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Prize Stories of Real Experience

A Complete
NOVEL

BLOOD BROTHERS

By GEORGE
ALLAN ENGLAND



BLUE BOOK



MARCH, 1934

MAGAZINE

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The Garden of T. N. T.

A tremendous adventure of the Anglo-American Intelligence officer known to the natives as the Red Wolf of Arabia.

By WILLIAM MAKIN



Illustrated by
John Clymer

THE king is dead; long live the king, eh?" suggested Paul Rodgers, smiling slightly.

"Exactly," replied the Chief of Police, twisting his mustache and crossing his legs with a slightly nervous air. "The leader of the rebel Druses, the Sheik Sonieda, was murdered on his way here in the Jerusalem Express. Thanks to you, the murder was no mystery."

"Except to the Druses themselves," replied Rodgers—an Anglo-American Intelligence officer whose daring exploits had caused him to be known among the natives as the Red Wolf of Arabia.

The Chief of Police nodded.

"Lost without a leader, their revolt in Jerusalem never materialized," he mused, uncrossing his legs. "And a good job for us, too! Give me a quiet life."

"Is that why they made you Chief of Police in Jerusalem, my dear Travers?" asked Rodgers with another smile.

Colonel Travers flushed, which is unusual in a policeman. But it was whispered that the wife of some great British pro-consul had once seen that flush, and had been so delighted with it that immediate promotion followed for Travers. He now held the highly nervous job of Chief of Police in Jerusalem, where most of the crime was political, and fanatics

from three great religions involved were in it.

"Nevertheless, I know these Druses have found a new leader, and they're up to some devilment," went on the Chief of Police, ignoring Rodgers' thrust. "I know they are," he repeated miserably.

"Who is the leader?" asked the Intelligence officer.

"That I don't know," was the reply, given with another twist of the mustache. "My spies—and although they're a cut-throat crew, they can be depended upon—assure me that something is brewing. That is all they can tell me. And that is why I've come to you."

"Who sent you?" Rodgers was blunt. Once again Colonel Travers flushed.

"It was the Governor," he admitted. "When I took him my report, he threw it aside and said: 'Go and talk with that fellow Paul Rodgers. If you can keep him away from a piano, he'll find out more than all your spies.' . . . And so, here I am."

The Red Wolf did not smile. He was fully aware that his reputation as the finest Intelligence officer, his astonishing adventures and his ruthlessness in unraveling a mystery to the finish, were bruited from one end of the Red Sea to the other. With a characteristic gesture he stroked the back of his flaming crop of hair, and said abruptly:

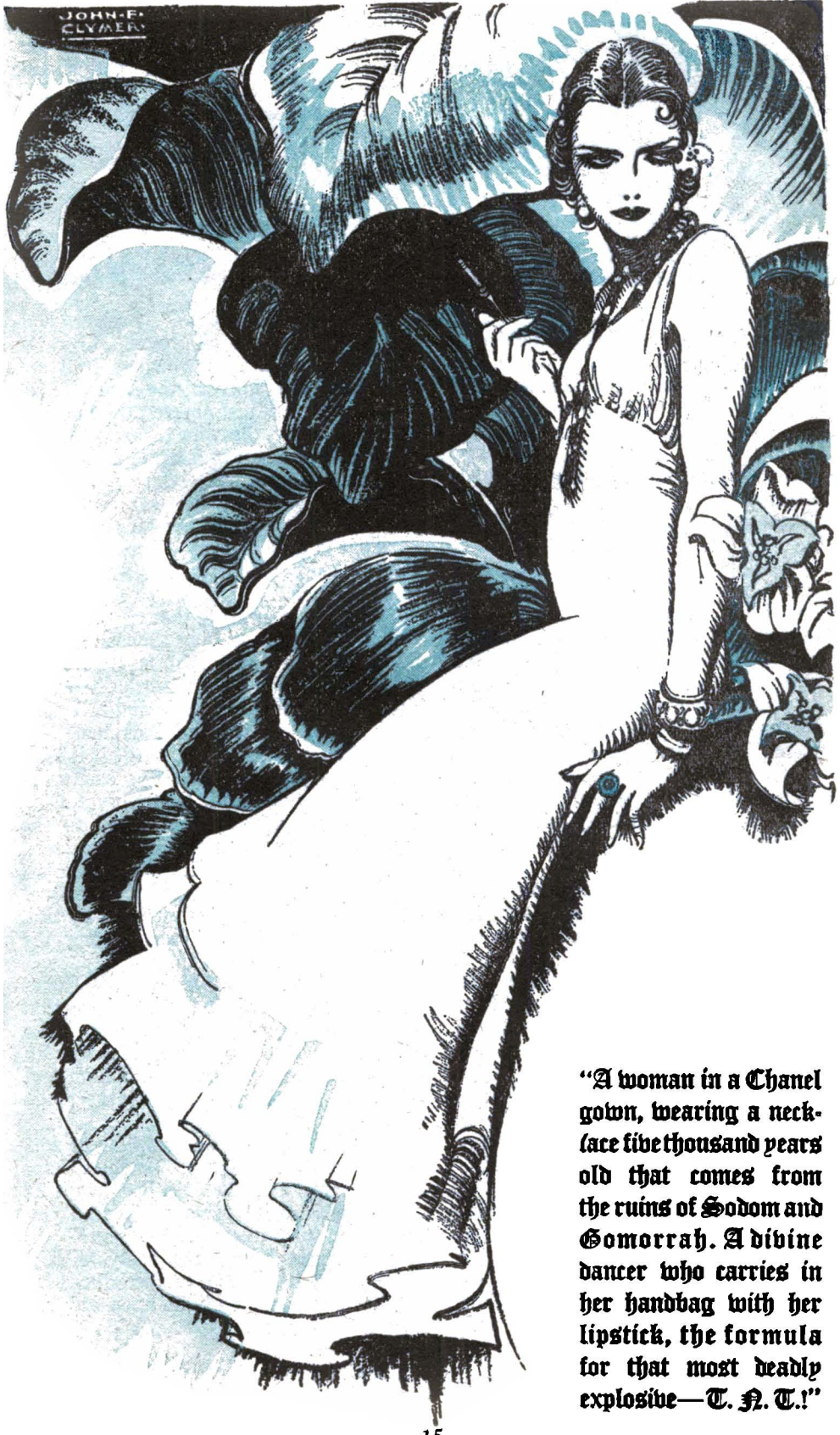
"Talking of pianos, do you realize, my dear Travers, that there isn't a decent one in this hotel—which calls itself the most civilized in Palestine?"

"Isn't there?" inquired the Chief of Police blankly.

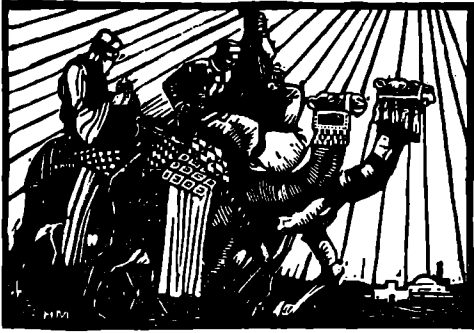
"No, there isn't," snarled Rodgers. "There's a crime that, as Chief of Police, you might investigate."

"But it isn't a crime not to have a piano in a hotel, surely?"

The Red Wolf thrust his youthful, energetic face forward.



"A woman in a Chanel gown, wearing a necklace five thousand years old that comes from the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah. A divine dancer who carries in her handbag with her lipstick, the formula for that most deadly explosive—T. N. T.!"



"I once knew a man who intended to go out at night and commit murder," he said solemnly. "But he found a piano and sat down to play. In ten minutes he had played all the rage and murder-desire out of his soul."

"That's devilish interesting. How do you know?"

"Because the man was myself," replied Rodgers.

Aggressively he stared round the luxuriously furnished lounge of the Crusaders Hotel, which lies to the north of Jerusalem. There, within sight of that Garden of Gethsemane where once a Man prepared Himself for execution, beautifully gowned women and men in uniforms and evening-dress strolled, and chattered of the trivialities of life.

"Well, if they haven't a piano here," murmured the Chief of Police, twisting his mustache, "they at least have an excellent dance band."

AND as though he had commanded it, the strains of a waltz, the "Blue Danube," floated toward them from the ballroom.

"A dance band!" muttered the Red Wolf bitterly. "And playing the 'Blue Danube' in that muddled, stodgy fashion of all bands that have never seen the Danube."

"It's not a bad waltz to dance," went on the Chief of Police bravely. "I even proposed to the woman who is now my wife after dancing the 'Blue Danube'."

"Naturally."

"Well, why not dance tonight?" went on Colonel Travers jovially. He glanced approvingly at the evening-dress which Rodgers wore, and which revealed his slim, athletic figure to perfection. "Find an attractive woman and dance with her."

"And then marry her?"

Colonel Travers blushed again. This Paul Rodgers, Red Wolf of Arabia, was a

difficult fellow in all circumstances. But the man of many adventures had narrowed his gray eyes and was staring across the lounge.

"Perhaps I will dance tonight, Travers, after all. Good night."

Slightly bewildered at this sudden dismissal, the Chief of Police rose.

"But I have your promise that you will help?" he ventured.

"Help! In what?"

"In finding the new leader of the rebel Druses."

"Oh, that! Of course." Rodgers nodded and held out his hand. "By the way," he added in a whisper, "tell me, when you turn, Travers, the name of that woman who has just entered the lounge."

Instinctively, Travers turned. He saw a tall, slim woman in a white satin gown of Chanel stamp, whose dark hair coiled voluptuously about her ears and emphasized the pallor of her face.

"That is Lola Nerval, a Frenchwoman. I'm told she's delightful. But alas, I don't speak French."

"Why is she wearing that red necklace, which I'll swear is four thousand years B. C., with a gown that is 1934 years A. D.? But don't stare so deliberately, Travers. Light a cigarette and tell me."

"I hadn't noticed the necklace," faltered the Chief of Police. "But if it is as ancient as you suppose, it is easily explained. Her husband, Jean Nerval, is an archæologist, a Syrian, attached to the expedition that is digging near the Dead Sea. It is claimed that the expedition has discovered the old cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed by fire. Probably the necklace was among the trinkets found there."

"Daring, but effective," agreed Rodgers, his eyes narrowing in the direction of that blood-red necklace that hung against a perfect white throat. "A woman who comes from the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah to dance the latest jazz! Lot's wife was not so lucky."

"She rather looks like a pillar of salt in that white satin gown," laughed Colonel Travers; and then flushed again at the boldness of his remark. "Would you like me to introduce you, Rodgers?"

"No, thanks," was the reply with a shake of the head. "To be introduced by a policeman casts a blight upon any romance. It's good of you, Colonel, but I'll introduce myself."

The Chief of Police shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I'd like to stay," he said; "but

hearing that waltz reminds me that I must get home to my wife. She's a bit nervous, these days, with all this trouble brewing."

"I'll do my best for you, Travers," nodded the Red Wolf, and with a parting smile, he turned away from the Chief of Police.

Ten seconds later Colonel Travers turned in the doorway that led out of the lounge. What he saw caused him to twist his mustache. Paul Rodgers was walking toward the ballroom, and the dark-haired beauty in white satin was at his side. She was laughing easily, and her hand slid into the arm of her companion.

"Quick work!" approved the Chief of Police. "These Intelligence fellows have all the luck."

And with a sigh he set off toward his home, to allay the fears of his wife.

RODGERS had been bold. Women, particularly beautiful women, frightened him. The dark beauty in white satin before whom he bowed had an alluring quality which ordinarily would have caused him to turn his back on her. But it may have been that brilliant red necklace, or perhaps a perverse intuition of his own, that drove Paul Rodgers to an unusual social gesture.

"Madame Nerval—" he began.

She stopped in her progress across the lounge, and regarded him with surprise.

"I am a complete stranger here," he continued in rapid French. "A desolate stranger, madame. And on seeing such beauty and hearing such music, I am mad enough to beg a dance with you."

Her surprise disappeared in a laugh.

"Are you drunk, monsieur?"

He shook his head.

"Drunk only with the vision of you crossing this room. Say the dance is mine, madame!"

"I couldn't resist it, after such a speech from a complete stranger," she replied. Then, as with the most natural air in the world they walked toward the ballroom, she asked:

"Who are you?"

But once again Paul Rodgers shook his head.

"It is too early in the evening for the stranger to unmask, Madame Nerval. Let this dance be with a stranger."

"And yet you know my name," she pouted.

"Who would not demand to know it, the moment that he set eyes upon you?" Rodgers smiled.



"All these pretty speeches suggest that you want something," she murmured, eying this strange red-haired man who looked so attractive in evening-dress.

"Only a dance," he said, taking her in his arms and gliding easily to the music of the waltz.

The Intelligence officer danced well. Lola Nerval was superb. The color in her cheeks heightened, and there was a sparkle in her dark eyes as she realized that this stranger was no clodhopper in the ballroom. As they circled round amidst the well-dressed throng, Rodgers let his gaze rest upon that blood-red necklace clasping the white throat.

She was suddenly conscious of his attention.

"You like it, this necklace, *hein?*"

"I think it is beautiful," he said. "Where did you get it?"

"From the neck of a skeleton, five thousand years old," she replied calmly.

"You are a brave woman."

"Why?"

"To wear what has adorned a skeleton."

She laughed easily.

"The skeleton was once a woman of fashion."

"Yes?"

"A woman who lived and loved in those cities known as Sodom and Gomorrah. My husband turned over the skeleton with a spade."

"An archæologist?"

"So you might call him. I expect, my friend, you are thinking that he is but a grave-robber."

Rodgers guided her gently toward the center of the ballroom.

"Only the ancients buried treasure with their dead," he observed. "Today we are practical enough to see that no wealth is lowered with the corpse."

"You have a gruesome mind, my friend."





"You have a gruesome ornament, Madame Nerval."

For a moment they stared into each other's eyes—a dark, challenging gaze from Lola Nerval; a shrewd gray glance from Paul Rodgers. Then the waltz dribbled to an end; slowly they sauntered from the ballroom back to the lounge.

"That was a divine dance," she murmured.

"You dance divinely," said the Red Wolf, bowing her to a seat.

She accepted a cigarette from his proffered case, her painted fingernails drooping for a moment like red talons.

"And now that you have granted a stranger the desire for a dance," said Rodgers slowly, "I am going to beg another favor."

"*Mon Dieu!* I might have guessed you

"There's something brewing," the Chief of Police had said. "These Druses are up to some devilment—I know they are!"



were being too nice. What is it now, my friend?"

"I would like to see the grave from which that necklace came."

She blew a cloud of cigarette-smoke into his face.

"Are you then pretending to be interested in archæology?"

"There is no pretense. I am intrigued."

"With Sodom and Gomorrah?"

"Who would not be?"

She flicked the ash from her cigarette.

"That should be easy enough. The Governor of Palestine, Sir Hubert Laidler, is paying a state visit to the diggings the day after tomorrow. Why not join the official party?"

"I hate official parties," protested the Intelligence officer. "And surely I could ask for no better guide than yourself."

She hesitated. This persuasive stranger seemed possessed of a pertinacity which interested her. Moreover, he was sufficiently good-looking and well-mannered to appeal to her.

"I GO back to the diggings tomorrow," she said. "They lie to the north of the Dead Sea."

"Let me take you there by car—tomorrow," he suggested boldly.

"Why not?" she murmured, half to herself.

"Yes, why not?" he repeated.

She turned her dark eyes toward him.

"Very well, my friend. But let us now cease this romantic *blague*. The time has now come to unmask. You know me as Madame Nerval. Who are you?"

His sunburned face smiled at her.

"My name is Paul Rodgers."

"Paul Rodgers!" The flush in her cheeks disappeared, and a dead pallor remained. "Then you are the man they call the Red Wolf of—"

A little evening bag which she had carried slipped to the floor with a thud. It burst open, and a mixture of ridiculous contents spilled forth. Lipstick, powder-puff, a small tube of perfume, a key and other objects. In the confusion that followed, Rodgers bent down and gathered them in his hands.

But even as he did so, the red talons descended.

"Thank you, monsieur."

Swiftly she scooped them into her bag. Then she rose. The incident had disturbed her composure.

"I must go now, Monsieur Rodgers. Thank you for an amusing half-hour. Good-by."

"*Au revoir*, Madame Nerval. Until tomorrow."

"Are you serious, then?" she asked.

"Are you afraid?" he countered.

Once again their glances challenged each other.

"Till tomorrow, then," she said with a sigh.

He bowed. Still statuesque in the white satin gown, she sauntered away.

The Intelligence officer stood with his hands clenched. As she passed out of the doorway, he sank back into a chair and unclenched his hands. A ball of paper was in one of his palms. He had concealed it from that spilled evening bag. Carefully he smoothed it out over his knee. It was scrawled with strange hieroglyphics, and signed. He read:

CH. C. H. (NO.),

Raoul Sabin.

"Queer," murmured Rodgers to himself. "A woman in a Chanel gown. A necklace five thousand years old that comes from Sodom and Gomorrah. A divine dancer who, in a bag that contains her lipstick, also carries a formula for that most deadly explosive known to science—T. N. T.!" . . . A strange mixture that required sorting . . . And who was Raoul Sabin—Raoul Sabin—Sabin?"

Like the *Leitmotif* in a musical composition, the name began to reiterate in his mind. *Raoul Sabin*. It was a theme with variations. Memories began to be stirred, like dead leaves in an autumn wind: Raoul Sabin. Paris. A boulevard café. Newsboys crying the latest noonday scandal. Dynamite. Yes, that was it! Raoul Sabin, the famous dynamiter—sentenced to transportation to Devil's Island.

With a quiet smile of triumph on his face, the Intelligence officer rose. He walked across the lounge and made his way to where the hall porter rested lethargically against a series of pigeon-holes of abandoned letters.

"I shall want a car for a long journey tomorrow," he said to the porter.

The porter blinked into action.

"Yes sir. I will get you the best motorcar in Jerusalem, sir."

Rodgers grinned and walked away.

THE motorcar purred easily over the brown plains that led toward the Dead Sea. Paul Rodgers was driving, and his slim hands controlled the wheel as easily and as firmly as if he were aboard his favorite mount, a camel.

For some time the woman in white,

Madame Nerval, who was seated at his side, had been silent. Suddenly, with a slight hesitation of her rouged lips, she asked him:

"Why did you insist upon coming with me to the diggings?"

He smiled. "Because I am curious, Madame Nerval."

She did not smile.

"Will you stop the car, please?" she commanded.

AUTOMATICALLY he did so, glancing at her in surprise. But her gaze was fixed beyond him toward the brown plain where a few stumps glistened white in the sunshine.

"There was once a woman who was curious—" began Madame Nerval.

"Naturally."

"She stood on this very spot, and gazed back upon the burning cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. For her curiosity, she was changed into a pillar of salt."

The Red Wolf narrowed his gray eyes.

"Lot's wife?"

"Lot's wife." She nodded gravely.

He laughed lightly.

"But where is the pillar of salt?" he asked, looking round at the brown plain.

"Some enterprising Levantine business man decided to dig it up and sell it as table-salt," she explained. "This particular pillar of salt was always described by guides as Lot's wife. And when hundreds of pilgrims heard of the desecration, they protested vigorously."

"Did it have any effect?"

"It merely gave the Levantine gentlemen a new idea," she continued. "In future they sold their salt as a rare and curious commodity—salt that had once been Lot's wife. And they got a much better price for it."

"You know the history of this region very well," he observed.

"My husband is on the diggings," she explained.

Rodgers eyed her cautiously.

"Am I to suppose, then, that there is a moral in the story you have just told me?" he asked.

Her face was white and set. Her dark eyes stared ahead.

"You said you were curious."

"I am, very curious," he said quietly.

Imperceptibly she shrugged her shoulders.

"Very well, then. I have warned you. Let us drive on."

And for the rest of that swift journey across the plains, she did not speak.

Very soon they reached a number of little hillocks alongside the River Jordan. It was an area known as the Wady Djarafa. Heaps of earth were being flung up by little armies of Arabs with spades. At first glance it gave the impression of a series of trenches being built for the use of a defending army.

"Sodom and Gomorrah?" asked the Red Wolf.

She nodded.

"And there, on the right, is the tent of the leader of the expedition, Father Talman," she added dryly.

Rodgers switched off the engine of the car, and gallantly helped the beautiful woman in white to descend. A slight smile of triumph crossed his face as he noticed that here, away from Jerusalem, she seemed slightly ill at ease. Much of her poise had disappeared. Nevertheless she accompanied him as he strolled toward the tent set among the rough heaps of rubble.

Father Talman came out to meet them. He was a fat, swarthy Frenchman, whose absurdity was heightened by the khaki shorts, piratical-looking belt and tennis shirt in which he was garbed. A scraggy beard hid his throat.

"*Bonjour*, Madame Nerval. You come back early."

"And I have brought with me—a friend," explained Madame Nerval. "He is curious to see the work you have done. He—insisted upon coming."

"Your work, *cher maître*, is known even in Europe," smiled Rodgers, holding out his hand. "When a few weeks ago I was talking with some friends at the British Museum, there was much,—shall I say, scientific?—envy of your brilliant discoveries. And when in Jerusalem last night I made the acquaintance of the charming Madame Nerval, I could not resist paying a personal visit to your diggings, Father Talman."

The fat and sallow Frenchman blushed with pleasure at this greeting.

"But of course, monsieur, you are very welcome," he purred. "I will myself conduct you over the ruins. It will be a pleasure, Monsieur—er—"

"Rodgers," said Madame Nerval quietly. "Monsieur Paul Rodgers."

FATHER TALMAN nodded. The name meant nothing to him. He took the Intelligence officer by the arm and began walking toward the diggings. Then he suddenly recalled the existence of the woman.

"Ah, but I am forgetting. Your husband, Madame Nerval—"

"Yes?"

She now seemed listless and indifferent.

"He is at work by the house."

"By the house!"

Despite the monotonous repetition, something like a gleam of satisfaction came into her eyes. Then she turned those lustrous dark eyes toward Paul Rodgers.

"I shall see you before you leave."

"Of course." He bowed.

FATHER TALMAN hurried him away to the heaps of rubble and stones and the delving Arabs which told of the great cities of antiquity being restored. Caressing his scraggy beard, the fat Frenchman told of his discoveries.

"I came across it by chance. A stone in the sand! You understand, *mon ami*? I began digging. In three weeks my proofs were convincing. I had discovered the long-lost cities of Sodom and Gomorrah—the cities of antiquity and great iniquity."

He chortled to himself.

"And they were destroyed by the wrath of Jehovah?" asked the Red Wolf, his gray eyes searching the men and the objects they delved.

Father Talman nodded.

"It would appear so, my friend. What probably happened was in the nature of an earthquake. And doubtless as you know, there is much oil below the surface here. An American company has recently acquired the rights. This earthquake of antiquity probably started several gushers, some of which caught fire. It was not long before the cities began to be engulfed by the blazing oil. That is the scientific explanation."

"And your own opinion?" asked Paul Rodgers politely.

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders.

"I belong to the Church, not to science."

He bent down and took up a piece of pottery that had been carefully put aside with a few other broken objects.

"Exquisite, is it not?" he asked. "It is a pity that the wrath of God, in the shape of fire and earthquake, left so little for a poor archæologist to discover. Not even the walls of the cities were left standing."

The Intelligence officer examined the pottery with interest. His life in the des-

ert, his extensive reading of Arabic literature, and the Koran in particular, had made him an authority on the ancient Middle East. The discovery was genuine.

"But did I not hear you mention to Madame Nerval something about a house?" he ventured.

"That is so," babbled the Frenchman. "We shall go there at once. A luxurious house with the remains of what must have been a garden. I think I can justifiably claim that the house is one which originally belonged to the Lot of the Bible, and in which his family dwelt while this city endured in its wickedness."

"A great claim!" said Rodgers.

"But justified. I have proofs," went on Father Talman. "I will show them to you. In this house Lot received the two angels who came to warn him of the forthcoming destruction of Sodom. It is this house which I hope to show with great pride to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Hubert Laidler, when he honors me with a visit tomorrow."

Obviously the forthcoming visit was to be a great occasion for the fat Frenchman. As he led Paul Rodgers through the heaps of rubble, his voice in sonorous fashion announced the program of the visit. The Red Wolf paid little attention to the details. His narrowed gray eyes were fixed on the Arabs, nearly all young men, who were working vigorously with spades.

They neared what had obviously been the principal gate of the city. Father Talman was prattling away vivaciously. But a single sentence growled in Arabic by a workman arrested Rodgers. It was a simple but mysterious sentence:

"The tulips are planted in the garden."

"*Aiee!*" grunted the other Arab to whom the sentence had been addressed.

RODGERS glanced swiftly at them. But they had bent over their spades and were digging vigorously.

"And here is the house of Lot," went on Father Talman. "Magnificent, is it not, my friend? Regard the solid workmanship. Thick walls, which only the wrath of Jehovah could overthrow. We have even found traces of frescoes which suggest that artists of diabolical skill existed in Sodom. But enter, Monsieur Rodgers."

The Intelligence officer passed beneath what had once been the doorway. Then he crossed a heap of rubble and found himself in the remains of a spacious



A shot rang out. . . The sullen Syrian pitched forward and began to slither down the slope.

courtyard and garden, with a lily-pond and fountain—obviously the house of a person of consequence.

"Even Lot believed in luxury," ventured Rodgers, examining the ruins with interest.

"Lot was favored by Jehovah," went

on the Frenchman. "But let me show you an altar which—"

"The tulips are planted in the garden."

Once again that phrase was uttered, this time in French. Rodgers looked up. But it was not Father Talman who had spoken. A dark, sour-faced Syrian had whispered the phrase to a woman.

"Be quiet, you fool!" was her reply.

The woman was Lola Nerval.

"Ah, permit me, Monsieur Rodgers," burst out Father Talman. "This is my chief assistant, Jean Nerval. I depend

upon him, particularly for the Arab labor."

Sullenly the Syrian bowed.

"*Bonjour, monsieur.*"

"An excellent army of workers, Monsieur Nerval," commented Red Rodgers. "They seem so well—er—disciplined."

"It is not an army," growled the Syrian in reply. "And they work because today is pay-day."

The Intelligence officer smiled pleasantly.

"Nevertheless, I must compliment you on the splendid work you have done, here particularly," he replied. "Not only have you cleared this courtyard, but you have almost made the garden bloom again."

The Syrian started. Father Talman interposed with a laugh:

"That, I am afraid, would be impossible, my friend. A garden blooming in the ruins of Sodom! No, no, that is too fantastic. Perhaps when His Excellency the Governor visits us, we may present him with a bouquet."

And Father Talman roared at what he considered an excellent joke. Even the Syrian lost his scowl for a moment, while Lola Nerval smiled gently. Only Rodgers remained serious.

Then, abruptly, he faced the little group.

"But already I have taken up too much of your time, *cher maître*. I recollect that I have urgent business in Jerusalem. I must take my leave."

"Surely you will lunch with us?" protested Father Talman.

Rodgers shook his head.

"Alas, it is impossible. But I am so enchanted with your discoveries that I will surely arrive with the Governor tomorrow. I must see them again."

Father Talman purred.

"That is indeed a compliment. For the moment then it is only *au revoir*."

THE fat Frenchman shook hands with the slim figure in white. Rodgers murmured his thanks, nodded casually to the Syrian, and walked over to Lola Nerval.

"These ruins are an admirable setting for you, Madame Nerval."

Her dark gaze rested upon him.

"Am I to consider that a compliment? Sodom was a wicked city."

"I enjoy wickedness," observed the Red Wolf.

Her dead-white face seemed strained in the cruel sunlight.

"Must you really return tomorrow?" she asked.

His gray eyes opened a little in surprise.

"Not necessarily," he replied. "But I should like to come to see you."

There was silence for a moment.

"I would advise you not to come to the diggings again," she said curtly, and walked away.

AN hour later Paul Rodgers had stopped his car at the identical place where earlier in the day Madame Nerval had commanded him to halt. It was the spot which tradition had identified as the death-place of Lot's wife.

Within the shade of the car he had squatted in Arab fashion, an incongruous figure in his white European clothes.

"Why a tulip garden in the desert?" he asked himself.

The very absurdity of the phrase had stamped itself on his mind. Tulips of the cultivated varieties were flowers unknown to the Arab. But were they? A thought, a devilish thought, entered the mind of the Red Wolf. The audacity of it took away his breath. His sunburned features set grimly.

"A garden of death!" he muttered. "And the tulips are explosives buried in the earth. Once again there are to be screams of destruction in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah."

He continued to sit there until the sun had dropped below the scarlet ruined hills. Then he stood up and began to walk. But his direction was toward the diggings of Sodom. . . .

Next day a procession of white motorcars moved toward the diggings near the Dead Sea. They carried the Governor of Palestine, a few bored A. D. C.'s and others. In the rear car of that procession sat the Chief of Police, Colonel Travers, and an inscrutable Intelligence officer.

"But why, my dear Rodgers, drag me into a picnic of this character?" protested Colonel Travers. "I loathe picnics."

"So do I," was the reply. "But this picnic may have startling consequences. I hope your camel patrols started early this morning?"

"My men can be depended upon," grunted the Colonel, glancing instinctively at his watch. "They should be in the vicinity now. But why be so mysterious, Rodgers? Can't you explain the need for bringing nearly half the police-force of Jerusalem into the desert?"

"The Governor is in danger," said the Intelligence officer briefly.

"So you have said," was the weary reply. "But what danger can there be in two dead cities?"

"Has it ever occurred to you," asked the Red Wolf, "that rebels might consider it well worth while to conquer two dead cities before moving on to living cities?"

"I don't understand what you're talking about."

"These ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are already in the hands of the rebel Druses."

"Nonsense! It's an old French padre who's in charge of the diggings."

"A figurehead," said Rodgers, "a blind man concerned only with the Bible and his scientific discoveries. All the Arabs who work for him are rebels. An army of Druses! Naturally, Father Talman does not know."

Colonel Travers began to be interested.

"Then the leader of these Druses—"

Rodgers nodded.

"We shall find him there. He will be introduced to the Governor."

"Good heavens! What's the game? Assassination?"

"Not only of the Governor," Rodgers said calmly, "but all of us."

"How? Sudden attack?"

"Something more cataclysmic than that. Dynamite!"

"Good heavens!" Colonel Travers began to look uncomfortable. He looked ahead at the other cars. "Don't you think we ought to stop this—er—"

"Picnic? Certainly not. You want to capture this leader of the rebels?"

"Naturally. But—"

"And you carried out my instructions to the letter?"

"I did, but—"

"Then there's nothing much to worry about, my dear Travers. Let us look at the scenery. Did you know that this was the spot where Lot's wife is said to have met her doom?"

"I only hope it isn't going to be the spot where we meet our doom," grunted the Chief of Police.

ON arrival at the diggings they were received by the perspiring, excited Father Talman. His beard had been combed, his garb newly laundered. The Governor, Sir Hubert Laidler, shook hands with him, and the tour of inspection began. The diggings seemed deserted. Only a few Arabs were visible.

"They asked that they might be gathered outside the diggings to welcome Your Excellency," explained Father Talman.

RODGERS gazed round for a glimpse of Lola Nerval, but she was not to be seen. Then his eyes turned toward a sandy hillock in the distance. Something white was crouched there. He smiled grimly, and whispered something to Colonel Travers. The Chief of Police gave a whispered order to one of his lieutenants, who saluted and walked away in a casual fashion.

After an examination of several *objets d'art*, discovered among the ruins, the Governor, accompanied by Father Talman, began a stroll among the heaps of rubble. Slowly they approached the house that might have been Lot's. The fat Frenchman was babbling excitedly. He indicated the doorway. The Governor stooped and entered.

"And now for the courtyard and the garden, Your Excellency," said Father Talman. "It is, I venture to think, the finest piece of archæological work in Palestine today."

The Governor stepped forward. The lily-pond and fountain attracted him at once. He moved toward them.

The A. D. C.'s followed. Behind were the Red Wolf and the Chief of Police.

Colonel Travers looked at Rodgers.

"Is this quite safe, Rodgers? Aren't we carrying this play-acting a little too far?" he whispered.

The Intelligence officer did not answer. He knew only too well that it was a gamble—a gamble with death. Beneath that garden was enough T. N. T. to blow them all sky-high. And connecting that garden was a thin copper wire that led to an electric detonator on a sandy hillock near by, where a woman in white squatted, awaiting a signal. . . .

The signal was given. A figure in the distance raised a hand. Even at that distance Rodgers recognized the man. It was the sullen-faced Syrian, Jean Nerval. And while Rodgers waited for the white flame of the explosion that in the moment of death would tell him of failure, he turned to the Chief of Police.

"That's your rebel leader, my dear Travers. He was introduced fifteen minutes ago. Better get him, now."

Nothing had happened. The Governor was still talking amiably with Father Talman, and bending over the lily-pond.

Once again that silhouetted figure

raised his hand, this time with a gesture of impatience.

"—and I am now convinced, Your Excellency, that it was in this courtyard that Lot received the two angels sent by Jehovah to warn him."

"Most interesting!" said the Governor.

They turned away from the lily-pond. It was then that the figure in the distance lost all control of himself. He stooped, picked up a rifle and leveled it at the little group in the garden. The Red Wolf drew himself up tensely. One shot into that garden of dynamite, and the lost city of Sodom would be destroyed again.

A shot rang out. But it did not come from the figure in the distance. Instead, the sullen Syrian pitched forward in the sand, and his body began to slither down the slope. And simultaneously there was a shout, and a roar from beyond the diggings. The massed Arab army, also awaiting that blinding flash in the sky, had suddenly found themselves surrounded by armed police on camels. Rifles and revolvers were pointed at them.

The Governor looked up inquiringly. He strolled toward the Intelligence officer.

"Is anything the matter, Rodgers?" he asked. "You look a little pale."

Rodgers stroked beads of perspiration from his brow with his fingers.

"I find this garden rather uncomfortable, sir," he said.

"It is a trifle hot," nodded the Governor.

Slowly they passed out of the house of Lot, walked among the rubble heaps, and toward the tent where Father Talman pressed liquid refreshment upon them. The swarthy Frenchman was still babbling of archæology, still talking of his newly found cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, still bowing and shaking hands, as the procession in the white cars left again for Jerusalem.

RODGERS found himself seated in the last car, beside the Chief of Police. "And the woman, Travers?" he asked. "What happened to her?"

Colonel Travers stared out at the burned landscape.

"I'm sorry to say, Rodgers, she was shot trying to escape. When she realized that the detonator did not work, that some one had cut the wires, she knew that the plot had failed. There was a horse waiting. She jumped into the sad-

die and galloped away. Some of our police followed.

"It's strange, you know," the Chief of Police went on. "But at that very spot which you pointed out to me this morning, the spot where Lot's wife turned and gazed back at the burning Sodom and Gomorrah, and was turned into a pillar of salt—there for some inscrutable reason Lola Nerval turned and gazed back at her pursuers. They fired. When they reached her, she was dead."

Rodgers nodded.

"Poor woman! It was her hatred of the French, and therefore of Europeans generally, that drove her to plot with that Syrian. Did you know, Travers, that her real husband is a man named Raoul Sabin?"

"I didn't. Who is Raoul Sabin? And where is he?"

"He's a prisoner on Devil's Island, the French penal settlement," replied Rodgers. "He was convicted for an attempt to dynamite the Chamber of Deputies in Paris. A former chemist, with an extensive knowledge of explosives. Haven't you heard of him?"

COLONEL TRAVERS shook his head. "I never bother myself with French criminals," he replied.

"I confirmed my suspicions by a telephone conversation with the French police at Damascus, the evening I introduced myself to Madame Nerval," went on the Intelligence officer reflectively. "I also discovered that her husband, her real husband, had sent her all the necessary formulæ for this explosive camp which would start the rebel Druses scampering through Palestine again. She hated the race that had imprisoned her husband. Then when the Syrian, Jean Nerval, offered her fame and fortune, with himself as the future conqueror of Palestine, she accepted. And the *coup* very nearly succeeded. A chance remark I heard sent me hurrying through the sands last night into that garden. It was as I suspected. I found the wires and cut them."

"And supposing they had discovered the cut wires and replaced them early this morning?" asked Travers.

Rodgers smiled.

"We should have joined those citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah who died five thousand years ago."

The Chief of Police lit a cigarette. He felt comfortably alive.

Another of these intriguing stories by Mr. Makin will appear in an early issue.