

THE SEVEN SONS OF BALLYHACK

BY

THOMAS SAWYER SPIVEY

*With Illustrations Adapted from Pictures
by the Old Masters*

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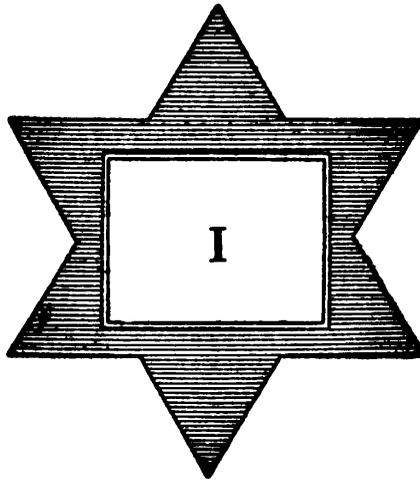
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The Seven Sons of Ballyhack



THE GENERATIONS OF BALLYHACK

THE living generations of Ballyhack, as recorded on the tablets in the great castle, were:

Imar, the King of Ballyhack, and six of his seven sons and their families; Duke Bingo, the eldest son, and his family; Duke Jingo and his family; Duke Sago and his family; Duke Marco and his family; Duke Paledo and his family, and Duke Echo, the youngest son, who had no family. It came to pass that to Imar was born a first son,

an indescribable monstrosity, a freak of nature. The aged midwife was charged with taking this deformed child beyond the mountains and away from the possessions of Imar, since which time neither had ever returned or been heard from.

Imar and his forefathers had ruled over Ballyhack for twelve centuries. All the surrounding provinces paid tribute to Ballyhack, which was so ensconced in its mountain fastness that the outside world dared not venture encroachment upon its environs. Moreover, the prowess of Imar and his sons was world-famed.

But perhaps the strangest feature concerning Imar's kingdom was that no one from the plains had ever succeeded in locating Ballyhack, notwithstanding that, with each new moon, from the plains of Agra, a mirage of the great castle is seen in the sky.

Now Bingo, who was known to his brethren as the eldest son, was a man of stupendous appetite—devouring a quarter of beef at one sitting—and of prodigious prowess; hence he was charged with enforcing tribute from the vassal provinces. It was known that he would become ruler over Ballyhack at the death of Imar.

Echo, the youngest son, was greatly beloved for his extreme beauty and manly graces. He was blue-eyed, blond, and fair to look upon.

Duke Bingo did not love Echo, as did his other brethren, he being extremely jealous of Echo's

popularity, secretly fearing the influence he wielded over the others, who entertained a wholesome respect, due to fear, of Duke Bingo, the terrible.

Now it came about in the latter part of the reign of Imar that the increasing population had forced the inhabitants of one of the outlying provinces to pass beyond the River Yeddo and people that country. Duke Bingo was sent on a diplomatic mission to fix the tribute for the use of the new territory, Imar claiming rulership over all the known world at that time.

During Duke Bingo's absence Imar fell sick and died, but before he died he called to his bedside the other sons, blessed them, and made them swear fealty and constant allegiance to their elder brother, Duke Bingo.

It must be here recounted that a curious accident had befallen the house of Imar but a short time previously.

While the sons were upon diplomatic missions, in the night an unknown horde had come, while the King was asleep in the tower, and carried away the wives and children of Ballyhack, leaving the castle in great distress and bereavement. This had hastened the death of Imar, who was a good king and fond of his children.

Upon his deathbed Imar charged the sons present each with a mission, to go in search of the kidnapped household, and to return their

wives and children to the castle of Ballyhack, where they rightfully belonged, Duke Bingo to remain as ruler of the realm. Then he turned his face to the wall and his ghost passed, and all the sons saw it and wept.

This mysterious raid upon Ballyhack could not be explained. Only a few of the household servants were left. These swore the marauders were strange men, accompanied by devils. This information had caused Imar much distress, because he had misgivings that the mysterious visitors were the offspring of the misshapen child which he had previously sent into the wilderness. He had not confided to his household the secret of the monstrosity. Imar's wife was not living, having died while Echo was yet a child.

Imar had, however, confided to Duke Bingo the grave family secret, also that, concealed in the tower, was a talisman which had been a protecting charm against evil and danger to the person of every ruler of Ballyhack for several hundred years. It was a copper amulet affixed to a strong chain to be worn about the neck. On one side of this talisman was an ancient and mysterious pentagon, with one crooked angle, while on the other was a strange scroll and the date 1288, which meant this charm had been in existence more than twelve centuries before it became the safeguard of the rulers of Ballyhack. Its origin and coming to Ballyhack were unknown,

but Imar gave the impression that he was the rightful possessor of it.

Therefore Duke Bingo, knowing he was going into a new country, begged his father that he might wear the talisman to insure his safety against unknown and unforeseen dangers, and Imar had granted this request.

Unaware of his father's death, Duke Bingo returned. He was met by a faithful eunuch, who informed him of what had transpired during his absence.

On the urgent solicitation of his elder brothers, because of their love for him, Echo had violated his oath to his dying father, and had usurped Duke Bingo's throne.

It had long been the custom at Ballyhack to kill a fatted calf upon the return of the sons from their diplomatic missions, and even upon the eve of setting out. The animal, wreathed in garlands of bright flowers, was driven into the great banqueting hall of the castle, in which were roasting pits. Here it was placed upon an altar and sacrificed according to the religious rites of the ancient family. The entrails were reserved for medicinal purposes and the carcass was roasted for feasting.

They had killed Bingo's calf, and were at that very moment banqueting upon its fat in celebration of King Echo.

When anger possessed the heart of Bingo he was a man of prompt and terrible deeds. He

was both hungry and angry. With a roar like a wild beast, he rushed into the banqueting chamber, seized the quarter of fatted calf, which had just been placed upon the oaken table, and, holding to the shank bone, he used it as a club with which to beat his brothers, and he did pommel them till they had all taken refuge under the table and he had beaten the sweet savored flesh entirely off the bones, which he now placed across his prodigious shoulders and strode out into the mountains, to cool off and think.

Arriving at a sanctified spot where Imar, his father, had erected a shrine at which he prayed for success before starting upon each of his expeditions of adventure, Bingo seated himself upon a near-by stone. Now, taking from his bosom the talisman, he examined it closely. There were the curious characters which held some mysterious meaning, perhaps prophecy, of great moment to the house of Ballyhack. Turning the talisman over, he examined the reverse side. To his utter amazement he discovered that the pentagon was no longer there, but in its stead was a double triangle so fitted together as to make a six-pointed star with one point slightly ajar, to let in the devil.

Now this mystery troubled him greatly, because the talisman had not left his possession since the moment his father had placed the strong chain about his neck.

The curious amulet possessed a power over the gnomes of the earth, and when in imminent danger of their lives the ancient kings of Ballyhack were wont to call upon these mysterious goblins for protection, and they would rise up from secret places and surround the king, protecting his person from all menacing evils.

While Bingo had no fear of his brethren, where it referred to a measure of physical strength and courage, he was distrustful of them in other ways. It now occurred to him to call upon the talisman for protection, and he said aloud: "Come forth, ye devils of the earth."

Bingo had no fear of physical things, things he could see and place his ponderous hands upon, but he was certainly shocked to see arise from behind the shrine the most wonderful creature he had ever beheld. It had a figure roughly resembling that of a human being, yet gnarled and twisted into great knots and humps of muscle, giving it the appearance of being possessed of prodigious strength.

Two short, white, glistening horns grew out from the temples, and two huge tusks, resembling those of a wild boar, curled about the corners of the mouth. The neck was thick-set and the head ran almost to a peak at the top, with two sharp-pointed ears lying flat against the sides.

The entire face and body were covered with coarse dark-brown hair. But the huge hands and

feet, in shape resembling those of a human being, had no hair upon them, but were of a blackish-brown hue, resembling tough but well-used leather.

As this ugly beast stood before him, with its slender, red tongue licking the foam-flecked tusks, and its beady little eyes looking him over critically, Bingo knew he had conjured up the terrible spirit controlled by the amulet which he held in his hand.

Espying the bones of the fatted calf lying across Bingo's knees, the creature sprang forward, seized them, broke the ends off, blew the marrow out into his chubby hands and swallowed it. Then he tore the corner off Bingo's heavy leather coat, wiped his face and hands, rolled it into a ball, and with unerring aim and dexterity sent it hurtling through the air, killing a hare a hundred yards away. Taking Bingo's great jingling spur from his buskin, he examined it critically, attempted to pick his teeth with it, then tied it in a knot and threw it so far away the eye could not see it fall to the earth.

These were feats of native strength which did not escape Bingo's understanding, for he was counted the strongest man in Ballyhack and all its provinces.

Bingo pointed to the talisman and then to the beast; the latter essayed to take it in his hands, but Bingo would only permit the beady little eyes to examine both sides. Upon seeing the unknown

characters on the piece, he exclaimed: "Druble!" and made a dive for the amulet, and a desperate struggle ensued. It was fortunate for Bingo that the talisman was secured to his person by the strong chain, for had the monster obtained possession of it he would have fled away instantly, and the proud towers of Ballyhack would have fallen.

Like two great monsters they struggled, rolling about upon the rough earth, overturning the stone shrine, and starting great boulders hurtling down the mountain side, to land in the deep valleys below. The people dwelling in the plains thought the mountains were falling.

In vain did the beast endeavor to plant his white and devilish little horns in the eyes of Bingo. At last Bingo shook himself loose, and grasping the beast by his gnarled legs he whirled him through the air and into the thick shrubbery. Then he waited.

Presently the now thoroughly whipped and humbled creature crept from the thicket, ran toward Bingo and dropped to the ground in an attitude of supplication. Bingo was master, although his clothes hung in tatters and shreds, and his face, hands, and body were bleeding in an hundred places.

Putting his finger upon the mystic inscription on the amulet Bingo said in Sanscrit:

"What do you know of Druble?"

The beast began to dance with glee, the while pointing over the mountain. Thus he reeled off a wild and grotesque bacchanalian dance, his little horned head bobbing merrily in unison with his motions.

Bingo knew there was meaning in all this motion, and he did not interrupt his gyrating conversation. The monster was of Sanscrit origin, and could be made to understand, and perhaps give some intelligent responses.

Turning the talisman over Bingo drew the gnome's attention to the six-pointed star. The devil shook his head, then, making upon the ground with the end of his finger a pentagon, he pointed over the mountain saying: "Druble!" Then he made a six-pointed star, pointed to the castle of Ballyhack, whose towers could be seen, and said with great emphasis: "Druble! Druble!" and showed his fangs in an angry snarl.

All the languages in the world could not have told Bingo a plainer story. This deformed creature was an emissary, perhaps the offspring, of Druble, the discarded first son of Imar, and Druble was ruler over that mysterious land beyond the mountains which could be seen from one small window in the highest tower of Ballyhack Castle.

Imar, in telling Bingo of his firstborn, had taken him to this window, saying:

"There is Hellagoland, the land of mystery,

from where no emissary has ever returned alive. Some curious instinct tells me that Druble, the deformed child whom I never acknowledged, is ruler over that strange country. Let no one look upon this land but yourself and your successors; should you do so it will bring to Ballyhack a world of trouble."

This devilish gnome had confirmed Imar's belief.

"We will go there," said Bingo, pointing over the mountains. Again the goblin danced with glee.

Touching the beast, Bingo again and again called him "Cuth." Which, at last, the gnome understood was to be his name. In the Sanscrit language it was equivalent to guide.

Now pointing to the castle, Bingo touched himself, and Cuth immediately took him upon his great muscular loins and went galloping up the winding way to Ballyhack Castle.

In the meantime Echo and his brothers had gone to their quarters, buckled on their armor, and had returned to the banquet hall, intending to slay Duke Bingo did he return in an angry and fighting mood.

Upon beholding Duke Bingo come galloping into their midst on the back of the devil, they fled in terror.

Jingo fell into the glowing coals of the roasting pit, and before he was extricated his armor had

become nearly red hot; consequently he lost much of his cuticle.

Sago fell into the slaughtering pit, and when his excited brothers saw him they thought he was mortally wounded and was bleeding to death.

Marco was found hanging by his armor to an iron hook, below one of the windows, used for displaying a signal lantern.

Paledo could not be found, but later it was discovered he had tobogganed it down the mountain side on the seat of his iron breeches, consequently he was resting on his face when searchers discovered him. He took his meals standing for some time thereafter.

Echo alone was unhurt. He had fled to the King's tower and barred the way to his retreat.

Seeing the roast beef which Bingo had whipped off the bones of the fatted calf lying scattered over the floor in strings and ribbons, like the refuse of a husking bee, Cuth eagerly began to gather it up and devour it; his tusks were entangled in it, and even his white little horns protruded through bunches of it.

At all these ludicrous happenings Duke Bingo laughed immoderately and uproarously, till he was almost overcome with exhaustion.

One at a time the brothers were brought in, each looking as sheepish and scared as the other. Bingo received each with a terrific roar, and Cuth, sitting at his side, gnashed his teeth and roared

also. When the culprits all stood in a row Bingo again laughed aloud. Echo, hearing the laughter, and supposing it meant the danger had passed, ventured down from the tower and was captured before he could make good his retreat.

Bingo now ordered his eunuchs to chain each of the pretender's adherents to a ring in the wall, and to rekindle the fire in the roasting pit. Apparently he was going to roast them alive one at a time, for he poked his finger into Cuth's side, pointing at them and then at the roasting pit, at which Cuth roared with glee, again indulging in his wild bacchanalian waltz. This caused the brothers to moan and groan, and beg piteously for their lives, each giving as a reason that Imar, their father, had charged him with a mission which he wished to fulfill.

Bingo then asked each one to relate the nature of his mission. In the meantime the remainder of the fatted calf was placed upon the roasting pit and its savory odors began to fill the room and tease the nostrils of the hungry men.

Jingo declared that his mission was to go beyond the River Yeddo, to the plains of Malacca, and in the guise of a nomad was to mingle with the wild bands of people there and learn if they knew aught of the housewives of Ballyhack.

Sago was to go through the gap in the eastern mountains and search for a people called the Araks, and bring report.

Marco was to climb to the peaks of the Gringo Mountains, view the surrounding world, and make report.

Paledo's mission was to travel south to the sea-coast and search for evidence of countries beyond, to which the stolen wives and children might have been conveyed.

They were to return with reports, showing they had reached these respective countries, and were to bring back good and faithful descriptions of what they saw there, to be recorded in the geographical archives of Ballyhack Castle.

Bingo declared these to be missions worthy his kingly father's good sense and judgment. Therefore if the brothers would swear to perform these assignments, and would go at once, they would be permitted to banquet upon the remainder of the fatted calf and take their departure.

Laying aside one quarter of the calf for his own use, Bingo commanded that the other be placed upon the banqueting table and that a fresh cask of old wine be tapped.

All were unchained from the wall except Echo, who, however, made no complaint. Sago was the only one with the courage to say:

"My Lord Duke, our youngest brother is chained to the wall, and you have not asked him to reveal his mission."

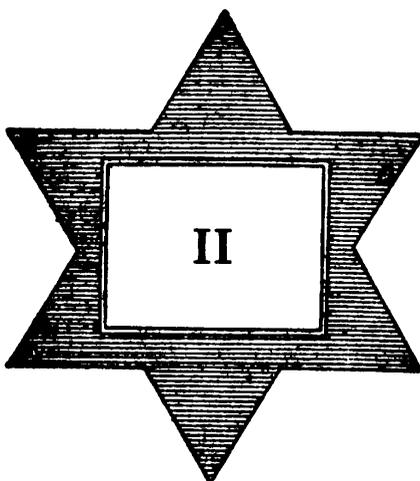
"He has no mission. He has neither wife nor children to search for. His would be but an ad-

venturous lark. I am going to make certain he does not again usurp my throne," roared Bingo. Through the feast of roast-beef and sparkling wine poor Echo remained a prisoner, faced by his terrible brother Bingo and the devil.

That very day Bingo saw to it that the brothers went on their way to foreign lands, allowing Paledo time to rivet a patch upon his iron breeches. For six days thereafter he had his eunuchs piling huge boulders against all the entrances to the Castle of Ballyhack.

Then he sent them to the plains below, saying he would leave the devil at the castle to see that they did not come back until he sent for them, and it was spread abroad that Ballyhack was guarded by the devil.

On the morning of the seventh day he strapped upon the back of Echo the quarter of roast calf, he himself mounted the loins of Cuth, and they started on their way to Hellagoland.



THE HELLAGOLITES

NOW in that time the generations of Hella-
goland and its provinces were:

Druble, first son of Imar, and king over Hella-
goland, and ruler over its provinces.

Now, Druble had seven sons, and these sons
were governors of his vassal provinces.

Brembo, Governor over the Bremites, called
the Waddlers.

Limbo, Governor over the Limites, called the
Whirlers.

Gumbo, Governor over the Gumites, called
the Benders.

Tumbo, Governor over the Tumites, called
the Nodders.

Jumbo, Governor over the Jumites, called the
Knockers.

Koko, Governor over the Kokites, called the
Rubber-necks.

Roko, Governor over the Rokites, called the Jumpers.

This title was given to Roko as a compliment, for he had no province.

These were the strangest lands in the world, and their peoples were unlike any other peoples of the earth.

The males, partaking of the father's hideous deformities, were the ugliest creatures in the world. At five years of age they were grown to manhood, which strange thing accounted for the population of Hellagoland.

On the contrary, the females were most perfect and beautiful, nevertheless they were compelled to be the wives of these homely sons of Hellagoland—and bear them children equally as ugly. The first daughters were called the beautiful daughters of Hellagoland, but there were many others equally as pretty.

The curious sons of Druble had no conception of beauty and grace, therefore they deemed themselves most unfortunate in possessing what they thought to be the homeliest women possible for wives. They adopted every conceivable means to make themselves and their offspring hideously ugly; this being in conformity with their father's wishes.

Therefore when Brembo, the eldest son of Druble, and Governor of Brem, and the ugliest of all the Hellagolites, returned from a journey

of conquest and adventure, bringing back with him a woman as wife so ugly she scared the other women into a state of dementia and the children into hysterics, he was considered by his brethren the most fortunate of men. They at once swore allegiance to him and urged him to put their aged father off the throne and he himself become king of Hellagoland and all her provinces.

Word came unto Druble that his provinces were becoming revolution incubators, and all weapons pointed toward him. But Druble was a resourceful king, and wise beyond his education and generation. Learning that Brembo was the central figure around whom these conspirators were gathering, he sent for the eldest son, saying he desired to take counsel of him on important matters of state.

Upon the arrival of Brembo at Druble's palace in Hellagoland, Druble sent for his official surgeon who, to Brembo's consternation and dismay, bound him upon a board and cut off both his hands and feet. Then the surgeon replaced these organs, but reversed in position, placing his hands where his feet should be and his feet where his hands should be. They kept Brembo confined until his hands and feet were firmly grown upon their new places, when Druble sent him back to Brem as a warning to the other conspirators.

The populace, however, hailed him as a hero, immediately adopted his deformity as a new fad,

and in a fortnight half the male population of Brem was in the hospital with hands and feet reversed in their positions. Unfortunately, however, the surgeon of Brem was unskilled and inexperienced, and got things mixed. Consequently when the citizens of Brem again got upon their feet, they not only found the new mode of locomotion awkward, but they were impeded by feet which had formerly belonged to others and which had been improperly replaced. Persons who had never before been troubled with defective feet now found attached to them pedal extremities bedecked with a sundry assortment of corns, bunions, and ingrowing nails. These promptly brought suit for damages against the surgeon, who, to escape a flood of criticism, fled to Ko, the province of the Rubber-necks. Ever afterwards the Bremites were called Waddlers. The wisdom of Druble was displayed by his order to assess the damages upon those who received the good feet for bad ones, and the suits were dismissed.

The deformity of the Rubber-necks came about in a peculiar manner also. Koko, the sixth son of King Druble, had a short, thick, squat neck which gave his head the appearance of sitting down flat upon his body. King Druble in a spirit of experimentation ordered that Koko be suspended from the ceiling for a time, to see if this would stretch his neck. That very day Druble

went on a hunting trip and remained a week, forgetting wholly that Koko was suspended in mid-air. Now it would have cost the officials their lives had they taken Koko down without orders from Druble, therefore he hung there till his father returned. When released, to the astonishment of all, his neck was a yard long.

Upon returning to his province he was greeted with much enthusiasm, as the greatest curiosity in the land, and within a fortnight the whole population of Ko was hanged in a neck-stretching contest. Hence the Rubber-necks.

The Limites were called Whirlers. It occurred in this manner: Limbo incurred King Druble's displeasure while acting as bow-bearer for the king. He had the ugly habit of constantly turning his head and looking backward. The king instructed that his spine be twisted in a manner to cause his face to be looking in the opposite direction to that in which his feet were going, thinking a day's torture like this would break Limbo of the ugly habit. Unfortunately for Limbo, the attendants were sent on another mission, not returning for several days. Consequently, when Limbo was released he was grown into a human corkscrew, and when he tried to walk he spun along like a top.

Upon his return to Lim the populace acclaimed in astonishment, and at once proclaimed him the most curious man in the world. A fortnight later

the whole population of Lim was in a whirl. Limbo's deformity had become a national fad. Hence they were named the Whirlers.

Gumbo, the third son of Druble, was a very pious man. The Gumites believed that God dwelt in the sky above. Wherever Gumbo went he was constantly looking devoutly upward. Now this was a source of annoyance to Druble, therefore he had Gumbo's head strapped in such a position he could not look down. It quickly grew in that position and the deformity became permanent. Consequently, when it was essential for Gumbo to look down he had to bend or stoop his body in the middle to bring his face in a horizontal position. This practice of stooping over became a fashion in Gum, and the constant stooping soon grew into a distinguishing deformity, giving to the Gumites the name of Benders.

The fourth son of Druble was Tumbo. He was governor over the Tumites.

Tumbo was a sleepy man, and no sooner was he seated than he would fall asleep and his head would nod back and forth in the manner of men who sit up and sleep. It looked as though he would surely fall off his seat, but he never did.

While seated at table with Druble one day this habit much annoyed the King, and he instructed the royal surgeon to perform an operation on Tumbo's neck which would make it impossible for him to nod. The surgeon inadvertently cut

the muscle which directed and controlled the movements of the head, with the result that Tumbo's head constantly nodded and rolled about in a startling manner, as though it were working on a ball and socket. For a long time those who did not know of his deformity were grabbing at his wabbling head thinking it was falling off his body.

Now Tumbo was a proud man, and, curious to relate, upon his return to his province he was so annoyed and embarrassed with the people grabbing at his head every time he moved that he ordered his own surgeon to cut the same muscles in the necks of every male in his province, and they became known throughout Hellagoland as the Noddors from Tum. In fact, it was not necessary to ask whence they came. They were long a most unhappy people, because they could not keep their heads still, sleeping or waking. When two or more of them came in close proximity they were continually knocking their heads together. Their entire mode of life had to be readjusted to meet the new condition. Quite everything had to be remodeled so the whole populace would not bump heads and bat each others brains out.

But Druble was equal to the emergency. He passed an edict that the people should grow thick shocks of hair upon their heads, to act as cushions to protect them. Bald-headed persons had to

wear artificial pads. Of course this law applied only to the Nodders.

The fifth son of Druble was Jumbo, a human monstrosity, he being eight feet tall and weighing half a ton. His offspring were like him in this respect. It required more to feed the Jumites than all the others combined, therefore as the community of Jum increased famine stared Hella-goland in the face. To be sure, Jumbo was held responsible for such a calamity, and Druble was sore puzzled to know what course to pursue to remedy the matter, when it occurred to him to make the Jumites do labor in proportion to their size and their excessive appetites. Therefore, summoning Jumbo to his palace, the King had him surrounded, and before he knew what was doing he was bound hand and foot. The royal surgeon then cut off his hands and feet and grafted on, in their stead, the feet of an ox, and this was done to all the male Jumites, and they became beasts of burden.

One unexpected result followed this seemingly cruel edict. The Jumites were fighters, and both their hands and feet became terrific weapons of offense and defense. To the amazement of Druble, too, where they were formerly carnivorous, and ate only meats, they were now compelled to confine their diet to vegetables and fruits, and they made frequent raids upon the neighboring provinces, and their fighting proclivities made

them a terror to Helligoland. They assumed the attitude of four-footed beasts, and as they stood about ruminating, their hoofs would strike together, making a curious sound. They became known as the Knockers, and the whole of Helligoland feared them because of their prodigious strength. Upon a vegetable diet they became mountains of flesh, and the clatter of their hoofs when they moved about sounded like unto gigantic castanets.

Now, the last son of Druble was Roco. He was the only son to resemble exactly and in every particular his father, and this was most strange, for Druble was shapened unlike any other human being. Roco's body was covered with a coat of coarse brown hair. His hands and feet were smooth and brown. His twinkling, little, round eyes were merry and brown. His ears were small, pointed at the top, and grew close to the sides of the head, which was smaller at the apex, resembling an inverted cocoanut. From his very infancy huge knots of muscle began to appear, and at the age of two years he was a prodigy of strength, taking his own mother astride his loins and galloping her about the country for hours, as would a horse.

Now Druble noticed this, and he foresaw great usefulness in this branch of the race. Nevertheless, he desired to embellish this son, and to make him look still more like the devil, which he him-

self resembled, he had his surgeon kill a small young heifer and a wild boar. On Roco's temples he had grafted the short, pearly horns of the heifer, and on either side of his mouth were grafted the large curling boar's tusks.

Druble himself was scared almost out of his wits the first time he looked upon his remodeled son. He thought surely he was seeing the devil, although he had commanded the adornment. He did not anticipate the tremendous change it would make. Therefore he shouted aloud: "Go away from me," and before he could recover from his great surprise Roco had seized his mother and galloped away in the wilderness, and she became his wife and bore him innumerable sons and daughters. The sons were all exactly like himself, including the horns and tusks, so much so they could not be distinguished one from the other. But curious to relate, the daughters were fair and beautiful, running wild in the woods like fawns, being frequently hunted, captured, and carried away by the other peoples, because they were such beautiful, harmless little animals. They were covered from their crown to their heels with soft, silken blond hair, and when once tamed they were as gentle as kittens. The Rokite men carried their women astride their backs, which was a strange sight.

Now Roco never returned permanently to his father's home, but ran wild in the wooded

fastness. Consequently, no province was assigned to him. He and his offspring foraged upon all the other provinces for sustenance. When captured they were made to carry the other people upon their muscular loins, which they did gleefully, but sooner or later would dump their burdens over a cliff and flee away laughing.

They became the true gnomes, and were so cunning they would steal a whole leg of fat calf from the very banquet table and get away with it. They would secrete themselves beneath the table, nip the legs of the guests, and while being searched for, they would seize the toothsome viands and flee so quickly the hungry banqueters hardly knew what had happened. They could only curse the Rokites and go hungry. The Rokites became the terror of the land, upsetting the order of things to such an extent that they were finally hunted for extermination, but no one ever heard of one being killed, and they increased like rats. It was only when some devilish thing was to be done that they were seen. Nevertheless, when they were hungry, and they most always were, a whistle would bring one bounding out of the bushes ready to take anyone for a gallop. But, woe to him who failed to give him a morsel; the next time over the cliff he went.

The language of Hellagoland was a babel of Sanscrit, each province speaking a different dialect.

In Brem it was called Hanscred.

In Lim it was called Samscredam.

In Gum it was called Sungskrit.

In Tum it was called Sanskrito.

In Jum it was called Sanscroot.

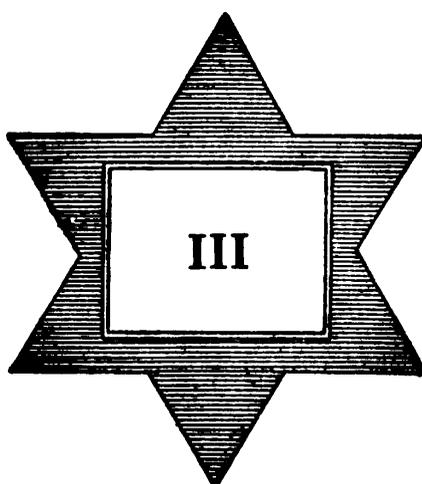
In Ko, however, the language of the Genii was spoken. It was called Procrit.

The Rokites mumbled the language of wicked demons, Paisachi.

Druble, being a king, spoke pure Sanscrit, the language of the gods; but was versed in all the others, as was Bingo.

The sons of Ballyhack spoke the dialect of men, Magadhi.

Now, this was the true state of affairs in Hella-goland when Duke Bingo and his brother arrived at its borders.



KING DRUBLE GREETES HIS BROTHER

IT came about, so Sanscrit history relates, that on the ninth day, which was the second day of the new moon, Bingo, on the back of Cuth, and driving Echo before him, arrived at the exterior border of Hellagoland. From the mountain top it was a strange sight that met their gaze as they halted. Poor Echo was glad of the rest, for he was suffering from sore feet and hunger.

Bingo was a learned man, having traveled much, and notwithstanding that no one had ever been met who could fully describe this curious country, in some manner its fame as being perverted and topsy-turvy had spread abroad. Therefore, Bingo had expected to be surprised, but not to the extent he was as Cuth pointed out and described the country.

During their travels to Hellagoland Bingo had learned sufficient of the Paisachi jargon to enable

him to converse understandingly with Cuth. The latter gnashed his teeth and cackled as he pointed out the several provinces to his new master, whom he now acknowledged willingly, because he fed him well.

Each and every province had a distinctive demarkation, although at that distance Bingo could not determine exactly the distinguishing causes. Later he learned that, the Hellagolites being born thieves and marauders, it was essential for each province to nail down every movable object, even the houses and the forests, the law being that could a man get away with his graft and get it into his own province, he escaped punishment. This system engendered a set of expert marauders who were greatly admired and honored for their ingenious methods of confiscating the goods and sundry chattels of the neighboring provinces. These past masters of thievery were wont to give sumptuous banquets, after which occasions they would tell of how they had filched everything on the table. Bingo subsequently nearly choked to death on a piece of cocoanut shell while attending one of these surreptitious feasts, inadvertently letting it slip into his epiglottis while laughing heartily at a native joke, for they were funny peoples.

It afterward recurred to Bingo that each province in its general contour, as seen from the mountain, resembled the form or deformity of the Hellagolites dwelling therein. It was explained

to him that Druble, in his wisdom and spirit of justice, decreed that this should be so, to prevent neighboring clans from encroaching upon the land of others. It was a common occurrence for a complaint to come into the court of Druble that the Bremites were on the neck of the Kokites, or that the Kokites were planting onions upon the back of the Gumites, meaning they were encroaching upon this portion of the provincial anatomy. Such offenses were severely punished too, for while Druble was a lenient king he took a special pride in protecting the anatomical contour of the several provinces, because they were formed in his honor, to portray the distinguished deformities which he in his wisdom had conferred upon his subjects.

A neighbor might do almost as he pleased with the legs of the Kokite province and go unpunished, but the moment he put foot upon its distinguishing feature,—its long neck,—he had insulted the King and was immediately haled before him, and so with the other provinces. The first offense cost a foot, the second a hand, and the third cost a head, which in every case was paraded through the provinces on a pole by the court crier as a warning to others.

As Bingo sat upon the mountain resting and contemplating the strange scene, two Rokites galloped past bearing astride their loins their pretty blond wives. Upon seeing Bingo, the wives in-

sisted upon coming closer to view the strangers. Their big blue eyes smiled at Echo, but looked in wonderment at Bingo's huge proportion and ugly countenance. This angered Bingo, and he ordered Cuth to again take him upon his loins and proceed toward the palace of Druble.

Toward evening they arrived at the environs of Druble's palace, and here their troubles began. Druble knew they were coming and had sent a carrier to welcome them, but it was the strangest welcome Bingo had ever encountered. He had no means of knowing that Druble was a practical joker.

Supposing all he had to do was to walk right to the palace, which was but a stone's throw away, Bingo started, only to find that the more he walked the farther away from the palace he was. This strange phenomenon did not strike him until he had gone some distance and was feeling tired, for Cuth had suddenly deserted him.

Feeling the need of companionship to share his wonder at all the strange things about him, he had compassion on his brother Echo, took half his burden and confided in him. Together they pondered the matter of the fleeing palace, when suddenly it appeared quite near, and they heard Druble laughing boisterously. No matter what the method was by which the palace had been brought near them, then snatched away, it was a dangerous thing to trifle with or play jokes upon

Bingo of Ballyhack. They were standing in the forest which seemed to be the park about the palace. Here Bingo drew his knife from his belt, saying, "I'll just cut a good, healthy club and give this Druble a sound beating when I do get to him." With this he thrust his knife into a young sapling, intending to make it into a club, when to their utter dismay the tree screamed like a woman, and all the other trees commenced to make noises of a thousand kinds and to strike at them with their limbs. Fruits were spattered upon them, and one huge cocoanut cracked Bingo on the head with a resounding thwack. In imminent danger of their lives, Bingo and Echo attempted to flee, but with each step they began to sink into a quagmire until they were wading to their armpits in a thick, black slime of an odor to sicken a dog.

Again they heard Druble laughing, as though he would split his sides.

Now angered to the very marrow, Bingo pushed forward toward what appeared to be a huge log on the surface of the pool of slime, intending to sit upon it and rest. He had no sooner touched the log than it slid from under him, throwing him flat upon his back, and he would have smothered in the mud had not Echo rescued him. As he dug the mud and filth from his mouth, nostrils, eyes, and ears, he cursed deep and loud. Suddenly they realized the end of that log was

contemplating them with a pair of beady, black eyes. It was the head of a huge alligator, and they were surrounded by hundreds of them.

It had not occurred to Bingo to call upon the amulet for protection, but now in his extremity he snatched it out of his bosom and exclaimed:

“I call upon all the powers of this ancient talisman to come to our aid and protection.”

Instantly the Rokites came galloping from all directions, and with sharpened poles they jabbed and beat the monsters away. Vaulting from the back of one alligator to another, the Rokites finally had the brutes jammed side by side, forming a living pontoon over which two husky Rokites galloped, with Bingo and Echo upon their backs.

This startling occurrence brought Druble to a realization that he was trifling with the wrong man, and he laughed no more.

In a few moments Bingo and Echo were deposited upon the front of Druble's floating palace. As that kingly individual, resembling the devil, appeared in the doorway, Bingo handed him a resounding smack on his sleek jaw that sent him sprawling upon the floor. Druble ran on all fours toward another door as Bingo and Echo now entered. To their consternation the walls came toward them so quickly that they were caught between them and the breath was being squeezed out of their bodies. Druble peeped in and

laughed. Every time Bingo began to swear, whatever power was behind those walls would suddenly give a little extra twist, causing the irate Bingo to give vent to the funniest bunches of profanity anyone ever heard. Despite their imminent danger of being crushed, even Echo had to laugh. This pleased Druble and, Echo being the smaller, the pressure was relaxed sufficiently to permit his extrication without releasing Bingo. Nevertheless, it gave Bingo an opportunity to get his hand into his blouse and upon the talisman, and he demanded that the walls be withdrawn. They retreated so quickly that Druble was stood on his head, and before he could recover himself Bingo had administered to him a prodigious kick that flattened him out against the wall. Now Druble was old, and he couldn't stand much of this sort of game, therefore he immediately changed his tactics and attempted to conciliate Bingo by telling him it was only his way of welcoming his brothers.

Well, the outcome of it was that when Bingo had cooled off and recovered his good nature, he had compassion for his deformed, elder brother, and they soon became fast friends, and the three sons of Imar sat before a quarter of fatted calf and each was drinking the health of the others in a calabash as big as an ordinary washtub. Consequently, all went under the table. Now it happened that Bingo was blessed with a tremendous

snore. The natives, hearing the unusual sound, flocked about the palace to learn its meaning. Bingo slept on, and his sonorous, nasal blasts shook the walls of the palace till the wondering natives were afraid to enter. In ever-increasing numbers they stood in a circle around the palace, waiting for Druble to make his appearance.

Now Bingo had not removed the black ooze from his countenance, but had mopped it about during the heat of the banquet until he was a sight to make the gods weep. He had often admired the shadow of his huge carcass when he had observed it cast upon the ground, but, mirrors not having been invented in that age, he never had looked upon his own face, and had judged his own by the handsomer faces of his brothers; therefore he did not know how ugly he naturally was. The additional facial decorations done in stucco from Druble's muck-bed now gave him an appearance so *distingué* as not usually seen in Hellagoland.

He and Druble awoke at the same time, when Bingo raising his huge body on his elbow and viewing his deformed brother for a moment, said:

"By the gods, brother, if I were as ugly as you I would go out there in that quagmire and drown myself."

Druble's little eyes twinkled as he replied:

"Huh! I have nothing on you. It's a mighty ugly man that can wallow about among my pet alligators and frighten them out of their appe-

tites. You have nothing coming to you, Brother Bingo. In Hellagoland ugliness is at a premium, but I shall warn my subjects in advance that you are no ugly god, but simply my ugly brother come to pay me a visit."

Bingo laughed, and they all crawled from beneath the table and stretched themselves. Hearing the noise of the rabble without, they went to the door. Of all the sights that ever met Bingo's eyes this was the limit. There was an ample delegation from all the provinces.

"Do you permit your lunatics and invalids to make use of your private grounds?" asked Bingo, in surprise.

"These are neither invalids nor lunatics, they are my loyal subjects," exclaimed Druble indignantly. "It is not their fault they are not as ugly as you are; they have tried hard enough to be."

There were the Bremites, walking with their arms. Some were gesticulating wildly with their hands on the ends of their long legs, as their conversation grew animated. Others had their hands clasped back of their heads, a most startling attitude of rest.

The Kokites, with their long, rubbery necks, had a great advantage over the others in point of observation. The many peculiar turns and twists they put into their necks while talking reminded one much of the reptilian movements of an ostrich

head bobbing back and forth. They seemed to be rubbering into the faces of all the others.

The Limites puzzled Bingo most of all. Suddenly here and there spinning bodies would gyrate from point to point, bumping into and upsetting the Bremites, and screwing back to make apologies, for they were polite people.

The Gumites seemed to take up more room and be more in the way than any of the others. This was of course due to their peculiar stooping posture. Half of them had cauliflowered ears, blackened eyes, and twisted noses before this hour of excitement was over, from the constant bumpings they received.

The great clumsy Jumites were satisfied to fringe about the crowd and crack their hard, little hoofs together, like cattle fighting the flies from their backs. No doubt they wished they had tails also, for the mosquitoes bred in Druble's alligator swamp were as big as Christmas turkeys.

The Tumites, with their "ball-and-socket" heads, were frights. They kept Bingo nervous.

The most startling feature of the scene was that the populace, in an unusual spirit of fairness on such occasions, had arranged themselves in the order of their ability to see, that all might have a fair opportunity to view these unusual visitors.

They came in this order:

The people from Brem, called Waddlers.

The people from Gum, called the Benders.

The people from Tum, called the Noddors.

The people from Lim, called the Whirlers.

The people from Ko, called the Rubber-necks.

The people from Jum, called the Knockers.

Now the Rokites, who were the little devils with horns, were dodging and dancing here and there and everywhere. They were called the Jumpers.

It was no wonder Bingo exclaimed as he did; and, to be perfectly fair to Druble, he did not blame his people for lapsing into a silence of awe and admiration upon getting a full view of Bingo. To them he was the acme of comeliness, with his torn and tattered clothing, his matted hair, and mud-encased features. Druble knew what his people were thinking, and he roared with laughter. There was a limit even to ugliness.

One of the strange and inexplicable things in Hellagoland was that Brembo, Jumbo, Limbo, Tumbo, Gumbo, and Koko each had a daughter fair and beautiful. They, with one younger sister, were on this occasion clad in gauzy mantillas, and were dancing at one side of the viewing place, gracefully waving long streamers of silken threads. They were surrounded by many of the soft-haired little female Rokites, the latter dancing and bobbing about like so many little pet animals. They would come up close, touch the hand



THE BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS OF HELLAGOLAND

or body of the young maidens, then dance away in glee.

These beautiful daughters of Hellagoland were at once enamoured of the handsome Echo, giving him all attention. Echo finally came to where they were assembled. Instantly one after another the wild little fawns sprang upon his back, which meant they all wanted to ride him as they were accustomed to doing with their own males. Finally Echo grasped the spirit of the romp, and went galloping about the grounds with sometimes one, sometimes two and even three, of the soft little dears piled up on his strong back.

Jealous of his attentions to the fawns, the daughter of Brembo sprang upon Echo's back, and he gave her a ride, and the same to each of the others. This caused the fawns to suddenly dart away with plaintive little cries of distress.

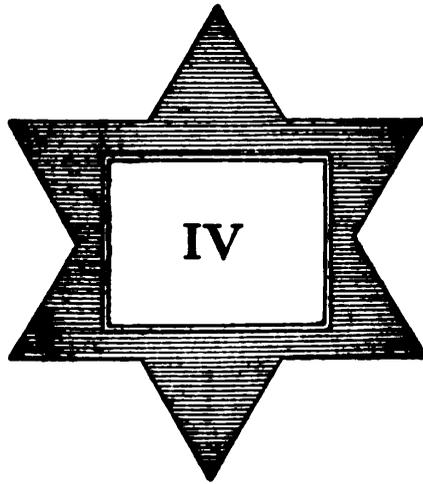
This familiarity with Echo on the part of the beautiful daughters was the beginning of calamity to the Hellagolites, as shall later be seen.

Now, Bingo, being wearied of it all, moved his maul-like fist and cried:

"For the love of our sainted ancestors, take them away, Druble, ere I lose my dinner."

Druble ordered his people to disperse, whereupon they went straightway and bedaubed their faces with the black slime and mud of Druble's alligator pen, believing this to be after the fashion

of the people from Ballyhack; and it became a fad in Hellagoland. They were close to nature, therefore imitated instantly any unusual thing they saw others doing. This same spirit is the origin of all fashions and fads. It is the rudiment of the monkey origin of the human race.



BINGO BECOMES CHIEF ADVISER TO DRUBLE

NOW, Druble was growing old and needed the assistance of a younger man. He was wise in his day and generation, and could make the laws to govern his people, but he lacked the energy of youth to enforce or execute his laws. Bingo therefore was a blessing in a homely disguise. His face was his fortune. His roar was better than a standing army. When he vented his displeasure the people fled before him as they would from an enraged bull.

He had come in direct contact with all but Jumbo, and had defeated them with shameful ease, therefore he was their master without a struggle. But his conceit received a hard bump one day when he called Jumbo an ugly brute, and ordered him off the palace grounds. He overlooked Jumbo's size and the tortoise-shell combs attached to his pedal extremities, consequently

Jumbo gave him a cursing in the Sanscroot dialect that sounded like a shower of broken glass, and then waded into Bingo and began to carve the language into his countenance with his hoofs. He had succeeded in embellishing Bingo with a goodly portion of his autobiography when Druble came upon the scene.

“What the ——” began Bingo, when Druble interrupted him by asking:

“What are you doing, giving Jumbo drawing lessons? Your face looks like the drainage system in the province of Gum. You should be tied together till one eats the other. Mr. Bingo, allow me to present to you his Excellency, the Governor of Jum, Mr. Jumbo.” But Bingo was so mortified he went slowly into the palace. Jumbo was no fool, however. He knew this dejection meant deep thought of revenge, therefore he returned to his province with a heavy heart, to await Bingo’s further assault upon him. When this encounter did occur, it came near rupturing Hellagoland.

Druble leaned heavily upon Bingo’s judgment in matters of state, and this began to be noticed by the Hellagolites, who had hitherto enjoyed a freedom which was practically self-government. Druble was a fun-loving, good-natured, liberal ruler, and as long as his subjects were happy, prosperous, and contented he left them alone. They had a covenant which forbade, too, great federal

encroachment upon their provincial rights. Druble had always respected this and had made but a limited number of laws as king.

The sons, representing all the people, sat once a year as a congress, Druble presiding on these occasions. It was then all complaints were presented and general laws were made. There was so little to do when Congress met that the meeting drifted into a period of feasting and social degeneracy.

Upon Congress assembling in Druble's palace after Bingo's arrival, Druble announced that in future Bingo's title would be "assistant to the King." Now this made all the brothers look askance at Bingo. But Bingo was a diplomat when occasion required it, therefore in order to deceive Congress and the people, and to conceal the true nature of his appointment and its duties, he straightway went to Druble's private chamber and brought forth the King's rusty old sandals, which he never wore in the palace, and these he strapped upon the King's ugly black feet. Druble understood, and, to still further carry out the deception and vent his effervescent fun, he put the flat sandal against Bingo's cheek and pushed him over flat upon his back, on the floor, which caused an uproar of laughter, to Bingo's chagrin. Nevertheless, he stood the gaff, but with a mental reservation which boded evil to Hellagoland.

That night he planted in Druble's mind the

seeds of a galloping nightmare, by suggesting to the King that he could quietly bring about a more centralized form of government, which would give him absolute control over the people, without asking Congress to make new laws or the provinces to vote upon an amendment to their constitution. Moreover, it would keep the King secretly advised as to what the people were doing throughout Hellagoland.

Druble was eager to hear the plan.

"It is easy," said Bingo. "Offer to-morrow a simple little resolution to clothe you with the power to appoint commissioners to conduct all the affairs of state, slipping in a joker giving these commissioners full power to formulate such rules for their purposes as they may deem proper and wise. This will obviate further necessity for making laws. You can select your own commissioners and dictate to them what you want done, and there you are. You have your people in the hollow of your hand. You may squeeze them to a pulp if they do not behave to suit you. Your constitution defines what you can and cannot do. Your power to make rules will annul this defect. Do you see?"

"Yes, I do see. It means sooner or later a revolution," replied Druble.

"Oh, you must provide against that by organizing a standing army and a secret service system," said Bingo.

"What do I want a secret service system for?" demanded Druble.

"To watch for that revolution," replied Bingo.

"The people wouldn't stand for it," said Druble.

"That is where the fine work of the commission comes in—such things will come under the secret rules for the wise and proper conduct of the national affairs. The people will know nothing about it," was Bingo's answer.

"I have forebodings, but we will try it," reluctantly said Druble, and Bingo's heart knocked the dust off his outer garment.

"When they pass this resolution, giving you full and unlimited powers, I will help you to work out the plan in detail," said Bingo.

The next day all the Congressmen ate and drank till part of them were under the table. Only a bare quorum was present, and these, flushed with good cheer, passed without a dissenting vote everything offered, and Bingo thought he would have to call in Cuth to carry the amendments, riders, and jokers piled onto the original bill.

After it was all over, Bingo laughed so heartily that he split his coat up the back, for these extras had no direct association with the original bill.

And this was the beginning of all such crooked legislation, and the whole world lost its freedom. It was the first legislative trust, in the guise of a

congress of the common people, to deceive and abuse the masses.

When Congress adjourned, and they had all sobered up, Jumbo took Bingo to one side and asked:

“Did you put the old man up to this?”

Bingo put himself on guard and defiantly replied: “Yes.”

“I’ve a good notion to kick you in the face with all four of my feet at one time,” angrily declared Jumbo.

“Why, I was about to suggest to King Druble to make you commissioner for the province of Jum,” said Bingo, in apparent surprise.

“I’m Governor of Jum, now,” said Jumbo.

“Well, but under this commission system there will be no necessity for a governor. A governor must be elected, and for a fixed period. A commissioner will be appointed for any period the rules may say. Just see what a saving will be made for the people by doing away with these expensive elections. The same may be said of Congress. It need only meet when called in special session. The commission will take off its hands all its arduous work, and you Congressmen may remain at home and practice your professions profitably, instead of wasting time here; at the same time you can be drawing your salaries.”

“Then what use is there for a Congress at all?” asked Jumbo. “Why not also save that expense?”

“Very little; only to occasionally widen the scope of the commission system,” replied Bingo, calmly.

“Not a province will agree to it,” declared Jumbo.

“They have already agreed to it,” replied Bingo, with a sneer, and he left Jumbo standing clicking his hoofs in rage.

In order to send the statesmen home in a good humor, Bingo persuaded Druble to give a state banquet that night, and this memorable function came near disrupting the union. It started in this manner:

Brembo and Jumbo were seated side by side. Opposite them sat Druble, with Bingo on his right and Echo on his left. Echo was not getting his portion of beef. Brembo took compassion on him, admiring his modesty, and handed him a piece of the toothsome viand from his own portion. Bingo snatched the proffered meat and appropriated it to himself.

Everything has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. Brembo instantly reached his long leg across the table and, grasping Bingo’s proboscis between his thumb and fingers, he gave it such a tweak he left it turned upside down on Bingo’s already ugly face.

Crazy with pain and anger, Bingo grasped the edge of the huge oaken table and turned it over, with all its contents, upon the guests. The red

wine and rich gravy bespattered the diners to such an extent that when they arose they could be distinguished only by their deformities. But they all came up gurgling and fighting.

“Get off my neck!” yelled Koko, as Limbo got a corkscrew hold upon the rubber neck. Poor Tumbo’s head kept up a steady thumping, as it bumped into everything that came his way, although he was peacefully inclined.

Bingo kept steadily at his job, keeping his antagonists away with the table. Had Jumbo been possessed of hands there would have been a fight worth going miles to see. As it was, Brembo, with his extraordinary reach, was the only one able to carry the fight to Bingo. Grabbing Bingo by the top of his shocky head, he tore a whole handful of coarse hair out of the scalp of the son of Ballyhack, and tried to ram it down his throat, thereby nearly losing two of his fingers between Bingo’s teeth, which came down upon them like the beak of a snapping-turtle.

At this juncture Koko aimed a wine tub at Bingo’s head, which caught the mighty warrior in a manner to settle over his head like a helmet, so blinding him he was at a great disadvantage. They all now piled on top of him, and had not Druble raised his mace and commanded them to desist, in the name of the law, poor Bingo would have been food for the alligators, the grave of all the dead of Hellagoland.

This fight was memorable in the annals of Hellagoland, because it was the beginning of all their dissensions and national troubles. The new order of things had practically precipitated a revolution at once. Druble was the central government; the newly appointed commissioner, Bingo, was Druble, and the people, through their representatives, were walloping Bingo. Therefore it was to all intents and purposes an uprising of the people against the central government.

Nevertheless, Bingo was by no means abashed. He went right along establishing Druble's government by commission on a firm footing. But now he was further inspired by a desire for revenge. He was badly in need of assistance and, believing the blood of Ballyhack to be thicker than the serum of Hellagoland, he took his brother Echo into his confidence and had him appointed Commissioner of the Interior, Transportation, and Mails, while he himself assumed all the other functions of the government. Now Echo was not as brainless as Bingo thought. He had some irons of his own toasting on the grid. Therefore he accepted his multitudinous appointment with avidity, then went behind the woodshed and laughed.

Bingo decided, for Druble, that it was essential to organize a standing army, in order to anticipate internal dissensions and insurrections. Of course it would not do to tell to the people the

reason for an army. It was sufficient that Druble had heard rumors of invasions by unknown peoples from over the mountains, and Bingo worked the words "patriotism" and "heroism" to a frazzle. Half the people of Helligoland sat up all night the first time they heard the invasion story, expecting the invaders to come in that evening.

Echo was wise to the schemes of his big, ugly brother, and very frankly told Druble that, should he adopt the radical changes he proposed, Helligoland would have no picture on the map in short order, and they began maneuvering to counteract Bingo's dangerous work. Nevertheless, they were both fearful of arousing Bingo's terrible temper. They would have to temporize with him until the excitement quieted down and the recent acts of Congress were forgotten.

Bingo had obtained an order from Druble to do certain unnamed things, "for the good of the nation," and upon this order Commissioner Bingo promulgated an order that the personal appearance of the people must be improved immediately. He gave orders to the royal surgeon to reinstate the Bremites to their former normal condition, replacing hands and feet upon the parts where they naturally belonged. He ordered that some surgical operation should be devised to shorten the necks of the Kokites, and to stop the heads of the Tumites from gyrating, and to straighten

up the Gumites, unwind the Limites, and by some means procure hands at least for the Jumites. After issuing these orders he and Druble went on a long hunting trip.

Bingo was a slick politician. Before going away he had selected certain individuals from each province and made a secret pact by which they were to quietly instill into the minds of the more ignorant an advocacy of the new "national policy" and teach them how to clack. Therefore Echo, who had been sent into all the provinces on a tour of inspection, was greatly surprised to find a large number in each province openly clacking "patriotism," a "standing army," "commissions" for this, that, and the other purpose, and finally he listened to a philippic advocating a "military government" for all the provinces, a long list of salaried sycophants, and a system of burdensome taxation to keep up a wholly useless and ornamental establishment, foreign to the functions of good government. This was the origin of the political machine.

Hitherto the Hellagolites had been, comparatively, an economic and peace-loving people. Their wants were few and simple and easily supplied. Druble himself lived a simple life as an example. When his subjects came to see him on business or pleasure they brought presents of such things as they could spare from their own bins or larders; Druble furnished the wine. This

was about the limit of taxation, and it was no burden. But now a regular tax was to be levied, and every man must pay a certain percentage of his earnings into a hitherto unknown treasury. Bingo swore it was only right that every man should pay for the privilege of living. His machine needed plenty of grease, not poultry, pies, and pickles.

To his amazement Echo found the people so prone to take up any new fad that was suggested in a fortnight all the provinces were advocating their own slavery—a form of slavery which in subsequent ages involved all the peoples of the whole earth: one half the world slaving that the other half may loll in official idleness and professional luxury, and under the cloak of a federal protection. The producers are mortgaged to the non-producing classes by innumerable forms of public and private debts.

Echo found that even some of the sons of Druble were bending to the fallacious arguments of Bingo's secret agents, therefore he recognized the danger of his openly opposing the new and revolutionary fad. Cautiously feeling the public pulse, he finally felt safe in confiding in Brembo and Jumbo, and the three set about counteracting and discrediting the new movement. They won Roko to their cause, which was of great importance because of his independent position.

They did not deem it wise to oppose the order

of Commissioner Bingo regarding the proposed physical changes, notwithstanding it involved the people in great hardship and suffering; but Echo, Brembo, and Jumbo got to the surgeons in good form, and when Bingo and Druble returned to view the results of the changes which they had ordered made, they experienced a new sensation.

It came about in this way:

Bingo had commissioned his underlings to raise a regiment of men to be known as "Druble's guards," drawing upon each province for a certain quota. This soldiery was to be maintained in idleness by a system of internal revenue, for they had nothing to fight excepting the alligators and one another.

This new order met with little enthusiasm, for Brembo did not want his children and their children educated in the arts of warfare; neither did the others. Moreover, the people themselves did not want to leave their own provinces. But Echo had a deeper motive in secretly thwarting the commissioner's orders. He was thinking of the future uses to which a fighting force might be put, therefore he himself instructed the surgeons.

Bingo had left instructions that upon their return from the hunt the "Druble Guards" were to be assembled in the palace grounds for an exhibition drill for the edification of King Druble and his subjects, who had never before seen an army.

Accordingly, as Druble and his retinue ap-

proached the royal palace they beheld, lined up in due form, some two hundred remodeled Hellagolites. Bingo, as chief of the army, stood admiring the results of his acumen and mentally calculated the glories of the future. To put the army through their paces he then shouted:

“Attention!”

The army endeavored to obey.

“Right face!”

It was impossible, as no two heads would remain in the same position.

“Mark time!”

Bingo leaned forward, staring at the curious motions of the feet, then exclaimed:

“St. Vitus forgive us! What is that, Druble, a buck-dance?”

Druble was holding his sides.

“March!” was Bingo’s last order.

Of all the strange things Bingo had ever seen happen, that which followed his command to march capped the climax. No two men went in the same direction. To begin with, the Bremites had not had time to learn the use of their feet in their normal positions, and at once, in their excitement, sought their old attitude. Consequently, it looked as if half the army was turning hand-springs. No two feet had been replaced alike, part of them pointing the toes backward, part sidewise, some two ways and some had one hand and one foot upon their ankles; and as they

had received strict orders to walk upon their feet, when they attempted to march they went seven ways for Sunday, and looked like an army of fiddler-crabs.

Now as to the Kokites,—the Rubber-necks,—the surgeons, instead of cutting out a section of neck, had cut off the heads of the Kokites, tied a knot in the necks, and replaced the heads. It was discovered after it was too late that, in properly replacing the heads to correspond with their relations to the anatomical parts, no two heads occupied the same relative position, hence some, like the Whirlers, had their faces turned in the opposite direction to which they intended to go. In fact, their noses pointed to all parts of the compass, with their feet opposed.

Now, if Bingo had commanded, "All waltz," the Limites, the Whirlers, would have surely complied with the order perfectly, for they still had the old habit on, and at the order to march they all went whirling off on a different tangent.

The Gumites,—the Benders,—having been straightened up, and their heads left in the old position, from time to time assumed the stoop, and it looked as though they were greeting their King and his chief commissioner with profuse bowings. Bingo, in his vanity of high office, made the mistake of believing this, and returned the bow. This angered the Gumites, because they

thought Bingo was imitating them in their hour of distress.

The only thing the surgeons could do to correct the noddings of the Tumites was to put deep collars of palm bark upon them, with the result that the continual rolling about of the heads so bruised and irritated the skin it looked as though they had all been mortally wounded and were bleeding to death.

To enhance the confusion, all these curious soldiers had been alternated in the line-up, and, as they were armed with every conceivable kind of weapon, when Bingo gave his famous order to march, the scene which followed is indescribable. Moreover, as they began bumping one another they grew angry, and in less time than it takes to tell it they were at it, hammer and tongs, swinging their weapons upon one another with resounding whacks, and before they could be stopped half of them lay prone upon the greensward of the palace grounds. The others, in their confusion and excitement, marched around in circles. It took the remainder of the day to march them out of the square, when they had to be led off one at a time.

To Druble this all seemed so funny he laughed till he rolled down the palace steps, putting a lump on his cocconut so large one could not tell which was the head and which was the lump.

Bingo was speechless. Never in his whole life

before had he seen such a quick and decisive battle. His standing army had before his very eyes annihilated and defeated itself, and was now in a wild and disorderly retreat. Here was a new set of infantry tactics to give a soldier a nightmare.

The day's experience put the standing army out of commission, for nearly all had received serious wounds. This battle royal, however, gave the people a taste of blood, and from a peace-loving people they were suddenly converted into quarrelsome neighbors and began fighting one another. Therefore Bingo could congratulate himself upon having engendered in the people a warlike spirit, which might be turned to advantage later, did they not in the meantime annihilate themselves.

Now the Rokites, having no province of their own, could not be drawn upon by order of Commissioner Bingo. They were the most available, too, as fighting men, because of their uniform contour, their great agility, and their superior strength. Echo grasped the situation at once, and anticipating that Bingo would also recognize this and devise some means of drafting them into a national army, he called Roko to him and said:

“Roko, how would you like to bring a thousand of your picked men and go on a journey of adventure with me?”

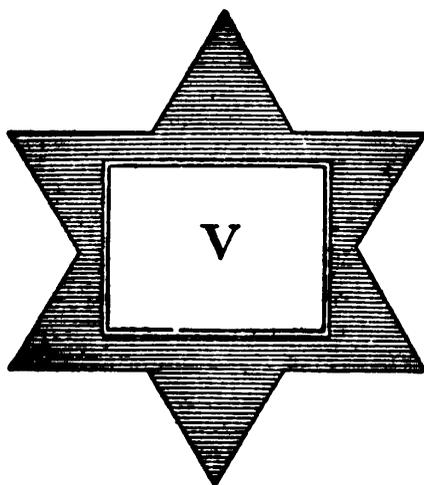
Roko at once expressed himself as in favor of the project.

Echo cautioned him not to say a word about it to anyone, and to have his people gather enough skins to make two thousand rawhide slings and have his men secretly become proficient in their uses.

Then he went to Letreka, the beautiful daughter of Brembo, who loved him greatly, and confided unto her his plans to secure the talisman which was in the possession of Bingo, take with him five of the beautiful daughters of Hellagoland, to be wives to himself and his brethren, and one thousand Rokites, and return to the land of Ballyhack, where he would be king and she should be his queen.

This pleased Letreka greatly, and she went straightway to prepare the other daughters for flight. Each also chose one of the gentle little Rokite fawns for her personal servant, and then they waited impatiently for the hour of departure to arrive.

Echo had sent for Cuth and secretly instructed him to steal that night from Bingo's neck the talisman. Then he went to the palace, where Druble was giving a banquet to the governors of his provinces.



CUTH STEALS THE TALISMAN FROM BINGO

AT the banquet given by Druble were his seven sons, including Roko, and Bingo and Echo. Bingo had found it not very easy to force upon the people his drastic ideas of a paternal government; Druble was content, and cared not. Nevertheless, he was desirous of having his people dwell in peace and amity, as they hitherto had dwelt.

The outcome of Bingo's attempt to establish a standing army had had a disastrous effect upon the morals of the people. Where they formerly settled their disputes by friendly arbitration, they now settled them by fair means or foul, usually resorting to personal combat. This had engendered numerous feuds, the participants of which had determined to exterminate one another.

Demagogue that he was, Bingo pointed to this

internal strife as the reason for a military establishment, ignoring the underlying fact that he himself had instilled into the minds of the people this fighting spirit. Druble, too, was wise enough to see the principle on which Bingo was working, being to first create, at any cost to public morals and welfare, a false public sentiment in favor of that which he desired to accomplish. This was destructive of national honor, and men began to cheat one another, and devise means to confiscate the other's property and evade the law; consequently, the necessity for new laws grew with these new conditions. This stimulation of a national activity to which the Hellagolites were not accustomed was on the verge of having a setback, for it looked dangerous to Druble and his sons, who unanimously opposed it, therefore bringing to bear his strongest battery of sophistry.

He accused Jumbo of being a "quagwoggle," meaning he was slinging mud, because Jumbo had said every move made by Bingo was increasing the budget. Bingo declared that national pride should increase the civil list, and a large budget indicated national prosperity, also prevented the people from taking on personal luxuries hurtful to them.

"You are advocating a prosperous government, not a prosperous nation," hotly declared Jumbo.

“The government you advocate would compete with the very power that created it.”

“Well, isn’t the government the nation?” demanded Bingo.

“Not on your life, not under our form of confederation,” retorted Jumbo. “The government you propose is a monarchy. While we call our father king by courtesy, he long ago gave to us the right to govern ourselves; and he, being our father, has the God-given right to continue as our patriarchal ruler, but no other centralized form of government can claim any such God-given right. We are the blood and bone of our father, without being slaves; but were we to assume that we are the blood and sinew of an artificial pater-nity, we would lose the freedom to which every man is entitled when his father resigns his guardianship over him; and we would be helpless slaves of a fictitious assumption of power over our persons. That is exactly why you seek to establish a large standing army, to enable you to enforce against our people the unreasonable things which you cannot obtain by moral suasion, because the people believe them to be unnecessary and unjust burdens. You now admit there is no external reasons for an army; you purposely engender conditions to threaten internal revolution to justify your naturally unreasonable demands. Now you understand what I mean when I say the government which you propose would be opposed

to our nation. A government produces nothing; in fact, may become so burdensome to the nation it bankrupts it. It can become a luxury a nation cannot afford. A government, especially one controlled by evil and designing men, is opposed to the nation every day it exists, and the Sanscrit history in our father's library proves there never existed a centralized form of government that did not unnecessarily encroach upon the rights of the people, and heap abuses and burdens upon them which were wholly inconsistent with the original design of government by constitution. I call upon my brethren to witness, I am opposed to your extravagant policies, because the cost of them all must be drawn from the people, and they do not get an adequate return for their sacrifices."

Bingo was boiling with indignation that a beast of burden, with four hoofs—for no hands had been found for the Jumites—should thus assert the right of free speech. However, Bingo reflected that the Sanscroot alphabet was still visible on his face, carved there on one other occasion of dispute by those same hoofs; therefore he refrained from physical culture exercises to show his anger. As usual, he resorted to his stock of sophistry to endeavor to stir the passion of his hearers.

"Huh! then you do not approve of cultivating a 'national pride'?" he sneered.

"A nation's pride is not reflected through its

government by constitution whose functions are clearly defined by law. It cannot legitimately assume to speak or act for the nation upon its own initiative. That would give it a spirit which it does not legally possess, a kingly and patriarchal presumption. National pride is reflected only through the morals, education, tastes, and comforts at large of the people. When a government by constitution becomes arrogant and proud, it becomes a controlling machine and overrides the constitution and the people. Assuming to be the mouthpiece of the people, it utters in the name of the masses only those things which it desires said. To perpetuate the machine in power over the people it becomes a sham and a false pretense. This breeds revolution, and sooner or later such a government must fall."

At this piece of oratory on the part of Jumbo his brethren loudly applauded, showing Bingo he was without support.

It looked as though the banquet would break up in the usual row, and it probably would, had not a funny thing occurred to draw their minds away from this earnest argumentation. A hungry Rokite swished from the table a quarter of fat calf and went galloping away, with the rich gravy so hot streaming down his back that it made him yell with every jump. Druble, who never reproved a Rokite, laughed uproariously, as did the others. Even Bingo had to smile. This restored

good humor, and soon thereafter all was merriment, and the rich, red wine flowed like a blushing river.

Bingo was stumped. He was now in exactly the mood to get good and sippy drunk, and this he proceeded to do. It was a curious thing that when thus drinking he wholly forgot he had upon his person the all-powerful talisman. This was due to two things. He did not want to betray his possession of it, and his knowledge of its powers was limited.

Seeing his deplorable plight, Roko and Echo plied him with many calabashes of the red stuff, finally rejoicing to see him roll comfortably under the table, where he had some soggy company. Now it so happened that Cuth had curled up beneath the table, and, despite the tantalizing odors of brown roast-beef and rich red wine, he never stirred, even when the huge carcass of ugly Bingo the terrible came rolling under the table.

When Bingo passed the last calabash, he having exceeded his capacity, Druble looked wisely at Roko, and Roko glanced cautiously toward Echo, who was himself too blear-eyed to count the number left sitting at the table.

Three fresh calabashes were brought in as a night-cap. Previously into Bingo's gourd, and now into Echo's, there had been squeezed a handful of the fragrant google-berries, which assured the partakers sleeping for three days. When

Echo's head dropped, indicating that he too had a through ticket for the Land of Nod, Roko looked beneath the table, which was steadily vibrating with the sonorous snores of sundry drunken sleepers, with Bingo's basso-profundo roaring above all the others.

Presently Cuth crawled out of the twisted mass of besotted humanity, tightly clasping in his chubby hand the chain upon which was the mysterious talisman. Handing it to Druble, he looked beseechingly at the remains of the banquet. With a wave of his hand Druble signified he could fall to, which Cuth did with a will, betokening a healthy appetite born of good digestion.

"In the end, even the devil gets his due," said Druble, as he examined the charm. He knew better than Bingo its powers and uses and the numerous purposes to which it could be put. In subsequent ages that circle of metal has been counterfeited by all peoples of the earth billions of times, and after receiving the blessing of the King, these duplicates became instruments of bribery and were distributed to favored subjects for "services rendered," finally becoming fiat money. Its power endures as long as the King lives. Long and earnestly Druble pondered over the huge coin, then he said unto his son Roko:

"This is the only piece of its kind in the world. As long as it remains undivided he who possesses it will own the earth and all there is in it. As it

becomes divided, so will the world be divided. My father Imar possessed it, and he claimed ownership over the whole earth. I, his eldest son, now possess it, and I too shall be king, and the world shall pay tribute to me. Take five hundred of your one thousand sling-men, strap a quarter of beef upon each of their backs, to sustain them while marching, and go to the Castle of Ballyhack, enter it and bring to me here all its rich and ancient furnishings; they are mine. I am too old to go to Ballyhack; Ballyhack must come to me. Bring, also, unharmed, my other four brothers. Do this right well, Roko, and you shall have Brembo's beautiful daughter, Letreka, for wife. I will make you governor over Ballyhack, and you and your people shall also have a province, like my other sons. Cuth will bring here the remaining five hundred sling-men, and they shall be my guardsmen."

And this inspiration was the beginning of modern kings. By the powers of that strange talisman the devil took possession of the earth and all there is in it. He became virtuous by his own laws. As his peoples grew, he divided his lands and gave unto certain of his sons and his grandsons beautiful wives of his own choosing, and placed them in possession of their own provinces as lord dukes. These lord dukes were true and faithful unto the tradition of their distinguished ancestry. The devil, who fell from heaven, was

due to reign upon the earth, therefore his claim to being a heaven-born king is the truth, and his entailed rule over the world is legitimate. All other kings are base imitations, and their talismans are counterfeits and without virtue; hence, under their rule their people are subject to great hardships and unhappiness, and they themselves assume to be of better clay than those whom they rule.

Now Druble never denied being the devil upon earth, therefore none could accuse him of false pretenses, when he assumed to be the rightful king. He always said that even those who declared him to be the representative of evil sent to him for punishment those charged with evil; hence he assumed that the power to punish must necessarily be enforced by law, and he was the law. If he were the acme of evil, he must know the different grades of evil better than those who assumed to be good, therefore he could administer justice more evenly than the naturally goody-goodies who were prejudiced.

He now sent all of his sons to their respective provinces, with a kingly order, etched on pigskin, to saw the winter wood and forget it.

Bingo and Echo he had conveyed to a gap in the mountains, placed a quarter of roast-beef and two gourds full of wine by their side, and left them to awaken. In a conspicuous spot, where

they would see it the moment they opened their eyes, he had posted the following notice:

REWARD

King Druble will pay a handsome reward to any of his subjects who will apprehend the ungrateful wretches Bingo and Echo, who last night unmercifully beat up his sons, then decamped with a quarter of fat calf and a quantity of rare old wine.

Their heads only will be necessary. They will be hanged, drawn, and quartered should they ever again be caught loafing around in Hellagoland.

It is not difficult to imagine the utter astonishment of Bingo and his brother Echo upon regaining consciousness. Misery loves company, therefore Bingo said: "Echo, I have been mean toward you, but I am glad you are with me now in this hour of distress."

"Thank you for your generosity," replied Echo, "but I wish I were in a position to decline it."

"Where in Hellagoland are we, do you think?" said Bingo.

"It is evident we are not anywhere in Hellago-

land, from the specious wording of that death-notice there," replied Echo.

"But I don't recollect any fight, do you?" said Bingo, and suddenly he rose to his feet with a roar which must have shaken the family clock off Druble's palace mantel. It was all plain now. He who had attempted to bite the devil was himself badly bitten. In his great sorrow he wept, for he had discovered that his treasured talisman was gone.

"I am as hungry as a Rokite," said Echo. "Do you suppose this stuff is loaded?" and he smelled of both the beef and the wine. Nevertheless, they fell to and ate and drank thereof, and felt stimulated and refreshed.

"What are we going to do?" asked Echo.

"Let's go to the top of the mountain and see where we are," suggested Bingo. They climbed the steep mountain side, only to discover they were isolated from their own land, Ballyhack, because they were banished to the opposite side of Hellagoland.

It would take them many months to circumambulate Druble's country, and it would mean certain death for them to be caught upon his domain. Bingo felt afraid in the absence of the protecting talisman. It was a serious piece of business. Echo looked carefully over the plain below, and said:

"Brother Bingo, I have an idea. Right there

at the foot of this mountain is the province of Brem. Letreka, Brembo's daughter, is promised to become my wife. Now, I propose to go down there, hide in the shrubs and wait till I can tell her of our plight. She will at least keep us supplied with food, and perchance some plan may be devised by which we may cross over Druble's domains and return to our own country unmolested."

"Why not persuade Letreka to go with us into the wilderness and hold her as hostage, and thus compel Brembo to beseech of the King that we be permitted to return unhurt to Ballyhack?" suggested Bingo.

"If she will come with us willingly, I approve of this ruse," replied Echo.

They cautiously stole down through the ravines, hiding here, and crawling upon their stomachs like serpents in exposed places, for the Hellagolites had keen eyes. Finally they reached the foot of the mountain, exhausted and sorely discouraged.

While resting in the shade of a great bamboo they were startled to see Letreka, accompanied by many beautiful young maidens,—for all of the maidens of Hellagoland were beautiful,—disporting themselves in a pool of clear water at the mouth of a cavern. Creeping near unto the edge of the pool Echo called softly, "Letreka!" The beautiful maiden ceased her splashing and bade

her companions to also be quiet; then she listened attentively.

“Letreka !” again whispered Echo, “it is I, Echo ! I am near you; I can see your beautiful form. I love you; I could not remain away from you. I would have important speech with you. Will you come to me?”

Letreka motioned the maidens to conceal themselves in the cavern, and she herself placed a ponderous lily leaf, with its huge blossom dangling upon its stem, about her to conceal her beautiful self, for she was virtuous, therefore modest, and went toward where she had heard Echo’s voice.

Brembo had not yet returned from Druble’s palace, therefore she was unaware of what had transpired there the night before. She lay in Echo’s arms, and eagerly listened to all he said. She even wept copiously upon his relating their banishment and the terrible hardships they had encountered coming down the rugged mountain side, that he might again behold her. He could not go away without bidding her good-by, and now they were hungry and sore and knew not whither to turn. They would surely die of hunger and thirst did they attempt to pass around Druble’s domains, and his cruel and surely unjust edict made it death for them to cross his lands.

Letreka wept and clung to Echo. Bending over her fair head, he caressed the rosy cheeks, kissed

the cherry lips over and over again, and whispered:

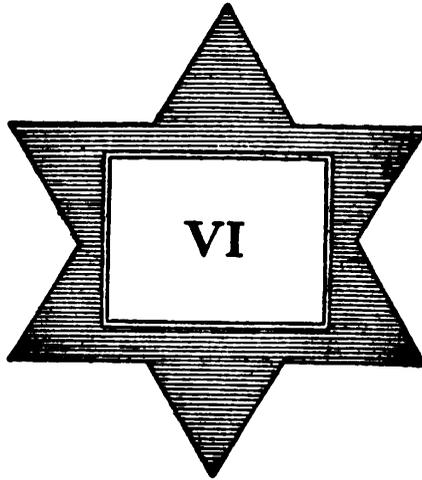
“Letreka, over there is the land of Ballyhack. It is fair and full of love and life. There are high towers upon its great castle, seven of them. One of these towers is my abiding place. It has every luxury and every joy any woman could want. You, Letreka, come with me as my wife. Let us steal across this land, go to the land of Ballyhack, and raise a few little kings of our own. There is land, a plenty for all.”

Letreka raised her fair head from Echo’s bosom, kissed him passionately, and said:

“Yes, my Echo, I will go anywhere you lead. I will now provide us with food and drink to sustain us on our journey. May I take my two dear little fawns?”

“Yes. Bingo will carry them, and I will carry you, my bundle of beauty. What a joy to give me courage in times of danger!”

And it came to pass that Echo, with his bride upon his back, and Bingo with two soft little Rokites tucked under his flail-like arms, succeeded in evading the Hellagolites, and reaching the mountains toward that side upon which Ballyhack was situated.



ECHO FOUNDS A NAMELESS NATION

BINGO and Echo, with their precious cargo, were resting upon the mossy banks of a mountain stream eating cold roast-beef and whortleberries, and sparingly partaking of wine because the calabash sounded hollow, when they heard mysterious sounds. It was not unlike the approach of many mountain goats, nevertheless discretion suggested concealment until certainty prevailed. Therefore Echo and the ladies, for they were ladies, though economically clad, betook themselves to the sheltering shrubbery, while Bingo crawled out upon a projecting stone and looked below. What he saw caused him to gasp. Five hundred Rokites, all carrying rawhide slings and a bag of one-pound boulders, were passing not one hundred feet below.

He quickly concluded they were marching upon Ballyhack. The devil had sent an army to attack

Ballyhack. He wept in suppressed rage as he conceived the ravages of this motley and heathen horde upon his ancestral home, while he lay here half naked from need of new clothes, and half starved from want of ample food for his huge and ever hungry carcass. He mentally kicked himself that he had ever thought of going to investigate Hellagoland. He had had the worst of it from the time he left his half happy home. His father's prophecy was being fulfilled.

Waiting till the Rokites had passed, he crept back to Echo and told him of what he had seen. Echo, too, was moved, because he had promised his fair Letreka she should occupy with him one of the spare towers of Ballyhack, and no doubt the lady had set her heart upon enjoying its advertised luxuries. Nevertheless, upon being told that it was essential for them to change their course of travel and seek solace elsewhere, she generously said:

“Lead where you will, my Echo, but leave me not.” The gentle fawns only pressed their heads up against the sides of the cumbersome old hulk to make Bingo swear, in every dialect of the Sanscrit language, that he would hammer on the gates of hell for admission did the fairies say so.

With an advertised reward upon their heads, Bingo and Echo did not deem it wise to come in contact with a living Hellagolite, for they did not know that the jocular Druble had cautioned

a faithful servant, who could not read, to post the notice without allowing any other person to see it, and that Bingo having destroyed it upon reading it, the fugitives had effaced all evidence of such an offer on Druble's part. Had Bingo known otherwise he might have come upon the rear of the Rokites, frightened them with his mighty roar, and saved the slaughter of many innocent little devils.

In times past Imar had dedicated a neutral strip of territory, running along the east side of the Yeddo River, between that stream and the towering mountains, upon which no one should reside. The cattle which strayed upon this land belonged to Ballyhack Castle. Now, none of the sons of Ballyhack knew this but Bingo, who had each season surreptitiously sown the land with seeds to produce the rich grass which coaxed the cattle to cross the river. This inviting land lay directly below them, and was a refuge. Approaching it, Bingo said:

"Come, I will take you to safety, and unto a land of milk and honey," and he took upon his back the fawns, and Echo took Letreka.

At nightfall they came upon the fairest, sweetest land they had ever beheld. Streams of crystal clear water were gurgling and splashing here and there, the trees were laden with luscious, ripe fruits, and lying about in the sweet scented grasses were fat cattle, goats, and lambs.

The two weary little fawns ran eagerly and, throwing themselves upon their backs beside the goats, began to suck their milk until fully satisfied, when they curled up in the warm grass and went soundly to sleep.

"I am King of Ballyhack. I pronounce you man and wife," said Bingo to Echo and Letreka. "Remain here till I return." He disappeared, leaving them alone, excepting for the Cherubim sleeping like two kittens near by.

The glory of Adam and Eve was in their liberty, the freedom from restraints, and the criticisms of a lot of meddling neighbors.

After a restful night, filled with the joy of living and loving, Echo awoke feeling like a king with a new domain, while his limited subjects, consisting of the sweet new wife and two fairies, assured him of light labors and much time to court his household pleasures. Just now he was of a domestic turn of mind, therefore he began to erect a temporary shelter for his household. Again the little monkey-doodle Rokites filled their hungry stomachs with goat's milk and brought a gourd full of the warm, life-renewing fluid to their sweet mistress, who was grateful.

And thus for twenty days they lived a life of pleasure, love, and easy comfort. But then the terrible Bingo returned, with his head in a sling, telling of the terrific siege of the Rokites against the Castle of Ballyhack, and of their defeat.

The four brothers, Jingo, Sago, Marco, and Paledo, had returned from their several missions, had heard of the impending attack by the Rokites, and had secretly loaded the towers with huge stones, taken their households up into the towers, closed all the gateways, and patiently awaited the onslaught of the enemy.

The Rokites crept up within sling-range and let go a shower of five hundred one-pound boulders against the side of the castle; not an answering sound was heard, therefore the Rokites assumed the castle was empty and all they had to do was to open the doors, walk in, and carry away the rich furnishings for which Druble had sent them. But no sooner were they in range of the battlements than a cloudburst of half-ton paving blocks rattled down upon them, with the tragic result that a hundred or more unsuspecting Rokites were flattened out like fancy floor-rugs upon the surrounding court. The remainder, never having before encountered genuine slaughter, scampered for the low timber and made a beeline for Hellagoland. Roko, realizing he was up against it, made an equally ungraceful retreat.

It so happened that Bingo had secretly made his way to Ballyhack Castle to see what was about to happen there. He had arrived just at the crucial moment when the shower of street building materials from the towers had routed the Rokites. In the excitement of the moment

he exposed himself, to give Roko the horse-laugh. Imagine his consternation when four and five-pound boulders began to spatter about him, bursting like bombs, the fragments tearing holes in his scalp and playing a tattoo upon every part of his huge anatomy. Besides this, he was being artistically decorated with arrows by expert Ballyhack bowmen.

At first he did not understand it, but grasping the situation he rolled down the side of the mountain like a cask of beer. At the bottom of the declivity he bumped into one of his faithful old eunuchs, who told him his brothers had been advised that he, Bingo, was leading the Rokites against Ballyhack, and that there was a reward for his head posted on the walls of Ballyhack Castle.

Now this angered Bingo immensely, but he was no longer Bingo the terrible. He had had some sense battered into him, and he was not going to butt his head against the walls of his own castle until he ascertained how many tons of boulders were stored on top of its ancient battlements. He was weary and badly in need of a vacation, therefore he retraced his steps to the spot where he had left Echo and his happy family. They greeted him cheerfully and begged of him to take a good long lay-off there, where no one would molest them, and they would build a city such as could not be taken by siege.

"I am king," said Bingo. "I will take unto myself the eldest Rokite woman to be my wife. Surely a cross between the blood of Bingo and the devil will conquer the world." And it came to pass that Echo's wife and Bingo's wife bore children unto them, and a nation was begun on the neutral lands. It prospered greatly. Sons and daughters were born in rapid succession. Their castles were built upon the inaccessible hill-tops, with entrances from below, and overlooking the beautiful Yeddo River.

Bingo was old, therefore he yielded to Echo the right to be ruler of the land, and Letreka made a good and famous queen of a nation without a name.

The land was extensive and rich, and Echo invited the peoples of the near-by provinces to come and settle upon his lands, but required of all who accepted to swear allegiance to him as king, and to pay into his treasury certain tithes. It came to pass that in time Echo had a great and strong nation, and his generous nature caused all the provinces of Ballyhack to remain in friendly relations with him. Therein was a great secret, which none but Echo and his now aged brother Bingo knew.

Bingo in his old age had much to cheer him, for Echo and his charming household were good and kind to him. They had always loved the little fawn whom he had taken for wife. They

concealed her downy body with clothing, and, strange to relate, her children were fair and beautiful, having smooth skins as well. Bingo loved his children, of which he had five. It was no uncommon thing to see old Bingo, with his wife and five children, ranging from babies to half-grown daughters, stacked upon his shoulders and back, giving them a ride. The girls, even in the second generation, retained the habit of riding on the backs of the men of the family.

At last Bingo realized his life's desire. King Echo had consented to his training an army. He and his brother Bingo signed a pact by which Bingo should attempt to recapture Ballyhack Castle. In the event of success Bingo for the rest of his days was to be King of Ballyhack and Echo was to be king of the neutral land, which had no name, and they were to divide equally the tributes paid by the surrounding provinces. This was the first great offensive and defensive alliance for pillage and profit.

Bingo drew upon all the provinces for fighting men, each province to benefit, in the event of having a successful campaign, by having its quota of tribute reduced.

But when Hellagoland was mentioned, both Bingo and Echo would exclaim, "Not for me! No cut-rate excursions to Hellagoland will be run this season." Their children ran screaming to the bosom of their mothers at the very sound of

the name, and yet the big blue eyes of the two original Hellagolite women would look appealingly at Bingo and Echo on these occasions. The blood of Roko was still in their veins, and their hearts had never fully relinquished a blood affection for their kind. It was good that their children were kind to them, and their husbands equally so, else they would have been extremely unhappy.

At last the time of trial of conquest was come. Bingo had five thousand well-trained soldiers—one thousand men skilled in the use of spears; two thousand expert bowmen; one thousand skilled sling-men, the sling having come into common use; five hundred men skilled in the use of the halberd and battering-ram, and to prepare materials for battle and fill in the ranks as they were reduced in battle; and five hundred portage men.

Bingo's army was the largest body of trained soldiers of that period, and when the several provinces began to foot up the cost, they found their great grandchildren would have to receive rebates in tributes to repay the amounts, but they themselves must now produce it.

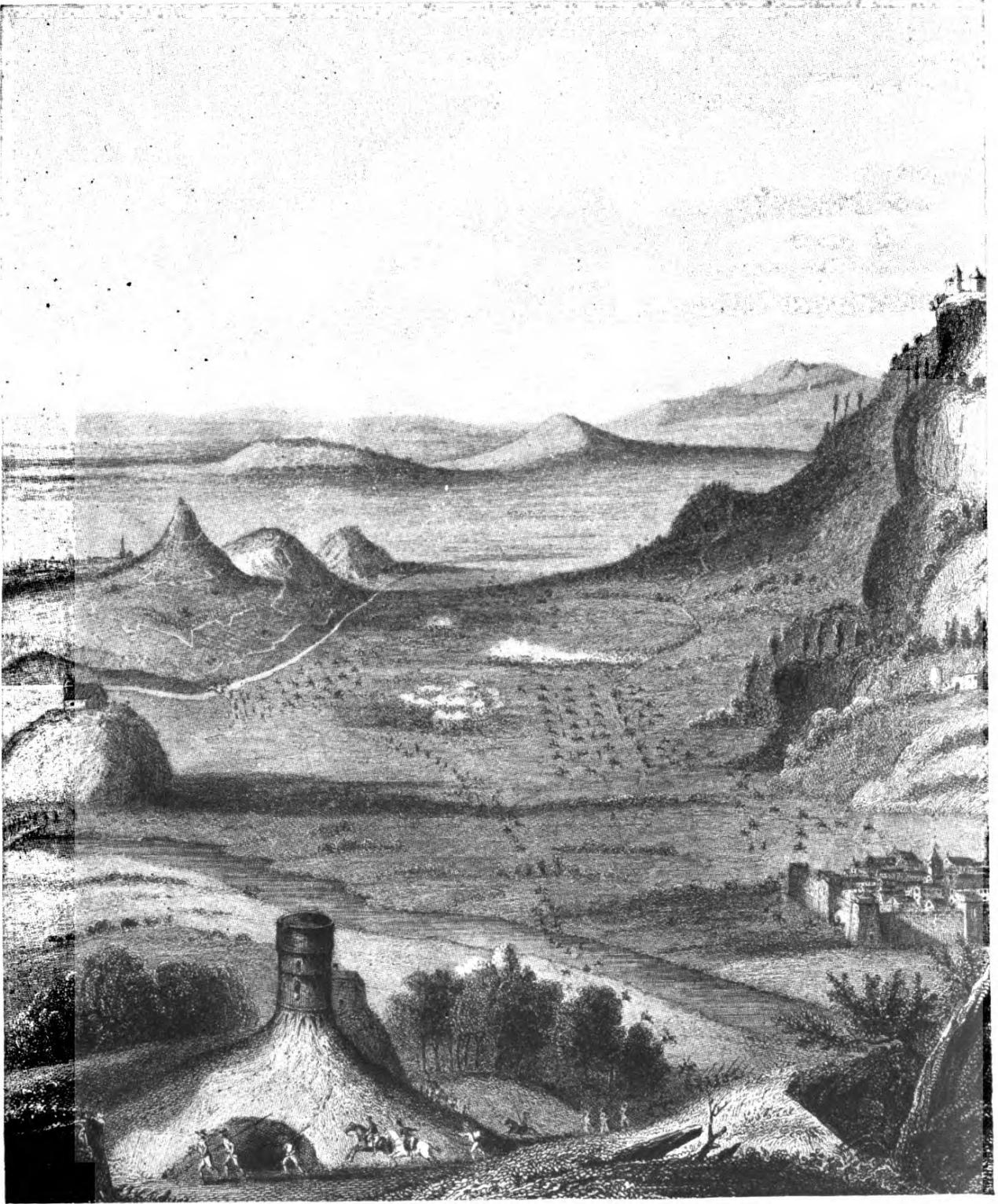
Bingo had assembled his army behind a mountain, in order to conceal the fact that he was ready to march against Ballyhack Castle. He had placed over the soldiers of each province a captain from the same province, merely as a compliment. The army was resting on its arms until

Bingo went over the mountain to bid his family farewell.

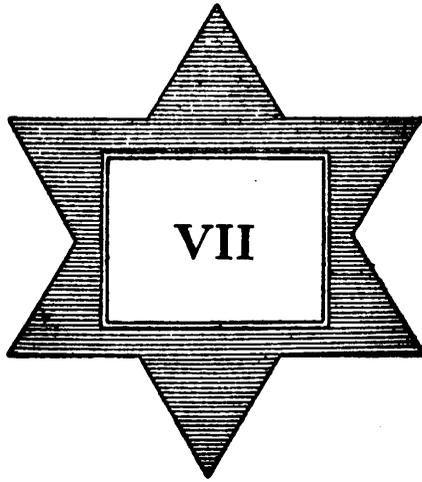
Imagine his surprise and chagrin, upon his return, to find not a soldier remaining, while he could see from the mountain far out upon the plain in beautiful order as many squads of men as there were provinces who had sent a proportional part of the grand army.

This blow nearly killed Bingo, and he sat upon the mountain side and alternately cursed and wept. But when each province sent a polite message thanking him for having trained for it a standing army, and saying, further, they would in future pay tribute neither to Echo nor Ballyhack, he was beside himself with rage, and to the consternation of his own household he disappeared into the mountains and they mourned him as dead.

Shortly thereafter a general alliance between all the provinces which had hitherto paid tribute to Ballyhack was formed, and a picked army was sent to loot Ballyhack Castle. The four brothers residing there, seeing the uselessness of resistance, fled, and everything movable was carried away. A great central capitol was built upon the plain by the alliance, and the rich and antique furnishings of Ballyhack Castle were placed therein. A grim sarcasm marked the walls: "An art loan from Ballyhack."



BINGO'S ARMY DESERTS HIM



BINGO MAKES A TREATY WITH DRUBLE

THE perseverance and energy of Bingo was phenomenal. Failure only seemed to spur him on to greater effort and exertion; moreover, he determined to quit cursing, gnashing his teeth,—all of which were badly chipped from this untoward habit,—and stop talking so much. He was getting wise in his old age. Experience was a good schoolmaster and had beaten poor old Bingo nearly to death trying to get some common sense into his hard pate.

When he left the unnamed land of Echo he had a very definite purpose in mind. He believed the provinces, feeling elated over their treachery to him, would attempt to annihilate the whole Ballyhack race, which conjecture proved only too true, in that they had caused all the brothers but Echo, to flee the country. Echo had always been generous and kind to them, and for this reason they

did not molest him; nevertheless, they ceased to pay him tribute.

Druble was a very aged man, yet was as wise, energetic, and full of fun as ever; therefore, when one of his guardsmen brought him a message from Bingo, saying he was alone, craved his clemency, and desired an audience, he rolled over upon the floor of his palace in a paroxysm of laughter; then, to the utter amazement of his subjects, he sprang upon the back of Cuth and went out to meet his brother.

Bingo could hardly believe his own eyes. No wonder his brothers, in that long time ago, had fled in terror upon seeing him gallop into the banquet chamber on the back of the devil. He would have fled himself at the sight he now beheld but that his legs refused to carry him.

Two accompanying Rokites spread palm leaves upon the ground, and Cuth deposited his royal burden thereon. Druble never cracked a smile, but sat for some moments blinking his eyes. The Rokites began to prepare for another paroxysm, for they placed more leaves upon the ground.

Finally Druble said to Bingo: "Why don't you say something, fool?"

"I would like to speak with you privately," replied Bingo humbly.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Druble. "Not talking for publication so much now, eh? I commend the improvement, but for the sake of our sainted

father, where did you get that paunch?" and he gave Bingo such a kick in his abdomen that he rolled over like a beer barrel, at which Druble broke loose, laughing as of old.

There had been a time when this act of hospitality would have set Druble to counting his teeth, and perhaps his ribs. It was a try-out, and Bingo's self-control caused Druble to refrain from further merriment, and offer to his brother a more dignified welcome. He knew Bingo had many good traits, and that most of his faults were due to an overzealous and impetuous nature associated with an insatiable desire to make himself conspicuous. It was a pleasant surprise to him to note the wonderful change that had taken place. Moreover, age had really added a dignity to Bingo, which well befitted him. He was by no means a dead one.

With no further ceremony they both mounted Rokites and were conducted to Hellagoland palace, where Druble ordered viands and wine placed before them.

"You are welcome, Brother Bingo, no matter what your mission may be," said Druble.

"Then I drink to your good health and congratulate you on your good condition so late in life," responded Bingo, raising with both hands the enormous calabash of wine.

"I have found the elixir of youth," said Druble, laughing.

"Pray tell me what it is, if it will bring back youth to an old hulk like mine," said Bingo.

"Laugh much, and bear no man a grudge," said Druble.

"Ha! I am doomed to old age. It is the grudge I bear against others that brings me here," declared Bingo, with a groan.

"What is the trouble, Bingo?"

"Ballyhack Castle is looted and our brothers are driven into exile," said Bingo.

"By whom?" asked Druble.

"By the people of the provinces over which our father ruled. They not only refuse to pay further tribute, but they actually found the way to Ballyhack Castle and despoiled it of its ancient furnishings," and Bingo groaned aloud.

"And they rightfully belong to me," mused Druble. "But, come, tell me the whole story."

Then Bingo told all that had happened from the very moment he and Echo awoke to see Druble's death-warrant staring them in the face.

Druble chuckled as he listened to this tale of woe, and finally he burst out laughing, and exclaimed:

"Bingo, you have robbed yourself of the credit I had given you of growing naturally dignified in your old age. Your sober and austere bearing is born of disappointment and a desire for revenge. You have twice been the victim of a chronic exaggerated ego, and now you expect me

to take all the risks of helping you out of your difficulties. Where do I come in?" and Druble surveyed Bingo as though trying to fathom his deepest ruminations.

"I will tell you the truth, Druble; I have been happier since dwelling in peace with Echo while he established his nameless nation than I have ever been before. We have no laws. Everything adjusts itself to the general welfare of the community, and we have every possible comfort to make us happy, our wives and children love us and ——"

"Our wives and children!" exclaimed Druble in surprise. "Why, have you a wife and children?"

"Yes, I took as wife one of the Rokite women accompanying Letreka, and I have five beautiful children. I ride them all upon my back at one time," said Bingo, with laudable pride.

"And you, the brother who aspired to be king of Ballyhack in my stead, married my granddaughter?" mused Druble, and he shook his head as though believing he misunderstood the matter.

"Why not?" demanded Bingo.

"I supposed you held a blood grudge against me and mine, that's why," said Druble.

"On the contrary, I forget all my troubles when in the heart of my family, and were it not that I am trying to insure a permanent future for my posterity I would never leave them," declared Bingo.

“Bingo, a brute like you would have no scruples about taking a hairy wife, but what about your children? Describe them to me,” said Druble.

“I have two sons and three daughters,” said Bingo. “The sons are like you, Druble, having neither horns nor tusks. The daughters, though, have changed equally as much. They are as pretty and gentle as all your Rokite females, but their bodies are hairless and their heads are embellished on either side with soft, little wings of downy yellow feathers. When in a state of repose these wings rest close to the sides of the head and are regular crowns of glory, but when excited they rise up in the most startling manner. They are the wonder of Echo’s community, because there are but three of them. They are much beloved.”

“They are my progeny, and little devils, nevertheless,” said Druble.

“They are perfectly harmless and are beloved by everyone,” said Bingo.

“Why not?” demanded Druble. “The whole human race is sprung from him who fell from heaven, and he is called Satan. I am not ashamed of my ancestry. You and your other brothers, victims of an exaggerated ego, believe yourselves to be special dispensations of the Omnipotent. Well, you are not. Take off your trappings and you are as ugly in the eyes of my people as they are to you. It is all a matter of taste and experience, and we are having less trouble than you are

—but let us get at the meat. What did you come back here for?”

“Druble, my father gave me the ancient talisman. While I was drunk in your palace someone stole it from my neck.”

“Which proves you should not get drunk,” said Druble.

“Nevertheless, could I recover the talisman I could compel these rebels to return to Ballyhack all they took away, and our brothers could return there with safety.” And Bingo looked appealingly at Druble.

“Bingo, I would not trust you with anything. Under the devil’s code, reform in a crook is impossible. ‘Once dishonest always dishonest’ is infallible. The moment you felt the security and power of this talisman you could, and doubtless would, tell me to go back to heaven, and my name would be spelled with the fewest letters you could use. Now, this talisman rightfully belongs to me, and you know it. If you want to make use of it, where do I come in?” And Druble plainly showed he was master of the situation.

“I am not here to take any mean advantage of you, Druble,” declared Bingo. “I want to do anything that will restore our ancestral castle to its pristine state and save our brothers from a position which might subject them to slavery or starvation.”

“A laudable ambition,” said Druble. “But we

must look upon this as though you had been sent as an envoy extraordinary with plenipotentiary powers, to make a binding treaty with me to lend my powers to the cause of your nation. You are a diplomat."

"Yes, but we have no nation," declared Bingo.

"You mean you have no constitution, or written law," said Druble. "But a people dwelling in amity is a nation. It is not essential for a people to burden themselves with a specific government as long as peace, prosperity, and comfort exist without it. A government is only for the purpose of promoting and maintaining these things, therefore the simpler its form and the fewer the general laws the less taxation and trouble it entails. A burdensome central government is an evil, and a multitude of laws breeds crime. If your people live in peace without written law, your community was established in love and amity, and you must be happy and contented. I commend you for it. But, Bingo, a wiser head than yours planned it."

"Well, I don't know. I've seen hands and feet displayed on poles and paraded in your public places, and they said that even heads had been thus exhibited to show the power of your central government," said Bingo.

"That is true, but we had a perverted beginning here. Our nation was born in hate. Our father, Imar, cast me into the wilderness. I was the ugly devil of our family, too ugly to be ac-

knowledged as human, therefore I was cast out of the only heaven I knew. As I grew, under the care of the old midwife who brought me into the world, hate for everything beautiful was a passion with me. Together we began Hellagoland. Her own offspring developed his father's habit, seized the only female he could call wife, his homely old mother, and the Rokites resulted. I have the least trouble with these ugly little devils of all my subjects. I had in me some strain of blood which, as I grew older, cried out for peace, love, and amity, therefore I used the best judgment I possessed to bring about these conditions. I was determined, however, that ugliness should remain the curse of this branch of the family, because of my cruel deformity.

"I have had an experience of my own which caused me to forgive my father. When I looked upon my son Roko, after having horns and tusks grafted upon him, I exclaimed: 'Go away!' and he and his mother took this literally, and did go away. I did not mean for him to go away forever, but simply to quit my sight.

"Now, I believe it was in this spirit my father exclaimed, upon beholding me, 'Take him away.' I was not his kind, therefore I never returned to him; but my kind came back to me in swarms, like rats.

"There are many curious laws in nature, and to assert themselves they do strange things.

Where my keenest desire was to reproduce ugly and abnormal things, the mother of all my sons had an equally strong desire to reproduce grace and beauty; that is always the female desire. In the second generation, when they were further away from my influence, her influence grew the stronger, hence the beautiful daughters of my sons and the gentle, little female Rokites, whom I love best of all my progeny.

“This is not only true of my children, but also of every living thing which I have perverted. Take the trees and shrubs of my forests, with all their deformities. When you compare them with the originals, it is found their misshapen bodies have enhanced their beauty of leaf, fruit, or texture.

The mountain trees, up there, which tore the flesh from your bones, were originally straight. Year after year I had them curled and twisted until their fearsome ugliness became permanent, yet at heart their grain and texture are the most delicate and beautiful of all woods. I could show you that the vegetation has its passions and sentiments as well as animal life. Since age has become a bar to my further material influence upon the development of my surroundings, I observe a strange tendency for things to turn back toward the normal pristine state, which convinces me that if left alone nature will disgorge the devil element and drive it into concealment; but it must be first

made visible. It can never be destroyed. It is half of nature, whether manifest or concealed.

“Satan represents bad things. It is a spirit that never dies. The devil is the prince of ugliness. Animated nature abhors ugly things and attempts to banish them from sight; hence I was sent to Hellagoland, and the Rokites have no province of their own. They are not under the law, therefore it is no crime for them to confiscate anything they can place their strong, cunning hands upon. But they take only that which they actually need.”

“While I was here I learned that stealing from one another was a normal trait,” said Bingo.

“You did not understand,” laughingly replied Druble. “Because a Rokite occasionally snatched your roast-beef out of your mouth, to feed his own, you were misled regarding our rules of life here. No one ever gives anything to anybody here. There must be some compensation, therefore they are not under material obligation one to another. But there is a strong moral obligation, and true to our original purpose of perversion, the early habit grew into a law to leave everything so exposed that he who actually needed it could take it, and, as the pride of poverty forbade asking for that which could not be openly given, taking by stealth became a high art. But never under any circumstances was anything taken that it was not, at the earliest possible oppor-

tunity, replaced by the same stealth. Therefore there was no such thing as actual theft in the minds of the people.

"I have myself been seated at a banquet with my sons when every mouthful of food and drink had been secretly taken from my own larder. He who gave the banquet regaled his guests with a story as to how he had accomplished it. He had equal pleasure in restoring it without my knowledge. So you see, after all, it is the sensation of theft which tempts people to steal unnecessarily, more than the desire to possess the property. I allow my subjects this harmless pleasure.

"It is only by comparison that theft is a crime; nature never loses anything. It is the individual who feels the loss. Were there no laws to protect individual ownership of property stealing would not be a crime, and the thief, like the Kookite, would only take that which he needed to sustain life. The law of compensation would acquit him of the charge of dishonesty.

"But, Bingo, I am taking you too far away from the subject nearest your heart. Speak frankly to me. I have more regard for your experience than you believe, and if your schemes do not impress me, they at least afford me much amusement. Now, what is your latest brain-teasing proposition? I have had so little to amuse me recently, and make me laugh, I am getting stiff in my joints."

"I have a scheme which will bring these provinces of the plains back to our vassalage," said Bingo. "I do not want the talisman to keep, but I want to counterfeit it. The rest you may leave to me."

"I will leave nothing to you. I will engage in no enterprise with you without knowing all of the details," retorted Druble.

"Very well; I will tell you what I have in mind," said Bingo. "We cannot successfully engage these allied armies in war, because there is no reason for their coming to the mountains to fight, and I know their bowmen could annihilate any army we might send against them on the plains. Your Rokites, with their slings, would be invincible fighting from the mountain side, but they would be picked off like jack rabbits on the open plain, therefore we must subdue the united forces by strategy and diplomacy."

"What has this talisman to do with that?" asked Druble.

"Everything," replied Bingo, "as I will demonstrate to you. I am here to make an offensive and defensive alliance between you and our brother Echo."

"A self-appointed envoy extraordinary, eh?" sarcastically said Druble.

"Put it that way, if you will," grumbled Bingo. "But now listen attentively, for I have devised one of the greatest schemes to plunder the Plain-

ites you ever saw, and I will wage you a calabash of wine, five vintages old, that you will say so."

"You are on! Go ahead," said Druble.

"Do you see yon mountain? That is where you left Echo and me to be eaten by the wolves."

Druble chuckled in his calabash.

"You did not know that that mountain would some day buy the earth, and all it contains, and enslave the whole human race," continued Bingo. "You acknowledged, by the wording of your notice of reward for our apprehension, that it was no part of your domain, therefore by the right of discovery it belongs to Echo and me, and we placed a monument upon it to mark it as our own. Now, that mountain is a solid mass of arguros!"

"Why, you don't say!" exclaimed Druble, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Yes, and you can find enough of it in the form of the native metal to equip your palace with furnishings wrought of pure arguros. I know we can hold this mountain against the people of the whole earth with an organized army of Rokite sling-men. At long range they can kill an ox. At short range they can kill the same ox with a one-pound boulder without the use of a sling. Their power and precision of aim are something marvelous. We must give a world-wide value to this mass of arguros, and we at once have a corner on the market. There is nothing like owning

the original source of the article for which you can make a world-wide market. We must make reciprocity treaties with these Plainites, and get, in exchange for our arguros, their cattle, grain, and fruit. Reciprocity is a great thing when you can obtain at small cost a large volume of some article in demand, like grain or timber, for arguros, for which I will make a market."

"What! exchange the stuff we are making tables and chairs of for cattle and grain? How would you transport such a quantity of heavy metal over these mountains? Impossible!" said Druble.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Bingo. "You forget we own the source of supply. If we make the demand, we can arbitrarily fix the value and size of every exchangeable piece. We will call each exchange piece a talisman, making it the same in size as the real one, which you will keep locked up in your treasury. We will make the exchange value of each talisman an ox or fatted calf, or an equivalent in any other property. It will be easy to determine the talisman value of all other properties by the relative values now existing, by the law of barter and trade. With a keen demand existing for arguros, we having first seized it, monopoly of the source of supply becomes the key to the game."

"Do you mean to say you can hand to one of the Plainites a piece of metal the size of this talisman and he will permit you to drive away one of

his oxen in exchange for it, while I may be warming a chair made of the same metal sufficient to make a hundred of them? Are they really that ignorant? Why, every time I sat down I would feel that I had stolen ninety-nine head of cattle, and the devil is not given credit for being over-scrupulous," said Druble.

"That is where I get in my fine work. I shall make it my business to gradually introduce the talisman as a common medium of exchange. Should they eventually have a value as a recognized medium, they could not be increased in number without our consent, because the metal of which they are made would not be available, we owning and controlling the supply. Therefore we could fix the volume, hence the value of every product. Our one trust would then control all the exchangeable values of the world, *the talisman being the basic measure of values*, as well as the *primary medium of exchange*. The people of the earth would have all the toil, hardships, and troubles of producing, caring for and protecting the properties, and we would hold in the hollow of our hand a mortgage upon their values. As we desired any portion of these properties we could go into the open market and exchange our talismans for them. As our supply needs no cultivation, and is inexhaustible, we may manipulate the market to suit ourselves."

"I do not see how you are going to fix the status

of the talisman as a recognized medium of exchange," said Druble.

"By laws, passed by their assemblies, making the talisman the sole, recognized legal tender of the realm, in which all debts may be settled and all taxes and excises paid. It will be unlawful for anyone to refuse the talisman in settlement of debt."

"In other words, the fiat of law makes it full legal tender," mused Druble.

"That's it, exactly," said Bingo.

"Then what is to prevent the law from stamping this fiat upon disks of bull-skin, of the same size and to the same effect, and compelling the people to use that as a full legal-tender medium?"

"Because the material would be too common, destructible, and plentiful," explained Bingo. "Moreover, I know the men who will make these laws. I once collected tribute from them."

"The fiat is the legal tender, not the materials it is stamped on; that is evidenced by the fact that I may sit upon a chair made of the same material as that of which your tokens are made. According to your statement of first cost of this material, I can build a grill around Hellagoland with it. It would be much easier to produce than would be raw bull-skins, which are equally valuable for making breeches," said Druble. "Why not make a subsidiary token of this material?"

"Yes, but you overlook the fact that the people

can all raise bulls, but they cannot produce arguros; therefore the materials for making these tokens cannot fluctuate in volume," replied Bingo.

"Oh, I see; you throw the burden of fluctuation upon the people and their products. This insures against loss in the fluctuation of the volume of any given product, the powers controlling the materials of which the circulating tokens are made?"

"Exactly so," replied Bingo.

"I am still unable to see how the volume of bull-skins can affect the volume of 'fiat' issued by the law. No matter what your tokens are made of, their volume depends upon the number of pieces upon which the 'fiat' is stamped. The 'fiat' is always in control, unless the free and unlimited coinage of all the raw material brought to your mint should be adopted," said Druble.

"You have struck the keynote. The law will say that all persons will be treated alike in regard to the coinage of arguros—that is the only material of which *basic, full-legal-tenders may be made*; therefore we, instead of the legal fiat, control the volume," eloquently exclaimed Bingo.

"Unless I choose to furnish my palace throughout with arguros, and the Plainites loot my palace, as they did Ballyhack Castle," laughingly said Druble. "Another point, Bingo. Do you think you can induce any people to surrender their honor as material for a medium of exchange, as represented by the legal fiat, and adopt a cumber-

some metal instead? Why, suppose a man wanted to buy several hundred head of cattle a hundred miles away; it would require a caravan to take the tokens with him."

"That's where your bull-skin money comes in. I will now make this plain to you, for it is the secret of my whole scheme. Of course, I feel certain I can establish the system, have all the legislation passed, and put it permanently and securely into operation. Roughly, I will say now, we own the arguros of which the tokens are to be made. It is the basic material—made so by law. To conceal the fact that we are in control of the raw material, we have proper laws made which opens the mint to the free and unlimited coinage of arguros into fiat tokens, free to anyone presenting the metal at the mint. This makes our raw material, which we control, in fact a fiat material, each bulk containing as many tokens in value as the weight of the coin token it contains.

"On the excuse of its being too heavy to be transported, the owner of the arguros, upon taking it to the mint, has his choice of taking it away with him in coined tokens or depositing it and receiving 'certificates of deposit' of the same fiat equivalent instead, stamped on bull-skin. This enables him to carry upon a piece of bull-skin the equivalent of several of the arguros tokens."

"How will you get the metal in circulation, so the people will have it to take to the mint, and

yet you keep control of the volume?" asked Druble.

"We own the arguros, we exchange the metal for such products as we need and want. The people take the metal to the mint and——"

"And buy fiat bull-skin," broke in Druble, with a motion of contempt. "Bingo, you are a crook, and you are proposing to me a colossal bunco game to cheat the people and confiscate their properties. It is worse than war. In war the people are killed and put out of their misery at once. In this game they are yoked in slavery for all time, they and their progeny. It would be more humane for me to adopt a warlike policy, and kill off a few of them, than take part in your nefarious scheme. However, of two evils I must choose the one which will work out the best for humanity in the end. I am the devil and all wicked schemes are brought to me to father. But I warn you now, Bingo, the theory, held by some, that poverty is an essential factor in the safe control of large communities is wholly wrong. Nature works out her own tangles. The punishment of evil is a part of the devil's task. It is born in the human race, and must work itself out of the great human system. It carries the seed of its own destruction, while good lives forever. You are setting a bad example for future generations. You are sowing the seeds of war, famine, and poverty. You are enslaving men to a system of useless labor

which will make them work or starve, and each decade will see a little harder task, a little less compensation, and greater detestation of government and the law. You will not live to see it, Bingo, but the blood of the great revulsion of human sentiment will stain all the rivers of the world to their mouths in the ocean into which it is said they empty their filth-laden waters. I will not interfere with your plans. I will lend you the talisman for a pattern, and you must take the consequences of what you do."

Bingo essayed to protest by argument against what Druble had said, by insisting that a medium of exchange was absolutely necessary as a nation grew and spread over so wide a territory that barter and trade was cumbersome. Wasn't he entitled to control that medium, and profit by it, if he invented it?

"I grant you that," replied Druble. "But an honest government can provide a just and equitable medium of exchange without paying to a trust, like yours, a fabulous premium for the materials upon which its fiat, making it legal, is stamped, and for the privilege of using its own medium. The government has no right to favor a middle class, nor itself enter into profitable competition with the people. It should combat and protect every token that enters the treasury as taxes, on the ground that it has added that much to the burden of the people, instead of devising

new ways and means to take more from them. There is a limit to the strength of all things, Bingo. Under the law of the survival of the fittest, it is not the fittest which starts the revolution; it is that element out of which has been crushed all pride and foolish sentiment. They are right down to the final fight for life and existence. Go back to your task, Bingo, taking with you much of your spurious metal. Bring here to me some of the metal, and I will permit you to strike off your patterns from this talisman from which to make your counterfeit tokens. But a seat made of this stuff would burn a hole in my breeches. I want none of it." Druble had talked thus to Bingo, showing great excitement and anger.

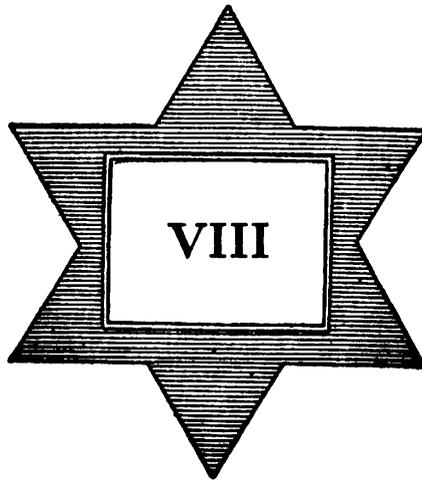
"What kind of a treaty will you make with Echo?" asked Bingo.

"This is our treaty, and it is to be verbal. Druble binds himself not to interfere with the schemes or plans of any of his brothers beyond the borders of his own domains, and he will not participate in, or in any manner share in, the token proceeds of working the arguros mines located in the mountains east of his domains. But this shall not prevent his bringing into his domain arguros obtained from beneath the earth's surface for other purposes. We are happy. Go your way in peace."

"Do you not have to consult your sons, your Congress, to ratify this?" asked Bingo.

“I would not insult the sons of the devil by intimating a drop of Ballyhack blood was in the veins of the man who would propose such a murderous scheme,” declared Druble bitterly. “Nevertheless, I will not interfere.”

Bingo returned to Echo’s unnamed country with a facsimile of the wonderful talisman and the assurance that Druble would remain neutral in relation to his new system of exchange. Many Rokites carried upon their backs the arguros which Bingo had mined; this they deposited at Echo’s boundary line, and they hastened back to Hellagoland.



THE FIRST MONETARY CONFERENCE

BINGO had the evil spirit of Satan within him, and his heart thirsted for revenge. He knew Druble would take no part in his scheme, either for or against it, therefore he went systematically about spreading his net. He hitherto had collected the tribute from all these peoples upon the plains for Ballyhack; and he not only knew well all their leaders, but he had even formed a close friendship with some of them; this now stood him in good stead.

Sending for two leading spirits with whom he had always gotten drunk on the occasions of his visits to the plains, he confided to them parts of his scheme, promising them high reward and profitable participation in the project. He gave to each some of the counterfeit talismans, instructing them to go to a distant part and secure

all the cattle they could and return to their own lands.

They were immediately asked by what means they had obtained the cattle. They secretly exhibited one of the talismans, saying it would protect and bring good luck to whomsoever possessed it. In a short time the talisman became a fad, so much was it in demand that even two head of cattle were given for one. This fixed the commercial value of the token, and its convenience made the few that were in circulation much sought after.

Now the time was ripe for Bingo to act. Sending out messengers, he invited to a conference—to be held in the neutral land of Echo—all the leading clansmen of the plains, and to a man they responded.

They sat for many days listening to and discussing Bingo's plan of a commercial Union and a monetary system, to make their exchanges of chattels and property more convenient than by the slow and cumbersome method of barter and trade. It was all so plausible, and looked so easy and convenient, that every proposition was unanimously adopted, and the first commercial union was formed, and that Satan of civilization, the politician, now stepped into human affairs, to profit thereby.

Bingo knew his men, and to them entrusted all the details of organization and law-making, he

having adroitly drawn the constitution in such a manner that almost any designing party in the future could interpret or misinterpret it to suit its political or plundering propensities. He also drew the forms of all the essential laws necessary to put his system into operation.

The tokens were now so much in demand that it was easy to induce the people to agree to the new scheme.

Bingo wisely refrained from including Echo's domains in the new Union, secretly declaring to Echo that it was his purpose to build up an aristocracy among the outer peoples which he could control, in order that he might make of the sons of Ballyhack a royal family; but Druble beat him to this game.

The last act of the convention was to appoint Bingo commissioner to foreign lands, to investigate the possibility of securing sufficient arguros for monetary purposes.

In short order the Union was formed, the constitution was ratified, and the laws passed. Bingo reported that, owing to the scarcity of arguros, it would be lawful for the treasurer to issue "promises" to pay arguros, and with this scrip pay the expenses of organizing and operating the government. Thus "bull-skin money" at once became the pliant instrument and subsidiary element in a monetary system which has subsequently robbed mankind and enabled a clique of conscienceless

men to loot the whole world and confiscate to themselves all the surplus products of the laboring masses, bringing about a condition requiring men to labor and slave physically whether they want to or not. This has diverted the human race from its original God-given purposes, making eternal slavery the price of existence, whereas God-given life itself depends upon the conservation of vital energy and the economy of physical effort. The human race is consuming itself.

Bingo saw to it that each and every "bull-skin promise" was paid with arguros on demand. He was not yet ready to manipulate it to run values up or down the scale. He had to organize a secret commercial clan of his own to be able to dispose of the real properties which he could secretly confiscate by his having control of the basic money. This he wanted to entrust to his own brothers, therefore he brought about an understanding which permitted their return to Ballyhack Castle, but no tribute was to be paid to them by the plains people, and they were to remain upon their own lands, excepting they might at will go to Echo's land.

Bingo sent for his brothers, and they all embraced, ate and drank much, and were friendly, and Bingo let them in on the game. They were amazed at its simplicity and at Bingo's acumen. They could now reap a terrible revenge, by strategy, where arms had failed them. In due time

they could reduce their ancient enemies to a state of abject slavery, and even to starvation, and deprive them of every means of defense or retaliation. They could, as the system developed, train their own increasing progeny into a standing army for their own protection in case of emergency.

As time passed the system worked out beautifully, exactly as Bingo had planned it. He maintained close and confidential relations with the leaders of the Union, and they built up a political party which controlled and ran the government. While a false pretense of consulting the will of the people was kept up, the secret machinery of government was absolutely in their control. They grew rich and arrogant, and Bingo and his brothers laughed when the people began to complain.

Suddenly something extraordinary happened. No more arguros came from Hellagoland. A large issue of "bull-skin" money had been made, and much of it was being presented at the treasury for redemption. Each day saw the reserve grow smaller. Panic was threatened. Bingo was accused of manipulating the supply of arguros. He almost went crazy waiting for his messenger to return from Hellagoland and report on the situation.

The scene which followed the messenger's story beggars description. Bingo with both hands tore the hair out of his head then fell down in a paroxysm of frenzied rage, and kicked and broke

up half the furniture in the room. All fled in terror, and it was well they did, for he was filled to overflowing with a desire to murder something, anything.

The messenger had said that he could not get into Hellagoland because Druble had built a picket fence of solid arguros around the whole of Hellagoland, and stood behind a big gate and laughed at him. Bingo finally learned that his men, upon entering the arguros mine in the usual manner, had dropped into a bottomless pit, the whole bottom of the mine having fallen in, and they were not seen any more. By diligent inquiry he had learned from a Bremite that Brembo had supplied Druble with the arguros. He had taken it out of a great cavern upon his own land, and within the borders of Druble's domain, which right Druble had reserved.

Bingo and Echo were amazed. It was the cavern into which the pretty daughters of Hellagoland had taken refuge at the time Echo had persuaded Letreka to flee with them. Brembo had cunningly extended this cavern under the arguros mountain and gutted their mines. No wonder Druble laughed.

Calamity always has bad company with it. A worse thing was happening. Straggling bands of broken merchants came to offer their petty wares to Bingo as he was coining his last pig of arguros into tokens.

A delegation of leading men, accompanied by an armed escort, also came to demand of Bingo an explanation. Panic was sweeping the provinces. "Bull-skin" money had been wholly repudiated, not being taken at one cent on the dollar, and a flood of counterfeit arguros tokens had been accepted by the people for their cattle, and half the cattle of the provinces had been driven off before the truth was known. The people were in a state of frenzy, holding the politicians responsible for the state of affairs, pointing to the riches they had accumulated under the system as evidence of their selfishness and perfidy. At any moment the whole government might be repudiated, revolution break out, and their palaces be sacked and the public buildings looted. The situation was critical.

Bingo listened patiently to their tale of woe, then he asked:

"Who bought these cattle with arguros tokens?"

"A strange lot of men, dressed in skins. No one knew whence they came, nor did they see the cattle driven away. They carried huge leathern pouches filled with the tokens. It was all done so quickly no one could conceive of a systematic raid. The tokens were exactly like our own and of the same weight and fineness."

"In which direction were the cattle driven?" asked Bingo.

"No one can tell," was the reply.

The party was startled by one of the retainers rushing into the room shouting:

"Come! Look! The whole mountain side is moving!" and they all rushed out to see the strange sight.

Far up on the mountain could be seen a dark mass, moving rapidly onward and away from the plains. They looked in astonishment. It was the provincial cattle being driven over the mountains to Hellagoland.

"There go your cattle," said Bingo. "Your despoilers are the Hellagolites. There is but one sure cure for panic. Excite the people with something worse—war. Else they will infect themselves with their own poison—revolution. Go back at once. Report that the Hellagolites have a corner on arguros, were the cause of your panic, and have stolen your cattle. If this is not justification for declaring war, then what is?" and Bingo awaited the reply.

"Will you join us in a war against Hellagoland?" they asked.

"We are not in your Confederation, therefore have no reason for involving ourselves in the hardships of war," responded Bingo.

The delegation went sorrowfully back to the provinces. They had never engaged in war, therefore knew little about preparing for it. Moreover, a still greater calamity awaited them. Im-

mediately following upon the raid by the Hella-golites which took from them half their cattle, a mysterious plague broke out, destroying the other half, consequently they were on the verge of starvation. They could not go to war. They had neither money nor cattle.

Brembo was wise in his day and generation and had put one over on Bingo.

When Bingo learned of this last stroke, he laughed long and loud. Calling his brothers to him he said: "We may now safely return to the Castle of Ballyhack. Go gather together all our fighting men and prepare the means of bringing back with us all the antique furnishings taken away by the provincials. We shall again establish a system of tribute."

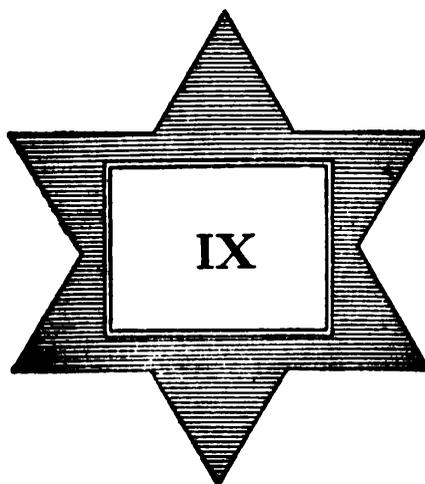
The brothers each brought a company of trained men, bowmen, sling-men, spear-men, and men with battering-rams and fire-balls. They marched against the provincials, taking due advantage of their unpreparedness and their impoverished condition.

The demands of Bingo and his brothers were granted, and without bloodshed they carried back to the towers of Ballyhack their ancient furnishings, and Bingo and all his brothers returned to their castle.

Letreka had trusted, and in the end Echo kept his promise, giving her a luxurious home in one of the great towers.



RECOVERING THE TREASURE OF BALLYHACK CASTLE



BINGO STEALS DRUBLE'S SILVER FENCE

A GAIN Ballyhack was in the saddle and her sons were reunited. Bingo was duly recognized as king. He sent his brothers to the provinces, to bring order out of chaos and re-establish the old-time system of tributes.

Leaving Echo in charge at Ballyhack, Bingo took one hundred picked bowmen and went on a strange mission, leaving no word of where he was going, but it was noticed he took an unusual quantity of roast-beef with him, evidencing a long trip.

He was away from Ballyhack a fortnight, when suddenly at sunrise one morning a procession of five hundred exhausted Rokites, driven by Bingo and his hundred warriors, arrived. On the back of each little devil was a section of Druble's silver-spike fence, each spike being seven feet tall. As

each Rokite was halted he fell panting to the earth.

Bingo's brothers looked upon this remarkable thing with wonderment. Surely only Bingo could successfully accomplish such a feat. He had actually confiscated enough of Druble's fence to surround Ballyhack Castle.

He fed and recuperated the little Rokites, always keeping them under surveillance, that they stole not Ballyhack itself and carried it back to Hellagoland. After they were rested he made them erect about the castle grounds the silver fence, which they accomplished with amazing alacrity.

Now, it was the morning of the seventh day, and Bingo told the Rokites they could return that night to Hellagoland, traveling by the light of the moon. He supplied each with a joint of roast-beef and a calabash of wine. He sent to Druble his compliments, thanking him for a few tons of his silver fence.

A few days later a messenger arrived at Ballyhack Castle with compliments from Druble to Bingo, which message read:

"In order that one in whose veins flows the blood of my father may not be known among my people as a common thief, I thank you for one hundred goat-skins of rare old wine of unknown vintages from the cellars of Ballyhack Castle in

exchange for a few panels of my fence. The top of your arguros mountain fell in yesterday, after we had taken out sufficient to replace the panels. My compliments. I drink to your good health and the future good fortunes of Ballyhack."

There was a moment of hilarity among the sons of Ballyhack upon the receipt of this message. But Bingo's face straightened up so quickly he jerked his helmet off his grizzled head.

"One hundred goat-skins of wine! What does he mean?"

Springing to his feet he rushed in rage to the wine cellar. There was a hole in the side of it, hidden by a cask, and a path worn in the mountain side from many comings and goings of tough, but silent little Rokite feet. He cursed deep and long. And then he laughed. But when he saw one particular cask emptied of its precious contents he wept, for it had contained a rare old vintage as rich as the blood in his veins. It was the pride of Ballyhack, because it had christened every birth in the old castle. He had the cask carefully drained of every precious drop, then taking the calabash to the great banquet-room he held it high and said:

"My brothers, this wine has united us with the devil, and yet I must tell you he is our brother. Druble, who reigns over Hellagoland, is our eld-

est brother, and is by lineal right the king of Ballyhack. I drink, in the blood of Ballyhack, to Druble."

Then he revealed to them the story told to him by his father, and they all exclaimed in wonderment. Bingo further related the story of his and Echo's experiences in Hellagoland, which greatly edified and amused his brethren. Raising the calabash, again he exclaimed:

"Druble drank to the good fortunes of Ballyhack, and now from this loving cup we drink to the good health of Druble, the devil, and every man for himself," and they passed the cup from lip to lip.

The roasting pits were yielding a savory vapor to make the soberest beast hungry, therefore these strong animals in human garb were ravenous. It was the first common family feast, and the men sat down to huge pieces of luscious roast and calabashes of wine in which could be floated a steamship. 'Twas then brotherly interest manifested itself for the beginning of the new Ballyhack.

Jingo arose, unsteadily and said:

"Brothers, we are again united. Do you remember the joys of our boyhood? And that we never disputed until we attempted to do an unjust thing—cheat Bingo out of the leadership of our clan? That is the only stain upon our brotherly escutcheon. I arise to say to Bingo that I regret

ever having so far forgotten myself as to do him that grievous injustice, and I crave his pardon. Let him who will, join me."

All the five brothers immediately arose, and, holding their calabashes aloft, proposed the health of the scarred old veteran, and they all drank deeply.

Bingo acknowledged the compliment, saying: "My brothers, most, if not all, of the troubles in the world arise from mistakes of judgment, and yet we are compelled to believe that the dictates of fate are inexorable. I drove our brother Echo out of Ballyhack with my provisions strapped upon his back, making of him a beast of burden. That was my mistake of judgment. He returned from Hellagoland with the most beautiful bride in all the world and happy and contented. I, on the contrary, left that land of mystery the most miserable man in the world, and his beast of burden. It was Echo that made me forget my misery and gave me the only real peace I ever enjoyed. Therefore, let us drink to Echo and his household."

Again they drank copiously.

"My brothers," said Echo, responding, "when our brother Bingo took me with him to Hellagoland he was unconsciously fulfilling the will of fate. To the limit of my strength I enjoyed the strange experience. At the point where it seemed I could go no further, my burden was lightened,

and I must confess I believe our brother was jealous of me for the good time I had in Hellagoland. Nevertheless, he was always good and kind to me while we were there, and he was the means of my finding all my future joy and happiness. Therefore let us drink to the good health of Bingo."

And again they drank copiously.

At this juncture an eunuch entered and craved private audience with King Bingo, and upon being bid to speak he whispered something into the King's ear.

"Ladies!" exclaimed Bingo. "From where?" Again the eunuch whispered, and Bingo burst out laughing.

"That old fool will make me laugh myself to death yet," he said. "Listen, brothers; Druble says our homely wives are happily united with his homely sons, and do not care to return to Ballyhack, therefore he sends to us four of the beautiful daughters of Hellagoland to be wives to Jingo, Sago, Marco, and Paledo, because beauty is out of place in Hellagoland and it is useless to feed it. They are a hungry lot. They are without, awaiting to be saluted by their husbands. Echo has for wife, and she has born him children, Letreka, the daughter of Brembo, and I bear them much affection. Jingo will take for wife Laleto, daughter of Limbo. Sago will take for wife Eleoneto, daughter of Gumbo. Marco will

take for wife Coreto, daughter of Tumbo. Paledo will take for wife Juneto, daughter of Koko. And may the shades of our forefathers rise up from the dust and bless you."

And it came to pass that the beautiful and refined natures of the ripe young maidens softened the hard exteriors of the tried sons of Ballyhack, and they became true and faithful lovers as well as constant and attentive husbands.

The love and affection engendered in the Castle of Ballyhack by the presence of so much feminine beauty changed all the rules by which these strong men had lived. From bestial debauchees they were converted into gentle-spirited men, ever careful of their conduct toward each other as well as toward their wives and children.

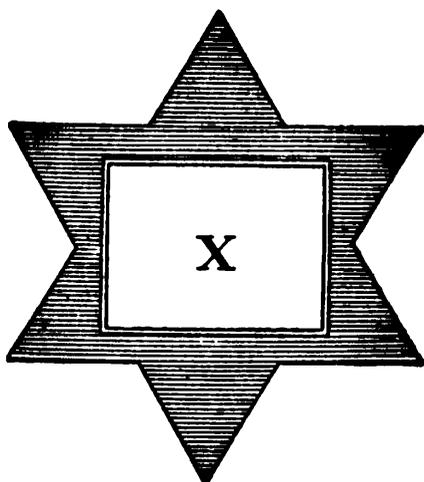
The drinking bout had been superseded by a delightful family feast. The calabashes had given way to small silver cups, and were now used for supplying water to the cattle. Sorrowing had been changed to song; music and mirth were everywhere, and joy reigned supreme at Ballyhack.

One day while they were all seated at the great festival-table, the wives on the right of the husbands and the children next their mothers, King Bingo said:

"My brothers, you are all happily married, your wives will forgive your sins, therefore each of you must make a dark confession of what

befell you on the missions which you undertook in fulfillment of the last commands of our father.”

The brothers looked at each other as though each expected the other to begin first. Bingo put an end to the embarrassment by saying they must relate their adventures in the order of their age. Therefore Jingo told his story first.



THE ADVENTURES OF JINGO

ALL listened attentively to the story of Jingo, for it was a very entertaining adventure.

“You know,” said Jingo, addressing Bingo, “our father commissioned me to go beyond the River Yeddo, to the plains of Malacca, and in the guise of a nomad. I was to mingle with the wild people there and learn, if possible, something of our wives and children.

“Following my father’s instructions, I traveled to a point on the banks of the Yeddo River where, it was said, a safe passage could be made; but upon entering the stream, to my consternation an undercurrent seized me, and had I not grasped a bulk of flotsam I surely would have been drowned.

“For six days and nights I floated down the river without food, and in constant terror of drowning. I was on the verge of starvation and

so exhausted I could not move when my strange craft, carried rapidly along by the swift current, struck the shore of a curious island and I was cast upon the sands to lie there helpless, for I was so weak from privation I could not stand upon my feet.

“I crawled toward the blooming shrubs, thinking to shield myself from the ardent rays of the sun, which seemed almost ready to drop upon the island and burn it up. I was surprised to find the bushes cast no shadows; however, I lay down and went to sleep, seeing in my dreams the most beautiful visions of angels in the sky. I could not tell how long my sleep lasted, but I was awakened by the dripping upon my face of some liquid, falling from the bushes. Some of the fluid ran into my mouth and it tasted like milk and honey, I investigated and found the cuplike blossoms filled to overflowing, and I refreshed myself from them. It was night, and an immense moon seemed so close to the earth I could almost touch it. It cast a soft, mellow light, most as intense as daylight, cool and refreshing. The air was filled with the most wonderful fragrance.

“I could see all about me, as though in mid-day. Beneath the bushes I heard a cooing and fluttering. I investigated and found quite a covey of bright pheasants struggling about a nest. I soon learned they were all anxious to get upon the nest and lay an egg. I was starving, yet I

had the sense to know that did I want a hearty breakfast I must wait till they had all left an egg in the nest. I did not have to wait long, when they went clucking off through the bushes, and I eagerly started through the shrubs to devour the eggs which were heaped up, completely filling the nest. I had in the meantime observed a glare in the eastern sky, and everything seemed to be getting hot.

“Suddenly I realized that every time I touched a shrub I felt a sensation as though I had grasped coals of fire, and I soon found my hands covered with blisters. I could not get near to the nest filled with the eggs of the birds. I was much refreshed by the fluid which I had taken for milk and honey, finding everywhere an abundance of it in the little cup-shaped flowers on the bushes which produced it. I afterward learned it was honey-dew, formed by sudden cooling and condensation at night.

“In the effulgent light everything had the appearance of being made of wax, but as the moon dropped lower toward the horizon, and the edge of a blazing sun appeared, the shrubbery began to glow as though heated in the flames of a red-hot furnace, causing the many beautifully colored blossoms to glow like unto crystal or superheated glass, while the whole atmosphere was bathed in a perfume so sweet and fragrant it was intoxicating. I occasionally touched a shrub that

emitted a noisome effluvium, causing me to recoil as from the sting of a reptile, it leaving upon the skin a painful eruption.

"I was so hungry I determined to make another attempt to get at the eggs. Seeking the spot where there were fewest bushes, I held my hands high in the air, plunged through and reached for the nest. The sand was now burning my feet and twisting my heavy sandals into knots.

"Instantly I was afire all over. Where the shrubs came in contact with my naked flesh I was blistered. My leathern clothing hardened and shrunk and curled up to such an extent I could hardly move. It reminded me, my brother, begging the pardon of your wife and children, of the time when I fell into the glowing coals of yon roasting pit upon beholding you come riding into this banquet-chamber on the back of the devil. My armor was red-hot before I got out and I lost patches of cuticle from my body, as my fair wife will attest."

Bingo started the laughter, in which all joined heartily.

"At a distance, it does seem funny," said Jingo. "It wasn't funny, though, in direct contact with a bed of coals, and I unable to tear the armor from my back. It too much resembled being in a stew-pan, cooking. The one thing which I recall most vividly on that occasion was the curious thought that I had tumbled into hell, and the devil him-

self was present to replenish the fires. That was your brother Cuth, Clareta," said Jingo, addressing Bingo's wife, at which they all laughed the more.

The soft little Muffins, with yellow wings attached to the sides of their pretty faces, thought it extremely funny that their Uncle Cuth looked like the devil.

"Well," continued Jingo, "there was no devil in sight this time, but I was in an equally bad plight, for I was held tight in the bushes with my leathern blouse shrinking smaller every moment and getting as hot as was my steel armor when I fell into the roasting pit. I was being squeezed to death as well as roasted alive.

"A curious thing was that I had managed to fill my hands with the bird eggs, but I was so hot all over I was not aware that they, too, were almost red-hot, therefore I held tightly to them, although they were burning holes in the palms of my hands. I afterward concluded the cause of the commotion among the pheasants was that their dear little feet were being burned off by the blistering sand while they waited their turn to deposit for me a hard-boiled egg.

"I was about to run and plunge into the waters of the Yeddo River when I observed a boiling foam about its edge. This discovery was most fortunate, for the water was boiling hot for several feet from the shore. I ran frantically along

the sandy beach, and finally saw a stream of water emerging from the shrubbery and emptying into the river. I placed my hand in it and found it cool, and immediately submerged my whole body. It at once allayed the acute pain of my burns; in fact, it instantly healed me.

“But imagine my predicament when I discovered the water was literally tying me in knots. My muscles began to draw, and twist, and cramp till I felt as though I surely was being twisted into a spiral. It was with the greatest difficulty I finally drew myself out of the treacherous, healing waters. Nevertheless, my burns were healed. My clothing kept me busy, to prevent it hardening to such an extent as to deprive me of the use of my limbs.

“Ashore again, my muscles at once assumed their normal condition, and I ran along the beach till my feet could no longer endure the heat. Seeing before me an unusually large tree, with limbs extending to the ground, I made a spring for the nearest branch and raised myself off the blistering sand.

“I was congratulating myself that I had at last found a spot where I could get a moment’s rest, when I discovered the more pliable twigs were slowly but surely coiling themselves about me like serpents. This was a startling sensation. I climbed higher into the tree, until the tendrils could not reach me, nevertheless they continued

to reach out for me from every side, feeling about like live things.

“Finding I was out of their reach, I took a look at my surroundings. To my intense surprise I saw not a great distance away what seemed to be a small city, with tall spires and funny gables. I was so overcome by the sight that I thought I was losing my mind, but there was no mistake about it. I could see objects moving about and hear sounds indicating the stir of people in early morn.

“Feeling a sting upon my hand, I looked, and, lo! I was covered all over, from the crown of my head to my feet, with millions of small green worms, each having a tuft of spike-like hairs growing upon its head; it was these tiny spears they were shooting into me, at the rate of a million a second. Every exposed portion of my body, even the palms of my hands, were bristling with the poisoned arrows. The pain was beyond description. How I ever escaped from that tree, with its grasping nature, I know not. I do remember, however, that as I came in contact with the pliable twigs and tendrils they instantly twisted themselves about my legs, arms, and body, and at the last a strong one caught me by the ankle and I hung suspended, head downward, and apparently done for. I reached down, however, and grasped a strong shrub, and with my remaining strength tore myself loose, dropping heavily

to the earth, with my left foot almost wrenched off.

“My face and hands were swollen to twice their size, and I was rapidly being blinded, when it occurred to me to return to the curious healing stream. I again plunged into it, and it gave me instant relief, but again tied me in a double knot before I could get out of it.

“Espying a vine near by, with some large gourds dangling from it, I decided to fill some of these gourds with the healing water and take it with me for emergency. Going to the vine I grasped a large gourd, but quicker than it takes me to tell it I was entangled in the tendrils of that vine and bound hand and foot. The only thing that prevented me being strangled or squeezed to death was the condition of my leathern surtout, as the result of my experience with the burning shrubs. It was as hard and unyielding as a piece of steel; I could not have got it off me.

“I had to keep moving, otherwise I would be roasted alive by the hot sand, therefore my present predicament was a frightful one. One of my hands had sufficient freedom to enable me to break a corner off the flinty edge of my surtout and gouge it into the root or stem of the offensive vine. It immediately wilted and relaxed its grip upon me, and I quickly disentangled myself from its many tendrils. Making a bottle of the largest

gourd, I filled it with the healing fluid and got moving again, for my feet were baking.

“I ran along the sandy beach, avoiding entangling alliances with unknown shrubbery, until I came to a wide, open space leading into the interior of the island. It looked so inviting I was fearful it, too, was a snare and a deception. Nevertheless, I went forward and was pleased to find, as I left the shore behind me, the heat decreased. A short distance farther the open space took a sudden dip, and down this declivity ran a broad, smooth, hard highway, shaped like a fan. It was divided into twelve deep grooves, near together at the point where I was standing, but spreading in a manner to permit the grooves to pass through the wall of the city at twelve different places.

“The city was a beautiful sight, snuggled there, as in the bottom of a deep platter. Pausing to contemplate it, I deciding to sit and rest in the meanwhile. Suddenly my feet flew from under me; and, Brother Paledo, you are perhaps the only one who has ever experienced the sensation I did, for you recall your toboggan slide down the mountain out there on the occasion of my taking a header into the roasting pit. Well, I slid down that declivity upon my back, darted into one of the narrow ways and, to the amazement of the people who were in the great central space which formed the middle of the city,—

for it was not large,—I shot past them like a streak of fire, and landed thirty feet out into a circular lake of water. The friction of my descent had set my surtout aglow, but the water extinguished it, fortunately, for the odor of burning leather was smothering me.

“It is needless to relate that the people were scared and surprised. They were at first afraid to come near me, but as I sat upon the edge of the lake they gradually drew nearer, and I was surprised to see only men, not a woman being in sight. They were fully dressed, in some soft, silken material, looking innocent, harmless, clean, and wholesome. Their distinguishing feature was the color of their robes, they being of every hue of the rainbow. I looked uncouth and ragged in comparison, because of my recent hardships. Moreover, the soft, clinging robes greatly enhanced their personal appearance. They wore soft curling hair and beards, and all seemed to be of blond complexion, and effeminate in character. Withal, they had a dignified, priestly aspect. I was larger and stronger than they.

“I addressed them in our dialect, Magadhi, but, while they doubtless recognized its origin, they shook their heads. I then tried Hanskred; again they intimated they did not fully understand. I tried the language of the Genii, Procrit. An elderly man stepped forward and said they understood the dialect, for they spake the

language of the Genii. They were of Koko's breed.

"They then thronged about me to listen to my story, which I briefly told. Instead of thinking my adventures amusing, they took them with great seriousness and with display of sympathy, many of them shedding tears.

"I greatly wondered what disposition they would make of me, when the same elderly man came forward, saying, 'You are the first human being from the outside world to visit us in this strange manner. You are welcome. Come with me and you shall be provided with comforts.' He took me to a doorway near by and bade me enter, which I did, and the door closed behind me. "To my utter bewilderment I seemed to be exactly upon the spot from which he had conducted me; there was the same circular body of water, the same surroundings; but not a living soul in sight, the old man having returned through the door.

"I was so puzzled I did not know what to do. While cogitating upon the matter another door opened and a large woman, regal in her dress and bearing, came toward me, saying:

" 'I was told a stranger was here. You are welcome.'

"All I had seen was so sweet, clean, and wholesome I was ashamed of my own dilapidated appearance, and I responded:

“‘I fear I am too homely and uncouth to merit so cordial a welcome.’ Then I informed her of my experience and adventures after leaving Ballyhack. She, too, wept. Calling an eunuch, she whispered something to him, and he began to examine my leathern surtout, which had been converted into a case-hardened armor by constant contact with heat and water. He tried to break it. Thumping it with his knuckles, he turned and disappeared, soon returning with a huge battle-ax of some sort. He handed me a welt across my side, which not only whacked a hole through my shell, but kindly broke three of my ribs. He would have finished me had not his mistress observed I was badly hurt, and checked his hospitality.

“It was well, however, this minor mishap befell me, for it put me in bed for three weeks, enabling me to fully recuperate my strength, and, moreover, it gave me an opportunity to learn something of the customs and habits of this strange people, thereby saving me much embarrassment. They had some peculiar laws, or rather rules, for they had no written laws or established form of government.

“The handsome woman who had so cordially greeted me was recognized as the queen of the community. Her word alone was the law. She informed me they practiced polyandry, and that while I remained there she would be wife to me,

which was by no means an unpleasant concession, for she was a very handsome, well-preserved woman of fifty. This meant, also, that I would be well protected.

“The establishment of the nation and its custom had come about in this manner, I learned later. Her family was wrecked upon this island, all but she perishing. Shortly thereafter seven brothers were also cast upon the island. Each wanted to take her as wife, but they were all so evenly matched in good appearance and accomplishments she could make no choice. Therefore she became wife to all of them but one, the youngest, who remained unmarried in anticipation of a daughter being born, which in due time occurred, and when she came of a proper age she was given in marriage to the brother who had so speculated on the future.

“The queen was a most intelligent woman. She frankly admitted that polyandry was based upon affection, or love of equality, there being not the same necessity for this practice as existed for polygamy, because a multitude of husbands could not increase a population as could a plurality of wives. Under the necessity for an increased population, to help sustain a community and build a nation, polygamy was justifiable. Under a condition where universal love and sympathy existed, and there was a desire to give to each his fair portion of all the joys of living, and

there existed no other law to govern, the moral law made polyandry proper. I was struck with the justice of this argument.

“While I was not actually confined to my bed all this time, nevertheless I was not permitted to leave the large room to which I had been assigned, for about three weeks. It had been explained to me, in the way of apology, that the old eunuch who had tried to carve me into bits was a half-witted old fool, and had himself conceived the idea of chopping off my surtout. He doubtless would have chopped off my head next, had he not been repressed.

“My hostess-bride was exceedingly considerate and attentive. She had twelve husbands, but I did not see one of them while confined to my room, nor could I look beyond the four walls, or rather one wall, for the court upon which the room opened was circular. It was a large open space, antique in aspect, with a circular pool of water in its center. There was a raised rim about the basin, and here and there immense stone seats. The whole structure was of the same material, a dead-gray volcanic rock, and upon close examination I found it was carved from one solid mass, which must originally have been the native formation. I could not determine the extent of the town or village, if it were such. I did not let my curiosity be known, fearing it might be misunderstood. I also thought it strange that I

had seen no signs of the presence of any other females.

“After the third day, however, my new bride developed into a regular gossip, telling me all about herself and her neighbors, so I believed. But the guileless are quick believers!

“They numbered but fifty-three souls, sons and daughters having been born in about the ratio of one daughter to three sons. The community at this time consisting of thirteen females and forty males. The children were permitted to marry at the age of ten. They were at this time all wedded. Nevertheless, I saw no wives, neither heard the prattle of children.

“They were the Genii of Fire Island, the Hermites. If you think, as I at first did, that they were a lot of dead ones, listen to what I am about to relate. I will first explain a surprising thing. They found this structure in which I found myself when they first came upon the island. It was the ancient habitat of a strange race of people, so old no one could name them. They had fled away, leaving their abode, furnished as it now was and ready for occupancy, with accommodations for a thousand or more. Among other things, they left great quantities of parchment manuscript in the Paisachi dialect of the Sanscrit language. This, of course, made these aborigines the ancestors of the Rokites, for they, to this day, speak only Paisachi, as you know, Bingo.”

"I was thinking of something else," replied Bingo seriously, and he looked at Echo with inquiring eyes. Echo, too, was thinking deeply.

"What was the age of this queen?" asked Bingo.

"She did not tell me her age, but I should name her about fifty," replied Jingo.

"And she spoke the Procrit?" said Bingo.

"Yes, that was her original tongue, and I afterward learned she taught it to the men, it becoming the language of the community. The men came from the plains, but she came from the mountains. Upon this point she was reticent, always evading any subject which made inquiry regarding their antecedents."

"What was her name among her people?" asked Bingo.

"They did not call her queen, but Mother Kokita," replied Jingo.

"Kokita!" exclaimed Letreka. "Why, that was the name of Koko's wife, who many years ago disappeared from Hellagoland!" and they all exclaimed in bewilderment.

Bingo held up his hand and commanded that Jingo proceed with his narrative.

"Well, as I said," continued Jingo, "if I thought at first these people were sleepy, I had my own mind rudely awakened, for it seemed they had two extraordinary festivals. They called one the 'Festival of Passion,' which was held when the

harvesting was finished and certain fruits were ripe. The other was called the 'Festival of Folly.' It was held directly following the other; in fact, it was a secret extension of the first, the whole fest lasting only one night.

"We once held high revelries in this castle, my brothers, but our festivities were as a summer zephyr to a thunder-storm as compared to these bacchanalian orgies. There were three special features to the festivities—'the dancing priests,' 'the fruit-begging girls,' and the 'devil's banquet.'"

Bingo laughed aloud. It had occurred to him that the bacchanalian dance indulged in by all the Rokites must have had its origin in this manner. Nevertheless, he permitted Jingo to continue.

"It was on the morn of the twenty-first day of my confinement that I said to Mother Kokita that I must be on my way. She informed me I was to wait and observe the annual festivities, which up to that time I knew nothing about.

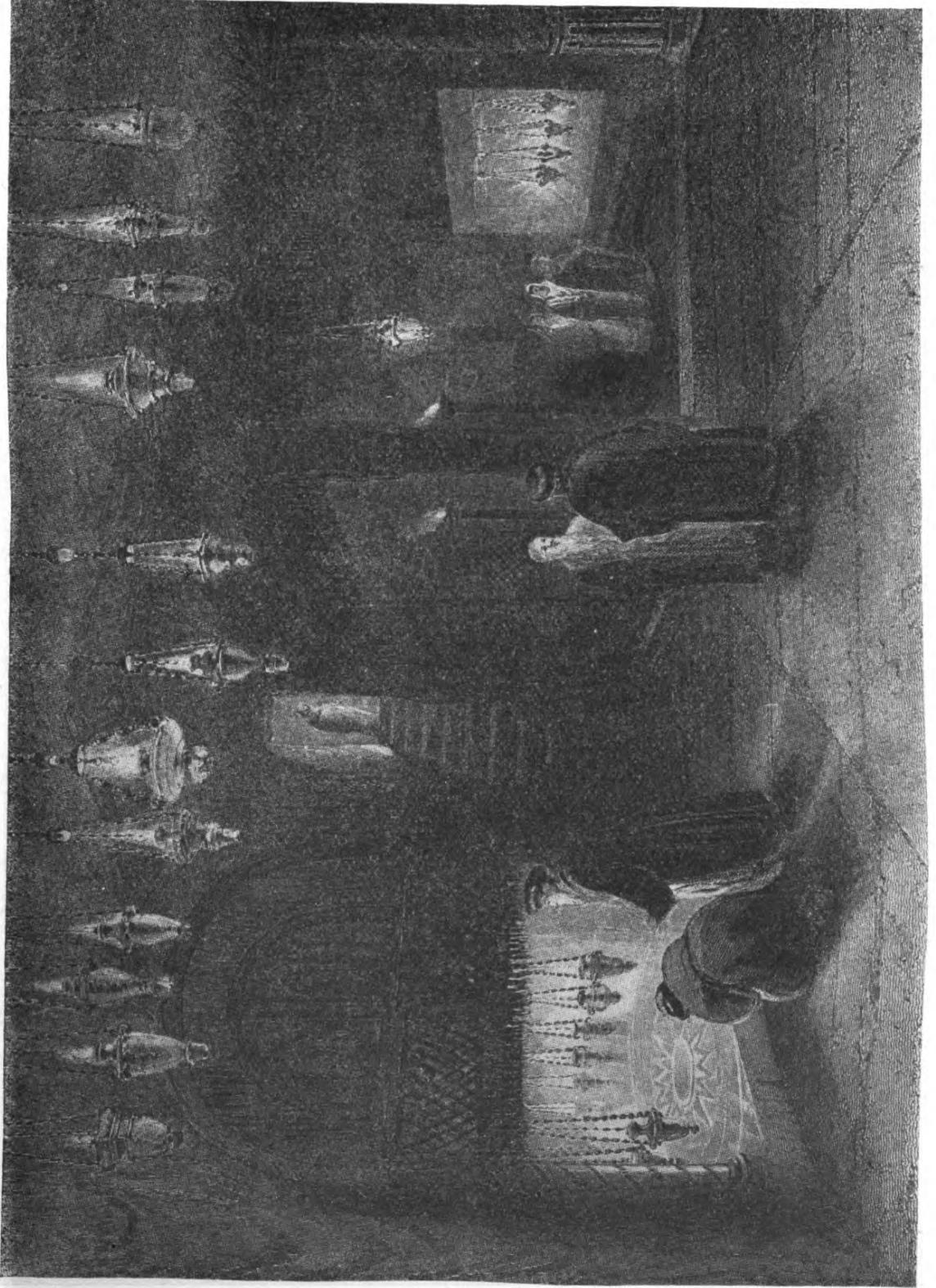
"Her explanation was very brief and simple. Twelve beautiful young women came to beg fruits of the men, and, incidental to this, they danced quite merrily, and on this occasion they indulged in certain other festivities. There also came at this time certain people from the mountains, to participate in the carnival. That was all. A few days more or less mattered not to me, for my

entertainment was ample. I felt, however, it was an ungrateful intrusion for me to remain longer. Kokita but laughed at my protest. Nevertheless, upon thus being apprised of the fact that they indulged in a yearly festival, and our father having particularly charged me with bringing back all obtainable knowledge regarding the customs of new peoples I met, I secretly congratulated myself that I was so heartily welcomed.

“Having learned during my last few days there that all the Hermite men professed to belong to some ancient priestcraft, and were correspondingly pious in their daily life, their morning and evening prayers being audible at my window, I expected the festivities to partake of religious rites and ceremonies. I was not undeceived till I was in the midst of the devil’s own invention.

“I was informed by Kokita that, in order to conform to the custom, it would be necessary to initiate me into the order, the rites being of the simplest form, consisting of my being conducted to a magnificent room, elaborately carved and decorated and lighted by curiously wrought lamps swinging from the high ceiling.

“The old priest led me to a strange device, resembling a large many-pointed star, upon which were numerous inscriptions in characters strange to me. He said many short prayers, and with each prayer he placed my hand upon one of the points of the revolving device, finally pronouncing

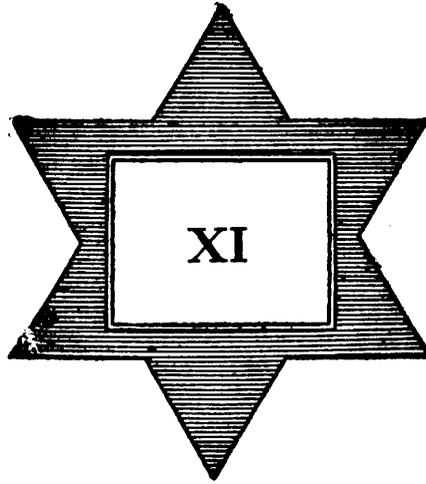


UNGO IS INITIATED AS A HERMITE

me a priest after the order of the ancient Hermites.

“I could not protest, as much as I disapproved of such untoward blasphemy. Moreover, this courtesy gave me equal right with the others to participate in the festivities to follow, so I believed, but I was mistaken.

“The Hermite queen did not herself participate directly in the revelries, but she was a deeply interested onlooker, approving of it all.

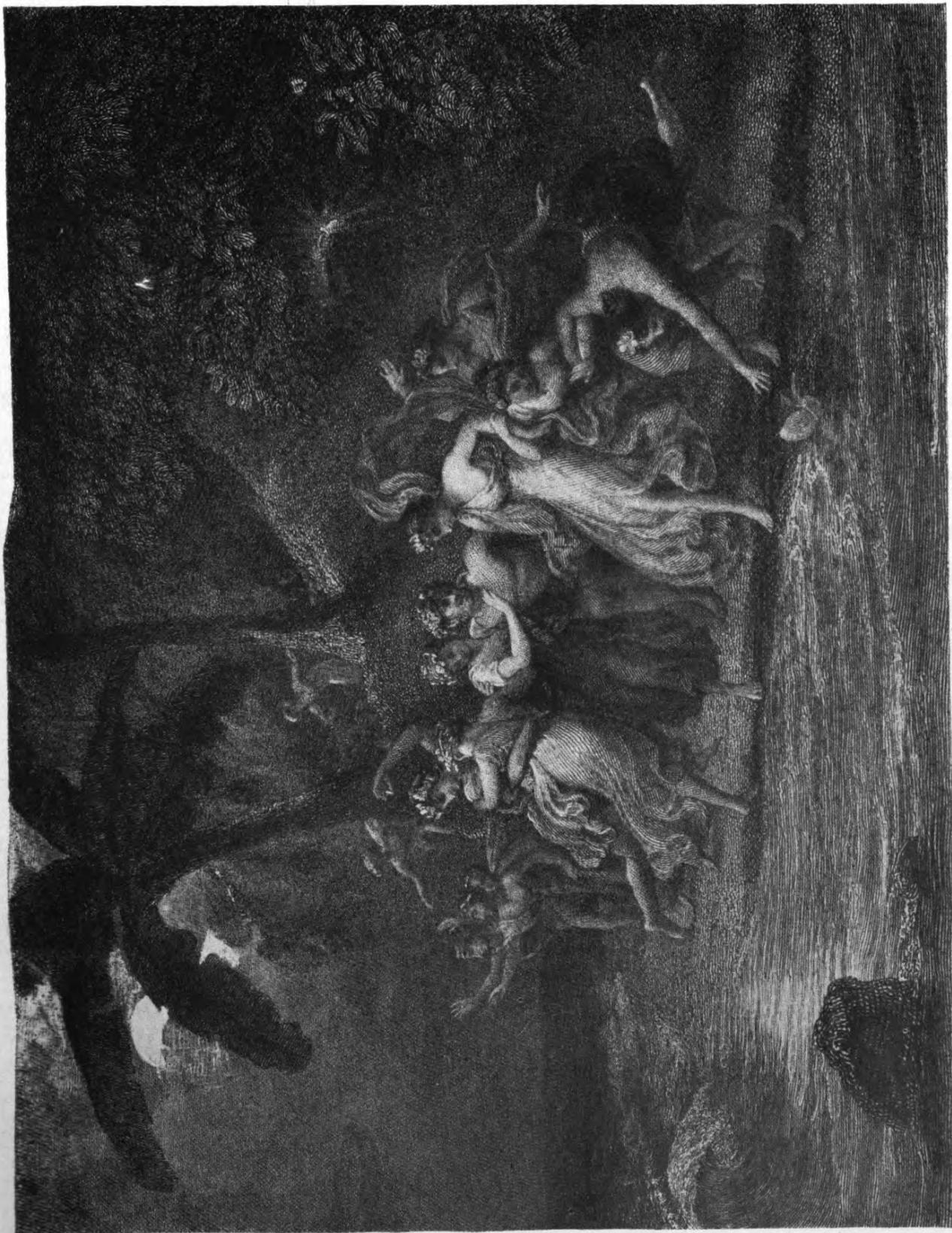


FESTIVITIES OF THE DANCING PRIESTS

“**I**T was midnight. The immense, white moon hung over the Island of Hermite like a great, arguros canopy.

“Kokita sat by my side, excited and expectant. As the shadows were straight up and down she said, ‘Come,’ and we passed out of her apartment through a passage which I had never seen before.

“Up to this time I had not seen about the place a woman other than Kokita, which had much perplexed me, therefore imagine my surprise to encounter, after we had traversed a long, dark, cave-like passage, a bevy of beautiful, half-clad young women, dancing like fairies upon the hot sand, and occasionally dipping their feet into the water which lapped the shore. I was told by Kokita that the sand at this point was always



hot. There was in their midst one satyr who seemed to be the victim of their mirth.

"We were concealed from them, and I watched their wraith-like dance with strange emotions. It was all so silent, so graceful, it seemed like a ghostly interpretation of innocent joy.

"Wholly free from licentiousness and vulgarity, the gyrations and motions and graceful whirling of the splendid polished limbs removed all thought of evil, and I only cherish now the picture of loveliness, enhanced by semi-nudity. It was like unto an animated ivory picture.

"In a brief while Kokita made a soft whistle, and the women sped swiftly away, soon disappearing from our sight. Plucking my sleeve,—I had adopted the silken robe of the priests,—she drew me back into the dark passage and to the apartment whence we had come.

"Clapping of her hands brought the eunuchs, who placed upon us robes of black silk, which draped us from head to foot. A deep hood concealed our faces, yet permitted us to see and hear perfectly.

"With flambeaux made of wax we again entered the passageway, but this time we turned a new angle and proceeded for a long distance with nothing to startle us. Upon our feet we wore thin sandals, made from the pappos of some shrub, as soft and fine as silk. Therefore, when a large reptile crept over my feet I sprang away

from the spot with an exclamation, dropping my flambeau. Instantly Kokita smothered my face with her hand and shaded her own flambeau, whispering, 'You must be silent. This is the cave of the huriya. The reptiles are harmless.'

"In the distant darkness I could see moving about many pairs of shining eyes, and while I had confidence in my companion I needed her reassurance that we were in no mysterious danger, for I must confess I am an arrant coward in total darkness and beneath the ground.

"The echo of my exclamation had ceased; I re-lighted my flambeau and we proceeded cautiously along the gallery. We soon heard soft laughter. Kokita instantly extinguished both flambeaux and in total darkness we crept quietly forward until a light cast a flickering, dancing shadow in front of us.

"Again a ripple of laughter broke the awful silence. Creeping closer and closer, we reached a vantage point where we could look directly into the chamber from whence, apparently, came the sounds.

"It was strangely romantic, a large cavernous room grotesquely ornamented and embellished with stalactites hanging like great icicles from the vaulted roof, while the stalagmites rose like ghostly statuary in the flickering light of a single flambeau. The entire chamber was incrustated with crystal so sparkling it resembled jewels. A strange

place for reveling, yet there were many evidences of approaching festivities.

“A long table was in the center of the chamber, festooned with flowers and fruits, and a single flambeau flared near by. Upon the table were all the paraphernalia for a bacchanalian feast, but neither food nor wine was present. But while we stood there eunuchs came from some mysterious passage bearing huge flagons of wine.

“Kokita whispered something to them, and we returned through the cavern to our apartment, from where we went out upon a balcony which conducted us to the center of the great building. Here a circular platform gave us a view of all the twelve entrances or grooves leading down from the hillside and down which I had made my undignified entrance into the place. In the center was the lake, in which I now saw a number of figures.

“I counted them, and they were forty priests, practically nude. Some were standing waist-deep in the water, others were sitting upon the edge of the circular basin, while the rest stood in groups, earnestly talking. The elder priest clapped his hands and all plunged into the pool.

“Almost instantly there shot into the pool, from the twelve different shoots or slides, one after another, as fast as they could come, no less than twelve rush cushions, on each of which reclined a beautiful, nude creature half stunned

from the rapid slide down the devil's slide, as Kokita named it. The priests caught them as they bounded into the water, plunging and grabbing at them, all struggling together to be the fortunate ones to secure a prize, for there were but twelve women to forty men.

"As the last one landed safely, and each lucky priest secured his mate, they took the women in their arms and climbed out of the water, carrying them away, while the unfortunate ones dejectedly followed.

"'Come,' said Kokita, and we returned to our apartment. She seemed sad.

"Keeping our dominoes on, we slipped out upon a peculiar balcony, which seemed to extend and wind about over the whole structure, finally taking a secluded position overlooking a large circular room the floor of which was made of sand.

"We had not waited long, when without noise or warning there darted into the chamber all the priests, bearing aloft small baskets of fruit. In close pursuit came the most wonderful display of womanly grace and beauty I had ever dreamed of—twelve voluptuous, round-bodied, polished-limbed young women, the fairies of the island. They were shrouded in blue gauze, which but enhanced the suggestion of artistic nudity. They were the nymphs who had shot down the devil's slide and into the water there, figuratively to be rescued by the willing priests. Now in turn they

were in hot pursuit of the priests, begging them to partake of the fruits of their vineyards. The baskets contained the potent huriycons, or love-apples, which the maidens sought to carry away with them to secretly administer their juice to the men whose love they sought. It was believed the potion would cause their lovers to be faithful and loyal. Moreover, it blinded the eyes of their husbands, so they would not perceive their wives' follies. The fruit had no effect whatever upon the women.

“Around and around the sanded floor they pursued the men, who were clad in short snow-white tunics, until the motion became less ardent and almost imperceptibly became a most beautiful and graceful dance.

“During all this time not one sound had been uttered, and none but the priests and their fair pursuers had entered. But as the dancing began to assume rhythmic harmony, from somewhere, I could not tell, a wild, seductive rhapsody began. This music was evidently made by flute and harp. Vivacious and inspiring at first, it gradually dropped to a weird but soothing drone, almost intoxicating in its suggestiveness. The effect was startling. The music approached closer, becoming softer and more seductive each minute. Then in the shadowy background I saw four persons wearing long black dominoes with their hoods closely drawn.

“One stood before the players,—the instruments being two flutes and one harp,—and he seemed to be directing the music with one hand while making signs at the dancing huriyas, now exhilarating their movements, then bringing them to a slow, dreamy, gliding motion which seemed to hypnotize the eager-eyed priests. The waves of emotion engendered in the men by this seductive dance could be discerned upon their white faces.

“The maidens, now in full control, were wonderfully beautiful in their fascinating efforts to place the dancing priests under their spell. They would whirl away from them, then, turning first to one and then another, weave their lithe, graceful bodies slowly back toward them. It was the personification of all that was intoxicatingly seductive in a woman in her budding youth. Kokita occasionally grasped my arm and quivered with excitement, but neither of us spoke; we were too spellbound.

“Occasionally the nymphs would stretch their arms beseechingly toward the fruits, but the priests held out to the end, only tossing them higher above their heads, which seemed to give mental relief to Kokita.

“Suddenly the hooded individual raised the palms of his hands, which were dark brown, almost black, and simultaneously the now flushed and tantalizing huriyas raised their own pink

palms toward their dancing companions, half inclined their bodies, as though desirous of being embraced, and like wriggling little serpents crept upon their prey.

“The priests lowered their precious baskets, surrendered one arm, with which to grasp the luscious harvest of their lustful dance, believing, in their conceit, they had seduced the huriyas into their own too willing arms.

“Quicker than a flash of lightning each huriya snatched from the hand of her priest companion his basket of fruit, and like a flock of scared fawns they fled through the door leading to the devil’s slide. Up this steep and slippery way they sped, their gauze flying behind them and their little feet pattering upon the ground in rhythmic unison, while their rosy faces, now flushed with the joy of success, were wreathed in happy smiles, as they looked teasingly back upon the more cumbersome priests, in hopeless pursuit; they never once made a sound.

“From our vantage point it was a most enchanting sight. We did not follow, and the priests soon returned, tired and dejected, to seek rest and solace in the quiet seclusion of their own chambers. They apparently were not aware that we had witnessed their high revels and their abject defeat.

“ ‘Come, quickly,’ said Kokita, ‘and I will show you the strangest thing in female human nature,—

I say "human," because the same thing does not occur with the females in any of the lower animals.

" "These same beautiful creatures who refused the love of these strong, handsome men will bribe the devil to love them, and will administer the poison of this fruit, hoping to make that liaison permanent.' And she laughed in a gleeful manner, as though secretly enjoying some mirthful thought. That she was the ulterior inspiration of this whole affair I doubted not, and I anticipated some strange, perhaps dramatic, culmination. I had no particular reason to believe that I was the victim of a deception.

" 'Lighting our flambeaux we again traversed the long, dark cavern, but not to the crystal-lined banquet-chamber.

" 'Be very stealthy and quiet and I will show you the most beautiful sight you will ever see. After this violent exercise the young women rest and bathe, preparatory to indulging in the revels of the devil's banquet.' My companion took me by the sleeve.

"Onward we crept till Kokita put out the flambeaux. In advance of us I could see the light which could only be that of the moon. We were near the mouth of the cavern. Directly in front of it was a pool of limpid water but for the splashing of fairy forms in it.

" 'For a moment feast your eyes upon all the

concentrated beauty of the world, for you will never again view the same human perfection.'

"I was dumbfounded. There, in all the graceful attitudes of secure seclusion and frank abandon, were the twelve fair young creatures, perfectly nude. No! clothed in the most enchanting God-given garment, perfect womanhood unadorned. Wholly unconscious of prying eyes, they were free from all restrains, therefore they were perfectly natural and graceful. Like so many sweet, innocent children they besported themselves in the crystal waters or lay restfully upon the soft mossy banks.

"It was a sight to make the gods rejoice, but no man could ask for a greater joy than to merely gaze upon the enchanting picture.

"'Come, we must return. They will soon be entering the cave to cover themselves with gauze and go to the banquet-chamber. We must not return there for an hour. In the meantime we may return to our apartment and refresh ourselves with viands and wine.' This we did.

"An hour later we passed into the cavern and crept cautiously toward the banquet-chamber. Peals of laughter echoed through the cave. High revel was on. The sweet voices of women mingled with a curious jargon which I at first could not understand, but soon interpreted as the Paisa-chi dialect.

"You know, Brother Bingo, I had seen only

Cuth before taking my departure from Ballyhack, and I believed him to be the devil himself, therefore I was wholly unprepared to look upon the devil and his whole brood. What I saw upon looking into that banquet-chamber startled me more than all my previous experiences combined.

“‘The devil’s banquet,’ whispered Kokita, as we ensconced ourselves in a dark recess, from which vantage we could watch the revelers and ourselves remain unseen.

“I did not know it then, but I now know that I saw Druble and eleven of his progeny seated about that table, each with the soft body of one of the fairies tucked under his arm, with her beautiful head against his hairy shoulder and apparently steeped in ecstatic joy, while they all partook freely of a multitude of viands and rich red wine. From time to time they would break into mirthful song and laughter.

“All the devils but Druble had glistening, little horns and ugly tusks, yet the young women exhibited their delight at being fondled and caressed by them, allowing them the greatest liberties without protest. They openly squeezed from the fruit into the glasses of the devils the juice of the seductive huriycons.

“Suddenly they all arose from their seats, eunuchs removed the table, and they danced. This devils’ dance was the most curious and fascinating thing I have ever seen. The huriya were graceful,

the Rokites equally grotesque, doing the strangest and most difficult things. They exhibited tremendous strength, playing with the fairies as if they were paper dolls, sometimes having them standing upon their shoulders while they waltzed about, sometimes grasping their slender ankles and holding them at arms-length and spinning about with them, and a hundred other equally hazardous tricks; the huriya, too, exhibited surprising agility.

“Closer and closer they drew to the mouth of the cave in which we were concealed. Kokita seemed startled, grasping me tightly by the arm, and trembling like a leaf.

“The chamber was lighted by many wax flambeaux. Quicker than it can be told each devil caught up one of these torches, a huriya sprang astride his back, and they galloped away through the cavern.

“Kokita screamed aloud and flew after them, leaving me alone. The eunuchs rushed into the chamber and extinguished the remaining lights, and there I was, in total darkness and with no means of relighting my own flambeau.

“I did not know to what unknown depth the cavern might extend or what pitfall might await me. I was truly in a pitiable plight. I called aloud, but no response came. I felt a reptile crawl about my feet, then the cold touch of something upon my hand warned me not to touch the walls. I broke into a cold perspiration as I fully

realized my situation; chills chased up and down my spine; my feet tingled; my head swam and my mind was dancing the devil's reel. I remembered the cavern made many abrupt turns and had innumerable branches. Where did they lead? Truly, if Kokita did not return for me I was lost. I felt the greatest fear that some of these devils might return, and perhaps slay me.

"Oh, but the silence, that intense quiet which seems to sing in one's ears! It was maddening. I wanted to scream, yet was afraid of the sound of my own voice. It could avail me nothing. The eunuchs would not heed, did they hear. No one but Kokita knew I was there. Should anything befall her, I was lost indeed. Should she seek me she would bring a light, therefore it was useless as well as dangerous for me to attempt to extricate myself. I sat down upon a projection and felt a reptile wriggle from beneath me. Then a new terror came. Instead of silence, a terrific gale of wind came sweeping through the cavern, carrying me completely off my feet. Then I heard the falling of a tremendous volume of water. Supposing a flood of water should fill the cavern! I moved toward the high, vaulted chamber in order that I should rise with the water in the event of such a cataclysm.

"Suddenly my heart was made glad by seeing an old eunuch enter the chamber bearing a flambeau and wailing. I approached him and en-

gaged him in talk. He told me the young women were the housewives of the Hermite priests. After their annual passion dance, to renew the love of their husbands, they had stolen away to banquet in the secret cavern with the devils. This time the devils had run away with them, and Kokita, in her great distress, had thrown herself into the burning crater of the smouldering volcano which heated the island in so curious a manner with the appearance of the sun each morn.

“He gave me a lighted flambeau and showed me the nearest way out; but upon coming into the open air the sun was rising and everything was so hot I began to blister. Rushing to the water’s edge I placed my hand in it and found the water cool. As the river seemed narrow at this point I plunged in and swam to the other shore and made my way back to Ballyhack, and that is my story.”

All expressed their wonderment. Bingo and Echo, being somewhat familiar with the habits of the astute Druble, were more surprised than were the others. Jingo’s story explained many things to them which were previously mysteries.

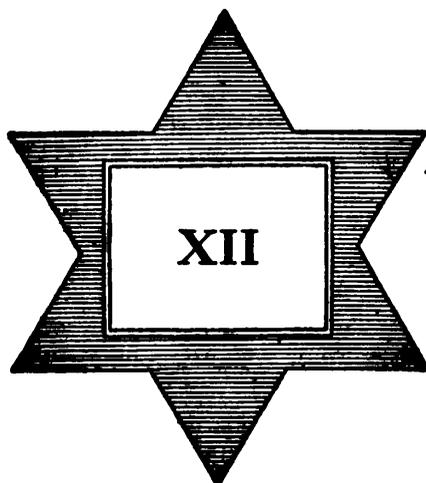
Mr. Druble was not the idiotic old fool they had given him credit for being. His many secret hunting trips were now accounted for. They could only speculate upon the meanderings of his caverns. Perhaps they permeated the whole mountain system, with secret passages to innumerable

other such places. While the bathing pool resembled that in which they, too, had witnessed beauty's bath, they were unable to reconcile the geographic positions.

They were amazed to note that their young wives hung their heads in silence during the last of Jingo's story. They wondered if they knew aught of this strange custom. Bingo had given the men an immunity bath, therefore they were entitled to the same consideration.

But Echo did ask: "Was there a grapevine swing over the pool in which the huriyas bathed?"

"Yes," was Jingo's reply, and Bingo and Echo gasped, but spoke not.



THE ADVENTURES OF SAGO

NOW Sago was a temperate man, therefore his story was surely the most curious adventure, so he thought. After the comments and criticisms of Jingo's story had ceased, Bingo requested Sago to recount his adventures for the further edification and entertainment of those present.

"You know," Sago began, "I was to go through the gap in the eastern mountains and search for a people called the Araks. They were reputed to be a most cultured and refined people. After a few days' travel I stopped to rest, during which time I polished my armored bodice to a brightness most dazzling, and I discovered much of it was inlaid gold, a truth hitherto unknown to me. Upon a close inspection of my curious dulband, which I had hitherto only worn on state occasions, I found it was a basinet of exquisitely

woven gold, ornately decorated with soft folds of gold and silk and surmounted by a crest of rare plumes. You know, my brothers, these were rare gifts from my father, yet I must confess I never before appreciated their value. Imagine my chagrin, therefore, to place these beautiful accouterments in a state befitting a king and then to look down upon my tattered leathern breeches and battered buskins. It was like unto that proud bird of which you have read, which spreads its gorgeous tail and struts until it looks down upon its homely feet and then its proud crest falls.

“I would be no less than a burlesque and a buffoon to these cultured people should I appear in their presence in this incongruous dress. Either I would be suspected of having slain some worthy knight-errant and confiscated his rich dress to embellish my worn ones, or I would be thought the poverty-stricken son of a broken family come to barter the last token of family pride. One would be as cruel as the other. I was both crest-fallen and perplexed, hardly knowing whether to proceed in this manner or not.

“Nevertheless, I went on my way, hoping to meet upon the outskirts of the great city some merchants of silk and be able to select and purchase suitable garments comporting with my otherwise rich attire.

“On the third day thereafter, in early dawn, I beheld upon a plain at the foot of a tremendous

precipice a magnificent city, with golden domes glowing in the morning sun. It was of the grandeur my father had described to me. But imagine my chagrin to find nowhere a passage which would permit me to descend into the plain below.

“Dismounting from my burro, I turned him astray, to wend his way back to Ballyhack, for I was determined to reach this splendid city or sacrifice myself in the attempt.

“For three days I wandered up and down the country, but not a break could I perceive in the sharp edge of the cliff. Finally I discovered some broken twigs, indicating that something had gone over the edge of the cliff. In attempting to look down to see if there might not be a hidden path, I lost my balance and over the cliff I went, end over end.

“My first thought was of being found with rotten breeches and a golden bodice on my broken carcass, and I wept as I went down grasping at the wind. The breath was suddenly jerked out of me by coming in contact with the grizzled side of a mountain mahogany, which not only broke my fall, but tossed me high in the air and tore from my limbs the remaining shreds of my breeches. I fell, bleeding and breathless, upon a shelf fifty feet below and two hundred feet above the whole world.

“I no longer thought of prospective dents in my armor; I was too busy rubbing the real ones

in my battered body; nevertheless, my corselet had greatly mitigated my fall, otherwise I surely would have perished.

“As I lay there, half stunned and trying to recover my rattled wits, I discovered in the wall near by the mouth of a cavern. A stone seat was by the side of it, and I heard a ripple of laughter and voices within, as of persons approaching. Being securely hidden from view, I awaited to see if there was danger ahead.

“An old witchlike woman appeared at the mouth of the cave, looked about cautiously, then beckoned to someone behind her. Instantly there appeared the most beautiful woman I had ever beheld, fresh and rosy as a ripe apple just dropped from the tree.

“She patted the horrid, old woman on her gnarled shoulder and laughingly said, in Sanscrit:

“‘Did I not say, dear old Goobro, your powers of divination were on the wane? Where is this wonderful knight whom you assured me I would surely find here?’ and she laughed merrily. She was a happy, rollicking bud, living for the mere joy of life. Her rich olive skin was as smooth as polished ivory; her hair, of raven blackness, was tucked away in great coils beneath a blue silken head-dress, secured by many wrappings of glistening pearls; her bodice was cut low, exposing a solid, round neck with a divine

curve at the throat. Bright almond eyes and glowing cheeks enhanced the beauty and perfect poise of her queenly head. Her stately person was covered with an ample silken robe and the silken trousers of the Eastern type of woman's costume. Neat, strong sandals encased the small feet. Jewels glistened upon her luscious bosom and her plump hands. In a word, she was most entrancing.

"Anxious to learn what her words meant, I remained quiet. The old witch went into the cavern and soon returned, bearing a calabash and two dried pomegranate shells, also some small wafers. They seated themselves and partook sparingly of wine and wafers.

"I never make mistakes. He will come. You will see. Look, I have counted all the beads many times; they always come out the same for you. He is a knight, wearing a golden armor."

"But, Goobro, how is he ever to get down here where I can see him?" asked the fair lady plaintively, looking up at the formidable cliff.

"My dear sweet princess, I cannot tell all the wonderful ways of the gnomes, who bring people down into the earth. That is their secret. I only know he will surely come. If I knew how, maybe I could do it myself, and maybe not."

"Tell it all over again. I love to hear the wonderful story," said the princess and she sat close to Goobro.

In a droning, monotonous voice the old witch related this story:

“There is beyond the mountains a great castle called the Castle of Ballyhack. Its king has seven sons. He has sent these sons on as many missions to strange lands. One son will come here to Arak. He is very handsome and wears an armor of inlaid gold. This, Princess, is the first man you will love. He should be here now.’

“I was puzzled to understand the old witch’s story. How did she know I was coming to Arak? Seeing she was much agitated, and merely trying to satisfy the beautiful princess, I groaned aloud. They were startled. Again I groaned, and pretended I was hurt more than I really was.

“They came to where I was lying, and, upon seeing my polished corselet, the old woman at once exclaimed: ‘’Tis he! I said he would come. ’Tis your knight. While climbing down the cliff he has fallen and is hurt.’ Then they helped me into the cavern, where there was a comfortable chamber. They removed my armor, which left me almost naked, because my breeches were in tatters. At last I was comfortably ensconced upon a couch, covered by the mantua of the princess, and had before me a calabash of steaming hot wine and some suitable viands. The old woman was a good doctor and the princess an adorable nurse.

“Shortly I pretended to recover, and began

to thank the beautiful princess, when she said, with becoming modesty: 'I will come to-morrow,' and went away.

"The old woman returned, looked at me for a moment, then burst out laughing.

"'Fool!' I exclaimed, 'what are you laughing at?'

"'You,' was her laconic reply.

"'Why do you laugh at me?'

"'You look so funny,' she said. 'One half your hair is gone. Your stock is on crooked, and your breeches a disgrace to a pariah, yet your hungry eyes made love to the princess,' was her reply.

"'Is it a crime to love so beautiful a woman?' I asked.

"'Yes; you are looking for your wife and children, and you are already in love with this princess. Your wife and children are not here, therefore you should turn back and save yourself and this innocent young woman the pangs of impossible love.'

"'Are you my keeper?' I demanded.

"'Just now, yes,' she replied, with an amused chuckle, which much vexed me.

"I lay still and thought for a while, then I asked, 'Who are you?'

"'Why do you want to know?' she returned.

"'Because you seem to know all about me, yet I know nothing about you,' I replied.

“ ‘You need not know more about me for your purposes; I will help you along with the princess. Love and beauty are my hobbies. You are a handsome fellow, so there, quarrel with me no more,’ and she busied herself about the chamber, presently leaving me to myself.

“I found I was really quite battered, necessitating a retirement in the cavern for several days, though in fact my princess nurse, coming each day, had much to do with my tardy recovery. I think I should have remained there, a strong, hardy invalid, to this hour had not she herself suggested that it was well for me to go into the city. When I informed her I had no breeches, she laughed merrily, saying:

“ ‘Oh, yes, you have! beautiful ones; they are my brother’s. They are made of silk and embroidered with gold, to match your golden armor, and have a surtout to match. I brought them myself.’ She placed them before me, then modestly retiring she permitted me to don her brother’s clothes.

“For some reason the old witch laughed. The clothes fitted me perfectly, and I felt very proud after putting on my armor and my basinet, with its graceful plumes. She had also brought me rich buskins of filigreed gold.

“I prided myself that my good appearance enhanced the admiration of the princess for me, for her cheeks were flushed and her eyes exceedingly

bright upon first beholding me panoplied cap-a-pie.

“‘Lead me where thou wouldst have me go, fair charmer, be it for love or fight, I am thy champion,’ I dramatically exclaimed. Again the old hag laughed. That curious chuckle of hers annoyed me. I continually heard it tantalizing my ears.

“‘I am going to take you to my father’s palace,’ she said. ‘Horses and retainers await below to escort to our court, with ceremonies befitting his high rank, so distinguished a knight,’ naïvely declared the little lady.

“‘I felt as if a splinter was puncturing my spine, and doubtless would have declined the honor out of sheer bashfulness had not the old witch whispered to me it was already heralded that an ambassador from Ballyhack was approaching the city. ‘Confide in and trust the princess. Hold your crest high and assume the bearing of a prince of the blood, for are you not the son of Imar?’

“‘You can say that, finding yourself checked by the precipice, you sent your retinue back and you yourself clambered down the side of the cliff. This will at once give you fame for prodigious strength and courage, which you must maintain at all hazards,’ said the princess, glancing at Goo-bro knowingly.

“‘This made me feel uncomfortable. This pretty

lady was not so ingenuous beneath her bonnet as her charming manner indicated. Nevertheless I was much enamored of her, and I determined to step boldly into the limelight and fight the devil himself for her if it became necessary—and it did.

“Taking a flambeau in her withered old hand Goobro took the lead and we followed, Salula,—for that was the princess’ name,—tightly holding to my arm. We traversed the cavern for some distance, when we abruptly came out upon another platform, from which a grand view of the city could be had. Its minarets, high towers, and curious bartizans bespoke a splendid Mohammedan city, and yet its inhabitants were of a warlike spirit, for the walls of many of the palaces were fortified and freely slashed with balistrarias, suggesting the cross-bow as a weapon; moreover, directly beneath us moved the bright plumes and polished spears of many richly accoutered horsemen, evidently our impatient escort. Standing near us awaiting her mistress was a dignified chaperon.

“The sight gave me courage. Clad as I was in the breeches of a prince and the richest armor the world ever knew, made centuries before these men were born, what had I to fear? I would adopt the vernacular of the gods, pure Sanscrit, and swear I was the vicegerent of Mohammed himself.

“Fortunately I was sufficiently versed in the Koran to carry out the deception.

“The gold-mounted ebony mace, with the great sparkling ruby shining in its head, was my only weapon, yet it was sufficiently imposing to inspire respect, and yet was simple enough to suggest a humility of spirit suitable to a direct representative of the founder of the greatest religion the world will ever know.

“The princess quickly read in my face my high resolve, and was correspondingly elated.

“Old Goobro stood watching us and laughing, as we boldly descended to the plain, where a group of richly dressed gentlemen, with their plumed bonnets in their hands, bowed low and bade me welcome. I was at once struck with their extreme politeness and elegance of manners. Behind them, in respectful order, stood a number of panoplied soldiers bearing long spears with shining metal heads. These wore strange hauberks made of steel rings. There were also drums and musical instruments.

“Two splendidly caparisoned steeds were beating the turf with their gold bedecked hoofs, as though impatient to assume the distinguished duty of carrying the ambassador from Ballyhack and his charming escort to her rich palace.

“It was indeed an imposing cavalcade, Salula and I riding in front, with the gentlemen following at a respectful distance, and the soldiers bring-

ing up the rear, with banners flying and music playing.

“Salula had assumed the dignified bearing of a princess and conversed charmingly about her country as we rode slowly along, pointing out to me the magnificent places which we were to visit together. As we approached the walls of the city I was amazed to see the tops covered with people watching the approaching cavalcade.

“When the great bronze gates were opened throngs of brightly dressed people filled the wide avenues. A band of beautiful young huriyas sprang into the street and, with tambourine and timbrel, literally danced us into fame. Even the children, running by the side of our chargers, at the risk of their pretty brown limbs, pelted us with bright flowers.

“My princess was doubtless pleased with my good appearance, for she looked proud and happy.

“‘I am surprised to find your people having such great liberty, and especially your women so freely exposing themselves,’ I remarked to Salula.

“‘You will understand this when I tell you this city is ruled by women,’ was her startling reply.

“‘Does this explain the polite nature and graceful manners of your men? Why, even your soldiers are most gallantly polite and respectful!’

“‘The rule and love of women soften the natures of men more than any other influence in the world,’ she replied.



SAGO'S WELCOME TO THE CITY OF ARAK

“My brothers, you will appreciate the truth of this when you hark back to our own days of roistering, before these fair wives were sent to reform us with their fresh beauty and ardent love—thanks to the devil who sent them. Even he can sometimes do a good and wholesome act. No one ever dreamed that even Paledo would sober up and become a decent respectable father, yet he has become a full-fledged mollicoddle,” at which they all laughed heartily, even Paledo taking the joke kindly, whereas formerly he would have bent his mace double on the adventurous Sago’s head for such a liberty.

Continuing, Sago said:

“Upon reaching the great portal of Salula’s palace I lifted her bodily from her saddle and held her at arm’s-length, at which feat of strength all the populace marveled, and a murmur of admiration was audible.

“In her ecstatic delight Salula bit a piece out of my cheek as large as a walnut.

“My brothers, never let this escape from beneath your bonnets; it is as old as the Sanscrit language: ‘Pride goeth before a fall’; and the greater the pride the harder the fall.

“One word of reproach uttered in the presence of the multitude may set a mob upon you. One simple satire properly touched off will make its victim the laughing stock of the world. One act of comedy may lead to a whole series of tragedies.

"If you are nursing in your minds anticipation of a glorious good time for me, prepare to weep, for surely no man ever fell so hard or was so suddenly overtaken by misfortune as I.

"I had thought Salula's father would publicly welcome us in the presence of the people and thus enhance my popularity. I was piqued not to see him come forward and embrace me. As I became more and more inflated by the pride and pomp of the occasion, my armor began to pinch my diaphragm and hurt me.

"Turning upon the wavering and murmuring masses, I cast upon them a benign smile, and Salula and I passed into the palace.

"Without ceremony we strode into the great central reception-chamber. Imagine my surprise and disgust to see sitting upon a rug in the middle of this room surely the devil himself, for he resembled Cuth without horns and tusks.

"He had a huge bowl of porridge between his knees and was eating it with both hands, smearing it upon his face from ear to ear. Could this be my lovely Salula's papa? To this day I cannot answer.

"Behind him stood an overgrown youth, whose every facial lineament spelled 'fiend.' He inspired me with fear on sight. He was dangling on the end of an invisible thread a huge spider, which from time to time he allowed to crawl down upon the face of the devilish individual, in order

to see him wildly strike at it with both hands full of hot mush. It was fortunate we entered, for he had laughed himself almost to death.

“As we approached, the old gourmand ceased eating, looked at me with his bright little eyes, grunted, then went on with his exercises. But the graceless scamp behind him yelled as loud as his voice would let him: ‘Take off my breeches!’ and before I could dodge him he had grabbed both hands full of the delicate fabric of which my borrowed pantaloons and my surtout were made and literally skinned me alive, leaving me standing, dumbfounded, and naked from my waist down to his accursed sandals, which had already made bunions on both my feet.

“Before I could recover he suddenly tripped me and grabbed off one of the sandals. My mace had fallen from my hand and he now began to maul me over the head with it. In sheer necessity, to save my life I fled in terror.

“In the meantime, beholding my unseemly plight, Salula had fled in dismay.

“Out of the portals through which I had so proudly entered but a few moments before I dashed like a frightened deer, with that fiend cracking my head or my heels at every jump with my own mace. I was a sight to make the gods weep. Clad in golden armor from my waist up, naked from my waist down, and wearing but one sandal, it is no wonder the populace joined in

the chase. A howling mob was now upon my heels, clamoring for the remainder of my hide. My bonnet flew off and my hair swept back behind me like a rick of hay. Fortunately they all followed after me in one direction, and by dint of dodging here and there, up this narrow street and down that, I finally escaped and made my way to the city gates, which happened to be open. Onward I sped, determined to outstrip the motley horde, which I luckily did. Gaining a prominence, I fell exhausted. Upon looking back I could see the excited populace marching from street to street with my bonnet on a high pole. Its proud plumes had been plucked out and it was battered and dented beyond recognition. Then I alternately wept and cursed.

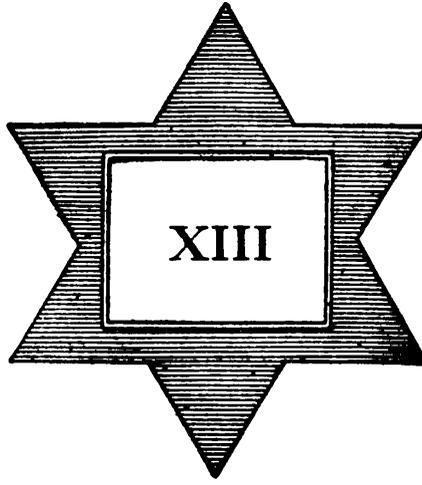
“If the power which makes or breaks us will spare me long enough, I am going to sack and burn that infernal city.”

Bingo and Echo were again exchanging significant glances.

“Another trip for Druble to his mysterious hunting grounds,” said Bingo, and Echo nodded his head wisely.

“And the old witch, Goobro?” asked Echo.

“Mrs. Druble,” replied Bingo.



THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO

NOW Marco was a philosopher, therefore as a rule was the least entertaining in his conversation of all his brothers. Nevertheless, his extraordinary and exciting experiences were listened to with absorbing interest, subsequently producing radical changes in the order of government at Ballyhack. He therefore related as follows:

“The strange mission with which our father charged me had an ulterior purpose which I did not fully understand until I had accomplished it.

“He commanded me to go to the highest peak of the Gringo Mountains, make a survey of the world, return to Ballyhack, and make report. Overwrought with grief at the thought of our good father dying, I did not pay sufficient heed to some words he whispered to me. He said, ‘Record well what you see and hear regarding

the government of any people you find on your journey. It may be useful to my generations.'

"Believing I knew where the Gringo Mountains were situated, and feeling grateful that our enraged Brother Bingo had spared my life, I went on my way with cheerful mien and rejoicing heart, whistling and singing most all the time, an unusual thing for me to do.

"Thus I traveled for several days, when to my consternation I found myself directly above the towers of Ballyhack Castle. I could almost cast stones down into my own chamber. As I sat there pondering the curious phenomenon, I softly sang one of the rhymes of my boyhood. Instantly a strange instrument began to play a sweet accompaniment to the air of my song.

"Now it seemed near, now distant, then almost in my very ear, as the winds wafted the sweet strains at will.

"I arose and essayed to discover the source of the harmony. Going toward the spot whence it apparently emanated, to my surprise I could come no nearer to it. It always sounded the same distance away, and I now knew I was the victim, too, of the player, for I heard soft, satirical laughter, nevertheless pleasing as well as teasing. Moreover, I discovered I was being attracted along a mountain path leading toward a deep grotto.

"Fearful that some unknown genii might by enchantment be luring me to my destruction, I

halted and then turned back as though to retrace my steps. Instantly the music ceased. I felt distressed, because the tones and extreme harmony had fascinated me.

“Hearing a fluttering sound above my head, I looked up and was much startled to behold, floating down toward me from a high gallery above, what seemed to be a white-winged angel. I saw in its hands the stringed instrument and a bow, the music being made by drawing the bow across the strings.

“Beneath these wings was a beautiful woman, and she rendered the sweetest strains as she descended. Coming near and directly above me, she reached her hand down as though expecting me to aid her in alighting. Taking the outstretched hand I gently drew her down to the earth, and the wings folded close to her sides. They were composed of immense billows of downy feathers strapped upon her body and limbs.

“‘Did you believe me an angel descended from heaven?’ she asked, in her soft musical voice, and in Sanscrit.

“‘You speak the language of the gods; I still think so,’ I responded, fascinated by her beauty.

“‘I saw you coming and waited for you,’ she said. ‘When I could play my violin for you I greeted you with my music and wanted to guide you. Why did you turn back?’

“ ‘Because I could not see you. Many a man has been seduced away from the paths of safety by the sweet songs of the siren as well as the sibyl,’ I responded.

“ ‘Ah! you fear what you cannot see; then behold me, for I am neither sibyl nor siren. I am Nahor’s daughter Nestle,’ and she raised her snowy wings, revealing a beauty of person which no dialect of the Sanscrit language can describe. Then raising her instrument she regaled me with strains of harmony entrancing to the soul.

“ ‘Who is Nahor, your father?’ I asked.

“ ‘He is king of the Nahites, where you are now trending. Will you go there?’ she asked pleasingly.

“ ‘What nature of people are the Nahites, my pretty fairy?’ I asked.

“ ‘They are a highly cultured people. The men are philosophers and the women are famed for beauty of person and the art of music, which they are taught from infancy,’ she said.

“ ‘Are you, then, an average specimen of your women?’ I asked.

“ ‘She laughingly replied: ‘I fear, to do full justice to my sisters, I must confess to being the homeliest woman in Nahi.’

“ ‘Then you have sisters. They must be amazingly beautiful, for you are the most charming woman I have ever seen,’ was my gallant but truthful reply.

“‘Ah, your compliment is modified by the circumstances of your travels and experience. Perhaps you have never seen beautiful women,’ was her naïve reply. ‘I have sisters, six of them. Perhaps you will think them prettier than I, but I am the only one that can fly.’

“‘Ha! ha!’ I laughingly responded. ‘Then I am right, you are the only angel in the family!’ At which she also laughed.

“‘I only fly downward; I cannot fly upward,’ she said.

“‘I trust you are not a fallen angel,’ I replied. She looked at me inquiringly with her big innocent blue eyes and asked, ‘What is that?’

“‘Oh, that is an angel who flies down and cannot fly back up again,’ was my evasive response.

“‘Yes, that’s it; I’m a fallen angel,’ she said, with bewitching ingenuousness.

“‘Where is your city?’

“‘It is up there,’ and she pointed toward the top of the highest peak.

“‘Surely this fascinating, little self-confessed fallen angel was wandering, for I could see no indication of even a site for a city up there.

“‘Divining my thoughts she said: ‘Come, I will show you,’ and she clapped her hands.

“‘To my consternation there sprang from the grotto two duplicates of your Cuth, Bingo, each so like unto the other they could not be told apart. Sweet Nestle sprang upon the back of

one, motioning me to take the other, and before I knew it we were galloping up the mountain side at a terrific rate, Nahor's fiddling daughter making the welkin ring with her joyous music.

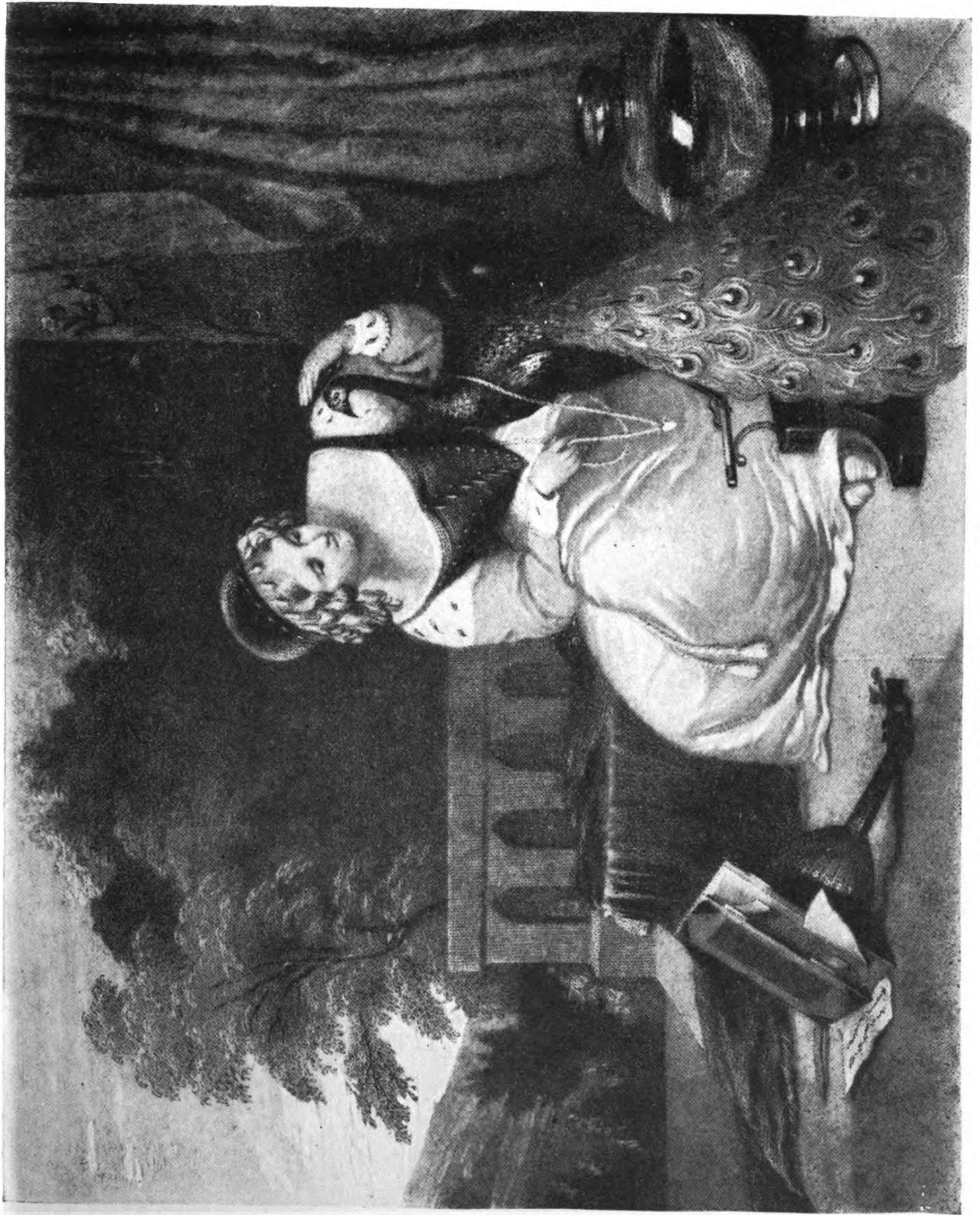
"The pace was never checked until we were suddenly deposited at the mouth of a cavern. I gave to each little devil a portion of my remaining beef, and they went frolicking back down the mountain side, alternating in carrying each other upon their strong backs.

"Nestle put her pretty head inside of the cavern and gave expression to a musical 'Whoo-hoo!' and out came four sturdy servants, bearing a splendidly equipped palyanka, into which we stepped and were borne into the dark passageway beneath the mountain.

"A short journey brought us again into daylight, and I must confess I never expected to see what I there beheld.

"Nestle bade me wait; then, stepping from the palyanka, she ran forward to a group of splendid, dignified yet very handsome women, older than she, and dressed in soft clinging folds of silk, which made them appear most graceful. They immediately took the feathered wings from Nestle and placed about her instead a garment of quite a different fashion.

"By a motion of her hand the little fallen angel had the palyanka brought to where they were standing. I stepped out and was presented as a



NESTLE THE MUSICAL DANCING OF NESTLE

wayfarer lost in the Gringo Mountains, therefore Nahor's laws of hospitality made it essential for her to conduct the stranger to her father's palace.

"I was more fortunate than you, Sago, for not being myself a warrior, I was costumed in a garb of peace, befitting a gentleman of philosophy. Therefore upon being conducted to a very plain but comfortable palace, and met upon the threshold by several very distinguished-looking men in garbs not greatly dissimilar to my own, I knew that my cordial welcome was a friendly one, and that the hospitality offered me would be most enjoyable.

"I was conducted into the palace, duly presented to the remainder of the family, consisting of a queenly old lady and six other beautiful daughters, then consigned to a large comfortable chamber for refreshing rest.

"Nestle practically became my sponsor, and with naïve frankness she saw to my every necessity and comfort. Although my heart was ripe for conquest, I could not for a single moment make her or any of her household my prey. There was an air of innate morality about that saintly family which had never before fallen within the confines of my experience. I was compelled to understand the difference between licentious liberty and the freedom of a conscious morality tempered with pure, untrammelled affection from the heart. For the first time in my life I experi-

enced a clean joy of perfect freedom with the most fascinating young maidens I had ever seen, without feeling they were legitimate prey for animal passion. It was the most wholesome lesson I had ever learned.

“One was as affectionate as the other, and the household seemed to feel there was no need for alarm when they heaped their honest caresses upon me and permitted me to return them in like kind.

“Nahor knew from some mysterious source that I was an ambassador from Ballyhack, and he entertained me in a manner befitting my rank. But, my brothers, instead of the wine being served in calabashes and tanks, it was served in small arguros goblets. The beef, instead of being placed upon the banqueting-table whole, was distributed in suitable portion to each individual, and upon platters, also made of arguros. They partook sparingly of meats, because of a variety of vegetable foods and fruits.

“It was at this table I learned my most impressive lessons in etiquette. I do not mean the stiff and unmannerly ceremony of royal households, or the too often unnecessary decorum of the family when strangers are present. I mean the natural ease and grace of good breeding, which should mark the intercourse between persons with clean minds, honest appetites, and refined instincts.

“Nahor was the patriarchal ruler over his small

community, called the Nahites, he having founded Nahi upon governmental principles of his own. He was a very aged man in point of years, but almost youthful in his energy and physical condition. He pointed to this personal preservation and the vigor, strength and great beauty of his people with great pride, as a vindication of his theories and principles. Love and respect for each other and the general welfare were the predominating features of the common intercourse.

“Now, their manner of life and government had come about in this manner, in Nahor’s own words:

“‘I Nahor, am the second son of Alcar, king of Arak. It came to pass that our father, feeling the approach of the end of his reign,—he being then one hundred and ten years of age,—called his sons to his bedside and held a long discussion regarding the future government of Arak.

“‘King Alcar came of a long line of entailed kingships, therefore he was imbued with the one idea that his eldest son must become king at his death. Now, I am regretful to have to relate that as long as memory goes back there has been a certain strain in our family causing the eldest son to partake of the nature of the ape. While it is undoubtedly a sign of the ancient lineage of our family, nevertheless it is embarrassing for a son who is in every way a full-fledged human being to be requested by his father to step aside

and permit an ape to become king of his nation, simply because of an ancient custom. I was by no means in accord or sympathy with his course, therefore I combated it with argument.

“ ‘I could not accept the theory that my father had a God-given right to delegate his powers over our persons to another and entail the kingly rights forever. Moreover, should we swear allegiance to our apish brother, to appease our dying father and satisfy his wishes, even though we might favor another of our brothers, that would not legalize the dying wishes of our father, for nature gives freedom of act to every living thing upon its being released from parental guardianship, when there are no community laws based upon covenant to govern such situations.

“ ‘It was only by courtesy or force of arms that our ancestors delegated from father to eldest son the kingly rights. I could not think it just for our father to overrule the majority opinion of all the brothers and say which of his blood and bone should become king over the others. We had hitherto enjoyed all property rights in common, which proved the practice was not based upon property rights. Our father’s powers ceased at death, by a natural statute of limitation. What his rights had been were personal gifts from heaven, and their benefits, during his lifetime, were graciously and equitably distributed among his sons—not his subjects, but his own blood and

bone. If they had the equal right to participate in the material gifts, they necessarily had an equal right to share in the joys of the spiritual or fleeting gifts. If they had these rights before death, they had them after death, for their blood rights were equal. Therefore upon demand they could claim an equal division of all the material property, share and share alike, because the father had acknowledged their born equality during life. The God-given power necessarily, then, was God's gift to all men, and each man was blessed with that power personally when death ended the father's guardianship, else the kingly power, to execute one's own will, would be restricted to but few individuals of the human race. The God-given power is the blood power of the living, not of the dead. The father could not stretch the pale of an entailed blood power over men who were by nature free. His rights came of a contract between men, and could not bind posterity.

“ ‘The oldest brother, having no rights over the property of his brethren, certainly was an usurper to assume rights over their persons. The personal rights of a man cease at his death.

“ ‘But our father's personal desire, though human, therefore fleeting, was a different matter. He had no legal power to bind us by oath to that which might afterward prove a curse to us; that would in itself be human usurpation of godly powers and entailing them to control future

generations of God's creatures without their consent. Therefore, all men could not possibly be born equal.

“The scheme of nature is to give equality to all men at birth and the right to delegate or surrender that equality, in whole or in part, during life only. To bind posterity, to be born ages hence, might easily mean to enslave mankind and chain them to conditions which would without their consent degrade them to brutish existence.

“The king who sits upon a throne in the belief that he holds it by a God-given right over his own brethren, although he may be a just king, and beloved by his brethren, is an imposter and a blasphemer.

“This was an abstract argument not intended to involve the personality of my elder brother, for I had the greatest sympathy for him. I was certain of my principles and, my father, being a scholarly man, quickly grasped the true philosophy in my argument.

“King Alcar, being at heart a just man, declared he had never before had the basic principles of his government and kingship so plainly revealed to him, and he congratulated me upon my learning. He then proposed an equal division of his domains, which consisted of six large cities and a barren waste located upon this spot,—distributing them by lot,—to which we all agreed because he had a perfect and legitimate right to

make such disposition of his real property during life as he saw fit. This arrangement left every brother a free man, with a domain of his own.

“‘To be sure, one must draw the blank, but it was arranged that each of those who fortunately drew a portion having a city should contribute to him who drew the desert such cattle, slaves, and free men and women as he might choose from their divisions, and these should be transported to such point upon his desert domain as he chose as the site for his city, and there maintained for two years by equal tribute.

“‘In this curious arrangement the ape drew the great city of Arak, I drew the desert, and, Marco, your father drew Ballyhack.’ ”

“‘Ballyhack!’” exclaimed all in a voice, and Bingo declared that their ancestors had ruled over Ballyhack for many centuries.

“‘Nevertheless, Nahor is our uncle, the brother of Imar our father. It is true our ancestors did rule over Ballyhack, but as a bailiwick of Arak.

“‘But let me finish Nahor’s story.

“‘Now, upon the allotment being made, all of the brethren were to take immediate possession of their provinces excepting the ape, who was not to come into possession of Arak till the death of Alcar.

“‘Knowing my brothers were all of a warlike spirit, and desiring to live in peace with them, I chose this, the most inaccessible spot in my do-

main, upon which to found my city. They had never seen this tight little valley, so snugly enconced in safety, believing I had nothing but the desert waste to cultivate. I informed them that I would make my choosing from their domains within the year, would personally conduct my household and people to the spot where I would build my city, and would expect promptly from them the tribute which our father had so generously provided for. But I would take my slaves, with provisions for six months' maintenance, at once. I made the tunnel through which you entered here and put my slaves to tilling the rich soil and building my city, which, as you have seen, is one large structure. I can close the tunnel and not a living soul can enter here. This cannot be said of any other province belonging to my brothers. The devil himself is barred from here. Our land here was infested with millions of crickets when we came, but we swept them out of it, being troubled no more.'

" 'And who is the devil?' I asked.

" 'Druble and his offspring,' was his startling reply. 'But let me finish. I was determined to make my community perfect, having beauty and accomplishment as my objects. Therefore I made careful arrangements to come quickly here with my free men and women, and went in secret disguise to all the cities and selected the most beautiful and accomplished men and women I could

find, fifty of each, mated them, secretly brought them here and closed the tunnel before my brothers were aware of what I had done. With the caravans we brought one hundred cattle, sheep, and goats and many fowl.

“ ‘For myself, I brought as wife the eldest daughter of my next youngest brother, the queen of all women. You have seen my people, you have heard our philosophy and our music, you have seen our industries. I leave it to your senses to determine whether my community is ideal or not.

“ ‘We have no laws, no crimes against each other, no wants, no sickness, and we are the happiest people in all the world, because the devil, with all his poisonous concoctions, cannot enter here and steal away the morals of my people. We make our own morals, therefore we know they are pure; we make our own happiness, therefore we know it is genuine; we define our love, therefore it is never debased. We love each other, therefore we serve each other with joy; we have everything in common, therefore we have nothing over which to dispute. We have universal beauty to please the eye, enchanting music to please the ear, the most delicious viands to please the taste; our province is a rose garden to fill the sense of smell with delight, and our whole being feels the composite joy of living. Go back, as your father bade you, and make report to Ballyhack. Say the

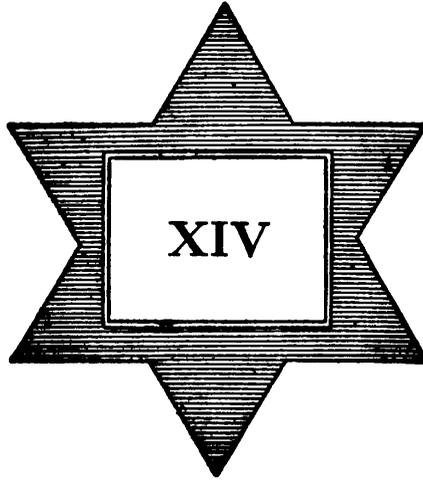
brother whom he abandoned has always been ready to welcome him, and he feels the disgrace that not one of his brothers has thought enough of him to ask if he had survived the hardships of pioneering. Say last, and loudest, that I am the greatest king in all the world, and the happiest man to boot. Incidentally, my brothers never gave me one gourdful of the tribute due me.'

"On the following day Nahor gathered his people in the beautiful grounds about his palace that all might bid me an affectionate farewell.

"The whole populace wept when I departed. Sweet little Nestle, with her retinue of good women, alone accompanied me to the cavern. The men again carried our palyanka to the outer entrance, then respectfully withdrew, knowing there would be a pathetic leave-taking. The lovely daughter of Nahor lay sobbing in my arms till the devils came to take turn about carrying me down the mountain. They were never known to enter the tunnel, or to steal from or harm a Nahite.

"Sweetly and tearfully Nestle bade me a last fond good-by, and I went away with the lovely music from her violin ringing in my ravished ears and a curious gripping at my heart."

Marco's story had caused all the females to weep and fall into a state of sadness, and when Paledo said his story would not make them laugh they gladly withdrew, leaving the men alone to hear Paledo's story of adventure.



THE ADVENTURES OF PALEDO

“**I** MUST confess,” said Paledo, “I did not leave Ballyhack with joy in my heart, because walking was bad and I could not well sit upon the back of my burro.”

All the brothers laughed uproariously at Paledo’s reference to his toboggan slide down the mountain on that memorable occasion.

“Nevertheless, I found solace in the fact that I had secreted a goat-skin filled with the rarest wine our cellar afforded, and every little while I regaled myself with a noggin of the liquid joy as I journeyed, until journeying became a nuisance. Finally I could navigate no longer, so I dropped my precious goat-skin upon the earth, kicked my burro and, thinking it was a downy couch, I lay down upon a rock-pile and went to sleep.

“Marco, you spoke something of philosophy. Let me tell you a bit of philosophy I discovered.

"The latent fighting qualities of every animal, be he man or beast, are awakened and put into the active state by drunkenness. I was awakened by a consciousness of being mauled. At first I thought Bingo had changed his mind, grabbed the other quarter of beef, and was beating me with it. But when an extra hard welt caught me on the chin it knocked me wide awake, and, so help me, St. Druble! if that burro wasn't taking aim and trying to kick a new spot each time, he having begun at my feet and worked up to my chin. Even the soles of my buskins were dented.

"I caught him by one leg, but he kicked me in the mouth with the other; then I got both hind legs, and he reached around and bit a piece out of my leg as big as a pomegranate. I tried to let go, and he kicked me on the side of my head. I tried to swing him, and he turned over on his back and began fighting me with both forefeet, at the same time taking whole mouthfuls out of my anatomy. Finally, getting my hair in his beastly mouth, he nearly scalped me before he let go. Grappling him, I got on top, and we rolled about over the jagged rocks until I did not have enough tin left on me to make a pair of spectacles.

"At this juncture we struck one unusually large boulder, which split us out, and we rolled apart. When we were able to sit up and notice each other, we both sat upon our haunches and glared. To save my soul from perdition, I could not help

laughing. I was going to kill him, nevertheless I laughed. If that beast didn't laugh back at me I'm a goat! Every time I let out a laugh he brayed, until I caught that crazy-fool kind of hysterical laughter that wouldn't let go, and I nearly laughed myself to death. I was afraid to lie down and roll, thinking he might playfully jump onto me again.

"We both began to droop at the same time, and finally we vomited together. Realizing what had happened to the poor beast, having seen my goat-skin flattened out near by, I understood that wine makes all beasts akin and we were equals. Crawling over to where he was now lying, sick and groaning, I placed my battered arms about his neck and wept, promising him everything if he would not die. And thus we dropped to sleep on equal terms.

"The strange results of my adventurous mission came out of this combat, as you will see.

"It was early morn when I awoke, and my donkey was carelessly browsing about, as though nothing had occurred to upset his digestion or give him a headache such as I had. I would have thought the past night a mere nightmare, had I not been reassured of it by bruises too numerous to mention and the loss of several teeth.

"I am neither modest nor bashful, as you well know, but when I looked at my tin breeches and my wrecked corselet it dawned upon me why that

drunken fool laughed at me. No wonder he kept his head away from me while grazing. I had a notion to give him a few floating ribs, but upon second thought I decided to make the best of it and forget it. There's nothing like a good, hard beating to sober a drunken fool and put some sense into him.

"There was no other alternative but to take off the hanging remnants of my breeches and straddle them over the donkey, for they were a hindrance in walking in their present state. But when I picked up the goat-skin and attempted to place it upon the donkey's back, that bird balked, kicked at the skin, then went tearing down the side of the mountain, and I after him. I hope this picture was not recorded in nature to be developed so anyone may recognize me. As my tin breeches whipped about from side to side, beating against the trees and rocks, it looked like a headless man having a hell of a ride. They flogged the sides of the beast till he was raw, and the clatter and bang re-echoed from mountain to mountain, and must have been heard in Hellagoland.

"I was minus both beast and breeches, and as far as I know that donkey is running yet. I was sore puzzled to know what to do. Suddenly I realized all my provisions had gone with the burro. It was too far to get back to Ballyhack, and I knew not whither to go in front of me. Then I wept that I should thus be cut off in my prime,

for death by starvation or the vultures stared me in the face—with my tin breeches on, I would have stood a better chance of escaping the buzzards. I shuddered to think I would soon grow too weak to fight them off and would have to lie or sit calmly and watch them eat my legs off.

“I was contemplating self-destruction and regretting that I had not permitted the drunken beast to kick me to death, when a richly accoutered horseman passed near where I was sitting. Seeing my woeful countenance, he dismounted and asked me if I were in trouble.

“‘Trouble!’ I exclaimed. ‘Does it look as if good fortune is fanning me?’

“He laughed and replied: ‘It looks like something has been keeping the flies off you.’

“‘You are not making sport of me in this plight, are you?’ I asked, for I was in no gentlemanly mood. Moods could not clothe me, and no gentleman goes about naked.

“‘No, indeed not,’ he earnestly exclaimed; ‘I am anxious to give you succor.’

“‘If you don’t mind, I’d rather you’d make it a pair of breeches,’ I grumblingly answered.

“At this moment I heard in the distance the bray of my donkey. In my mind I could see him entangled in my tin nether garment. Doubtless he, too, was braying for succor. I heartily hoped he would choke to death and become bait for the buzzards.

“ ‘What was that?’ asked the stranger.

“ ‘That? Oh, that’s the cause of all my troubles. It is laughing at me. He has my tin breeches on.’ Then the picture of my wrestling, kicking, fighting match with that drunken burro rose up before me in all its humor, and I laughed till I thought my battered ribs would fall through the holes he had kicked in my corselet.

“The stranger, doubtless thinking I had suddenly lost my mind, started to mount his steed, but I found time to say:

“ ‘Wait a moment till I tell you what I am laughing at. It may not seem funny to you, but try it once, and it will make you laugh yourself to death that you are not killed.’ Then I related in detail my encounter with the drunken mule; the empty goat-skin lying upon the ground attested the truth of my story. I refrained from telling him that my own beastly drunkenness was the first cause of the whole thing.

“Grasping the spirit of the comical situation, we laughed a duet, alternately lifting each other up as we rolled upon the ground. It’s a wonderful comfort to have another see your joke and have an honest laugh with you. Good-fellowship was at once established between us, and we were in the midst of one of our paroxysms when to my surprise a train of laden camels came up. My new-found friend had not had an opportunity to explain to me that he was an ambassador return-

ing to his country, and that he was accompanied by a large retinue.

“When the cortége beheld its master rolling upon the ground with a naked stranger, they halted, with exclamations of surprise and alarm, and prepared to dispatch me in short order; but the master told them the story. They saw nothing laughable about it, and to our utter disgust they stood blankly staring at us, with jaws sagged and tears in their eyes. Nothing makes one feel so sorry for himself as to have others fail to laugh at that which stirs his risibles. They had never heard a joke before, therefore they did not know whether to laugh or cry.

“We looked foolishly at each other, and again the donkey brayed in the distance.

“‘Even an ass can see a joke?’ muttered the stranger. Then he instructed his caravaner to open a package of his goods, from which he selected suitable clothing to cover my nakedness. Then he had one of his slaves rub my wounds with an astringent, which greatly allayed my pains and sufferings.

“Bralezio, for that was the generous traveler’s name, insisted that I should join his retinue. As I had seen evidence of his need for an appreciative companion who could see a joke, for he had a few to spring and he always felt foolish and selfish when he had to laugh at his own jokes to make them go, I accepted so eagerly the caravaner

thought I was going to assault Bralezio, and he drew a scimitar a yard long. Bralezio reassured him, and he soon learned to understand my emphatic ways of expressing myself.

"The caravan rested for a day, and my new-made friend proved to be a friend indeed. Upon my telling him of my mission, he exclaimed:

" 'Why, how fortunate! I am going to the sea myself; also to my own country, beyond the sea. You will come with me. We will travel together and be of great assistance to each other. As Duke Paledo, ambassador from Ballyhack, you can bring back half the women in my country to embellish your seraglio. In my country we coin wit into wafers of gold. You can bring back bushels of them.'

"I gladly accepted the challenge, not knowing I would have an occasion to regret it. Bralezio was all right. He started life as a butcher boy, went to night-school, studied law, was elected to Congress, was defeated for a second term, was a friend of the king, was appointed ambassador to Boggyland, got jungle fever, in a moment of aberration killed his doctor, which threatened to bring on international complications, and was recalled.

"He pointed at this strenuous record with pride, and declared that if he could not get a government life job on that showing he would steal for a living, for he had never done an

honest day's work in his life. He said he was called a politician. Upon asking him the meaning of the word, he laughed and replied:

“ ‘It means everything, from a saint to a thief but more often an unscrupulous, heartless, dishonest person seeking to live without labor by always deceiving the credulous and innocent people into a belief that he is a great and wonderful being sacrificing himself and seeking office for their good, not his own profit. As a rule, upon getting into office, if he does not steal the office furniture it is because it is nailed down.’

“He laughed when I expressed my astonishment that the people were so weak-minded as to be thus fooled.

“ ‘Wait till we get over there, then I will show you things you never dreamed of in the way of respectable, even honorable, tricks to skin the people, who toil and labor like beasts of burden that the noble politicians may revel in continuous luxury. All legislation is primarily for the purpose of taxing the people and perpetuating the politicians in office.’

“ ‘Have they no honest politicians there?’ I asked.

“ ‘Not now; they have recently all been retired to make way for a so-called new nationalism, which means permanent rule for the new political machine culled from all parties. They mislead the people with high sounding names.’

“ ‘I think I would be afraid to go to such a country,’ I said.

“ ‘On the contrary, you will be welcomed with open arms into the ranks of those who vote, but pay no taxes,—those who enjoy the blessed privilege of breathing the fresh air of a land of liberty and sending home to their own country the goods and chattels which they reap or steal there. Our system compels our citizens to pay for all commodities brought into our country, but there is no tax upon aliens carrying our properties to foreign lands.’

“ ‘I am more than ever afraid to visit such a land. People who would do such curious things would take liberties with my personal rights, which I would resent, and being ignorant of their laws and customs, and my country having no representation there, I would be in desperate straits should I kill a man who wilfully did me an injury or injustice, as is the practice over here.’

“ ‘My companion looked startled when I said this, and then he replied:

“ ‘My good man, you would start a graveyard over there working on such a system, for it is no uncommon thing to be kicked or cursed, insulted and robbed, and abused generally. I am frank to say our own government sets the example by doing grave injustice to the people whenever it can get away with it.’

“ ‘What a strange land, where a man who has

been living by its bounty thus reproves it,' I exclaimed.

" 'Oh, I have a license to speak the truth about it. Now my pay is stopped and I am journeying at my own expense. Moreover, I can knock as hard as I please over here, and they cannot punish me for libel or slander.'

" 'Tell me some more about your curious customs,' I beseeched him, and as the journey was tedious and the hours irksome he gladly complied.

" 'I am sometimes not proud of my country myself, and I do not mind saying it is because I do a little independent thinking. I can see the remarkable changes which have taken place in the condition of the people since my boyhood. But let me tell you a story.

" 'Once upon a time Satan made a tour of my country, finally sitting through one term of Congress. It was noticed he was extremely morose and seemed to be most unhappy as the time for his departure approached.

" 'One of his entertainers asked of him: "Why don't you introduce this system in your realm? You must be getting crowded down there."

" ' "I draw the line somewhere. I am very sad. I have been starting new colonies in my realm with people sent there from this country. I thought because they had been convicted under your criminal laws it was right that they should receive the time-honored punishment. I have

found out my mistake. They are deserving of eternal sympathy. I shall return at once, apologize, and introduce into my realm all the comforts of home."

" " "Then you do not approve of our form of government?" exclaimed the guide.

" " "It would be unbecoming my realm," replied Satan. "Why, practically all your crimes here are committed either in self-defense or in a fit of irresponsible insanity. The human mind as well as the human body has limits to its endurance. A man may be physically as fat as an ox, yet be a mental cadaver. You are starving the mentality and common sense out of your people, by working them to death physically. Your system is driving your thinking people insane and your ignorant masses, who do not understand, into an unspeakable state of crime."

" " "We do not view it in that dubious light here," retorted the entertainer, with a show of displeasure.

" " "We! Who are we?" exclaimed Satan. "The very ones responsible for the conditions. You are satisfied because you are satiated. The ruling power here consists either of ignorant asses or arrant knaves, for you are surely drifting upon the rocks of revolution."

" " "Where do you see signs of revolution?" demanded the guide, now indignant.

" " "Everywhere. Your intermittent internal

strife is gradually becoming chronic. You have so much of it you cannot recognize its meaning. You call it by numerous euphonic names to rob it of its dangerous influence upon the public mind. But I saw it in your own Congress. You, and thousands like you, are so blinded by your belief in the infallibility of your centralized government you cannot see your own danger. You cannot help it, you have been educated to it. You are one of the essential elements in the system. You are sowing the seeds of discontent and revolution while you believe you should sit up and be worshiped as gods for your benign benevolence to the poor masses whose energies support you."

" "Ha! ha! you make me laugh. When will we awaken to our danger?" asked the guide.

" "When the pressure upon the laboring masses approaches the limit. You will see the first signs in your own Congress. A strong social and labor delegation will be elected to Congress, with power to throw its force to which ever party or faction will yield to its pressure. It will become the balancing wheel in Congress, and will compel recognition of the rights of the masses," was Satan's ominous reply.

" "Do you see signs of this danger in the near future?" asked the guide, now rather calm. Satan had reversed his wheel for him.

" "Yes, it will soon be upon you," replied Satan.

“ “ “What can we do to avert this danger?” anxiously inquired the guide.

“ “ “Danger! Avert!” thundered Satan. “The people will only assert their rights. It is to become a fact. Were it not for your dumb selfishness, I would inform you that while I intend to put in new plumbing and several improvements to mitigate the discomforts of those who have been the innocent victims of your nefarious system, and sent to hell by your false pretense of justice, I’d call your attention to the fact that all the furnaces will be kept aglow as of old,” said Satan in disgust.

“ “ “That’s not troubling my conscience much,” said the retainer doggedly.

“ “ “No, not now; but you will recall this polite conversation when you are alone. You will think about it. It will settle deeper into your shallow mind; then it will trouble you some,” was the answer. “You knowingly play upon the ignorance of the thousands whom you entice to come into your country, by making them believe they will have greater liberties here, whereas they have less true liberty than in their own countries. What you call liberty is license. There is a vast difference between liberty and license. Liberty means to speak and act by the dictates of one’s own will, while a license gives one the right to speak and act by the will of someone else. License means to purchase the right to violate the law. If there

were no law to prevent free action, there would be no need of license."

" " "I should like to hear this discussed in Congress. Your arguments, no doubt, are fallacious, but they sound plausible," said the retainer.

" " "Point out the fallacy or sophistry. I am open to conviction," replied Satan. "I will say this, however, the time has passed when these questions may be openly discussed. I have seen good men in Congress almost choke to death because the rules gag a man on every subject until it is the pleasure of the powers that be to allow him that God-given privilege—the power of free speech. If a man cannot give vent to his views in Congress, where your laws are made, how could the people expect to enjoy free speech at all? If this be your boasted civilization, deliver me from it. Hell is much better. I would rather be primitive and happy than live in this constant state of mental and physical turmoil, without aim or purpose beyond bread and salt. You have deprived your laboring masses of all the essential harmonies of life.

" " "You asked me if I saw signs of revolution," continued Satan. "Let me call your mind to something important. When you squeeze music out of the people it disappears from public places. A man may peddle carrots on the public thoroughfares, but not music. The people have no time to devote to the study of refining things after a

day of strenuous labor. A peaceful, satisfied, and prosperous nation bursts forth in song and music, for music is the expression of harmony, order, system. The people cannot afford the instruments which make mechanical music, therefore you have taken from their mouths mirthful song and implanted in their hearts the silent curse they dare not utter. Your conditions have so long deprived your people of good music, the kind which makes rest in their souls when they do hear it, it no longer arouses a refined sentiment; instead, they prefer only the garrulous strains which make them leap, dance, and scream—another indication of mental stress. Harmony flees from a land threatened with convulsion, as rats flee from a rotten ship before it sinks.”

“The guide took this severe lecture in silent contempt, and when Satan ceased speaking he said:

“ ‘ ‘In this country we call those holding your views pessimists, reformers, muck-rakers, socialists, anarchists, and many other appropriate names.’ ”

“ ‘ ‘Thou fool!’ ” Satan only answered. “You will surely get what is coming to you. I have never found it to fail; a man who is profiting by a system, no matter whether it is honorable or not, will defend it.” Then he took his departure.

“ ‘That is all I want to hear about your country,’ I said. ‘I am sure, now, I will not go farther

than the sea with you. I want to see the great ocean, otherwise I would turn back.'

"Bralezio laughed at me, saying: 'You must not think I am slandering my own country. Satan had observed only part of the naked truth. It is useless and profitless to make enemies there by complaining of the conditions. It, like some cancerous disease, is fixed in the system of the nation, and is eating out its heart. It requires some very strong and radical treatment to cure it. The remedy may destroy it. From time to time, as they occur to me, I will briefly tell you more of our troubles; but I shall refrain from long essays, hoping you may change your mind and visit my land.'

"'Before you drop the subject,' I said, 'I will hear a little more. Why do your people submit to a condition so manifestly hurtful to the general welfare of the masses?'

"His reply was prompt.

"'Because the people have lost control of their own government. They innocently entrusted the conduct of their government to their respective political parties. These parties built up a machine which became stronger than the nation itself, and it usurped all the powers of government, leaving to the masses little voice in making their own laws. Therefore, instead of the people dictating to their own government what their will is, the government dictates to the people, until it

has assumed the nature of a political oligarchy with inquisitorial and monarchical proclivities insisting upon extending its ramifications to the very hearth-stones of the republic, without constitutional authority and by tricky legislation. It is in the selection of candidates they fool the people. No man can be nominated without being a true and tried tool of the machine. Therefore nomination is but the acknowledgment that the candidate is ready for promotion, his election and subsequent pay becoming his reward. Where men formerly served in office free or for nominal fees, they now receive princely salaries. In early times common sense and common law prevailed; but now statutory law has displaced the common law, and common sense is not heeded. The magistrates construe the statutes according to their own whims or humors. The simple instruments of law assume to be the law. Love, respect, and confidence in the law, like music, have fled the hearts of the people, and only fear, hatred, and a secret contempt for the law and its machinery remains. It is all a cruel mockery, and may explode at any exciting time.'

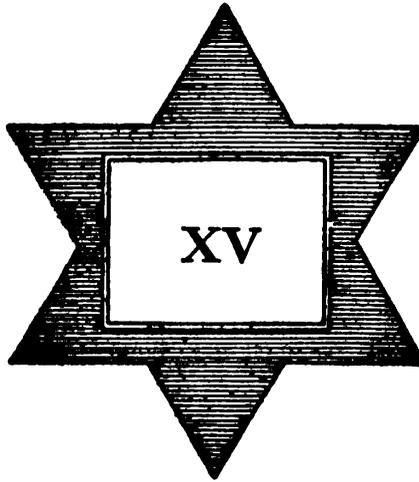
“‘And yet you are returning home to ask for a government position?’ I said.

“‘That is my way of showing my contempt for the system. Thousands of the government employees know the true conditions, and care not. They have seen so much dishonor and crooked-

ness condoned they see no profit in displaying a conscience themselves. The system has developed into definitely favored and unfavored classes. Those who toil and produce, against the official and professional sycophants who toil not nor produce, but are always devising new laws to steal the surplus products of the laboring masses; hence the rich are very rich and the poor are very poor. The professional classes are growing out of all proportions to the needs of the people, consequently their fees increase accordingly, in order that their kind may survive and maintain the dignity of a favored class. Their voting influence begets for them favorable legislation, enabling them to plunder the people with impunity.'

"'I desire to hear no more,' I declared.

"With a deep sigh Bralezio ceased talking and dropped into troubled meditation."



PALEDO HAS A DEADLY ENCOUNTER

CONTINUING the story of his travels to the sea, Paledo said:

“We had been traveling for several days and had reached the place where the mountains and the plains meet. To my surprise, I saw near at hand a body of fully accoutered and panoplied horsemen. They looked dangerous, and I cautioned Bralezio to put himself on guard and ascertain their character before proceeding farther.

“The caravan was halted and our retinue was put in order for defense against attack, should the strangers prove to be unfriendly. Then we sent an envoy to inquire of them their attitude toward strangers traveling in their country.

“In the meantime Bralezio had discovered, hiding in the thick shrubbery, a most beautiful but frightened young woman. Her rich apparel indicated a person of high rank.

“Upon being questioned, she declared the horsemen to be of a near-by province, and that the Black Prince had come to her village to pillage it and carry away the fair maidens for which it was renowned. She was the daughter of the chief ruler of the province, and upon being advised of their coming she had fled and concealed herself, living for several days on wild berries and herbs. The horsemen were in search of her. Should they find her, she would be carried away captive by the Black Prince, the leader.

“Our messenger returned, saying the strangers had demanded of him to tell if he had seen anywhere hiding in the woods a young woman. He, having not seen the woman, gave a truthful answer that he knew nothing of such a person, that he was with the convoy conducting an ambassador to the sea.

“They then sent word they would not molest us. While we had a band of terrific fighters with us, we were not looking for a fight. Therefore we took a wide detour to evade them. Evidently they were determined to inspect our caravan, for they started toward us.

“In the meantime Bralezio had disguised the young lady as a page and had hidden her behind a large oak until he could parley with the suspicious strangers. Then he himself donned his armor and rode toward the men to invite them to come and partake of a noggin of wine. They

accepted, but in a manner to indicate it was for the purpose of inspecting our outfit.

“One of the strangers struck our chief caravaneer with the flat side of his sword, and hardly had he done so before his sword was broken and his plumed bonnet lay rolling in the dust and himself battered and bruised before his companions could come to his rescue. Our men carried large truncheons with heavy iron heads, and as the invaders dashed into the midst of them to avenge their battered fellow they began to swing these truncheons with deadly effect, causing the horsemen to turn tail and flee.

“Bralezio and I seized spears, mounted, and went in hot pursuit, but the strangers galloped quickly away.

“Seeing we were capable of defending ourselves, we accepted the young lady’s suggestion to go to her village, not far distant, and rest there, because it was walled and afforded safety from attack should the strangers return. As the last of our caravan passed through the portal in the village wall the Black Prince himself came dashing up to the gate.

“Seizing a heavy truncheon, I stood at the entrance and demanded to know what he wanted. Not the least abashed at my threatening attitude, but taking an insolent position on his charger, he informed me that upon returning to where the fight started, to recover his indiscreet comrade’s

bonnet, which was prized highly, he had found behind a large oak tree garments which unmistakably belonged to a young lady of rank, therefore he had concluded that the handsome page whom he had seen in the camp was none other than the aforesaid maiden. He proposed that she forthwith be delivered over to him, or he would return with a large body of armed men and pillage and burn the city.

“This impudence angered me. I could not reach him, but with one blow of my huge trunchion I felled his charger, and before he struck the ground I was upon him and had him disarmed. He showed fight, and I handed him a few welts over the head that put bees in his bonnet. Taking him by the neck, I dragged him inside the inclosure and ordered the gates closed. Sending for Bralezio and the young lady’s father, we court-martialed him, stripped him naked, and turned him out on the plain as bait for the buzzards.

“That night we banqueted on tender young cosset and excellent wine, and as I started for my chamber, heavy with sleep, I saw Bralezio with his pretty page in his arms; she was kissing and caressing him as if he were a young brother. I cast some eyes at her homely sister, but she was too dumb to understand.

“The next morning very early we started on our way, soon leaving the village far behind us.

Bralezio said he would follow and overtake us within the hour; at the end of which time imagine my surprise to see two horsemen come riding toward us instead of one. Bralezio had persuaded the old chief that his daughter's safety depended upon his taking her with him to Kebbo, the seaport for which we were making.

"Zuza—that was the young lady's name—was greatly rejoiced when her father gave his consent for her to accompany Bralezio. It meant travel and a great lark for her. She was not bashful, therefore she continued in male attire, and she looked very pretty and youthful astride a splendid steed. Her brother had loaned her his set of light armor, with bonnet and plumes, and she carried a short sword. Really, she was a charming little guardsman, and Bralezio was immensely proud of her, while all the men of our caravan wore pleased smiles. There is nothing like a pretty young female to put spirit in men, for a fight or frolic.

"In three days we were in sight of Kebbo, and Bralezio confided to me he had brought with him a large quantity of gold, which was concealed in the packs, not even his chief caravaner being aware of it. It was his intention to marry Zuza at once, she having promised to be his wife. Therefore it was essential to put upon her the dress of woman. Opening one of the packs, he took therefrom richly ornamental clothes for me

and for himself, also beautiful silken robes for his future wife, which we all donned.

“Zuza looked pretty in her coat of mail, but she was sweeter and better in a garb befitting her sex.

“ ‘I do not know what the customs of Kebbo are, but the inhabitants will be less liable to molest anything we are carrying on our persons than in a pack, therefore we will each strap upon us one of these leathern bags and carry as much of the gold with us as we can; the remainder we will have to take chances on,’ said Bralezio. Then he took gold bars from the pack and put into our pockets to the safe limit of our ability to carry them. We now approached the sea.

“When I first looked upon the sea a storm was raging. The waves seemed like unto the Gringo Mountains. ‘And you must go upon these waters to return to your land?’ I asked of Bralezio.

“ ‘Yes,’ he replied. ‘Will you go with me?’

“ ‘Not,’ I responded, ‘unless you take me by force. The solid earth is good enough for me.’

“ ‘Then we shall have some joy here before my leaving. I will also tell you more of the laws and customs of my country.’ He now directed a courier to go to the gates of the city and announce the approach of the ambassador and ask if we were welcome. The courier returned forthwith, saying we would be welcomed with great gladness.

“Now, if you are becoming drowsy over my long story, prepare to be awakened and hearken unto the ancient Sanskrit saw: ‘Look before you leap, and don’t leap till you know where you are going to land.’

“Neither my companion nor I knew anything about this city, consequently we walked blindly into the boiling pot, and in attempting to get out we jumped right into the glowing coals.

“Brother Sago, you swore to burn the city of Arak. I will make a pact with you right now, and draw to determine which will get the first action. I will go with you to pillage and burn Arak if you in turn will join me in a siege against Kebbo, for, like you, I will not die in comfort if I must leave this bedlam intact and upon the map.”

“We will leave Bingo at home to guard Ballyhack, and we will all join you in your campaign,” declared Marco.

“You will—will what?” roared Bingo. “There will be no campaigns unless I am in them,” and they drank to the success of future trouble.

Continuing his story, Paledo said:

“We donned our best trappings and started toward the city. It was surrounded by a high wall, the outside surface of which was studded with sharp spikes. The gates were huge affairs made of bronze ornately decorated. A long inclosed balcony was constructed above the gates, the sides and bottom of which were slashed with

balistrarias for the use of many cross-bow men in defense of the gate. Similar sea-walls extended far out into the ocean, and against these terrific waves were continually breaking, making assault by that way impossible. In the event of siege by land, this afforded means of obtaining supplies by water. The dark hulks of several triremes could be seen upon the calm waters within these protecting walls. I was much impressed by the appearance of strength marking the whole place. It was a veritable fortress, with but a single weak spot; their water supply they obtained through a deep tunnel tapping a river high up in the mountains. It could be shut off by the combined efforts of many men.

“Notwithstanding all this visible show of strength, with five hundred Rokites I can capture the city in a night and frighten its people to death.

“As we approached the city the gates were opened and a body of full panoplied and magnificently accoutered horsemen, carrying long spears, rode forth to meet us. As their bright armor and glinting spear-heads gleamed in the sunlight, it made a scene of warlike splendor such as I had never before seen.

“‘This must be a rich city,’ I said to Bralezio.

“‘Apparently so,’ he replied. ‘There is the prince of the province, doubtless, leading the cavalcade,’ and he indicated a splendid young man

wearing no armor. His long blond hair hung in graceful curls which tumbled about his neat shoulders, giving him something of a feminine appearance. He was clad in white brocade silk elaborately ornamented with gold lace. His hat was broad and of soft felt, flopping gracefully about his face as he rode. He rode between two esquires wearing full armor and helmets, one of these guardsmen being visored.

"The cavalcade stopped, and we did the same. The unvisored esquire dashed forward, saying:

" 'His Royal Highness, the Prince of Kebbo, sends greetings to all friendly strangers and welcomes them to his city.'

"Bralezio bowed low and replied: 'Say to his Royal Highness, the Prince of Kebbo, we are extremely grateful for his generous hospitality. We will follow.' The esquire carried this message to his prince.

"As the cavalcade maneuvered, preparatory to returning to the city, I said to Bralezio: 'Look at that cadaver with the window shutter over his face. If I have not seen him before I'll eat my buskins.'

"Bralezio only laughed, but I was troubled in my mind. But I soon forgot the matter in the excitement of entering the city.

"We have heretofore seen in the cities which we have visited that crude splendor which nature assists much to adorn, but I was wholly unpre-

pared to see what we beheld as the great doors clanged behind us.

“The streets were thronged with cleanly garbed men and women. The men wore short tunics and the women concealed their faces. They were the busiest people I had ever seen. It was a mart, and everyone seemed to be buying or selling. The men carried wide baskets filled with their wares, consisting of trinkets, long strings of bright colored beads, silken scarfs and mantillas, sandals, dulbands, and innumerable other things.

“The women, bedizened with dazzling colors and literally smothered in beads, carried their children upon their backs, thus displaying their Rokite origin. They were Hebrews. It was one confused bedlam, the streets being in a continual uproar with the cries of the trades-people and the wrangling of their customers. Their language was a jargon to my ears. I could understand nothing of what they said.

“Bedouins from the desert were coming and going through a gate on the opposite side of the city, but none seemed to pass through the gate by which we had entered.

“We had been taken in charge by an aged patriarch with a long flowing beard and wearing a headpiece like a beer barrel. He slapped the impudent vendors out of our path as we went through their ranks.

“I am convinced from what I saw there that

commercialism is the bane of the large cities. The keen competition for profit begets unscrupulous habits and engenders enmity among men. The mind-rending noise and confusion must necessarily make chattering idiots of the people.

“We were conducted to a prison-like domicile and told that it would be our place of abode while we were in the city. It looked like a jail to me, and our stay might be indefinite. Our caravan having gone in another direction, I was surprised, upon passing within, to find all of our goods heaped upon the floor of the inner court and our chief caravaner standing guard over them. He looked worried and seemed anxious to have word with his master, yet he would not speak with him confidentially in the sight or presence of our ancient guide.

“We were conducted to our several apartments, which were widely separated from one another. Bralezio protested against being too widely separated from his fiancée, fearing harm might befall her. Nevertheless, she was turned over to the tender mercies of a motherly old shrew, who, with great volubility, declared the fair damsel should be as tenderly cared for as a suckling babe while she was under her protection.

“I felt the stifling sensation of being imprisoned, and as the day passed without any callers I began to grow suspicious. Seeking Bralezio, I said:

“‘Look here, Brazzy, you got me into this; how are you going to get me out?’

“‘Wait! I’ll settle this. I’ll spring my credential as ambassador and demand some attention.’

“‘Spring them where? I’ve tried every door I could find and there is but one way out of here; that door is double-barred.’

“‘What! Do you mean to say we are in prison?’ he exclaimed indignantly.

“‘You may call it what you will, but we are between four walls, and we can’t get out. We generally call that being in jail,’ I exclaimed.

“‘Well, what about Zuza, then?’

“‘If I knew, I would be glad to tell you,’ I gloomily replied.

“Then together we went over the whole place, finding not a single human being. Our caravaner and all our packs were gone, and the portal through which we had come was closed and securely fastened. We were convinced, without discussion, that we were imprisoned.

“Bralezio was now beside himself with rage, declaring he would make someone suffer for this outrage. I informed him that someone was already suffering, he and I, therefore what was the use of drawing others into it? The thing was to get safely out of it. ‘But,’ said I, ‘you go on punching holes in the air; I’m going to look this place over and see if there isn’t a rat-hole left unplugged.’

“In a remote spot I found a balistraria with a broken casement, leaving a space through which I could squeeze my person in an emergency. I returned to Bralezio and cautioned him that we must by all means appear cheerful and unsuspecting should anyone come, then, when night fell, we would complain of great fatigue and would retire for the night. We could then go out and see the town.

“‘We shall be recognized,’ said Bralezio.

“‘Leave that to your gay old uncle, who was educated in a boarding-school,’ I said. ‘In yonder closet are two black robes and tall bonnets like the jailer wears. I saw many of them in the crowds yesterday. I guess they will about do for two such ecclesiasts as we.’

“Hearing some one rattling the bars at the door, we struck into a cheerful conversation, which threw off his guard the old fellow with the flowing beard, who entered with food and water. We partook of these sparingly, fearing they might be poisoned.

“I had suggested to Bralezio this bit of caution previously. We were ravenously hungry, but had planned that we could eat when we went out to see the town.

“As we ate, the old man informed us that on the following morning we would go to call upon the prince who ruled the province, and that Zuza would accompany us. That sounded plausible

enough, but did not account for our being prisoners.

“Nevertheless, we effusively thanked him, and asked as a favor that we be not disturbed from our slumbers during the night, in order that we might be fully rested and fresh for the morrow. He assured us we would not be, and with a twinkle in his merry old eye he left us, and we distinctly heard the bar drop into its sockets on the door.

“An hour later we slipped into the black gowns, put on the tall bonnets, and I hid my iron-bound truncheon beneath my black night-gown. Bralezio put his dagger in easy reach, and we sallied forth to do Kebbo by flambeaux.

“‘I am in a fighting mood to-night. The gods help him who bumps me this night,’ I said to Bralezio.

“‘I’ll carve a cross on priest or parishioner who bars my way to Zuza,’ said Bralezio.

“With no little difficulty we climbed through the broken casement to the ground beneath it, having agreed to first make a hurried tour about the city walls to ascertain the difficulties we would encounter fleeing out of the city, should opportunity afford.

“Bralezio could speak the Hebrew tongue, but I could neither speak nor understand it, therefore it was essential that we should remain together.

“As we cautiously made our way out of the narrow passage, we were surprised to emerge

into a kind of garden surrounding a large brightly illuminated palace, undoubtedly the prince's residence. In a secluded corner we saw three men laughing and talking.

"Motioning to Bralezio to conceal himself in the thick shrubs, I crept close to where the men sat. I was delighted to hear the Sanscrit language.

"I at once recognized the blond-haired prince who greeted us upon the plains, and I knew I had seen that cadaver with his visor down. It was none other than the Black Prince whom I had stripped naked and turned out upon the plains.

"The gods come to our rescue! I knew we were done for could we not make our escape. Where, oh, where were our fighting men? In prison also, perhaps.

"'Ha! ha! my good Sanzara, you have done exceedingly well. You have brought in excellent game, two ambassadors, much gold, and my sweet Zuza, and that without bloodshed. I approve of that. I must really select some high ambassadorship for you in order that you may exercise your ingenuity. Now do tell us the story.

"My generous Prince Herrera, I have little to relate. It was no adventure at all. When you sent me upon this delicate mission of bringing to you the fair Zuza, I expected resistance and the necessity of pillaging the town, in which event I would have profited. But imagine my surprise

to find there the party of these ambassadors, and to learn that Zuza was to become the wife of Bralezio. I at once invited them to come to Kebbo and have the ceremony solemnized by your blessing, and they are here. That is all.' They all laughed heartily. Sanzara had made good use of the gossip of the old priest, our jailer, to whom Bralezio had confided that Zuza was affianced to him.

"'Brother Cabanni, what report has Sabo to make?' asked Prince Herrera.

"'Ye gods!' thought I, as I heard these several names. 'This must be a lost remnant of Bralezio's tribe.'

"'Sabo is due at this hour,' replied the brother. At this moment the old priest, our attendant, made his appearance.

"Making a supreme obeisance, he was bidden to approach and make his report, and these are the joyous tidings which greeted my expectant ears and set my brain on fire. I thought surely the iron head of my truncheon would burn holes in my ecclesiastical robe.

"'I have the two strangers securely locked up in the old palatium. They seem contented and unsuspecting.' At this the others laughed. Continuing, Sabo said: 'The fair maiden is weeping her eyes out at the house of Zucus.' Addressing himself to Sanzara, he added: 'Prince, she has told the old woman how you were cast naked——'

“ ‘Silence, fool!’ exclaimed Sanzara, rising to strike the old man, but Cabanni intercepted him. Herrera looked sharply at Sanzara, then bade Sabo to continue with his story.

“ ‘Well, by getting their retainers drunk, we separated them and went through their packs, finding nothing of particular value but these bars of gold.’ He placed upon the table the gold which we could not carry. ‘We also found this pouch filled with gold upon the person of Zuza,’ and he produced the pouch which she had carried.

“ ‘Have you searched the two strangers?’ asked Herrera.

“ ‘I have had no orders to do so,’ replied Sabo.

“ ‘I will go at once and search them,’ said Sanzara, hurriedly arising, but Herrera pressed his arm, saying, ‘Not now, wait.’

“ ‘I promised the strangers their slumbers would not be disturbed to-night,’ said Sabo.

“ ‘And they shall not,’ said Herrera. ‘Continue.’ Sanzara looked angry and glum. ‘What of their retainers?’

“ ‘They and their camels were put out upon the plains by the south gate, and as they had been told they were discharged by their master, they took their way back toward the place whence they came, and disappeared in the falling darkness.’

“ ‘Then, to my horror, I sat and calmly listened to my own death-sentence, as Herrera said:

“ ‘Give out word that the two strangers have

returned with their caravan, and to-morrow morning place poison in their sack. Bring here anything of value you may find upon their persons and hide their bodies in the old well in the palatium until they may be safely conveyed to the sea. Go at once and bring here Zuza. I will make her laugh instead of cry.' He dismissed Sabo.

"It was now of the greatest importance for us to make a safe exit from the garden and get on the trail of Sabo, intercept him and rescue Zuza. With stealthy tread I crept back to where I had left Bralezio, and together we made our safe retreat, while Herrera and Sanzara wrangled over a division of their gold.

"There was but one manner in which we could be certain of getting on the trail of Sabo, and that was for each of us to go around the palace block, either way, and the one seeing him to trail him and the other to follow if in sight; or, if not, to remain near the palace doors and await the return of the other.

"In turning the first angle I almost bumped into Sabo, and being fearful that he might accost me I hurried away. He hesitated for a moment, cast a crafty look backward, then passed on. I followed him at a safe distance, until he went inside of a modest dwelling, soon coming out accompanied by a woman dressed as a native, and with her face fully concealed in the folds of her mantilla. She was sobbing as they walked.

“Biding my time till we had reached a dark and secluded spot, I dealt Sabo a crushing blow upon the head. I felt by the impact that he was done for, and before the maiden could realize what had happened I said, ‘Zuza, don’t be frightened. Come.’

“But before we could get a dozen steps away we heard a great commotion, and saw Bralezio, hatless and with his priestly garments flying in streamers behind him, fleeing from a mob of screaming and yelling men. At a glance I could see it was useless to attempt a rescue, therefore, shrinking back in the shadow, we permitted ourselves to be silent witnesses of the tragedy. It was fierce while it lasted. As each man drew near enough to reach out his hand to gather in his victim, he seemed to stumble and fall, and he did not rise again. I had seen the backward upper thrust of Bralezio’s dagger, and I knew it was doing deadly work before his pursuers were aware their companions had been punctured.

“This could not last long, however, for the mob was momentarily increasing. We had agreed that in the event of necessary immediate flight we should make our way quickly to the south gate, and I knew by the course Bralezio was taking that that was his objective point. Therefore urging Zuza into a run, we took the shortest possible way toward the same point.

“Suddenly I realized there was a single indi-

vidual running after us. Desiring to keep our identity wholly concealed, I slackened my pace to see who our strange follower was. I instantly recognized the Black Prince, Sanzara, in cumbersome armor, even to his bonnet, only endeavoring to keep us in sight, doubtless believing me to be Sabo with Zuza in charge. As he observed us slacken our pace he put down his visor and hastened to us. Averting my head to conceal my lack of flowing beard, I clutched my truncheon for a deathblow—and I delivered it with a will. It caught him full in the face, and as he fell I struck him on the back of his head. He rolled over and I left him wildly clutching at his helmet, which I had so nailed to his head that he could not get it off. We then hurried on our way.

“We were in a safer situation than was poor Bralezio, therefore we cautiously wended our way to the gate, arriving there alone, with neither Bralezio nor the mob in sight. It was that fortunate hour when the Bedouins of the desert were making their early start. There was a horse mart near at hand, where the best steeds, ready accoutered, were sold. I quickly bargained for three steeds, ready for a journey, paying for them with the gold which I still had upon my person. Placing Zuza upon one, I mounted one and led the third to the gate. At this moment Bralezio, scarcely able to put one foot in front of the other, came dashing toward us with the

mob at his tired heels. I threw off the tall bonnet and cried to him to mount the horse, but he had not the strength left to do it. Handing the reins of his plunging animal to him, I interposed my own horse between him and the mob and, snatching a heavy sword from one of the natives, I plied it right and left with terrible effect.

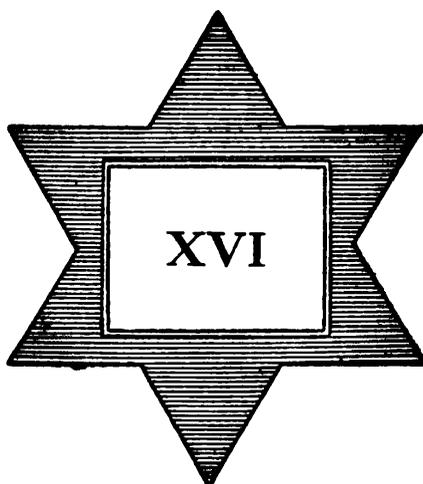
“Fortunately this had occurred directly in the gateway, or the gates would have been closed upon us, with Zuza on the outside, at the mercy of a horde of wild Bedouins. Seeing this danger, I had brained two gatemen, and as Bralezio at last fell into his saddle we dashed through the gate, leaving half of my horse’s tail fast therein. With a wild plunge he freed himself, and we dashed away, knowing we would be pursued.

“The next morning a fortunate circumstance intervened between us and further danger. Zuza’s uncle, brother to her father, had long held a grudge against Kebbo, and he was marching upon that place to demand satisfaction.

“Imagine his surprise to meet his niece fleeing from danger from that very city. Giving to each of us a jupon made of steel links, and arming us with short scimitars, he sent us on, with a strong escort, to Zuza’s own province. From thence I made my way back to Ballyhack, leaving Bralezio happy with Zuza.”



PALEDO HELPS BRALEZIO TO ESCAPE FROM KEBBO



THE RAPE OF BALLYHACK

NOW, the sons of Ballyhack were by nature warlike; they loved adventure. These stirring stories had aroused the old fighting blood, and their hearts were inflamed to the point of openly declaring war on the whole world.

They loved their wives and children, but they loved the honor of Ballyhack better. Therefore the stain of the insults of Arak and Kebbo to her sons must be wiped off her escutcheon, that their future generations might not be branded as of a race of cowards and be ashamed of their fathers.

They had been very happy and peaceful. The wives Druble had sent to them as not worth feeding had proved good wives, and motherhood had rendered them even more beautiful and lovable. Therefore it required unusual courage, born of bitter hatred and lust for revenge, to cause

the males to surrender all the joys and comforts of a happy home and go looking for a scrap.

The wives took another view of it. They had noticed the tankard displace the usual family drinking cups, and finally, seeing the eunuchs scrubbing up the old-time calabashes, which had long been used as swill tubs, they held a family indignation meeting and demanded to know the significance of this untoward change of habits. They were not going to add any bloody shirts to the family washing, if they knew it.

At first the husbands were a little jarred that their faithful wives should notice these trifling changes in their mode of life, but, being men, when it was put up to their putty balls to choose between love and duty, they smote their hairy bosoms and swore to save their family honor they would wade through the fires of—of Hellagoland. Accordingly they began to plan a world-wide war on a tremendous scale.

Echo alone held out to the very last against disrupting the peace and happiness of Ballyhack, but finally, through undue pressure, he too fell into line.

The six sons each started on a diplomatic mission to inculcate into the minds of the provincials the glories of war and inflame their hearts with a desire for bloodshed and give them the itch to plunder—and, incidentally, contribute men for a vast army.

Now it was on one other occasion, when all the sons were away on diplomatic missions, that men or devils came and carried away the homely wives of Ballyhack, for which they never very deeply mourned.

During all the intervening years, from the time when Paledo had fought his way out of the gates of Kebbo, and had skinned the hungry Herrera out of the sweet morsel Zuza, that blond monarch had harbored a desire for revenge. Notwithstanding the truth had leaked out regarding Sanzara, how he had been turned out upon the plains naked on the occasion he claimed to have induced Zuza to come to Kebbo by diplomatic persuasion, Herrera had forgiven him, because of the terrific sacrifice of his face which occurred in the street fight when Zuza was carried away.

It was said that when Sanzara was picked up, it took a blacksmith to get his helmet off, and half his face came off with it. Notwithstanding this awful wound, he recovered. He lived only to nurse in his heart the keen passion for a cruel revenge upon the man who hit him, that being Paledo.

The way to Ballyhack from Kebbo was rough and hard to travel, and Kebbo could not spare an army sufficient to lay siege to such a stronghold.

The only thing these two hungry souls could do was to cherish the grudge till kind fate offered

them a fair opportunity to make a quick raid upon Ballyhack.

Word had reached Kebbo that, since the old bucks of Ballyhack had taken young wives, they were all wonderfully in love, having turned regular mollycoddles. They had given up the calabashes as drinking cups, for their ladies' thimbles. "They make me sick," said Sanzara, who could still talk out of half his face.

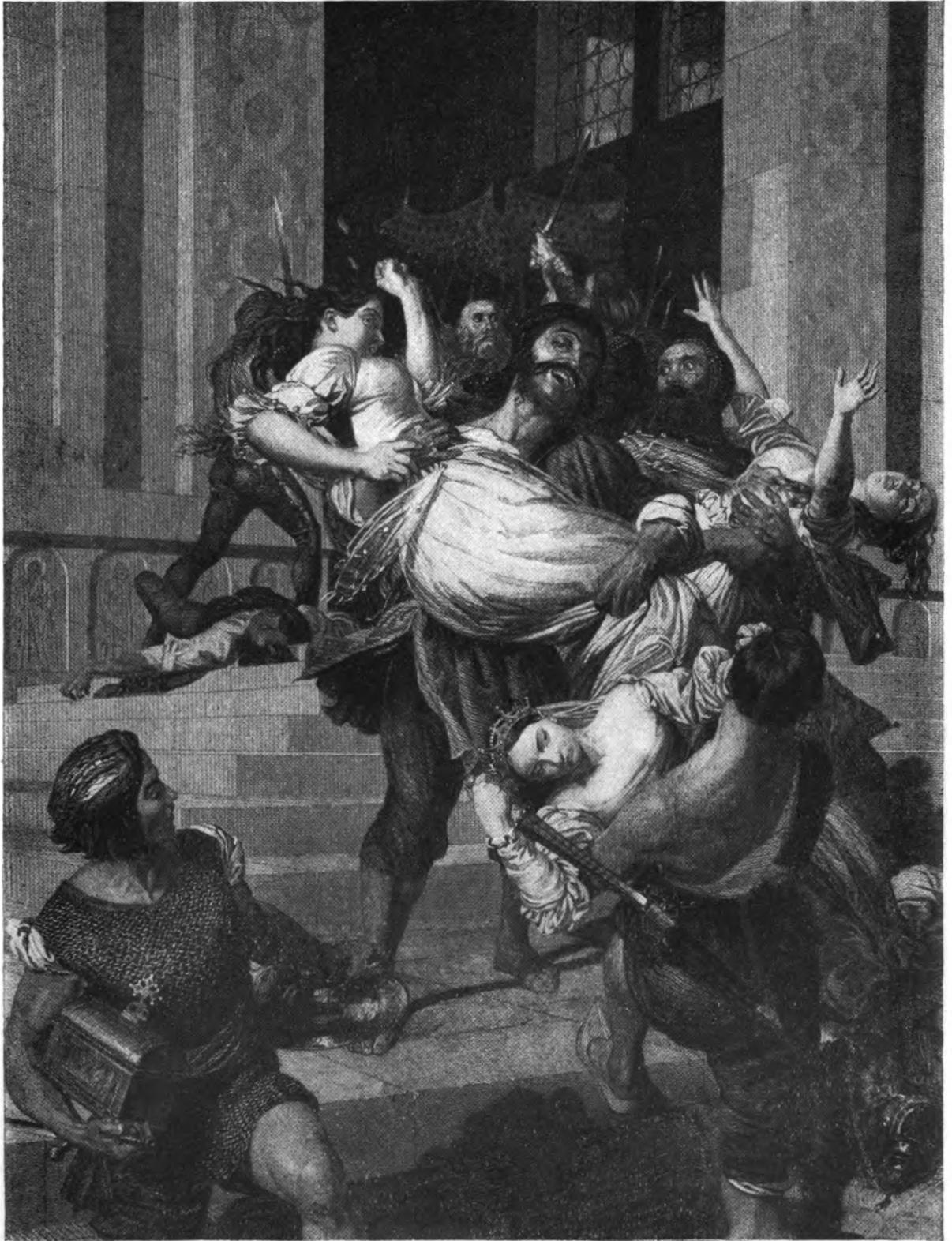
"Yes," replied Herrera, "if I can ever catch them napping, I'll eat those pretty wives alive."

Well, the time had come. Word came unto Herrera that all the sons of Ballyhack were away from home, that the cellar was full to overflowing with rare old wine and the castle full of arms—not cutlasses, but beautiful, soft, snow-white arms of lovely women.

A flying division was formed that very night, and as speedily as they could go they went straightway to Ballyhack, taking with them the means of carrying back to Kebbo the wives of Ballyhack and one hundred goat-skins of rare old wine.

To this day the raid of Herrera is called the "Rape of Ballyhack."

Now, it so happened that Letreka quarreled with Echo because he gave up her love to go to war, and she had on the morning of the very day the raid was made taken her baby upon her plump loins and started back to Hellagoland, conse-



THE RAPE OF BALLYHACK

quently she escaped the horrors which apparently awaited her companions. After wandering about in the wilderness for several days, Letreka found her way back to Ballyhack. To her horror, she saw the ground strewn with dead children and eunuchs, the awful massacre of the raiders, who took only the wives away with them.

One of the wives had succeeded in running a soldier through with his own sword, and his dead carcass lay with the others. This gave the clue to the perpetrators of the crime.

Letreka slipped to the ground and lay there unconscious, with her innocent baby patting her fair face and lovely bosom, when the six brothers returned. The horror of the situation struck them speechless. The only living creature was Echo's child, but the beautiful mother lay quite cold and still, apparently dead.

Now, Letreka was the fairest of all the Ballyhack wives. She had not been sent there by Druble, her grandfather, but had taken all chances and followed the uncertain fortunes of her lover. They had been faithful to their earliest sentiment for each other. Echo loved her fondly, devotedly. Therefore, when he recovered from the first paralysis of the horrifying sight, his anguish was something terrible.

Rushing to where the white cold form lay, he rudely pushed away the innocent little child, to grasp in his arms the inanimate form of his be-

loved Letreka. He sat there cradling her beautiful head upon his lap, cooing and petting her back to life, but there was no response.

Looking up, he saw the other brothers standing with bared heads and dumbly staring at the sight. Gently he lay the precious body upon the ground, quietly drew his sword and there was murder in his eye as he crept toward his brothers.

"This is your doings," he screamed. "And I am going to finish the job by wiping the Ballyhack generations off the earth."

It was quite evident he intended to assault them, but a terrific tragedy was averted by the shout of a lone horseman approaching. It attracted the immediate attention of all.

He was a splendidly accoutered soldier, wearing pliable chain armor with a close fitting hood of the same material; by his side was a long straight sword of tremendous size and weight. As he rode forward and saw the awful tragedy, he too was shocked beyond speech.

"Bralezio!" exclaimed Paledo. As the horseman dismounted they embraced affectionately, and Paledo, finding his tears, wept aloud upon the warrior's shoulder.

Echo had returned to Letreka, where in his absence the sweet babe had returned to caress its mother. Snatching the child from her breast, Echo now covered it with affectionate caresses. Suddenly he dropped the babe and fell upon his

knees screaming: "She lives! she lives! Oh, thank the gods, she lives!" and he began chafing her cold hands. The color came into her cheeks, a great sigh heaved the grand bosom, and her eyes opened wide. Seeing Echo, she laughed, then shivered. Feeling the warm hands of her babe upon her, she laughed softly, saying, "What a horrible dream."

Echo was mercifully shielding her from the awful carnage about them, but she must necessarily know the truth, therefore Echo took her in his arms and said: "No, Letreka, it is not a dream, but you have been spared to me, therefore be strong now to know the truth."

She looked inquiringly at him for a moment, then with blanched face and staring eyes she said: "Oh, I saw it! I saw it! What does it all mean!"

"It means the curse of war has fallen upon Ballyhack, but never again shall it separate us, my love. Were it a thousand times my duty to go to war, I would say, To hell with war! my first duty is to cherish peace and the love and comfort of my sweet wife and child. There is no duty greater than that. I thank the gods we left our other children in the land without a name. We shall return there and live in peace. This castle shall be a future sepulcher of all the Ballyhack dead."

After Bralezio had been presented to the other brothers, he stood with bowed head as they gathered up their dead and bore them into the castle.

Echo then informed his brothers that in the future he would be a man of peace, would return to his former neutral country where his sons and daughters still lived, and would no more look upon Ballyhack as his home.

Bralezio now stepped forward, saying: "Allow me to take the division of the army which you were to lead."

Echo gladly resigned his command in his favor, and with his wife, the fair Letreka, and their pretty babe, took a sad leave of Ballyhack.

Bralezio related that upon the return to Kebbo from Ballyhack, Herrera and his band had sacked and burned his village and had carried his wife, Zuza, off with them, therefore he had a just cause for making war upon Kebbo. Zuza's aged father had taken refuge with his brother, Hesper, the same who had given them succor when they fled from Kebbo.

Vengeance was again declared against the despoilers of their domain, and the portals of Ballyhack were closed to the world by great heaps of boulders and across the gate was placed this legend:

"We have gone to avenge our dead.
May the gods pity those who desecrate
this tomb."

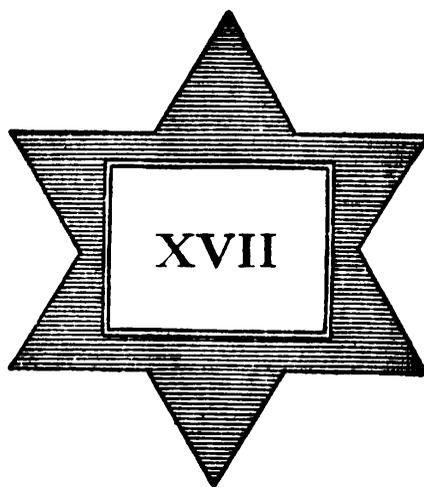
Then Bingo, Jingo, Sago, Marco, Paledo, and Bralezio went down upon the plains and assembled

their army, each having under his leadership a division of five thousand well-trained men.

It was an imposing army, and under the leadership of such veterans it was a dangerous one.

Ballyhack had contributed all its cattle, stores of grain and wines for a long campaign. This generous contribution inspired all the provinces to do likewise.

The march against Kebbo was begun, and on the evening of the twentieth day the great army, in excellent condition, settled down in a deadly coil about the doomed city.



THE DESTRUCTION OF KEBBO

THE discipline of the army was excellent. Maneuvers were conducted with the precision of veterans. Orders were executed with an alacrity betokening willing soldiers. The commissary department was under Marco, the ample supplies including five thousand goat-skins of wine.

Bingo was commander-in-chief, and despite his age he was right on top of his job all the time.

The first offensive move was to divert the river, from which Kebbo received its water supply, from its natural course and into a new channel, for the double purpose of depriving the city of water and to run the stream through the camping-grounds to give the army easy access to fresh water.

As usual Bingo was impatient that the river was not pulled bodily out of its channel and

slammed into its new place, and he jumped into the new bed just as the water broke through. It caught him up like a bundle of straw, and it took the whole army to fish him out, more dead than alive. He swore a blue streak and demanded to know which of the thirty thousand men had pushed him in, that he might make a tent mat of him.

In the meantime Paledo had his division making large balls of osage grass saturated with grease, tallow, and pitch. By nightfall five thousand of these terrifying weapons of warfare were ready to do deadly execution. Then it was that Paledo revealed the purpose of one hundred curious machines which he had brought with the army. He had once said he could take five hundred Rokites and destroy Kebbo in a night. He had already carefully estimated the placing of his machines. They were put in position in a long line, protected from sight by the crest of the ridge which extended along one side of the city.

When the balls were piled about the machines and fires kindled the whole army was eager to see the artillery in action.

Up to this hour not a living soul had been seen about the city, yet it was a certainty they knew an army surrounded them. The walls were high and strong and they could only hope that some stroke of Providence might intervene to save them.

Just as the battery was ready to begin operations the great gate was seen to open and a single horseman dashed out toward the crest of the ridge, doubtless in a pretense of parley, to see what was being done behind the ridge. His curiosity was not satisfied, however, for Paledo and Bralezio rode forward to anticipate him. They lowered two long spears to intimate he could come no farther.

The messenger halted, saluted, and raised his visor. This revealed the ugly visage of Sanzara, with his half face. It was horrible to look upon, with all the teeth on one side exposed.

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Paledo, "but you are a beauty. You must be a charmer among the ladies. What do you come out here for, to scare us to death?"

Sanzara was no coward; to this insult he made like retort.

"I came out here to inform you dogs of Ballyhack that it was a juicy meal we brought home with us from your accursed pile, and the dear ladies seem to be serenely satisfied with their new husbands, especially mine, whose name, I believe, is Juneto and was the daughter of one Jumbo, a beast of burden. She is so enamored of my pretty face, to prevent her smothering me with her vulgar display of affection I daily give her a beating with a stave."

Paledo, unable to endure this insolence, plunged

forward in an attempt to put his spear through the bold Sanzara. This was exactly what the scoundrel was trying to provoke, and Paledo's rashness would have cost him his life on the spot had not Bralezio interposed his own spear and parried the blow Sanzara had aimed at Paledo's neck. Before they could recover, the Black Prince had galloped away and was seen to enter the gate.

For two days a storm had been raging upon the sea, which prevented flight from the city, and before it subsided the invading army was in a position to burn the vessels, the first fire-balls being aimed directly at the triremes.

Now the reserve army saw a wonderful pyrotechnic display. Before Sanzara was fairly within the gate a storm of fire-balls fell like a shower of stars upon all parts of the city. At the rate of two hundred a minute they were poured into the inclosure.

Almost before it can be told the city was ablaze in an hundred places. The cries of dismay and fright could be plainly heard, and in the bright glare of the numerous fires the unhappy people could be seen plunging hither and thither like a herd of stampeded cattle.

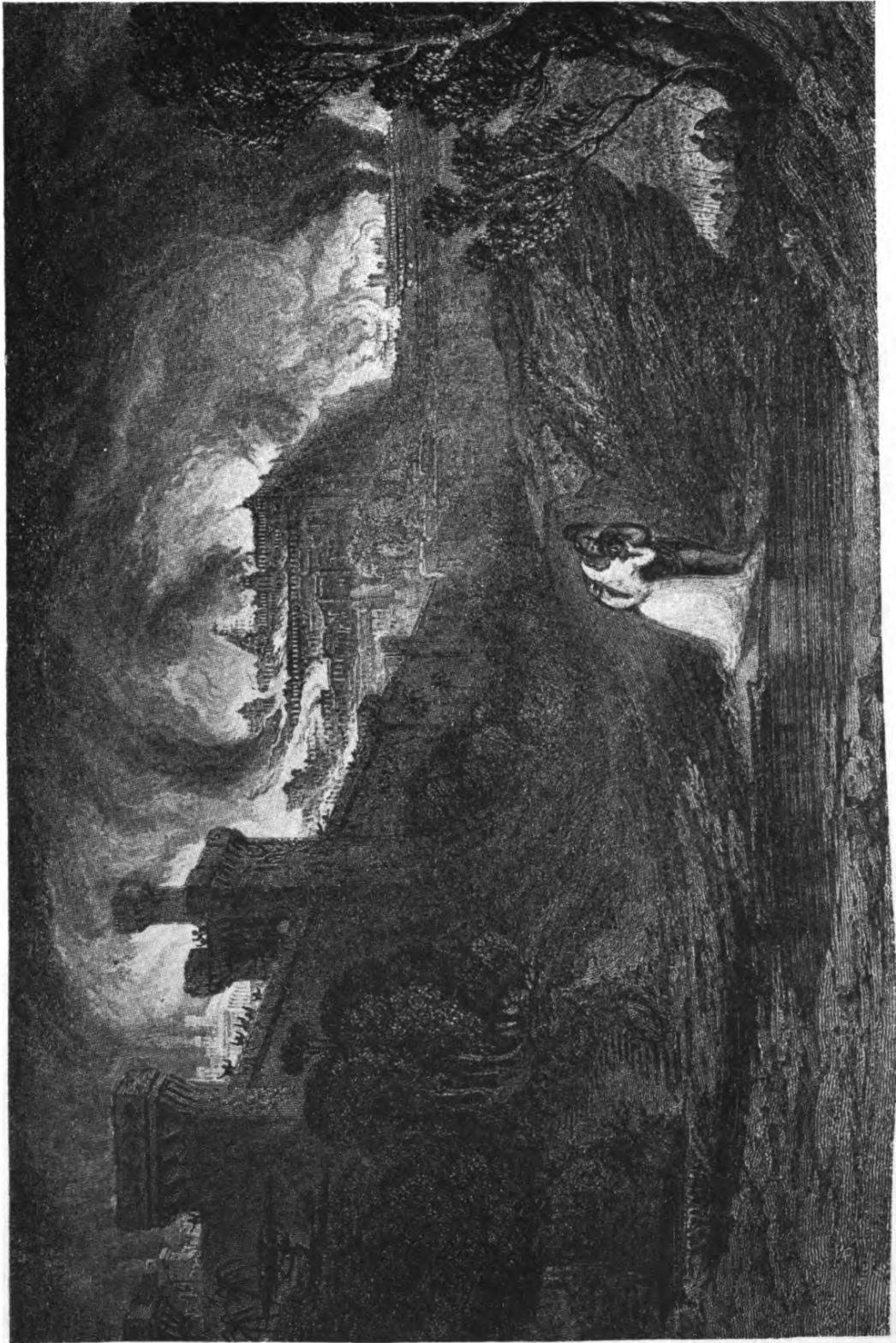
Now the wails of distress grew louder and louder, and Paledo and Bralezio realized that the gates, blocked by the frenzied mob, could not offer sufficient egress, as the streets hurled their

scores of frightened denizens at these narrow gateways. Now the lives of their own wives were in jeopardy.

Row upon row of bowmen stood ready to send a shower of arrows into the people escaping through the gates, which they did with deadly accuracy, and soon the entrances were completely clogged with the dead and dying. It was a terrific slaughter. Those within were doomed to become food for a woeful holocaust. Nothing could stay or remedy matters now, the city was so compactly built it at once became a raging furnace. The roar of the flames, the wails of the people, and the crash of falling walls became louder each moment. It was needless to waste energy by casting more fire-balls. It was evident there was no army within, and even so they could not now come forth, even to fight for their lives.

The Ballyhack soldiers stretched themselves upon the ground to watch in comfort the magnificent display, complaining the while that there would remain nothing to loot.

Suddenly a cry went up. Plainly in the glare of the conflagration the top of Prince Herrera's palace became perfectly visible. There, frantically running about and throwing their arms aloft in supplication, could be counted four women. They were the wives of Ballyhack. Another startling sight was to see a single white form rise above the pile of dead and dying, plunge forward,



THE DESTRUCTION OF KEBBO

and escape from the burning city. Bralezio, with a body of spearmen, rushed forward, and with a cry of joy he seized the fainting woman in his arms and supported her from falling. It was a miracle. Zuza had escaped and after a hard struggle had reached the gate. She was now borne to safety by her own lover.

Thirty thousand startled men moved toward these exciting scenes. Instantly Paledo gave orders to empty a thousand goat-skins of their wine, fill them with water and rush them to the machines. The catapults were taken directly to the wall nearest the palace, and a shout of joy went up when the great springs were released and the goat-skin, filled with water, struck squarely on top of the palace, burst and splattered the grateful shower like rain. Then the unceasing shower of water bags sent cooling streams down all sides of the palace walls.

The women had wisely taken shelter behind available projections in order to avoid being struck by the strange projectiles, any one of which would deal a death-blow did it strike their persons. It was thought strange that none of the men had taken refuge upon the top of the building.

In the meantime an enormous battering ram, impelled by an hundred pairs of sturdy, willing arms, was grinding to powder the stones of which the great wall was constructed, and soon, with a mighty crash, a huge section of the wall gave

way and a shouting mob dashed over the top of it with spears, truncheons, and battle-axes poised, but no enemy met them. A tremendous down-pour of water fell from the walls, making an avenue through the surrounding flames by which to reach the palace.

Bralezio, who had reluctantly yielded Zuza to Sago's care, now returned to the aid of Paledo.

Paledo, Bralezio, and Marco were first to reach the palace door, but it did not respond to their united efforts to batter it open. Therefore one of the infernal machines was put in operation and great boulders were slammed against the doors, but without avail.

Torches were lighted and held within the balustraria, till the inmates were smothered half to death, and every time a hand or foot appeared it was the target for an hundred arrows.

The portals finally opened, and Sanzara, with an arrow sticking through his neck, staggered out.

"Your man, Paledo!" cried Bralezio, and gave way to the maddened man.

Thud! fell the battle-ax, and Sarzara's head rolled in the dust. Grasping it by the hair, Paledo thrust it upon a pike and handed it to a soldier, who swung about a shower of blood from the horrible trophy.

"Ha! Your man, Bralezio. He comes," as Herrera came staggering through the doorway with a half dozen arrows sticking in his head,

neck, and arms. As he dropped forward upon his knees Bralezio brought his ax down with unerring precision, and Herrera's head also bit the dust.

"Yours, Marco!" and Cabanni's head was soon being paraded with the others.

And now something new happened. Standing in the doorway, with hands aloft, was a tall, gaunt figure wearing a long white robe. His snow white hair and beard gave him an ancient appearance. His benign countenance was his passport. The angry men recoiled. No man could strike that grand old man.

The battle was ended.

"Cease your wanton slaughter," cried the sage. "Send here your leading men."

Paledo stepped forward.

"First, demand that your soldiers cease killing, then hurry to the house-top and save the women ere they are smothered to death. Then I will parley with you."

Paledo turned to the soldiers, saying: "Enter not the palace," and he, Bralezio, Marco, and Jingo hastened to the house-top, arriving none too soon, for the women were in a bath of steam which was cooking them. Each tenderly took a woman in his arms, carried her below, and they were sent to the rear by a suitable escort captained by Sago. Turning now to the old man, Paledo demanded: "Who are you?"

"I am Hakos, your father's brother, and son of Alcor, thy father's father," said the sage gloomily.

"How came you here?"

"This is my province. When our father, Alcor, distributed his domains by lot to his seven sons this province fell to my lot. In recent years my son Herrera has taken the active rule upon his shoulders."

Here the tottering old man fell down upon the headless body of his son, buried his head in his bosom, and lamented. All the men bowed their heads in respect for the aged father's grief. He controlled his emotions shortly, however, and arose, saying:

"Take your wives back into your bosoms, for they are not defiled. I would not permit so vile a crime to pollute one in whose veins courses Alcor's blood. He was a just and honorable man, and always said that to permit soldiers to outrage defenseless women was the greatest crime against God and humanity."

"Nahor is avenged," said Marco.

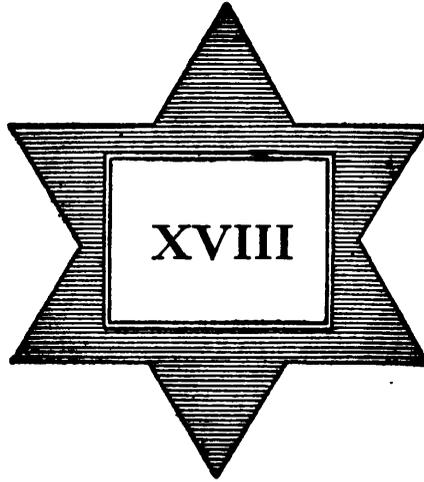
"Nahor! Does my brother Nahor live?" asked the old man eagerly. "Tell me where, that I may go to him. He is a just man."

After a little further parley the old man was passed to the rear, and the soldiers were turned into the town to pillage and loot it.

Thus ended Paledo's siege of Kebbo. It was

now in order to march against Arak and avenge Sago's insults.

In spite of the ravages of the fire at Kebbo, great loot was recovered and sent back to the plains, where it was to be suitably distributed when the general campaign was ended.



THE SIEGE OF ARAK

THE sons of Ballyhack, feeling grateful toward Hakos for having protected their wives from outrage, treated him with great consideration, thereby greatly appeasing his sorrow at the loss of his sons. Upon being told the harrowing details, he admitted the justness of the warfare.

Expressing a great desire to see his brother Nahor before he had reached the end of his time, he was much elated and buoyed up when Marco told him that Nahi was near their line of march to Arak. They promised to carry Hakos in state to see his brother, who was a good man, a philosopher, and free from the intrigues of the devil, he having securely eliminated him from his domain. They held no grudge against Nahor.

Securing a pair of snow-white oxen, with highly polished horns, black as ebony at the base and tapering to a pearly white at the tip, they gold-

mounted the horns and hoofs, placed upon the plump necks a yoke, well carved and inlaid with gold and panoplied them with rich coverings of similar design. These were attached to a high-seated cart, constructed and ornamented in due keeping with the royal oxen.

Taking from the loot of Kebbo the crown,—which rightfully belonged to Hakos,—they placed it upon his head, seated him upon the royal cart and started on their way to Nahi and to Arak. This generous treatment Hakos greatly appreciated, and in turn he confided to Bingo and his brother the knowledge of a secret passageway into Arak.

It had worried Sago much that he had seen no means of easy access for an army of men into Arak, and, knowing the people to be warlike and eager to fight, he was not so certain of the success of his siege as was Paledo, who made such sharp and decisive battle upon Kebbo; therefore this bit of intelligence gave them great elation.

Their army had not been tried as veterans on long and tedious marches and in hard battle, but they hoped this inexperience would be offset by the taste they now had of loot. Every man, at the end of the campaign, hoped to retire for life upon his portion of the general plunder.

The rescued wives had been sent to Echo's domain to reside there during the absence of their warlike lords.

It was a startling thing that Bingo had not seen hair nor hide of his own Rokite wife and progeny since the time of the "Rape of Ballyhack." Their bodies were not among those who were slain, nor were they taken to Kebbo.

When Echo bade Letreka farewell to go conduct the wives of Ballyhack home with him, he took to Bingo the glad tidings that Druble had sent word that when a brutal old husband went back to the calabash and took to fighting again, it was time for the devil to look after his own, and Mrs. Bingo and the children were riding about on the backs of his pet alligators, having a good time, and as far as he, Druble, was concerned their fool father could go to the place spelled with fewer letters than Hellagoland.

This just reproof made Bingo ashamed, and he wept.

Nevertheless, the twang of the cross-bow and the swish of the battle-ax were singing in his ears and the smell of human blood had set the fire of youth again ablaze in his tough old heart. He soon forgot his wife and the dear little creatures with the golden wings attached to their pretty heads when he was on the march and swinging his great iron-clad truncheon like a drum-major's baton.

The way to Arak was steep and rocky, therefore when the army rested, to permit of a detach-

ment conducting Hakos to the entrance of Nahi, it slept so soundly that some mysterious night prowlers stole a thousand goat-skins of wine and much good beef from their commissary without a sound being heard. But Bingo swore to have revenge when he saw the tracks of innumerable little leathern feet upon the ground.

Nahor, in simple garb, came out through his mountain tunnel to meet Hakos, who had been his favorite brother. Upon being told that he had long mourned him as dead, they embraced each other and wept with joy.

None of the women were present, and as Nahor had requested that none of the strangers be permitted to pass into his tight little city, he sent ample entertainment to them, and he, Hakos, and Marco took the royal cart, passed through the tunnel, and to Nahor's palace, where Marco was embraced by all who remembered his former friendly visit. No, not all, for sweet Nestle had pined and died shortly after that visit. The sisters were now women and mothers of a multitude of sons and daughters.

The visitors were delightfully entertained by the sweetest chords of music they had ever heard, a choir of trained voices having been added to their former instrumental music. Each morn they sang a chant of love to the sleeping Nestle, whose tomb was kept ever swarded with fragrant flow-

ering shrubs, thyme, basil, honeysuckle, and jessamine, that her silent home might have the same sweet perfumes she so loved in life.

“When free music ceases in a nation then love dies, and disorder and discord follow as natural as the night follows the day,” said Nahor.

How well did Marco know the truth of this; both love and music had long since died in Ballyhack, and peace could not dwell there. That great Choir Master who sits in heaven and conducts the music of the spheres points his inspired baton at noisy discord, and its causes are instantly destroyed. Wars represent the destructive crash of discordant elements upon earth. One atom of the treasure and blood expended in the promotion of warfare would keep mankind attuned to the harmonies of creation, and love would supersede hate, and music would take the place of cruel and destructive noise, which are the warning signs of that antagonism which leads to ungodly wars and the hellish shedding of innocent human blood. Beware of the ruler who gets his nation to feed an idle and gluttonous standing army. He has within his heart neither love nor music, therefore no regard for the welfare of his people. In his reign no public music will be heard upon the streets of his cities, to keep the popular heart attuned. He who unwisely steals from the hungry human heart the natural love for the harmonies, that hate may be implanted there for some ulterior purpose



HAKOS VISITS HIS BROTHER NAHOR

of his own, is himself a human wolverine, and a thief of God's greatest treasures.

Marco regretted to leave Nahi. It soothed his turbulent mind and made him feel ashamed that he was engaged in an expedition to kill and outrage an innocent people, but it was too late for him to withdraw.

Hakos gladly accepted his brother's invitation to remain with him. It assured him of peace and happiness in his remaining days of decrepit old age.

Onward marched Bingo's invading army. There was quite sufficient of the thirst for blood and warfare within the soul of this hardened old sinner to compensate for the soft tissues and vain regrets in the heart of his younger brother Marco. When Bingo raised his knotted truncheon mountains trembled and his whole army danced. This inspiration kept up the lagging spirits of the tired soldiers as nothing else would. Such is hypnotized human nature.

At last the straggling army, reduced by five thousand men, who had fallen by the wayside, stood upon the great promontory overlooking Arak.

It was a grand sight of a noble city, such as had never before been seen by these soldiers. The same feeling was secretly in the heart of every man—he would much rather pass peacefully into this beautiful creation of man and view its

wonders in silent admiration. But that was not the heart of a licensed soldier, that gives his lust for loot and outrage no surcease; and for these things he had become a soldier. If he did not get his share in trinkets when the spoils of war were divided, he would get the equivalent in the form of a pension, to enable him to live in idleness thereafter.

Remove the promise of direct personal reward from the soldier, and an army could not be raised by any nation. Take away his tacit license to ignore and override the civil law, and you deprive the soldier of all the romance of soldiering, and his patriotism oozes.

A pensioned soldier, after war, is an eloquent proof that it is essential to temper the patriotism of men with a little of the material rewards, or they won't fight; and no better evidence of the unrighteousness of war is needed. Men also commit murder for money. The unnecessary taking of human life smells as bloody under one name as another.

While the army lay upon the heights of Arak resting, feasting its greedy eyes upon the shimmering city which lay peacefully basking in the sunlight below, and dreaming dreams of embracing beautiful women and enriching themselves with the treasures which must be everywhere, Bingo and his brothers held a council of war to determine the best mode of attack upon the city.

They too could view the valley below, and it was not to their credit that they were also making an estimate of the profits of the venture.

Now it so happened that at the very place they selected for their confabulation there was, curled up in the rocks, a sleepy little Rokite. He immediately awoke and listened to the plans of the leaders. Then he quietly slid down the dangerous face of the cliff and rushed into the mouth of the cavern, where sat old Goobro, crooning over the well-worn beads by which she foretold all great events, as she had foretold to the fair Salula the coming of the unfortunate knight wearing the golden armor.

Strict orders were given throughout Bingo's camp that all his soldiers must sleep soundly and well that night, to be in good condition for arduous duties on the following day.

The next morning he was rudely awakened by Marco saying that a message awaited him. Thinking this was an envoy from the city of Arak with a plea for mercy, he quickly sprang up, but let out a tremendous roar when he found himself stark naked, by what accident he could not even guess.

His tent, to distinguish it from the tents of the common soldiers, was a vivid red, and now, not caring to meet a distinguished diplomatic commission naked, he had a large section of his tent converted into a royal robe, stuck his battered old

helmet on his head, and sallied forth to meet the imaginary envoy, only to be faced by a cunning little Rokite with an important message, which read:

“BINGO:

“For every hair of this messenger you harm I will roast you for one hour on a red-hot grid-iron. When in the name of right you begin to rape and pillage innocent peoples weaker than yourself, it is time for the devil to take a hand and see that the scales of justice are balanced and not tampered with.

“I forbid your making war upon the Araks. They are a peace-loving people, living in amity. They have never harmed you, and owe you nothing; therefore you have no just cause for war upon them. Your excuse that it is to avenge an imaginary insult is a false pretense.

“Arak is under my guardianship, and should you attempt to sack it I will have Ballyhack removed stone by stone; I will take from the land without a name all your wives and children and take them under my protection; I will annihilate your army and turn you and all your leaders over to the Araks, to be tortured in a manner befitting your crimes.

“I have modes of warfare of which you never dreamed. I will slay one half your army so fast they will smother to death the other half as they

fall upon them. Go back to Ballyhack in peace and forget it.”

“DRUBLE.”

“Druble!” exclaimed Bingo. “What the Hell-goland has Druble to do with this?”

At this juncture a terrific hubbub began throughout the whole camp, growing louder and more angry each moment.

Bingo and his brothers made immediate investigation, and found that while the soldiers slept their arms, half their clothing, and half their commissaries, including their wine, had been stolen. Even the buskins had been taken off their feet.

They complained that the devil himself must have done it, for not a soldier could tell how the trick was turned.

Then it was Bingo had another of his paroxysms of passion, and while it lasted his half-clad, half-starved army looked on in astonishment. When he came to, his lurid garment, made from a tent fly, was in tatters, and due to violent perspiration its color had tattooed his huge body in an amazingly grotesque and figurative manner.

The wind snatched away the remaining remnant of his royal mantle and carried it like a great red bird out over the plains of Arak, leaving him standing naked, with the map of the world pictured upon his elephantine carcass. His whole army laughed so loudly that all of Arak felt the

shock and ran into their streets, thinking calamity was surely come.

When the great leader was sufficiently cooled off to be approached with safety, his brothers called his attention to the urgent necessity of beginning an immediate retreat, in order that their rations would be sufficient to get their armies back to their respective provinces. Starvation would overtake them, as it was, for their march would be slow because of the loss of their buskins.

Glum and angry, the whole army reluctantly turned tail and began the march homeward. At first they mumbled their discontent, but as their feet were bruised and blistered and the pangs of hunger began to arouse them, their lamentations were loud and their cursing constant. Finally all semblance of discipline disappeared, and the broken army became a crazy rabble.

Bralezio, recognizing the grave danger of this, warned Bingo and his brothers to attempt to guide their rabble as far as possible from Ballyhack and Echo's land. Then he and Paledo forged ahead to warn Echo of impending danger. However, the remnant of the once proud army—more than one half having fallen by the wayside—reached the plains and gradually worked its way back to its respective homes, more dead than alive.

The provinces felt very bitter toward Bingo and his brothers, holding them responsible for

the terrible disaster resulting upon the war, and now began to organize an army for the purpose of wiping off the map Ballyhack and all that represented its evil influences. The crisis was near at hand, and the now tired brothers could see no way of averting disaster, which would not only destroy their time-honored castle, but would also probably mean the destruction of Echo's peaceful land.

At last the hour of danger was at hand. An old witch-like woman came to Echo's land and demanded to see Bingo.

She frankly told him she was Goobro, formerly wife to Druble and Roko. She now wandered about in anticipation of calamity, and attempted to protect and save from death and disaster the beautiful women and children.

Ballyhack's darkest hour had come. Echo's land would be first invaded and despoiled. They must act quickly. They must take refuge in the high towers of Ballyhack Castle and lay in supplies for a long siege.

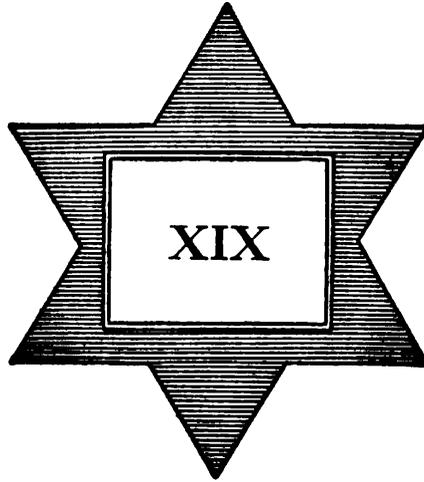
Bingo, at first skeptical, called his brothers to listen to what he termed old Goobro's croonings. The brothers at once believed, and immediately began preparations to follow to the letter the old witch's advice. They placed watchers upon their high towers and the mountains, to watch the plains.

Their preparations for flight were begun none

too soon, for reports came in rapid succession that there were evidences that the plains people were assembling a large army for some purpose.

Great quantities of supplies were taken to Ballyhack, the wives and younger children were placed in the highest and most secure part of the castle, and tons upon tons of stones were carried up to the battlements as munitions of warfare. All of the weak places about the ancient castle were strengthened, especially the well-spring in a strong dungeon, which had always been the saving feature of Ballyhack. Then to guard against being smoked out, all the openings in the lower portion of the castle were filled with masonry and every opening leading to the upper part of the castle closed.

It was a most formidable fortress, and they now awaited the onslaught with some degree of relief and satisfaction, for they knew it would come.



THE SIEGE OF BALLYHACK

WATCHERS reported hourly on the movements of large bodies of men upon the plains. It seemed evident they would depend upon overwhelming numbers and starvation to capture Ballyhack. They would not be able to use the fire-ball machines successfully, for there was nothing about the castle sufficiently inflammable to catch fire, and the position from which the machines would have to be used would at all times be at the mercy of the expert bowmen and slingers of Ballyhack.

Owing to the limited number of fighting men at his disposal, Bingo decided to remain inside the castle and waste no energy or ammunition in an attempt to engage the enemy as they approached.

Two very exciting reports came in at the same moment. One was to the effect that an immense army was approaching by way of the plains, while

another large body of soldiers, with many horsemen, could plainly be seen coming through a mountain pass from the direction of Kebbo.

This latter news greatly puzzled Bingo and his brothers, for they knew of no danger threatening them from that direction. It was certain the two armies would meet at Ballyhack simultaneously. This made it, apparently, two divisions of the same army. Amid great excitement preparations were made for early battle.

Fortunately the lower walls of the castle were of the solid native rock, therefore battering-rams could not be successfully used. The mountain heights above them were too far distant to aid the besiegers. It looked as if starvation must be the only effective weapon in the end. The supply of food would last for six months.

The army from the plains stopped a few hours' march from the mountains—no doubt to send scouting parties ahead to see if there were any traps set for them or unforeseen dangers in approaching, for here and there small bodies of horsemen could be seen galloping toward the passes.

In the meantime the other army had disappeared from sight in the defiles and passes by which they would approach Ballyhack.

Bralezio and Marco volunteered to slip out and take a closer view of the strange army. Two hours later they returned, accompanied by the cousin of Bralezio's wife Zuza: The strange

army was commanded by Zuza's Uncle Hesper, the same who had come to Paledo's rescue at the time of their first flight from Kebbo. Hearing that Ballyhack was under siege, and being under obligations to his brother, Zuza's father, Hesper had come to demand that Zuza be passed through the lines and he be permitted to escort her in safety to her father, who was now residing with him.

Upon being informed that the army of the plainsmen was not yet arrived, but was resting at the foot of the mountains, a hasty consultation was held, and it was decided to give the invading army an unpleasant surprise as they approached the castle by meeting them with a force of which they knew nothing. In the end the plainsmen could smother Hesper's army by overwhelming numbers, but it would do them much good to give them a taste of real battle in the beginning, and perhaps some specific advantage might result for the besieged.

Two of the large portals to the castle were opened to enable Hesper and his forces to fall back and gradually take refuge in the castle as the greater army of the plains pressed them. All their stores, consisting mainly of dried fish, dried figs, and olive oil, were placed inside the castle walls, and all was in readiness for the surprise to the enemy, Hesper's army having been kept in concealment in the mountain ravines.

Hespar would go to the front and conduct the battle for Ballyhack, and would lead a sudden dash of his horsemen upon the invaders before they could realize what was occurring. This, on the part of Hespar, was indeed a noble act, without hope of adequate reward. Bingo, Jingo, and Paledo insisted, under these circumstances, in sharing the dangers with him, although they were on foot.

Bingo took a long spear, Jingo his bow and arrows, while Paledo, a very desperate and careful soldier, was armed cap-a-pie with sword and buckler.

The allied armies of the provinces were under the command of one Nordeau, a man who under Bingo's monetary system had grown very wealthy. He was tremendous in size, and brave as a lion. Despite the scandal attaching to the system which had brought panic and ruin upon the provinces in previous times, Nordeau by his strong personality had retained both his wealth and his political influence, and notwithstanding his age and that he resembled a sage more than a soldier, he was selected to conduct the campaign against Ballyhack.

Bingo knew Nordeau to be no mean adversary. He had courage as well as cunning. He took him at his full worth as a soldier and commander.

Satisfied he had a clear road to Ballyhack Castle, Nordeau started his army moving. In

three hours he expected to make camp about the walls of the grim, old fortress. He swore he would furnish his own palace with its rare old junk.

Nordeau could be plainly distinguished in the van of his bodyguard by the besieged sons of Ballyhack. Bright red plumes crested their shining helmets; their armor was burnished like gold, and their tremendous lances, in perfect alignment, were pointed with brightly polished heads.

Then came two thousand bowmen, with short, yellow jackets, with their quivers swung upon their hips.

Behind them came two thousand sling-men, with their strong rawhide slings upon their arms ready for use, and their pouches filled to the limit of their marching strength with half-pound boulders.

Then followed the reserves, two thousand foot soldiers with short lances, bucklers and daggers, and one thousand horsemen carrying long spears.

It was a noble and imposing review from the towers of Ballyhack. Hesper was there to get the lay of things, and was frank in his praise of Nordeau's army, but he declared it looked too clean and pretty. It too much resembled a dress parade, and he pointed with pride at his grim and rusty fighters now visible down in the ravine by Imar's old stone shrine.

"Ha!" exclaimed Hesper, "I will teach this

neophyte a trick in warfare. Look at this lagging ox-train, with supplies, at least a mile behind the army, and only escorted by the drivers. I will detach fifty picked men and in the excitement of the engagement here they will steal upon that necessary division, set it on fire, and destroy it before it can be prevented."

Then Hesper went down to prepare his own little army for quick, hot work.

Bingo, Jingo, and Paledo embraced their families and their brothers, and went to prepare for desperate battle.

All the mountain passes centered in the little valley on the border of which Imar had erected his shrine, and this would be the natural, objective point of Nordeau, as affording the best camping spot; therefore Hesper assembled his terrible horsemen in a secluded dell ready to pounce upon the unsuspecting army as it defiled into the opening.

Bingo and his brothers, with one hundred picked bowmen, with spears convenient at hand, lay concealed between the valley and Ballyhack Castle.

Hesper had placed fifty picked men at a point to dash away, upon the beginning of hostilities, and quickly destroy the ox-train, which was carrying all of the army supplies.

These were all grim arrangements, carrying terrible death in their secrecy and audacity.

On came the proud army of Nordeau. It hesi-

tated a moment upon reaching the small open space. The silence seemed eloquent of impending disaster.

Riding to the cross upon the shrine, the old leader struck it and made some laughing remark to his guards. They began to alight from their chargers, and as the bowmen began to crowd into the space orders flew thick and fast to prepare to make camp.

Suddenly, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, there arose a tremendous shout from a thousand husky throats, and Hesper's horsemen charged into the open space with drawn swords and trampled and slashed a swath through the army, leaving the ground strewn with dead and dying men. To add to the horror, the fiery steeds of Nordeau and his men stampeded, trampling men under their hoofs as they wildly plunged about.

Shower after shower of arrows was sent into the panic-stricken men as they fled in dismay and wild disorder back upon the other portion of the approaching army, and the narrow defiles were soon choked with men trying to escape from the danger.

Was Nordeau panic-stricken? Not he. Despite the confusion, his brain worked. He knew it was a trap, therefore the number of the enemy must be limited. With wonderful command he held his men together till a sane and orderly retreat could be made. Well did he know the

terror to the raw recruit of an unseen enemy, and he must right now convince his army that this could not occur again. A leader is always held responsible for disaster of this kind.

Giant that he was, and with hundreds dead and groaning about him, he challenged Bingo, Jingo, and Paledo in one combat while he shouted his orders to those of his men who stood by him. His long white beard gave him a patriarchal appearance as it whipped about in the breeze.

It was Bingo's desire to capture Nordeau and hold him as a hostage, but the ever-ready sword of the gallant commander dashed aside every weapon aimed at him. Finally an arrow went into his thigh, but he never paused. Throwing aside the shield, he cried, "Stand!" He had his personal guard under control, and they gathered about him with a double line of those huge lances and covered his retreat. One man, with great fortitude, knowing the large open wound would be better than to leave the arrow to corrode in Nordeau's flesh, snatched the arrow from his leader's thigh.

The people upon the battlement and towers of Ballyhack looked upon this short but terrific fight, and as they saw the army go plunging down the mountain trails they added to its discomfiture by raining upon the flying men showers of boulders from their slings as long as they could reach them.

All the wounded were without ceremony dis-



HESPER SURPRISES NORDEATH

patched out of their sufferings. Then Bingo and his men quickly gathered up all the arms littered over the ground,—bows, arrows, spears, slings, daggers, bucklers, and swords,—and carried them to the castle.

There being no adequate means of providing safety and comfort for horses at Ballyhack, Hesper decided to remain in the castle with half his men, and send the horses away before Nordeau's army recovered from its panic and returned, which it surely would.

A cry now went up from the towers. Down in the plains could be seen a great conflagration. Hesper's men had routed or killed the drivers of the supply train and then had driven the wagons in a close circle, knocked the oxen in the head, and had set fire to the whole pile. This in turn had set fire to the high, dry grass, and the whole plain was a roaring furnace.

Nordeau saw disaster before him. Calling his officers about him he said: "Your men cannot pass into that raging fire. It is approaching. Our only retreat is to go back to Ballyhack. Get your men in the best order you can and follow me." Then at the head of a strong body of bows and lances alternating, man for man, he plunged again into the defiles and went over the top of his own dead to the very walls of the castle.

In rapid succession new bodies of men came up and took position and began to darken the air

with stones from their slings and arrows from their bows.

To Nordeau's surprise, there was no responsive action. He at once saw that he was dealing with wise old veterans who were not going to waste energy without execution; they were waiting a direct assault.

A number of ox-skin shelters were now sent toward one corner or inside angle of the castle. The stone was to be chiseled to support scaling ladders. As the sappers and scalers reached the wall, however, a tremendous shower of huge boulders descended upon them, tearing them to pieces like paper, not one man escaping.

There was now a sudden pause in Nordeau's attack; the arrows ceased, as did the stones. Then a large body of men was seen climbing the long incline sloping up from the castle to the rocky mountain crags above, clearing the way as they went, and as time went on huge timbers were placed side by side like a pontoon bridge.

For three days half-starved and exhausted thousands of men worked upon this curious construction without Ballyhack being able to solve its purpose. The roadway finally reached the base of the great cliffs, and while Ballyhack was wondering at the purpose of the whole thing, the entire face of the cliff seemed to fall toward the corduroy way. As one huge block came tearing and plunging down the declivity until it struck the

castle wall with a thunderous thud, the purpose of the long bridge revealed itself.

The entire side of this cliff, hundreds of feet high, needed but a slight jar to tumble it off. Nordeau had conceived the idea of building a tremendous causeway by gravity. A shout of joy went up from his whole army as one after another these huge rocks came bounding down the mountain side to bombard the castle wall.

The besieged looked on in dismay, for they could practically estimate the hour when this tremendous bridge would rise to the top of the lowest part of the castle walls.

The fire upon the plains had subsided and a new provision train, heavily escorted, was seen in the distance. The hungry soldiers, too, saw it from their elevated positions, and their shouts could be plainly heard.

Things looked serious for Ballyhack; each hour saw the great pile of stone grow higher. Already from one point arrows and stones would reach the battlements and even the topmost towers with telling effect, making it no longer safe to be exposed to the enemy.

The next morning saw great quantities of stores and provisions being brought up to the famished army. All work ceased and for a half day the soldiers rested and feasted.

Then with great will, night and day, they moved the mountain toward Ballyhack. It now seemed

but a matter of short time when the walls would be stormed. Every available weapon was brought to the weakened spot. It would be a horrible slaughter when the besieged and besiegers met.

Two days later the sky was darkened with stones and arrows while timbers were placed upon the causeway, to enable a larger body of men to cross upon it.

Bingo and Hesper both admitted this was the most stupendous piece of engineering they had ever witnessed in the course of a siege. If the siege lasted a month Nordeau and his army could walk on a level causeway to the top of Ballyhack Castle. While the besieged were having no fatalities, neither were the besiegers, but that causeway would soon be drenched with human blood.

In the meantime, two fearful engines of warfare had been invented by Paledo, a modification of his fire-ball engines. They were ready for operation when Nordeau sent his first squad of men over his great bridge.

Under cover of a shower of arrows and stones two hundred men started toward the walls bearing long scaling ladders. As they began raising the ladders the causeway literally swarmed with the oncoming warriors.

Paledo was ready. While the besiegers were halted for a moment by a hail of stones and arrows, his terrible engines belched their death-dealing loads from one of the high towers down upon

the crowded causeway. It needed no aim, and each shot got a half hundred. If it did not kill or maim them, the men leaped from the causeway to escape.

One after another, as fast as they could be put into the machines, goat-skins filled with boiling hot water were dashed upon the rocks below. Striking the jagged rocks, they burst and scattered their contents like molten lead over a radius of an hundred feet. The tortured soldiers ran screaming down the sides of the bridge or crowded back upon it. Hundreds were scalded and crushed before the bridge could be cleared. Nordeau was amazed. This was a new engine of terror in sieges.

Nothing could induce the soldiers to again venture upon the causeway. It was a waste of time to try to persuade them.

Two days of inactivity followed. At the break of the third day a large body of men dashed out upon the bridge, and it was seen their entire bodies were covered with ox-skin clothing, even their faces and hands.

Seizing the ladders they began climbing up the walls, swinging battle-axes and using long spears. The bowmen and sling-men literally smothered those who rushed to the defense, killing and wounding many for the first time, hence only those wearing armor assumed heavy work of this defense.

Bingo, clad in strong armor, stood alone at the slaughter-pen, he having piled them up at the foot of their scaling ladders an hundred deep. Every time his huge truncheon landed a warrior went down, but it was impossible for him to keep up the pace. The enemy came up so fast he could not dislodge them all, and some got over the walls and ran along the galleries, only to be overwhelmed and cast over the parapet to be crushed and mangled on the stones below. Yet they came faster, and were making steady progress, especially when with long hooks they tore loose and dragged off the stone coping of the castle, reducing the wall's height, to receive more and shorter ladders.

Despite the storm of arrows and stones, from time to time the brothers would dash to Bingo's relief and for a few moments do terrible execution, but it meant torture or death to them. Jingo was converted into a human pin-cushion, having been punctured by no less than a dozen arrows; yet he lived. Echo was forbidden to leave the women and children as a last resort guard over them, he, Marco, and fifty men guarding the tower in which they had taken refuge. Sago was lying groaning with a broken arm and crushed shoulder. Hesper and Bralezio lay apparently lifeless. In the very midst of the fight Marco seized a long spear with which to protect himself, and drew the body of the brave Hesper from



THE SIEGE OF BALLYHACK

the edge of the broken wall that it might not plunge below and be mutilated.

The causeway was now so slippery with human blood it was nearly impossible for the soldiers to keep their footing, and huge skins filled with earth were brought to cover up the stones.

Unless a miracle intervened to save them, Ballyhack and all her people were doomed. Nordeau had given orders to spare neither men, women, nor children.

Well, the saving miracle did occur. At the most critical moment, when it seemed the exhausted old Bingo could not raise his great iron truncheon for one final blow, it happened.

Like a cloudburst from heaven there settled down upon Nordeau's army a storm of one-pound boulders. With not a living soul in sight the air was kept so full of these death-dealing projectiles that even while looking in amazement for the new and unknown source of danger the men's brains were dashed out. With such terrific force did they come that not infrequently would they crush a head, ricochet, and wound or kill another. It was the most certain and deadly assault Nordeau had ever seen. A thousand of his men lay dead in ten minutes and his army was being annihilated before his very eyes. A stone had caved in his own helmet, while another had struck him a crushing blow upon his right shoulder, disabling him. It was all done with such astonishing quickness

the battle against Ballyhack ceased before the besieged people knew what was happening.

Suddenly the cry arose: "Ballyhack is guarded by the devil and his hosts!" and the soldiers, who had never before seen them, ran in wholesome terror from the swarm of cunning little Rokites, who had thrown aside their slings and with devilish precision and deadly aim were picking off the men at short range.

The soldiers fell over one another in the stampede. The narrow defiles leading down into the plains were piled full of fleeing men, and they crushed and smothered to death another thousand.

Like a pest, the Rokites followed the fleeing army, driving it before them like sheep and pelting them with such fierce persistence not once could they turn in self-defense. Nordeau's men had cast away their arms in their eagerness to escape the devil; few of them lived to reach the plains and tell the awful story.

Thirty minutes after this avalanche had slid down upon Nordeau and his army, perched upon every available rock was a little brown Rokite, calmly munching some portion of the army rations.

The besieged people had watched in amazement the annihilation of the army below. They were so stunned with surprise they knew not what to do. Hesper's soldiers, upon seeing this thing, were as much frightened as were Nordeau's men.

It was something new to them. The strange succor did not remain in sight long, for in a short time not a Rokite could be seen, and Ballyhack began to pull itself together and care for its wounded.

Hespar and Bralezio were both dangerously wounded, but not dead.

Jingo had an even dozen holes poked in him, but, as he said, none extended to the marrow.

Bingo was black and blue from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, and was so exhausted he could not stand.

Sago was in a bad plight, his arm and shoulder giving him much pain, and he was being cared for by his faithful wife.

The women proved to be splendid physicians and nurses in an emergency. In a short hour a very material change for the better was noticeable. Some calabashes of wine and cold roast beef fixed the grim warriors up in great shape, and they began to discuss the terrible affair.

Bingo said he had recognized fourteen of his former captains as he slew them at the top of the ladders. They now lay in a heap against the wall. It was later estimated he had brained over two hundred men single-handed. He said the most painful blow he had received was given him by the last man up the ladder. This man had a single-handed ax, and as Bingo crushed him with his truncheon the man struck him a vicious

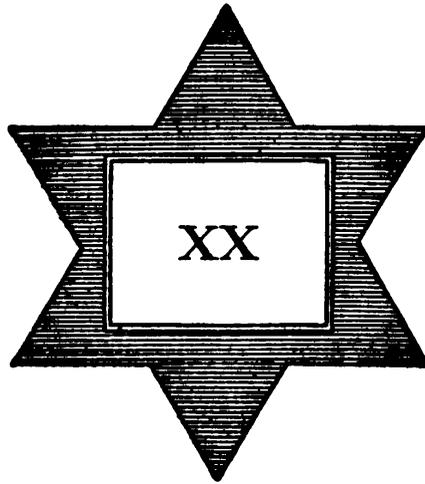
blow on the shin bone, and for a moment it paralyzed him. Had there been one more man on the ladder he would have gotten him, sure, at that moment.

Hespar's men, though, wanted to understand more about the sudden defeat of Nordeau's army. They were much puzzled, and Hespar himself, when able to take notice, asked why the army had fled away.

Bingo answered for Ballyhack, by saying:

"Years ago my ancestors had made a pact with the devil to keep guard over Ballyhack Castle, and ever since at the crucial moment he came to its relief and saved it from destruction."

This worried Hespar greatly.



THE BUZZARDS CONQUER BALLYHACK

ON the following day a characteristic message came from Druble, saying:

“Leave Ballyhack at once; go to Echo’s land. You will not be molested there. Take my advice. Tarry not one day.”

Bingo and his brothers wondered, but well they knew the serious import of such a command; therefore all preparations were made to go the following morning.

Bralezio and Zuza went away with Hesper, runners being sent ahead to have horses meet them.

Bingo and his brothers, with their families, went on their way to Echo’s land. As they reached the defiles to go down into the plains they found them clogged with dead soldiers. A new way had to be found. They finally reached the plains.

when the heavens were darkened as with a black cloud.

Millions of great, black vultures had come in a swarm. Where men had failed, the buzzards had captured Ballyhack and driven out her sons. Never again, perhaps, could they dwell there. Its defilement would place it beyond redemption. Even now the air was poisonous with the sickening odors of the carrion scavengers.

Some of these terrible creatures turned aside to carefully survey them, with their impertinent little bald heads bobbing about and their beady little eyes searching them to see if any living creature in that party was ready to become bait for their ravenous appetites. In long ribbon-like streams, reaching as far as the eye could view, they came.

The people upon the plains saw the awful sight, and understood; Ballyhack was dead. She had feasted upon their sons, and now the devil birds had come to feed upon her carcass and spew upon her proud towers. They wondered if those terrible sons of Imar would escape. They hoped and prayed not, for they had been the first cause of all their troubles, griefs, and sorrows. Perhaps a just retribution had overtaken them at last.

But the sons of Ballyhack were not made of that sort of stuff. Upon getting themselves established and braced up, Bingo returned to Ballyhack Castle to see what ravages had been made

upon it. The sight he beheld sickened him. The ground everywhere was covered with the white bones of five thousand plainmen, picked clean by the vultures. The walls of the castle were unrecognizable and the sickening odors were like unto the breath of hell itself.

Then he had good reason to understand Druble's warning. The ravenous birds, not being satiated, attacked him. It required the fight of his life to escape them. Finally, however, they ceased their attack. Although he was good and ready to retreat, he was seized with one idea, and he began to pluck the quills from the hundred or more vultures he had knocked down with his truncheon. As many as he could carry in his arms he took away with him.

A few days later a messenger left Echo's land carrying huge bunches of vulture plumes to the chief men of all the provinces contributing soldiers and supplies to Nordeau's army. Each bouquet of death bore this insolent note:

"A tribute from Bingo of Ballyhack." The chiefs were angered at this voice from the tomb, but they wanted no more of Bingo the terrible—with the devil fighting on his side.

A new era dawned with the downfall of Ballyhack nevertheless. The staunch sons of Imar, although broken and battered beyond recognition of their former grace and beauty, were still able to demand tribute of those who had tried so hard

to destroy them. For a long period following, the plains people brought tribute to Echo.

It was Druble Ballyhack's sons feared, however, and to him they now turned for their future comfort and happiness. They owed their very lives to him, and they were now ready to acknowledge him as their elder brother and bow to his superior sense and judgment. Nevertheless the invincible Bingo, knowing him best of all, could not refrain from sending him this characteristic message:

"The buzzards are roosting upon your accursed silver fence. What shall we do with it?"

Druble knew Bingo, therefore this message came in reply:

"Return it to its rightful owner, and let the buzzards roost upon the broken walls of Ballyhack."

Now Bingo was at heart, when that heart was not parboiled with undue excitement and anger, a really good fellow, and he who could stir his risibles was his friend. He laughed long and loud when he received this message from Druble, and he made up his mind at once to fool his elder brother, for once. Therefore he said to his brothers:

"Druble is our best friend by blood, and we owe much to him. In fact, we owe the lives of ourselves and our families to him, for unsolicited he sent the Rokites to our relief when death hov-

ered over Ballyhack. Death has claimed Ballyhack, but Druble has brought us out in safety, therefore I will return to him his silver fence, make apology for all previous insults, acknowledge him as the eldest son of Ballyhack, and invite him to take possession of that buzzards' roost."

Then he gathered together sufficient men to frighten away the vultures, take up the remnant of the fence and carry it back over the mountains to Hellagoland.

Druble was not any too cordial, nevertheless he treated them well without asking Bingo to remain longer than it required him to rest and recuperate his men. Something strange had happened. He was not the Druble of old.

Upon his departure he called Bingo to one side and said:

"I want you to sign this for yourself and your brothers," and he handed him a parchment which read:

"PROCLAMATION

"We, the undersigned brothers of Ballyhack, do hereby acknowledge and proclaim Druble to be our elder brother and the rightful King of Ballyhack Castle and domains, and we invite him to take possession of same at his pleasure."

Much chagrined and humbled, Bingo signed this important document without protest, and

sadly took his way back to Echo's land, where he dropped into a sort of trance.

Time passed and no word came from Hellagoland. Life was growing monotonous, and these battered old veterans felt their joints beginning to get stiff from sheer inactivity. The plains people brought their tribute without solicitation and with painful regularity and promptitude. There was positively nothing to arouse the lagging spirit or rekindle the fires in the clogging hearts of the old warriors. They were simply wasting away from ennui and desiccating from desuetude.

Despite their vow to quit fighting, the strain of the devil was not wholly knocked out of them. As soon as their physical pains ceased their spirits longed for energetic work and activity. Something had to be done. Every social emetic had reacted till domesticity had become a nuisance.

One day while the brothers sat in a confab of state, a messenger came and placed before them this strange command:

"The King of Ballyhack sends greetings to his brethren, commanding them to appear before him at Ballyhack Castle and state a reasonable cause why they should not pay tribute to the king.

"DRUBLE."

If a thunderbolt had dropped from a clear sky and spattered itself about Bingo and his brothers

they would not have been more surprised. After a consultation they deemed it wise to obey the summons, therefore in a body they repaired to the ancestral home which they had abandoned to the buzzards.

At the foot of the mountain an amazing sight confronted them—a large body of horsemen, all of equal bulk, and none less than eight feet tall. They were full panoplied and clad in shining armor and helmets of solid silver. They carried, seated in a stirrup because of their weight, tremendous pikes ten feet in length, made of hard polished wood re-enforced, inlaid, and embellished with silver. The spear ends were long straight blades. They were ponderous weapons, and in a charge could not be stayed with that bulk back of them.

The huge chargers were panoplied for warfare, their armor and trappings corresponding with the dazzling armor of the giant warriors. There they stood, in absolute silence, like a silver forest, awaiting the approach of Imar's sons.

It was by all odds the most formidable sight Bingo and his brothers had ever seen, and they were not certain it was not a trap to capture them and make them permanent prisoners at Ballyhack. Therefore the intrepid Paledo rode in advance, to ask the meaning of this warlike display.

In a voice, which roared like Bingo's, the captain of the troop made answer:

“We are Druble’s guards come to escort you to the castle.”

Without parley the body of horsemen turned about and led the way up the ancient defiles. Now they were broad even roadways, with a stone wall on either side. At the place of the old shrine was now a stone chapel and the ground was embellished by blooming shrubs and flowers. An old man in a dalmatic of gray color bowed low to them as they passed the chapel. Bingo and Echo recognized in him Gumbo, the pious Hella-golite. He seemed to have assumed a perfectly normal condition.

Passing on up the old winding way, protected by stone walls covered with wild rose vines and ivy, they again looked upon Ballyhack, but not as of old. Surely this was a new Ballyhack. There was neither mark nor scar upon it. Its ancient walls were swathed in glowing ivy; its balastrarias, broken by ages of battering warfare, had given way to broad windows which let light and air into the dark old dungeons. All of the broken turrets and crumbling battlements were restored to their former state, and from each of the seven proud towers waved a bright banner, gleefully whipping the air as though rejoicing at new life in the aged castle. The grounds about the castle, surrounded by a grill of solid silver, were made into a veritable garden of the gods, embellished by every conceivable kind of flowering shrub.

The hillsides were covered by blooming fruit trees and vineyards. People could be seen busily engaged in cultivating them. Others were engaged in removing stones, building walls and pyramids, and doing many other useful things to further enhance the beauty of the place.

The great causeway, once drenched with human blood, had been perfected, all the sides of it properly straightened, its top leveled and covered with rich earth, handsome walls placed along its sides, and the whole decorated with rows of trees and flowers. It was now a magnificent boulevard leading from the walls of the castle to the higher parts of the mountains. Moreover, this garden effect had been extended to the vast top of the castle, where roses, honeysuckle, and jessamine filled the clear, pure atmosphere with fragrance, while violets, pansies, jonquils, and sweet thyme were everywhere. A stream of sparkling mountain water had been conducted along the causeway and ran its way in little rivulets, fountains, and fairy-like cascades and waterfalls to all parts of this castle garden in the air. It was here that Druble lived, and it was here he received his astonished brethren.

They were taken in hand at the great silver portals by two clean, well-clad men and conducted to the top of Ballyhack, where Druble greeted them and bade them welcome.

Druble! impossible! This man was seven feet tall and a model of manhood. This was not the Druble they knew.

"Ha!" he laughed, as he enjoyed their surprise. "I have developed in stature since you last visited me, eh?" And his kindly eyes twinkled merrily as he saw Bingo and Echo look at each other in amazement.

"And I have for you, Brother Sago, a long delayed apology and a very sweet message of greeting from the Queen of Arak, Salula, my beloved daughter."

"Oh, stop a minute! Let's take a new hold on our breath and get one thing at a time. You can't understand we are in a trance. You are used to this, and we are not. Now tell us which Mr. Druble you are." And Bingo mopped his perspiring brow.

Again the new monarch of Ballyhack laughed, saying:

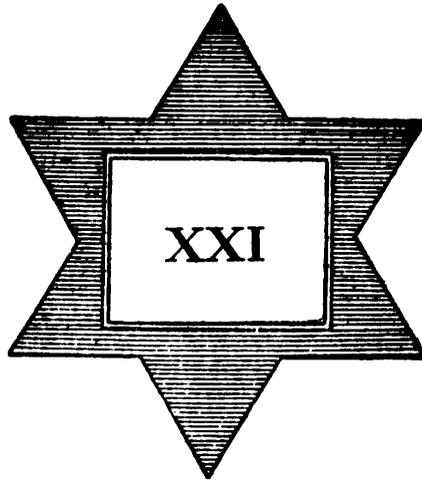
"My brother, it's a long story, and we must have the proper surroundings to set it off, therefore you will all get the dust of travel out of your throats, and by the time you are freshened up and rested you will join me at the old banquet board and hear the story which I know will please and perhaps surprise you; so curb your curiosity for a time and prepare for a roistering night of it, such as you once enjoyed in this grand old

castle." And the king politely conducted them to the way they were to go, for they were lost in the very castle where they were born and bred.

As they filed out he laughingly called after them:

"I will whet your appetites by telling you that I dug up a cask of excellent old wine in the cellars below. It will be served to-night in the old calabashes."

In a daze the brothers were conducted, to their further bewilderment, each to his own old tower to refreshen himself.



SATAN SUCCEEDS WHERE MEN FAIL

A GAIN Ballyhack sat at banquet; the same old-time feast. As the rough old chaps looked about them, tears came into their husky voices as they tried to joke over the past. The room was wholly unchanged. There were the old roasting pits, now sputtering and sizzling with sundry mysterious doings, but the delicious odors intimated a fatted calf and tender mutton. The whole great room was heavy with the tantalizing fragrance of the savory banquet. Large baskets of fruits and flowers embellished the old oaken table, and now the calabashes were being placed.

As they walked into the room Echo, in sport, walked to the ring in the wall where he had, that long time ago, stood chained while Bingo and the Devil feasted.

The new Druble took the head of the table,

with Bingo at his right hand, and the others in the order of their age.

One seat, at the other end of the table, remained empty. All eyes were turned questioningly toward it, when the cunning face and laughing brown eyes of the old Druble appeared in the doorway. He had grown thin and emaciated, and his beard had become quite patriarchal in its length. He plainly showed his great age, and this was enhanced by a long gray dalmatic in which he was clothed. With a wave of his hand the king bade Druble take the seat at the end of the table. Of course Bingo and his brothers were bursting with curiosity to have all this mystery explained.

The king now arose, saying: "Arise with me, gentlemen, and let us take our first drink together in a profound prayer for the peace and prosperity of the new Ballyhack," and they all drank deeply.

"And," came a piping voice from the lower end of the table, "I drink to the future health and happiness of her seven reunited and regenerated sons," and the old Druble drank, while the brothers wondered how much longer they would have to wait before knowing the truth.

The viands, steaming hot, were now served, each man receiving a huge portion for his own on a wide silver platter provided with a knife and fork—a great improvement over the former days of barbaric simplicity.

It was noticed that little Druble was not served, but after all the others had received their portions they roared to see a whole juicy quarter placed before him. He arose and thanked the king for his liberality. As they partook of the savory repast the king told his story.

“My brothers,—and when I address you thus I am prepared to establish the authenticity of my claim to being Druble,—in fact, your elder brother.

“I am now and long have been the true king of Arak, although this other Druble has had credit for being king there, because the kingship of Arak is but a name, the city having long been wholly ruled by women. My daughter Salula is queen. At the proper time, Sago, I will explain and make due apology for your harsh treatment upon your diplomatic visit there. We have always deeply regretted it.

“For reasons of my own I have used Druble of Hellagoland; but I must begin at the beginning.

“When I was born—of the same mother as you, my brethren—there was a woman who acted as midwife. She herself was with child by the apish offspring of Alcor, and was sent away, finally wandering to Ballyhack. The night before I was born Druble, there, was born, and thinking to have her son be eventually made king over Ballyhack, as his father was over Arak at that time,

the midwife exhibited her child to both my mother and to Imar as their firstborn.

“Imar in his rage bade the woman take the child away. Having hid me near the shrine, she now took both the babes and went away into the wilderness, and Hellagoland was founded.

“Druble was the name Imar had selected for his first son, and the old midwife, Goobro, called both of us by that name. She said it meant the devil. But she long kept the secret of our birth from us.

“We grew up together, and I have always said, although Druble was akin to the devil, no truer or better brother was ever born. Never once in ten years did we have one quarrel. We lived together as brothers, and I watched with wonderment his tendency to pervert things; but always in a harmless way. He had a passion for gnarling and twisting things into curious and ugly fashions, and together we began to develop a topsy-turvy country, finally reaching the point where we had the roots of trees growing upward while the fruits were upon the ground.

“Druble at the age of ten was the father of Brembo, and Goobro told me she was going to take me away from Hellagoland. I protested, but she declared I would some day be king over a great country and that I must be educated as kings are. In great secrecy she told me she had discovered a great cavernous system running be-

neath the mountains, and if I would swear that her offspring should forever remain the king of Hellagoland and this underworld, she would see that I came into my own on top of the earth, and we would control both. Thereupon she revealed to me the truth of my parentage. I agreed to this arrangement, and she took me through the cavern beneath the mountains to Arak, a great and beautiful city. There, under good tutors, I was educated in all they knew, and they were wise men.

“Now, understanding and liking Druble, when I met the king I was startled to find him the exact counterpart of his offspring in Hellagoland. We at once became fast friends, and I told him as much as Goobro had confided to me. He at once grasped the whole situation, and completed the story, assuring me that I was the eldest son of Imar, therefore the legal heir to the throne of Ballyhack. But he declared he wanted me to be practically king of Arak, because he knew his deformities and lack of proper education unfitted him for the kingship; therefore I became, in fact, acting king of Arak. I soon had an underground system of communication with Hellagoland, and I had my old tutor secretly educate Druble of that country. As time passed King Apias,—for that is the name of the apish king,—although seldom seen, grew very tired and sick, and from time to time I would bring Druble to the palace and give

Apias a vacation, and not a living soul knew the difference.

“Apias loved to wander about in the caverns. On one of these trips he disappeared and was never again heard from. This made it necessary to make a permanent change in the rulership,—without the knowledge of the people,—for they were prosperous and happy. I desired to retain control over the rich city of Arak, yet I was biding the proper time when I might go to Ballyhack and claim my own.

“In the meantime I had married, and to me were born a daughter and son, Salula being the eldest. She was most beautiful and was beloved of all the people of Arak.

“One day Druble—believed to be Apias—issued a proclamation that he was unable physically to continue the affairs of state, and gave the people their choice of having me for king or Salula for queen to rule them in his stead. The people very promptly accepted Salula, and this is why a woman rules over Arak. Moreover, all her advisers are women.

“My son was little more than half-witted, and an incorrigible of the most fiendish type. He grieved himself almost to death during Druble’s absence, but teased and tormented him incessantly while present, which the good-natured Druble endured without complaint.

“The day that Salula brought you to the palace

I was away from the city. It was Druble you saw there, playing the part of Apias, which he loved to do.

“It was most unfortunate that my foolish son recognized his own clothing upon you before an explanation was made. I bear to you the most humble apologies from Arak, Sago.”

This story told by the new king of Ballyhack was amazingly interesting to the brothers. Not one intimation of doubt of its truthfulness was offered.

“Can you enlighten us regarding this devilish strain in our blood?” asked Bingo.

“There is the same devilish strain in the blood of every man,” replied the king, “but it is not always manifested alike. There are so many devious ways by which the devil crops out of humanity, nature has attempted to place a genetical bar to his physical reproduction. But,—so the archives of our race state,—one of our ancestral women became enamored of a genuine gnome or genii of the underground world and broke down nature’s bars, since which time we have not fully exterminated the tainted blood. I do not know how true it is, but the records say this occurred on a mysterious volcano island called——”

“Fire Island. I’ve been there,” exclaimed Jingo.

“You have been at Fire Island?” said the king, looking at Jingo in great surprise.

"Yes; and I saw Druble there," replied Jingo.

Druble now looked up as though he, too, was surprised.

The King and Druble exchanged significant glances.

"What else did you see there?" asked the King, with interest.

Jingo briefly related the story of his adventure with the Hermites, at which both the King and Druble laughed.

"That old grunt was still living, and doubtless he and Kokite are still running the show," said Druble. "It was all a bluff about her killing herself. Goobro sees her frequently. She is a wonderful woman. It was Apias you saw there, not me. Apias stole Koko's wife and ran away somewhere with her; no one ever knew." The devil was furious. He said no more during the banquet.

The King, expressing a desire to know something of the excellent wine in the cellars of the castle, they lighted flambeaux and all adjourned to the place of the wine casks. They tasted and discussed the different vintages, and then went above.

"Where is Druble?" asked Bingo. Seek as they would, not hair nor hide could be seen of the old Druble. It was declared he had not left the castle, and they searched every nook and corner of it without avail.

“Come with me to the wine cellar,” the King now said to Sago. “Perhaps there may be a bung-hole open down there.” The two went alone to the cellar, where a cask was rolled away from the wall, exposing the entrance to a cavern.

“This cave,” said the King, “leads to Arak. You are welcome there.” Then they rolled the cask back in its place.

“It also leads to Hellagoland, therefore if you value your wine you would better fasten this entrance on this side.”

They said not a word of their discovery, and the search for Druble ceased. Only the King knew where Druble had gone. He was looking for Apias. The dancing huriyas Jingo had seen there were not the daughters of Kokita. They were the beautiful daughters of Druble’s own people. Once each year since Apias’ retirement they and certain Rokites disappeared for two days, as suddenly returning. It was to embellish this old rogue’s orgies they lent themselves. Therefore Druble was looking for that other devil. The men who participated were a sect of monks, making this curious old place their den.

The King now called together his brothers, saying:

“Cast among yourselves who should be king of Ballyhack in my stead. I must return to Arak. When you have chosen, I will make a pact with you.”

In surprise the brothers heard this generous offer, and right quickly chose Echo, even Bingo voting for him.

Then the King of Arak said:

“If each brother will swear to go upon a diplomatic mission for five years, advocating peace, good government, and amity throughout the world, while Echo remains here and re-establishes Ballyhack, I will make him king. I will visit him once each year and give him the protection of Arak.”

The brothers agreed to this, and Druble drew up a code of instructions for them, consisting of

ESSENTIALS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

1. The fewest possible laws, especially criminal laws, for they widen the criminal classes.
2. The plainest, simplest laws possible, with their intent clearly defined for the people when passed, in order that the nation may not be burdened with so-called law experts. A law honestly passed for an honest purpose is plain and explicit.
3. The government by covenant, being the creation of the nation, should at all times be under the control of the nation, and its functions be clearly defined by law. Under no circumstances should it advocate an extension of its own powers or usurp functions not belonging to it.
4. No discretionary powers should be given to

the government in any of its co-ordinate branches, for indiscretion is a human frailty.

5. The greatest economy should be practiced in the conduct of the government, as a salutary example to the people.

6. Aggrandizement, pomp, and pride of office should have no place in government.

7. The people should have the greatest personal freedom. They should not be teased by espionage, threats, or accusation of criminal tendencies in the absence of specific evidence of crime.

8. Seek not to convict persons charged with criminal intent on insufficient evidence. The prosecutor is always prejudiced.

9. Under no circumstances should the people be convicted of crime or charged with damages in cases in which they are the innocent cause. Intent, motive, or purpose is the essential evidence of conscious crime.

10. Declare that war between nations is the king of all crimes. Stop wars by an international agreement, setting a prohibitive indemnity upon each and every man killed, as certain modes of warfare are prohibited by international agreement.

11. Establish a monetary system based upon, and controlled in volume and purpose, by the legal fiat of the nation, and having for its sole purpose the honest and economic exchange of the products of the nation, and resting wholly and

specifically upon the right of the people to adopt such a medium without paying a premium therefor to a middle system, which by its control makes money a commodity, to the hurt and detriment of those who produce, and destroys the natural law of values fixed by supply and demand.

12. Disarm all men of every calling, official or otherwise, and keep the people upon their honor. There will be greater respect for law, and less crime.

13. Punish the abuse of public office more severely than any other crime.

14. Destroy and prevent political associations for power and profit.

15. Eliminate from public service any man who becomes identified as a political enthusiast, working to perpetuate himself in office by his favoring his party over the people.

16. Pensions and life tenureship of office are the two most dangerous bribes in government.

17. Commissions to transact in secret the public business of the nation smacks of crookedness.

18. A profligacy of public expenditures requiring a coercive taxation on the privileges of doing business intimates that the government controls the nation, not the nation its government.

19. The taxation of one half the nation to pay tribute to the other half is a species of coercion which can only be maintained by government of restraint. Such a system is born of hate and is an

utter disregard of all the decencies and justice of human obligations.

20. Music and cultured refinement are the works of the higher civilization. When music is not heard in public places harmony and amity have fled.

“Teach these precepts among the peoples you meet in your travels, my brethren, for the world will be no better till they are understood.

“My travels have shown me that the world is composed of two classes—those who produce and have a bare living, without time for self-culture, and those who produce not and live in extravagant luxury by the false pretense of rendering some romantic professional service which lifts them above the laboring classes. These latter are professional criminals who rob the poor under the protection of special class legislation or in the studied absence of protecting laws to keep such sharks away from the helpless and ignorant masses.

“There will come a day of reckoning, however, for men learn by contact those things which they have no time to learn by precept. When the common people take hold of their government and by sheer force wrest it from the grasp of the political tricksters, God help those who have set themselves up as special dispensations and are marked for elimination; hell is no myth.

“When the people awaken to the necessity of levying a special tax upon those who reap, but sow not, the professional classes will contribute their fair share to running the nation as a partial compensation for the privilege of living at the expense of those who labor and produce intrinsic wealth, to be surreptitiously snatched away from them by the devious methods of those who do not produce intrinsic things.

“And now, in conclusion, your Druble, although but half a man, has taught you most of the wholesome lessons you know. He has succeeded in establishing a happy, though homely nation, which you cannot boast of. You have named him the devil. Presume he comes as near the average conception of the devil as any human being does, but there is no such thing as an existing devil. The name and the story of his punishing evildoers were invented and put in use by the designing churches to control the ignorant and by thoughtless parents to frighten their children.

“If the devil punishes evil, then he must be an element to correct evil, therefore a good element; we never hear it said the devil punishes the good.

“All men have within them God and the devil, or good and evil. It depends upon which they exorcise as to which we hold them responsible for. If all men were as thoughtful for the welfare of others as our dear old Druble has always been, the world would be better.

“And now, my brothers, my work is done. I have restored Ballyhack to its pristine condition and given it back to you. Keep faith with me, and the way to Arak is always open to you. Should Druble die, it is his wish to be buried at the foot of the old shrine, which I have restored to its former position, and, curious to say, he insists that his gravestone shall be thus inscribed: ‘Here rests Druble, the Devil.’

“Bingo, I return to you the talisman which your father gave to you. It will be a good keepsake, but it is a myth. Its counterfeits will become a curse to humanity. Not even the devil is willing to be caught dead with the original on his person.

“I must start at once for Arak.”

Notwithstanding the urgent request of his brothers to remain longer, the king of Arak, known by his people as the true Druble, drew up his army of giants preparatory to starting on his way. The captain raised his visor and made a polite courtesy to Bingo, nearly knocking the latter off his clumsy old feet, for it was none other than Jumbo, with real hands and feet.

The King explained that during the course of the terrific battle Druble had secured feet and hands for all the Jumites, for which in time he would give Ballyhack due credit, no doubt.

The six brothers now looked about.

They could not understand it. It was a new

deal, and it would be ill-befitting of them to do aught but carry out, to the letter, their pact with their generous elder brother.

They brought their households to the castle, there to be under Echo's care while they fulfilled their pilgrimages in the campaign for universal peace and good government.

The day of parting had come, and they were seated at the great banquet-table in a farewell feast when a servant informed them some great disaster was happening beyond the mountains. Sure enough, the sky looked as if it were on fire, while at intervals great volumes of fire and smoke shot a thousand feet above the highest mountain top.

They immediately sought the towers. From one small window a view of Hellagoland could be had. Like a map of burnished metal it stood out clear and distinct. Great streams of lava were pouring destruction down upon it. No living thing could escape. Hellagoland was but a half-remembered dream. Its fantastical features were fading and its curious lands being purified by fire, the devil's own acid.

Ballyhack knew not whether to weep or laugh. Suddenly there was a great commotion below. Rushing down to investigate, they found Druble lying upon the floor of the banquet-chamber. He was dying. His feet and hands were mere stumps, having been burned off. His body was singed of

its hairy coat, and was a mass of huge blisters. Only his beard remained unsinged.

With his dying breath he told them he had come to save Ballyhack. Sago alone understood the terror of the situation. He did not wait for further explanation, but calling every available pair of hands, even the women and children, he started the transfer of stone and earth to the wine cellar, and at the end of three hours had so thoroughly plugged up the cavern the lava could not break through. Druble knew the cavern inclined toward Ballyhack, and as soon as it began to fill it would be only a short time when gravity would carry the molten stream like a river right into the castle, seek its level and rise up like a fountain and destroy Ballyhack.

Again the devil had saved Ballyhack, but this time at the cost of his own life.

For several days they fought the persistent lava, until it broke through the earth, running away from the castle and into the valley below. The volcano had broken through the crater of the arguros mountain and not a foot of Hellagoland remained uncovered. The land of mystery was washed off the map by Satan's own flood. It was never known how Druble got into and through the cavern to Ballyhack, but he did, and proved true to his trust. It was a miracle that the King of Arak had shown Sago the cavern; perhaps it was premonition.

The whole face of the country was changed, and when they could safely do so Sago and Marco went over the mountains, but neither Nahi nor Arak could be found.

Poor old Druble lingered a few days, suffering the tortures of the damned, then he died. They buried him by the little shrine, and the inscription read:

“Here rests Druble, faithful unto Ballyhack.”

It was not now essential for them to keep their vow to their elder brother, but they made an iron-clad oath among themselves that never again would they raise their hands against man, but would devote the remainder of their days in teaching their own people the science of right living, and promoting peace throughout the world.

They had a happy family and enjoyed living.

On each anniversary of the death of Druble they held a banquet, and when the calabashes were nearly empty they would stand and sing this song:

Grasp each man his calabash,
 Forgive the wounds of time;
 Forget ye each his temper
 And condone each other's crime.
 Let us drink to Druble's rest,
 Be he man or devil—
 What ere he did he did it well,
 And he did it on the level.
 Here's to the King of Hellagoland,
 There's a streak of devil in every man,

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It will crop out whenever it can,—
So let us drink to Druble.

We planted Druble deep in the ground,
For he was a jolly good fellow;
He made good bait for the hungry worms,
For he was old and mellow,—
We'll drink to the sons of Hellagoland,
For they were not all devils,
They were the fathers of the wives
Who join us in our revels.
There are no heads left to crack;
There's nothing left for us to sack;
Druble's gone and will never come back,—
So let us drink to Druble.

We'll batter down the gates of time
And march into the past,
Mop out the stains of each man's crime,
And live in peace at last.
Then drink to the health of every man,
Be he man or devil,
When he tries to do his duty well
And does it on the level.
We'll drink to both heaven and hell,
To which place he went we cannot tell,
He was going some when they tolled the bell,—
So let us drink to Druble.

We credit the devil with all we can,
But when we get acquainted,
We find him as good as the average man,
And not half as red as he's painted.
Here's to Druble of Hellagoland,
For he was a good old soul,

His head was like a cocoanut
But his heart was made of gold.
He walloped the back of sinner or saint
That bucked his game, or made complaint
That all he did had the devil's taint,—
So let us drink to Druble.

In future our weapons will be good wine,
With plenty of beef and mutton,
We'll fight our battles in rollick and fun,
And make each foe a glutton.
Here's to the health of every man,
Be he saint or sinner,
Friend or foe, prince or priest,
Give him good wine with dinner.
The devil is born in every man,
He is king of every land,
For good or evil he holds the best hand,—
So let us drink to Druble.