rumors in the city that the steamship line is believed to be in difficulties. It's pointed out that the owner's mysterious disappearance has a pretty fishy look. Their shares went down five points on the exchange this afternoon—heavier drop expected tomorrow."

"Looks to me as if the whole proposition is a frame-up, Yelverton—as I thought during our discussion last night. If the owner is unquestionably murdered, that lets you out on the hundred-thousand-pound insurance—but it doesn't prevent the other chap from getting control of the line and doing anything he damn' pleases with it. On the other hand, if the owner dies by accident, suicide, or natural causes, you lose—and the line loses—all round. I've met the owner three or four times—sized him up as a man who really hasn't any nerves, whether he looks scared or not—by no means the type to be easily killed by any thug or bolshevist—he's too level-headed, too far-sighted. Don't you pay a cent on his reported death, or admit it, until I tell you it's probably so! Tell the newspaper men when they come to you, as they will, that you've inside information which convinces you the owner is *not* dead. See his bankers, brokers and executors, tell 'em the same thing—and sit tight. By the way, do you know of any mark or feature by which the man might be recognized?"

"**U**M—wait a bit—let me think! 'Pon my word, I believe I do—an' it's something not likely to be noticed, at that! Across the back of his left wrist, pretty well up under the sleeve, there is a white diagonal scar from an old slash with a Malay kris, years ago, in the East. He's a hairy man on his chest an' limbs—hair covers that scar so it wouldn't be noticed in a casual glance. I doubt if even his adopted daughter knows of it—he's never had a valet. Showed it to me, once, when he was tellin' the story.

You'll certainly not run across two men with that same scar!"

"Good! That little bit of evidence might come in handy—never can tell. You can call me up at any hour of the voyage, with our regular station-letters."

CAPTAIN MEDFORD had left a moment after introducing them; and while Coffin was talking, Sparks had courteously stepped outside the door to light his pipe, so that the Baronet could be as confidential as he chose. While he was standing there, a figure came aft from the A-deck companion—Sir Michael Smarrt, who wished to send a London message. Hearing the indistinct murmur of a voice inside the wireless-house, he remarked dictatorially:

"I fancied it was against your comp'ny's regulations to permit anyone else inside your operating-room, Tatham!"

"That applies to everyone outside of our operatin' an' official force, sir."

"Oh—I see! Then you have two operators aboard this boat—eh? I was not aware of that."

"Sir Edward Coffin holds a chief operator's license, sir—has had it ever since he was mate on the Brock Line boats."

"Hmph! Your comp'ny consider him as still in their employ, do they—when he's settled down ashore an' given up the sea altogether?"

"I really can't say as to that. May be a matter of courtesy—but he carries about with him a chief operator's license—an' that quite naturally outranks me. I'm supposed to take any orders he may give me."

"What's he doing in there? Sounds like telephoning!"

"Aye—possibly. You might ask him when he comes out."

"Hmph! I fancy I'll go in an' ask him now—at once!"

"I fancy you'll not, sir."

"The devil you do! I'm managing director of this Line!"

"But not of our comp'ny, sir. The inside of that wireless-house is our ground—not the steamship line's, d'ye see."

"I say, Tatham—you'd best keep a civil tongue in your head! How long do you fancy you'll last if I send in a report that you've been offensive?"

"As long as I enforce our regulations, sir, that doesn't worry me such a lot. You'll do as you please about reporting me, of course."

"Look here! How does it happen you are equipped for wireless-telephoning?"

"We're not—officially or commercially. But we're naturally experimentin' along that line. The instruments in there belong to me personally—an' are merely for experimentation in off-hours."

"But Coffin seems to be holdin' a regular conversation with somebody!"

"Quite possibly. I've done that myself—over varying ranges."

"Could you talk with anyone in London—from this boat?"

"Well—I have done so—at a much greater distance than this."

"Good! I wish to speak with some one at my house in the West End."

"I'll be pleased to take any message for transmission in code, Sir Michael—but I can't give you a telephone-connection. The comp'ny has no equipm't for it on board, an' would seriously object to my handlin' such business until they have."

"Now look ye here, felley-me-lad! Ye'll do as I order, aboard my own ship, or ye'll be walkin' ashore at Gib without a berth, d'ye see!"

"I doubt if I do, either! Damn it, man, the employees of our comp'ny are not supposed to take abuse from anybody! You can send your message along to me by one of the stewards, with the money, just as other passengers do—an' I'll return the change by him. But if you're doin' any business with me direct, you'll keep a civil tongue in your nut!"

IT chanced that Coffin had finished his conversation before the end of the talk outside and had overheard nearly half of it. He grinned as he came out.

Sir Michael started in on him:

"So ye're by way of bein' but an employee of the wireless-comp'ny after all, Coffin! One hadn't heard that the operatin' force ran to titles—eh?"

"Oh, there are lots of things you haven't heard, Smarrt. Tell me something—will you? Suppose you considered some chap very much in your way, cramping your style on things you meant to do. Would you merely say; 'Well, it can't be helped'—and let him live? Or would you undertake to bump him off? Eh? You've been civil enough since we met, aboard, here—in your own way; but I can't help the feeling that you don't really love me, for some reason or other. Now, is this all my imagination? I can't recall having injured you in any way. On the other hand, I don't relish condescension from anybody. If you really don't like me, say so like a man—"

and I'll look out for myself. But if you want me bumped off at any time, don't arrange to have some other man do the job! That sort of thing is so likely to leak out somewhere—your executive may double-cross you at any time."

"What—what d'ye mean!"

"Oh, nothing. Just making a suggestion—to see what shape your nerves are in. I don't have to have a man slap my face in order to catch the impression that he'd rather have me anywhere else in the world than on the same boat with him. And I'm curious to know just why you feel that way. Either I must have done something which made you pretty sore, or else you've done something which scares you blue when you think I may have found it out and intend giving it to the newspapers! Which is it?"

"Deuce take it, Coffin—I—I fancy ye must be crazy! I've nothing against ye—nothing in the world! Ye're just imaginin' a lot of bally rot! I did lose my temper a bit with Tatham, here, because I can see no good reason why you should have communicatin' facilities from one of my boats which are refused to the managin' director of the line—quite a natural feelin' for me to have."

"In the circumstances, it's not. I was merely experimenting a bit with Tatham's own private equipment, which his company certainly wouldn't authorize him to use for commercial business. And if you attempt to carry out your threats against him, there'll be my report and that of a big organization against you."

"Are ye by way of bein' an F.O. man, Sir Edward?"

"No—nor Scotland Yard, either. But I've some influence in other quarters."

Smarrt turned about and went below without another word—just as Captain Medford, attracted by what sounded like a quarrel, came down from the bridge and went into the wireless-house after the other two, closing the door after him.

"An' what'll ye ha' been doin' to our managin' director, Sir Edward?"

"Just getting his goat, that's all, Dick."

COFFIN rapidly sketched for them, not the whole story he'd obtained from Yelverton, but just enough to indicate that, on circumstantial evidence, Sir Michael was up to his neck in some scheme to obtain control of the line and freeze out Seldon Jennis, the majority shareholder—even possibly arranging to have him killed.

"My object was to get him both rattled and scared—which I think I did. He's no idea how much I know, but fears it may be a good deal. If he has three or four confederates aboard, I'll have to watch my step, or they may shove me overboard with a knife in me. I'm pretty sure there's one other passenger who's playing the game with him—and I've a sort of hunch that he expected to find one other man aboard who hasn't turned up. Smarrt is looking for wireless messages, day and night. Way I figure is about like this: he's been polishing up some scheme within the last week—possibly an attempted murder—that won't look so good for him if he's in London when it happens. But if it's shown that he was at sea, on his way to Singapore, that's an unshakable alibi. Meanwhile he's left the dirty work to hirelings he doesn't altogether trust, and is nervous lest they bungle the play somewhere. If he could telephone instead of trying to give orders and handle the thing by code-messages, it would give him a heap more advantage in directing the situation. That's why he was sore because Tatham wouldn't let him use his short-wave transmission. Well—I got him way up in the air just now. He won't do anything with the cool judgment he needs as long as I'm aboard with him. So I'm looking for some little slip—some bit of carelessness—that'll tell me a good deal before we make Gib. By the way, Dick, how do you like that chap Marston?"

WHY—rather better than the bulk of the passengers, I fancy," Medford replied. "Can't think where I met him before—but he looks pretty decent, and is evidently a man of wide int'rests."

"That's my impression. What did he say his front name was?"

"Didn't say—but Frome has it on the list. He's Samuel J. Marston. Liverpool man, originally—been in London a good many years."

"Samu— What's that? Samuel J. Marston. Oh, my sainted aunt! What d'you know about *that*! Oh, it's just coincidence, of course—simply impossible for it to be anything else! But—"

"Why? What's wrong with him? What's the coincidence?"

"Now, wait a bit—wait a bit! Let me think over what Yelverton said—and get this straight. Samuel J. Marston is a man about fifty-two—smooth face, rather fine-looking, five feet seven and a half—and went aboard the Newhaven packet

this afternoon. That's all straight enough! And our Marston is six feet or more—and sailed on this boat from the Royal Albert Dock three or four hours earlier. Hmph! That seems to let him out! Wonder what boat it was that scraped us?"

"Nobody even got a glimpse of her in that fog—unless it was you, Coffin. It was about the right time for the New-haven packet—but I won't swear we were nearer her course than the Folkestone-Boulogne. Might have been either one of 'em. By the sound of her screws, she was one of the smaller, older boats."



Coffin rapidly sketched the story for them. "My object was to get Smarrt rattled and scared—which I did," he said.

In the morning the pseudo-Marston made a point of having a pleasant chat with Sir Edward after breakfast, and presently fetched the talk around to stock-investment—as distinguished from speculation.

"I don't mind admitting, Sir Edward, that at my present age of fifty-two I'm in comfortable financial circumstances for the rest of my life, unless all my investments go phut at the same time. One of my habits has been to buy outright for investment at the bottom of a bear market and hold for the top of a bull-market if property behind the shares appears to be sound. Take this line, for example. I've a little block of their shares—but before we sailed yesterday, I noticed that the shares had dropped five points, and there were rumors it would fall still further—some vague apprehension be-

cause the majority shareholder appears to have mysteriously disappeared. Well, d'ye see, under Jennis' management I'd hold the shares indefinitely, because he's made money for the line, and this chap Smarrt doesn't dare disobey his orders.

But if Smarrt ever gets control—well, I couldn't sell out any too quickly to please me. I've no real belief that he can get control—Seldon Jennis should be more than a match for him. And this droppin' of the shares may be a frame-up—a freeze-out. At all events, I'd like to wireless certain instructions to my brokers, but I don't wish to do it in my own name. I often use another which they know and will consider quite authentic for an order. But, d'ye see, I fancy the operator on this boat might object to acceptin' a message from me under a false name. Even if he did accept it, he might mention the circumstance to somebody and give me away. D'ye see?"

"I think I do, Mr. Marston. You have your own good reason for not wishing it known that you are out of the United Kingdom at this moment. But—er—just why did you imagine that I could help you?"

"Well—possibly you may have offended Sir Michael in some way. At all events, I overheard him tellin' one of the passengers that you were by way of bein' a licensed operator in the wireless comp'ny's employ an' were rather inclined to be above your position in that capacity. If there was any truth at all in that statem'nt, I fancied you might, as a matter of courtesy, accept my messages for transmission an' turn 'em over to 'Sparks' as bein' perfectly all right. The replies would come addressed in the other name, d'ye see—an' you could have it understood you would deliver 'em. Eh?"

It was really a legitimate transaction—and Coffin thought he might dig out valuable information by it.

"Why, of course I'll accommodate you to that extent, Mr. Marston—and keep a close mouth about it. Write out your message—I'll take it up at once!"

Marston drew one of the steamer's note-sheets from a rack on the smoke-room bulkhead and scribbled a message to a firm of brokers within half a block of the Royal Exchange: "*If Oriental Straits-Navigation drops to 110, buy a thousand. At par, buy all you can get.*—*Lycurgus Small.*"

As Coffin stepped into the wireless-house and handed Tatham the message with the smiling remark that any replies could be delivered by him, the operator grinned appreciatively—thinking the Baronet himself was the sender. Then he passed over a code-message on one of the company's blanks—that is, a message in which the words themselves were coded.

"You're a good bit faster than I am, Sir Edward—prob'ly more sure of gettin' code-words straight. Would you care about sendin' this for me while I go outside an' smoke a pipe? It's from Sir Michael, d'ye see—an' I'd not like to have him catch me in any mistake."

THE Baronet cheerfully nodded and Tatham went out well pleased. He wouldn't have risked his berth and possibly a criminal charge by monkeying with that message—but he had the idea that whatever organization Coffin might be connected with, under the rose, would stand behind him in anything he decided to do. Sir Edward got the Land's End W/T Station and sent the message in regular form—getting a very careful repeat to make sure that Tatham's records were clear. Then he rapidly copied the coded words on a sheet of blank paper

and stuffed it into his pocket. In a few moments Land's End was calling him again with a message to Sir Michael from a firm of London brokers. This also was coded—but it was the old familiar "A-B-C" which most commercial houses use in alternation with the "International"—recognizable at a glance. Coffin could have decoded most of it from memory, but he copied it as he had the other—jabbed the message-form on Tatham's hook—and then glanced through the code-book hanging upon the bulkhead to get the words he couldn't remember. It read: "*Smarrt—R.M.S. Sringar—Bay of Biscay. Have sold your account ten thousand Oriental-Straits Prefd.*—*Haley & Grant.*"

COFFIN'S room-steward was a little cheerful Cockney of forty or more. At first glimpse of the Baronet when he came aboard, there was a glow in his eyes like that of a faithful hound-dog whose tail begins a preliminary wagging at the sight of a former master. He placed himself in Sir Edward's way once or twice, casually, until that gentleman chanced to see him—and stopped short.

"Sniffin, by jove! *Sniffin!* You were my cabin-steward all the years I was in command for the Brocks! Well—well—I'm glad to see you, old chap! We must have a good long chat. I say! How much will it take to satisfy the man who does for me now—and change with him? Eh?"

"You leave that to me, Cap'n—leave h't to me!"

"No—he won't like it a little bit unless you square him—which means you'll cough up two or three pounds—and that I won't have. Here are five pounds—give 'em to him! Say I haven't a word of complaint—give him a first-class recommend any time—but that you did for me five years, transferrin' to all the boats I commanded, and we'd like to be together again. He's to have the whole five, mind—you'll have plenty!"

Coffin didn't know at the time, nor did Sniffin even think of telling him, that he also looked after the pseudo-Marston's room on the deck below—Coffin having the de luxe suite at the starboard forward corner of A-deck, with the music-room bulkhead forming one side of it—the little communicating passage, another—and outside-bulkheads for the other two sides. So unless an eavesdropper placed his ear against the paneling in plain sight of several other

people, nobody could hear a word spoken inside the cabin or the bathroom. Sir Michael had the corresponding suite on the port side—and his steward was an intimate crony of Sniffin's. On the third day out, Sniffin casually spoke of Marston as being quite evidently an old traveler who knew his way about and would get along with ships' people anywhere—a decent considerate sort of a body, but one who'd take no nonsense from anybody. Incidentally, it had been Sniffin whom Marston had heard telling the ladies that the man in the green mackintosh was not in Sixty-four.

As the steward was talking, it suddenly struck Coffin that here was an opportunity for acquiring the results of a little close observation; a room-steward sees a good deal.

"Sniffin—did Mr. Marston come aboard early, on sailing-day?"

"H'I reely couldn't s'y, Cap'n, just when 'e did come aboard—cause h'I never lays me h'eyes on 'im until after we was scraped by that Channel-boat h'in the fog. 'E was h'up gassin' wi' somebody 'e knows h'in the smoke-room, h'I farncy—cause 'e didn't come below with 'is luggage until just before the bugle goes f'r dinner. 'E'll be 'avin' a trunk h'in the 'old, of course—'cause 'e's nothin' but a suitcase h'under 'is berth. Sort o' gent as is accustomed to travelin' light, belike. Mr. Frome, 'e says the gent found at the larst minute that t'other chap wasn't tikin' Number Sixty-four, an' beat h'it f'r the docks in a taxi."

A WILDLY impossible notions suddenly flashed through Sir Edward's brain. He didn't see how it was possible, but—

"Ever see him without his coat or shirt on, Sniffin?"

"H'I scrubbed 'im in 'is barth this mornin', sir."

"I suppose you didn't happen to notice any long white scar on one of his arms or legs—eh?"

"H'm! I did so, Cap'n! H'it wasn't a-showin' so plain h'under the 'air of 'im ontill 'e gits that left arm wet—but then h'I sees h'it pline across the back of 'is left wrist—like h'it might ha' been done with a carvin'-knife or a kris."

"Sniffin—I know you'll forget you ever saw that scar or told me about it, if I ask you to—but I'm making a little present of five pounds just to fix that in your mind. Understood?"

Coffin had been working on the code-message sent by Sir Michael—at odd

moments, in his cabin. Women, as a rule, find code too difficult to bother with—and he was acting on a hunch that the message might have been to a woman, though it was addressed with initials instead of prefix. Hence, the code would be of the simplest sort—probably numerical and alphabetic. It wasn't long before he struck the key and decoded it. The message was to Lady Smarrt—and had been sent before any message had come to the *Srinagar* concerning casualties on the Channel-boat. It read:

"Man drowned by falling overboard from Newhaven packet, during collision with liner, answers in every particular the description of William B. Shields, whose photograph at Passport Bureau is that of your father. Deeply regret unfortunate accident—but see no reason to doubt that he is dead. Must be one day in Egypt upon important business, but will return overland from Brindisi as quickly as possible. Our shares being attacked on Change in mysterious and disastrous way. Shall need to hold every one can purchase or get. Wish to take up option on your shares, at the market, as agreed upon in the event of your father's death. Please see his executors at once and have transfer made."

After reading this, Sir Edward's first action was to get in communication with Yelverton, of Lloyd's, at the Association's offices—assuring him that Seldon Jennis not only was alive but could be produced in ten minutes if necessary. He then asked him to see Jennis' executors at once and convince them of the same thing. Yelverton said he'd seen them the morning after the *Srinagar* left—and they had agreed that they would not permit any transfer of the shares until Jennis' death was proved beyond any possible doubt. After this radiophone conversation, Coffin hunted out the fake Mr. Marston and fetched him into his cabin.

"I say, Marston—I've been sending and receiving *nom-du-guerre* messages for you. Now—I want to know if you have any other emergency name which your executors will recognize as being unquestionably from a live man instead of a dead one?"

"Fancy I don't get you, old chap!"

"Unless your executors know positively that you're alive, they may transfer the shares they're holding for your adopted daughter to her husband, as she gave him an option to do in the event of your death. According to the casualty report from the Newhaven-Dieppe packet, you

are supposed to be completely dead at this moment!"

Marston laughed.

"Even if Smarrt got those shares from his wife, they wouldn't give him control, Sir Edward. Those *non-du-guerre* messages you've sent for me to my brokers succeeded in catching Smarrt short, as I hoped they would. We bought as fast as he sold. He dumped all he had on the market—sold a lot more he hasn't got and can't get. The man is irretrievably ruined. When my daughter knows what he has done, she'll leave him—and I fancy I might be able to prove that he has put his neck dangerously close to the noose. The real Marston tried to trip me off my feet an' shove me over the rail of that Channel-boat on which I was crossing—that is, I suppose he must have been Marston, because I afterward found this passport in the gangway, and I doubt if anyone else could have dropped it there. You see—I weigh a lot more than he did. His shove didn't even jar me off my feet. But in trying it, he lost his own balance and went over the rail. Two men had tried to kill me before—so that unquestionably this was more of the same. The master of the packet had no time to lower a boat and search for a man in the water—his mind and hands were too much occupied in trying to avert a collision. Five minutes afterward, we scraped the stern of this boat. I'm not telling as much as this to the police, because they'd swear I knocked the man into the water—which I didn't; he came up behind me, and I didn't see him until he was too far over the rail to grab."

Coffin nodded. "Right! Now let's get Smarrt in here, and put the fear of hanging into him before he tries something else!"

WHEN Sir Michael appeared—under protest—Coffin asked:

"Smarrt—would you mind telling us where and when you heard that the supposed Mr. Shields was lost overboard from the Newhaven-Dieppe packet in a fog-collision?"

"Hmph! I've been sending quite a lot of wireless messages since I came aboard—and receiving a good many more!"

"There has been no mention in a single one of them either of the fog-collision or anyone who was aboard of that packet—except by you. Nobody on this boat knew what craft struck us—nobody on that packet knows what boat this was.

Nobody ashore, except your wife, knows that yet. But you wirelessed your wife that her father had been lost from that packet—that his passport-picture had been identified at the Bureau. Which was another lie. It hasn't. Now—unless you are guilty of conspiracy to murder—where did you get that information? When nobody on this boat knew what happened after we left port?

YOU needn't bother to answer—it isn't necessary. Mr. Marston here, represents Scotland Yard. You're ruined, financially. We'll give you two alternatives: First—write out your resignation from the Board. Then write a statement that you knew certain men were out to kill Mr. Jennis and had reason to suppose they might actually do it. We'll not force you to say you paid them. That you then contemplated getting control of the Line by rigging a deal in the stock-market after the report of Jennis' death—that you secured insurance on his life from Lloyd's to the extent of a hundred thousand pounds when you were convinced he would soon die,—by accident or otherwise,—that you demanded from your wife the transfer of her shares according to an option you had made her give you, against her wishes and better judgment. I think that's all."

"And—if I refuse to write any such incriminating statem'nt?"

"You'll be put in irons now—sent home from Gibraltar on the first boat, to stand trial on a charge of criminal conspiracy involving both murder and fraud—with the wireless message to your wife, decoded, and the other facts we have to back it up. Lloyd's will prosecute on a charge of fraud. Jennis will prosecute on three charges of attempted murder. You won't stand much chance in a British court. If you sign the statement, we'll let you get off at Gib. You'll not enter England again without risk of arrest. And don't try any more funny business against either Jennis or me—there's too much on record against you!"

Sir Michael disappeared at Gibraltar without suspecting that Marston was Seldon Jennis. Jennis admits that Coffin convicted Smarrt when it might have been difficult if not impossible for the shipowner to prove his charges against the scoundrel—but is still puzzled as to how the Baronet solved his identity and drew the threads of the game together. And Coffin smilingly refuses to tell him.

Another of Mr. New's famous stories will appear in the next, the April, issue.