

2cc BROWNIE GOES on the BOOGIE BEAT

By VIC STAFFORD REID

Second-class constable Archimedes Brownie never cared much for the night beat on the Spanish Town Road. In fact, he cared for the Road not at all. He considered the Road to be much over-rated.

True, within a few hundred yards of its roistering length, any good copper could put a finger on a few unconvicted murderers, a dozen hole-in-the-roof men, and scores of pickpockets and plain, garden thieves. But all that meant nothing. These gentry only resided on the Road. They seldom operated there. Better pickings were elsewhere.

Why, thought Brownie as he leaned against a wall and twisted his nondescript features into a thoughtful whistle, *might just as well argue that because the big shots lived in St. Andrew, more mortgages were signed and more tweeds sold among those green reaches than in the dusty city!*

What happened was that both halves operated vice versa. St. Andrew motored south by day, and Spanish Town Road slunk north by night.

That was it, thought Brownie, and stretched his pursed lips in a grin.

A wandering wisp of east wind brushed one side of his cheek. It brought a light dust from West Queen Street and a smell of curried mutton from El Alamein.

El Alamein was a greasy cold supper shop. It was named after a more illustrious predecessor. But

things were happening normally. Over by Young Street, a pocomania Shepherd led his band around the *Falling Walls of Jericho*. He waved a white wand. In rich harmony, the band told the tale of Joshua's historic stroll. Their red-turbanned heads nodded in unison.

A country bus thundered in from the west; a halo of gasoline odours settled over the *Falling Walls*. Three girls swung out from the Coronation Market, baskets of fruit on their heads. A blundering handcartman was swiftly cursed as his grimy cart brushed too near an immaculately zoot-suited thief. The girls laughed. They walked with a peculiar grace, short skirts whipping around moulded hips.

Gawd luv a duck! whispered a country boy leaning against a truck. He stared at the girls with hot eyes. He sucked greedily at the ice-cream cone in his hand.

Brownie grinned. The Road was normal. Noise and heat and dust and song and raw, boisterous life. Apropos of nothing, he whistled a bar of *Laughing on the Outside*.

He came off the wall and walked to the door of the Alamein. He waved a neat hand at Calligan. Calligan beamed and leaned across the counter and twirled the dials of the radiophone. Brownie slid outside the aura of light from the door and leaned against the wall. He twitched his cap over his eyes, eased open the collar of his tunic and

hole-in-the-roof men in the business; and Amos "Country" Fagan, the knife artist.

Over at Sutton Street police headquarters, the matter of the loss to a big King Street store of a Thousand Pounds of stuff was still on the "open" file. Momentarily, a squeal was expected. The Road had it that Country was dissatisfied at the share of the proceeds, and was seriously considering a "carrying-down" of Boysie. The Road further had it that a good percentage of the loot had not yet been fenced; and that this was what was holding back Country.

The Road would not have been surprised had Country taken his steel to Boysie. He had been known to carve up more than one pal in a flare of temper.

But Boysie was a cool devil with a great opinion of himself. Many obliging females had helped towards forming that opinion. So Boysie Ramchuman smiled with white teeth and a trim mustache and seemed not to notice how Country stuck closely to him.

The radiophone crackled and a fine mellow voice said it was Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians. A piano trilled four liquid bars. The saxophone team took away the melody. The melody flowed over smooth rocks of woodwinds and bass. Brownie shifted and peered under the batwing doors of the Alamein.

Calligan still leaned on the marble counter. He wore a beam on his face. His huge fingers tapped out the beat on a broomstick which he held like a bull fiddle. Calligan was an artist. Brownie thought Calligan was also pretty dumb.

Boysie Ramchuman played cards with one of his hands under the table. From where he stood, Brownie could see what that hand was doing. Calligan could not. The table was about ten feet away from

the counter. Katie Calligan laughed often, her slanting eyes half closed. When she laughed, her tongue curled red over her short lower lip. Big Mas'r Calligan wore a beam on his face and tapped out the beat on his bull fiddle.

Katie Calligan laughed often, her half-closed eyes on Boysie. Slim Garvey played his cards phlegmatically. He placed the cards on the table with a jabbing motion as if they were so many chisels. He used a chisel often in his business.

Country grinned everytime Katie laughed. You could see he knew why The Body laughed. He grinned without mirth. He looked often at Boysie.

The tune was changed. This time the trumpets carried the tune. The muted instruments had scooped up fistfulls of little white stars and now were pouring them out through their burnished mouths in clear, keen notes. Carmen Lombardo started her chorus. The trumpets traced a scintillating pattern, edging the gold of Carmen's voice with a delicate scrollwork of silver.

Calligan knew his music. Brownie relaxed against the wall. For the first time in the history of the Alamein, a boogie woogie jelled into its muttoney interior. Its glutinous deviltry crept into every corner of the shop and put a sinuous weave in Katie's splendid torso. Country's big shoulders wriggled frantically as he hissed breath through clenched teeth. Slim Garvey came out of his phlegm enough to say in a heavy voice to The Body: "Gi'e me some skin, Babe." Boysie Ramchuman just sat and grinned at her.

All this Brownie saw when angry surprise pushed his head through the batwinged door of the Alamein. He saw Calligan leaning over the counter, his broomstick in one hand while the other fumbled at the radiophone. There was an annoyed

(Continued on Page 19)

The Hero of "For Cats are

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El Alamein was a greasy cold supper shop. It was named after a more illustrious predecessor. But not inappropriately; for a visit to this latter-day Alamein invariably produced a battle—a battle between its curried mutton and your digestive juices. Your juices seldom won.

What Brownie liked about the Alamein was its radiophone. As radiophones went, the Alamein's instrument went a far way; and Big Mas'r Calligan had the soul of an artist. Yes. The big ex-pugilist was the proprietor of the Alamein and artistry lurked behind his battered countenance.

During the week since Brownie had been on the beat, the ex-heavy had discovered the constable's soul. And since soul calleth to soul, nightly as he leaned his back against the Alamein, Calligan would exchange a grin with him, then reach down and search the dial with two powerful fingers. The Boston Philharmonic or some other long-haired musicians would soon move into the Alamein.

If their long hairs were not waving in the ether at that moment, then Big Mas'r would find some quiet dance music. The Alamein's radiophone never played jazz. It was always dance music—dispensed by discreet gentlemen like Guy Lombardo or Sammy Kaye; gentlemen who performed as if slightly ashamed at what they were doing, but determined to hang a tailcoat and white tie on any of Broadway's jungly-swampy vapourings.

Brownie took a look around his section of the Road and saw that

maculately zoot-suited thief. The girls laughed. They walked with a peculiar grace, short skirts whipping around moulded hips.

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But while the taut five-foot-eight frame of 2cc Brownie leaned with apparent nonchalance against the wall of the Alamein, his mind was busy. Many persons who noticed Brownie for the first time, often promptly forgot him. The reason for this was that there was nothing noticeable about Brownie.

But long ago, Brownie had realised his un-noticeableness and had decided to do something about it. As a result, he had contrived to build up a good supply of brawn and brain within his small frame. Only recently, an Inspector had been mildly surprised at the brain incidence behind the stubby features of this second-class constable*.

Four persons playing cards inside the Alamein had set Brownie thinking. Every night for a week, they had played cards inside the Alamein. First, there was Katie Calligan. From West Parade to Darling Street, the Road once knew her as Katie, the Body. That was before Big Mas'r Calligan had contrived with the help of a priest to make an honest woman of her. According to the rules governing that bit of ceremony, her comely face and superb sambo body was now in the keeping of Big Mas'r Calligan.

Then there were Boysie Ramchuman, the handsome half-caste gang leader; Slim Garvey, one of the best

* For Cats Are So Modest. Post, October, 1946.

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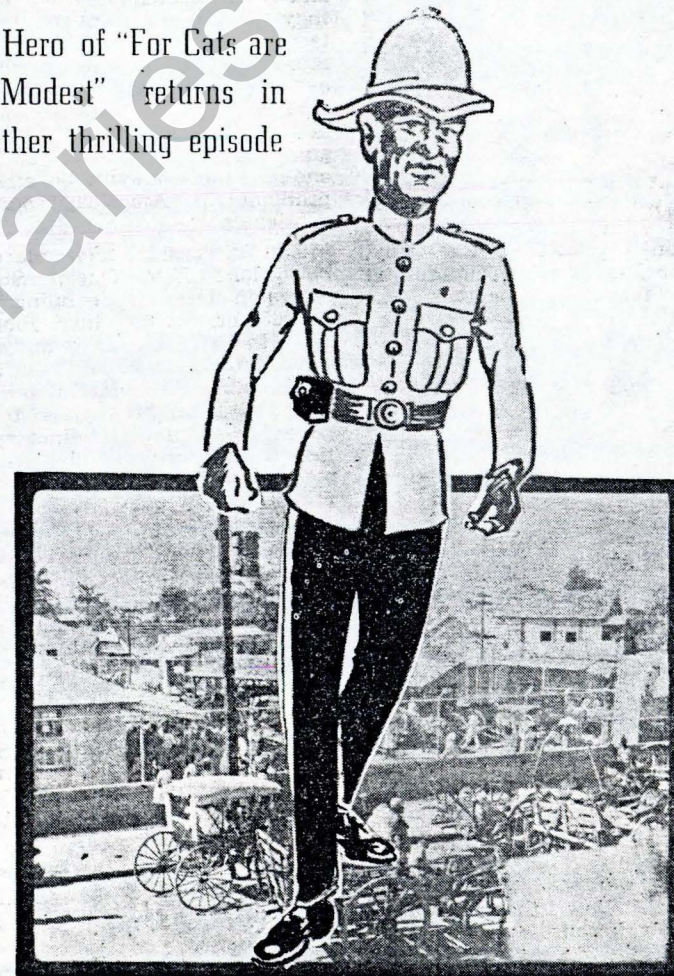
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(Continued on Page 19)

The Hero of "For Cats are So Modest" returns in another thrilling episode



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(Continued from Page 11)

look on his face; his eyes were closed in disgust. His beloved instrument had let him down with an unexpected change of programme.

And at that moment, another of those unexpected things happened. Every light in the Alamein went out.

It was the shriek that galvanised Brownie into action. It started out like any other frightened shriek, but midway bubbled and guggled away....*crash*.... something fell heavily inside the Alamein. Brownie's fingers were searching around the door jamb before the shriek ended. His fingers found the switch which he had previously noticed. He snapped it up.

Light slapped against his eyes with almost painful impact. Everyone inside the Alamein must have had a similar experience. That is, everyone except Boysie Ramchuman. The dead feel no pain.

A squad of constables kept the eager Road people from swarming into the Alamein. Inside, the camera team snapped flashlight pictures. A CID sergeant wandered around the shop with a steel tape in his hands. Boysie Ramchuman stared sightlessly up from the floor. The front of his shirt was a bloody smear.

Second-class constable Brownie spoke to his Inspector.

"What I can't understand, sir, is how did the lights go out." He spoke unhappily.

Inspector Gabidan looked unhappy. Katie the Body, Country and Slim Garvey were standing by the far wall. Behind the counter, Calligan helped some constables to shift packing cases. They were searching for the weapon. A police surgeon straightened up from beside the body on the floor. He peeled off his rubber gloves and nodded at the Inspector.

"Look for a—"

"—Sharp, cutting tool", finished the Inspector wearily. "Yes, I know."

It was a fine but stout twine, with a small loop at one end.

"Any ideas?" queried the Inspector. Brownie said no.

Outside in the Road, the pocomania meeting had been whittled down by this bigger sensation to a score of devotees. Their souls were being wrung with the poignant mercy-seat tune: *Are your windows opened towards Jerusalem?* They sang no words. They hummed with a deep intensity. In a high pitched tone, the white clad Shepherd placed old, exotic words from Solomon's Songs upon the deep velvet of the humming voices:

Yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding.....if thou seekest after her as silver and searchest for her as hid treasure.....

Brownie said: "Please, sir."

There was urgency in his voice. Gabidan scanned his face. The affair of the lovemaking cats* had given him respect for the youngster. He said: "Come on," and led the way to a corner of the shop.

"I", said 2cc Brownie, "believe I know who killed him."

The Inspector swallowed. He placed his hands on his hips. Twin wrinkles crept up from the corners of his tightened mouth and built into furrows across his forehead.

"Splendid," he said.

"It was Calligan," said 2cc Brownie eagerly.

"Good," said Gabidan. "How?"

"It must have been, sir," raced on Brownie. "Doctor says he was struck from directly in front and only Katie and Calligan was directly in front."

"Quite," agreed Gabidan; adding sweetly, "and Calligan was only ten feet away. He switched off the lights by the wall switch while he was behind the counter, he leapt the counter, knifed the Indian and got back before you could turn on the lights again. Superman Calligan, Brownie, you are a—" Again his word ended in a sibilant hiss with

"Country wouldn't be after him before all the stuff was fenced, sir," objected Brownie. "This is a revenge killin' and Country was after money. Boysie was foolin' 'round Katie and the whole Road knew it."

"Why are you so stuck on Calligan and this revenge theme?"

"It's that radiophone business I told you about, sir. Calligan knew his programmes too well to have been fooled. He did it deliberately knowing I would look inside. When I did that, I became his alibi. He was too far away to kill Ramchuman."

"Hmm. What about that bruise on Garvey's face? How does it fit in? You ruled him out entirely?"

"No reason, sir," said Brownie. "Yes. But the bruise, man, how did he get it? He says he—hey! suppose in knifing the Indian the man struck at him and the blow caught him on the cheek? It looks a bit like a fingernail mark, doesn't it?"

"But, sir—"

The Inspector whirled. "Come on, Brownie. Let's have a look at the Indian's hand."

They both squatted beside the body. Gabidan lifted the right hand and let it down again when he saw the nails were clean. He raised the left, peered closer and gave a grunt. Brownie said something that sounded like the Inspector's word. Under the nail of the dead Indian's left forefinger was a streak of blood. Inspector Gabidan said: "See what I mean?"

They rose from the floor. Brownie's eyes were thoughtful. He did not see the little triumphant smile playing around the Inspector's mouth. He said: "But why should he want to kill Ramchuman, sir?"

Gabidan shrugged. "You can't follow a criminal's reasoning, constable. It's usually warped; that's why they make so many mistakes," he said sentimentally.

"Perhaps Calligan knows something, sir," suggested Brownie.

"Right; let's ask him."

Inspector Gabidan asked Calligan about his card playing guests.

The ex-heavy rested his forearms on the counter. The constables had ceased searching for the weapon. It just could not be found.

"Ah 'ad no use foh them, Inspector," said Calligan. "They usta laugh w'en ah play my kin' o' mu-

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"Struck from directly in front," added the surgeon.

The CID sergeant wandered by. His rubber heeled boots made no sound, but everytime he passed Brownie, he made a sound like a throttling steam engine. The big sergeant had no love for 2cc Brownie.

Gabidan asked: "Found anything, sergeant?"

"Norr," said the sergeant.

Brownie asked the surgeon: "Could it be a chisel, sir?"

The Surgeon said tolerantly: "Could be." He glanced at Gabidan. "One of your brighter young men?"

Gabidan said a word. It was of one syllable and ended in a sibilant hiss. A magistrate who was also a radio-fan, once dubbed it the Forty Shilling Word.

Brownie walked over to where Slim Garvey stood and looked keenly at the man. There was a bruise on his cheek which he said he had got when the lights went out. He could not account for it. A constable was speaking to the Inspector. Gabidan called sharply: "Brownie!"

Brownie went up quickly. The Inspector showed him the length of twine resting on his palm. "This constable found it under the card table," he said.

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"But the cord, sir!" said Brownie swiftly.

"Eh!" Inspector Gabidan started. He stared at Brownie for awhile, passed his palm over his chin. He said softly: "The cord—yes. But how could he have acted so swiftly and surely in the sudden dark?"

Brownie grinned. "Just before the lights went out he had his eyes closed in what I thought was disgust at the radio, sir."

Gabidan said slowly: "He—had—his—eyes—oh! I see what you mean! So when the darkness came, he was prepared for it?"

"Yes, sir," murmured 2cc Brownie. His brain was clicking ahead. They had now arrived at the point which he could not explain. He awaited the question.

"But how could he have reached the Indian, knifed him and got back to the counter in a few seconds?"

"He is an ex-boxer and fast on his feet, you know, sir," tendered Brownie.

Gabidan pursed his lips. He shook his head. "Hmm. No go, Brownie. You've been good up to now, but no go old boy. Sorry. What about Country?" he asked suddenly, "wasn't the twine found under the table?"

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Gabidan nodded. "Well, you are rid of them now. Calligan. We are taking them away."

"You mean—arrestin' them suh?"

"That's right, Calligan. We've found the murderer. You never had cause for worry though, unless your reach has gained six feet since I saw you in the ring."

Brownie laughed with Calligan. But when the ex-heavy had finished laughing, a grin was still on Brownie's face. It seemed frozen there.

Slowly, his eyes wide, Brownie stooped and picked up the broomstick with which Calligan had been tapping out the beat to Lombardo's music.

"If his arm was as long as this, sir, plus another half, he could," said Brownie through his grin.

"Doan joke me, corpy," said Calligan smilingly as he took the stick from Brownie. Second class constable Brownie smiled back but his heart was doing flipbacks.

Calligan was a giant of a man and could make a lot of trouble. So Brownie eased his revolver from the holster, shifted position to take the Inspector out of line of fire, and said: "I am not jokin', Calligan."

Two months ago Inspector Gabidan would not have done what he now did. But, he knew now that 2cc Brownie was not exactly a moron. His own gun came out and

(Continued on Page 22)

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ed one hand on to the top corner post and held on to the top strand of the ring with the other. He chewed steadily on the end of a black panatella and squinted his eyes at the two fighters dancing about the middle of the canvas. The squint was caused by the afternoon sun which rested briefly on top of the ragged brick wall surrounding the yard, circled the whitened trunk of a dead ackee, glanced off the sweaty torsos of the two fast-stepping men in the ring and shone full on the mahogany of Wharton's face.

Beside him, he heard Pop Jones grunt, and he glanced quickly down at the bald dome of the manager. Pop, who stood exactly six feet in or out of his socks, turned the seamed black parchment of his face up to Wharton. He spoke from the side of his mouth, the black of his eyes leaning far out at the corner of their sockets to keep the ring in view, meanwhile.

"Watch it now, Mist' Wharton," he said, "watch the ole Battler!"

With over a score of years of knowing where to look, Wharton waited. He saw Battling Tom Burnett's flickering left jab dart at the fighter, and the deceptive drop of Battler's arm when the jab missed, leaving him wide open. He registered the swift leap of the other going in for the counter punch, and the easy roll of the old fighter taking him out of the way. There was a quick flurry of gloves, and then a comical surprise on the face of the sparring partner as he sat down heavily on the canvas from the short right that was neither a hook nor a cross, but just what Bill Wharton had christened it a generation ago—the Burnett Express.

Pop Jones' eyes swung back into place and climbed up to Bill Wharton's face. A wide smile creased the parchment some more.

"Eh, Mist' Wharton?" he said; "has the ole Battler still got it?"

Wharton showed his teeth in a grin which the squint pulled a little, making it lopsided. He spoke through smoke and the grin.

"I'll say he has, Pop! If he hadn't copped a bit on that punch, your chopping block would have been bounced into the middle of next week!"

Pop rolled his eyes wisely. "You tellin' me, Mist' Wharton!" He stabbed a nudgy forefinger at Bill Whar-

eyes, a weary expression on his face. "Listen, Mist' Wharton," he said slowly, "first of all, Battler is not forty, he's thirty-nine. Braddock was nearly that when he took the title from the beautiful butcher's boy; and you and me know that Battler's life has been as different from the ornery fighter's as Tunney's from Battlin' Siki's. What the Cinderalla Man did, Battler can do; get me?"

Wharton nodded solemnly, his eyes dancing.

"I get you, Pop—er, by the way, did you read my column this morning?"

enormous thumbs in their fifteen ounce practise gloves. A tiny birthmark under his left arm was startlingly clear against the dark tan of his skin.

"Hi, Mist' Wharton?" he said.

Bill Wharton grinned and sent his fists over the ropes to nudge the corrugated stomach of Tom Burnett, affectionately.

"Lo, Hermit," he said, "how's the Newcastle eyrie? Haven't seen you with the gloves on for about five years, have I?"

When the Battler dropped his hands from the helmet, the corded muscles on his gleaming biceps made

odours of massage and good sweat, seemed to Bill Wharton to reel back the years in prodigious turns of a decade . . . nineteen-thirty five . . . nineteen-twenty-five . . . and he saw himself, a cub-reporter with the ink still wet on his fingers, discovering the mild-mannered youngster whose modesty, too great even for his two hundred muscled pounds, hid him under the showmanship of brighter young fellows in Topsy King's old Chancery Lane camp.

And, as he burned his way to the top of his profession, he saw himself again helping Battling Burnett climb the ladder until the night back in 'thirty, he sat in the Press Row at Ward watching his fighter take the heavy-weight crown from Cantneria, the Cuban.

That had been one of the happier events in their friendship. Sadder times there had been—like the marriage, followed a year later by the crash. And again it was he who had held up the young fighter, instilling in him the will to live and fight on, in and out of the ring. . .

Tom Burnett twirled the rope over his head and looped it around the neck of a handler. He leaped the ropes and walked over to the speed bag suspended from the dead ackee. His bandaged hands flailed the bag in a blurred speed that had it machine-gunning against the back-board.

Pop Jones tortured eyeballs rolled over their backs once more.

"Eh, Mist' Wharton? Has the ole Battler still got it?"

Bill Wharton came out of his reverie, rocked a little on his heels and then looked down on Pop's fissured face.

"I'll say he has, Pop, I'll say he has!" he conceded half dreamily.

The afternoon of the Panamanian champ's arrival. Bill Wharton joined the small crowd looking at him work out.

He was a youngster of not more than twenty, but as compact and tough a fighting machine as Wharton had ever seen in the cruiser-weight class. Something about him haunted a memory deep back in the sports editor's mind. What Wharton did not like was his cockiness.—He was a wise-cracking, two-handed puncher with a sneering grin and a packet of snappy insults for the snarling partners whom he belted about the ring.

A couple of sports writers from



"No, Tom No, Ole Tom, You Couldn't".

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RETURN OF BURNETT

(Continued from Page 10)

and with her, all traces of grandmother and child.

"And then the scene changes. Three years after, this fighting boy becomes the fighting heavy-weight champ of Jamaica; and incidentally, there never was a better one. He fought all comers, winning, as he did everything else, cleanly. Then came the war years and the dearth in boxing.

"With the money he had saved, the boy, who was now a man, bought a small farm in the New-castle hills and retired to the quiet life he loved. From this life, he was called by us, you, and me, and all his admirers to defend his title against a youth but half his years.

"If I am wrong, bear with me. But I venture to say, that you who know Tom Burnett, the fighter, the possessor of that sight-defying punch which your writer in his flowery youth once dubbed: the Burnett Express—I say that you who really know Tom Burnett, could have had no doubt in your minds that Tom could have stopped the Panama Kid, good as he undoubtedly is. At any rate, if his age weighed too heavily in your mind against him, certainly you will agree he could have at least had gone the distance over ten rounds! But the worst happened.

"Why did Tom Burnett allow himself to be batted around the ring like a third-rate amateur? Was it a swindle?

"That theory would be too foolish even for consideration. For had it been a swindle, then Tom would have put up some semblance of a fight and so have us completely fooled. Letting alone the fact, of

course, that Honest Tom Burnett just could not be a party to a thrown match.

"But why did he not once, throughout the short bout, even attempt to throw that Burnett Express? Why did he just stand there goggling, waiting for the Kid to come in and hit him at will?

"Well, let me answer for him, for Tom is too proud to answer for himself.

"You see, Boxing Fans, when Tom Burnett found himself facing a youth who, like himself, carried that peculiar birth-mark of a clenched fist under his left arm, a youth who bore a marked resemblance to himself, Tom Burnett knew — and Tom Burnett could not hit his own son! No, not our Tom!"

Bill Wharton lifted his eyes from the paper and looked again at the bruised face of the old fighter. The lines that had gathered about his mouth when he rose from his seat in the stadium, were erased. He lifted his hand and ran the palm gently up and down the sleeve of Battler's pull-over.

"No, Tom," he said, a faraway look in his eyes; "no, old Tom, you couldn't."

He struck a match for the stump of cigar in his mouth, then touched it to the sheet he had just read, and watched it flame and curl and become a dead thing. Then he reached for the 'phone and called the weary Mitch.

"Hullo, Mitch? Go ahead and put in your cycling handicaps. Mine's out— shut up, you old grouse!"

He replaced the receiver on the hook and grinned at Tom.

THE END

UNTIL TOMORROW

Continued from Page 21.

Vivian began to notice soon after that the male section of the gathering were casting eager glances towards the doors. There was an air of expectancy, seen only when Castilian men await

each other for the favour of her smile. She sat opposite Vivian and every now and then she would raise her eyes and laugh at him. Her spirits were high and it showed in her eyes.

"She is beautiful, no? La bonita senorita? But you like the senora better? No es verdad?"

Vivian's fork clattered on his plate as he turned and looked into eyes that had enraptured Cuba. They were black but in them was a hint of water-

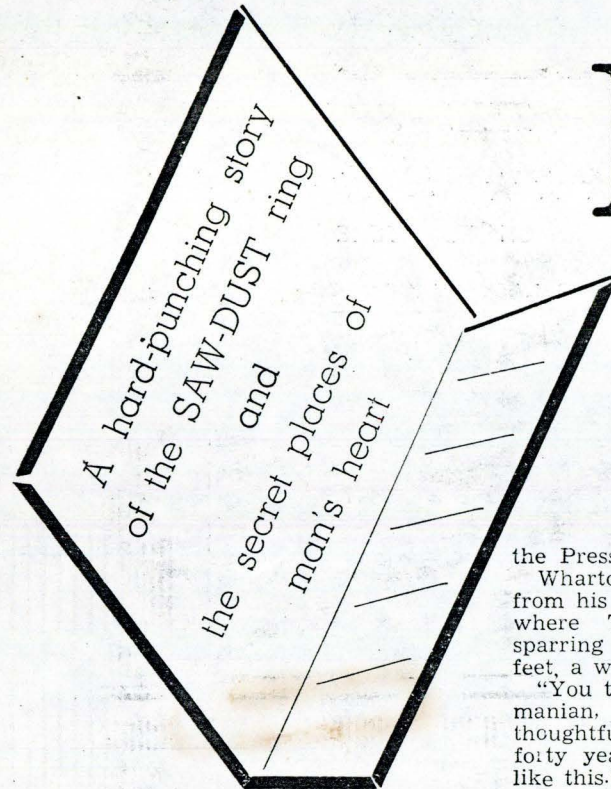
"Un caballero!" she exclaimed. She looked at him for a moment and added: "We shall be friends, senor. We are so much alike. We think of others before we think of ourselves. No es verdad?"

Without waiting for an answer she turned her attention back to Frederico.

COFFEE AND LIQUEURS were served in the big hall.

As the ladies left the table, "La Cielita" had bent towards him and whispered: "You may call me Maria, senor. I like you. We are friends, no?"

RETURN of



BILL WHARTON, Sport editor of the Kingston *Daily Mail*, rested one hand on to the top corner post and held on to the top strand of the ring with the other. He chewed steadily on the end of a black panatella and squinted his eyes at the two fighters dancing about the middle of the canvas. The squint was caused by the afternoon sun which rested briefly on top of the ragged brick wall surrounding the yard, circled the whitened trunk of a dead ackee, glanced off the sweaty torsos of the two fast-stepping men in the ring and shone full on the mahogany of Wharton's face.

Beside him, he heard Pop Jones grunt, and he glanced quickly down at the bald dome of the manager. Pop, who stood exactly six feet in or out of his socks, turned the seamed black parchment of his face up to Wharton. He spoke from the side of his mouth, the black of his eyes leaning far out at the corner of their sockets to keep the ring in view, meanwhile.

ton. "The trouble is that a lot of youngsters in your racket thinks a lay-off of five years is too much for a fighter, an' they've been howlin' at Sousa ever since he decided to put on this match with the Panamanian champ! You mark my word, there's goin' to be on a hell of a head-ache among the smart boys of the Press when this fight's over!"

Wharton tapped away the ash from his cigar. He glanced across to where Tom was joking with the sparring partner now back on his feet, a wry grin on his face.

"You think he can take the Panamanian, do you, Pop?" he said, thoughtfully. "You know, old timer, forty years is a-plenty for a game like this."

Pop placed his hand at the back of his neck and rode the palm right across the top of his head down his face to his chin. He half-closed his eyes a weary expression on his face.

"Listen, Mist' Wharton," he said slowly, "first of all, Battler is not forty, he's thirty-nine. Braddock was nearly that when he took the title from the beautiful butcher's boy; and you and me know that Battler's life has been as different from the ornery fighter's as Tunney's from Battlin' Siki's. What the Cinderella Man did, Battler can do; get me?"

Wharton nodded solemnly, his eyes dancing.

"I get you, Pop—er, by the way, did you read my column this morning?"

Pop Jones jerked his thumb to his chest.

"Who? me?" he shrilled. "Me read what th' papers say before a fight? Blah! Blah-blah! No, Mist' Wharton." He grabbed at the lobe of his right ear with forefinger and thumb, his ear bent forward, his eyes wide. "I listen to what the know-alls say before a fight, then afterwards, I readan' laugh, Mist' Wharton, an' laugh an' laugh!"

Wharton reached out and held him by both shoulders and shook him gently.

"Look here, Pop Laughing Water Jones, all that stuff about Braddock was in my column this morning, and I have a feeling you read every word of it!"

The queer gurgling sound was Pop chuckling.

"Just habit, but sure I know you're with us—where else could you be?"

Battler walked over to them. He rested a foot on the lower rope and pushed back his helmet with two enormous thumbs in their fifteen ounce practise gloves. A tiny birthmark under his left arm was startlingly clear against the dark tan of his skin.

"Hi, Mist' Wharton?" he said.

Bill Wharton grinned and sent his fists over the ropes to nudge the corrugated stomach of Tom Burnett, affectionately.

"Lo, Hermit," he said, "how's the Newcastle eyrie? Haven't seen you with the gloves on for about five years, have I?"

When the Battler dropped his hands from the helmet, the corded muscles on his gleaming biceps made

the rays of the sun move about in a quick play of light and shadow. The broad face framing the steady black eyes were as free of lines as a teak mask. A handler stood beside him unclipping the big gloves.

"Five years, Mist' Wharton," he smiled, "but the ol' horse is back 'n the track."

Wharton asked: "You feeling okay, Tom?"

Battler nodded. "As good as ever, Mist' Wharton."

"Fine," Wharton returned. "You look it. I hear tell this Panama Kid is a buzz-saw."

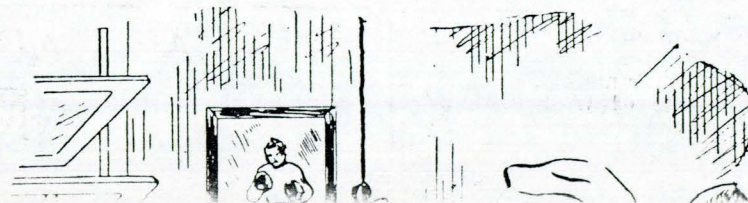
Burnett grinned. "Hope so. I like 'em that way."

Wharton shook his head slowly. "The years tell you nothing, do they, Tom?" he smiled.

THE SWISH OF the skipping rope on the canvas, the lithe rise and fall of the fighter's splendidly-proportioned body, the odours of massage and good sweat, seemed to Bill Wharton to reel back the years in prodigious turns of a decade . . . nineteen-thirty five . . . nineteen-twenty-five . . . and he saw himself, a cub-reporter with the ink still wet on his fingers, discovering the mild-mannered youngster whose modesty, too great even for his two hundred muscled pounds, hid him under the showmanship of brighter young fellows in Topsy King's old Chancery Lane camp.

And, as he burned his way to the top of his profession, he saw himself again helping Battling Burnett climb the ladder until the night back in 'thirty, he sat in the Press Row at Ward watching his fighter take the heavy-weight crown from Canterra, the Cuban.

That had been one of the happier events in their friendship. Sadder times there had been—like the marriage, followed a year later by the crash. And again it was he who had held up the young fighter in



of

BURNETT



The Churchill

WINSTON CHURCHILL occasioned the utmost discomfiment to the British Caribbean when he came so close to these loyal lands and visited, "Britain beyond the seas", but which to quote one of his own favourite mots, "is ever on my mind."

Fifty years had added girth to fame to the ruddy cheeked English correspondent riding through Cuban jungles, searching for hearts, assessing Cuban ideals... and in fifty years the low island proudly styled Pearl of the Antilles had cut a bloody swath in Freedom's field.

Bitter feuds, ill-chosen governments, political experiments, economic disasters had made Cuba a destiny in most of those years. They are not time lost but his made. The huzzahing, gala crowds thronging Havana's streets to honour our England's greatest twentieth century name are Cubans who to a nation which replaces the factions which Churchill, the newspaperman, witnessed fifty years ago.

British Caribbeaners pertinently ask why Mr. Churchill delight in Havana, not a British West Indian capital.

The superficial answer is that a rest tour it would have been possible for him to have visited numerous B.W.I. capitals: to have omitted any single one would have been to foster jealousy among islanders and to have injured our pride.

Geopoliticians advance that statesman on holiday is never forgetful of his country's commitments and alliances; is ever watchful of alliances of his country's allies. They are right, or merely over-estimating the significance of Churchill's 3-days in Havana, the fact remains that in the Caribbean British and American spheres of influence are peculiarly entwined from the standpoint of military, naval and air warfare, Cuba being a strategic relationship to North America. North American foreign policy is everywhere a consideration to Britain's commitments.

Even in the atomic age just entered, Cuba's contiguity to the United States remains unaltered.

IN THE PRESENT vague British American economics and sentimental goodwill, Cuba who normally is an outsider, is in fact considerably concerned, because she is a major partner of the Sugar Empire: the control of which never ceases to exercise minds on both sides of the Atlantic.

Each year, the island of Cuba produces over three million tons of sugar.

rival papers sprawled on a bench, their wise eyes taking in everything. They nodded respectfully at Wharton as he sat beside them. Rory Scott, who was acting as manager to the Kid sauntered over to their bench.

"Hullo, Mr. Wharton? Hullo boys?" he greeted.

Wharton pointed with his cigar at the fighter.

"You've got a package this time, Rory," he commented.

Rory Scott twitched his lips, dragging down the corners of his mouth.

"You can't get everything, can you?" he demanded. "Ever heard of a rose without thorns?"

One of the sportwriters laughed.

with a bundle of notes.

Scott smiled broadly. "What's this?" he reproached. "I thought Gentlemen of the Press don't bet on fights!"

WHARTON got the traffic-light between the South Camp Road intersection. He slipped the gears into second, twirled the steering-wheel right, and entered the stream of cars flowing west. Outside the East Queen Street entrance to Rose Gardens, a great and noisy crowd milled around the pay-booths. He threaded a way through to the parking lot, got out and locked the car and walked to a side entrance. His press pass took him through to ringside. In the semi-gloom outside the ring, he found his way to the press-box. Two light-

by
VIC STAFFORD REID

"True, Rory," he said, "but if that phonograph wasn't such a sweet fighter, and if the game didn't need a boost, we'd take him apart in tomorrow's issue! Tell him we came to see, will you? Not hear!"

There was no doubt in Wharton's mind that the Panamanian was good. His crouching stance was reminiscent of Lefty Flynn's, except that with a heavier poundage, he was not as speedy. He watched the Kid bob and weave and get in under a feeble jab from his heavy-weight sparring partner, pumping in a vicious right hook to the midriff as he did so. But with the whole pattern of Tom Burnett's style etched in his mind, Wharton noted something which the others missed.

Whenever the Panama Kid threw his favourite punch, a whizzing overarm right, his left did not position fast enough to block the inevitable counter. He was thus left for a brief instant, entirely unprotected.

Faced by mediocrity in the sparring partner, the lapse did not show up; but it would be a different matter with Battler. In that split second, the Burnett Express could come smashing through, stretching its victim for the long count.

"What do you think of Gran'pa now, Mr. Wharton?" asked Rory; "think he can last ten stanzas with the Kid?"

Wharton smiled his confidence. He said: "Confidentially, Rory, I really am sorry for that Kid. Somebody should tell him what he's coming up against."

"Massacre," cut in Briller, the second of the sportwriters, laconically; "massacre, Mr. Wharton, and you know it. Gran'pa won't stay two rounds with this baby".

Wharton rammied the cigar between his teeth, stuck his thumbs into his belt and grinned savagely. He said: "Oh, yeah?" and dug his hand into his hip pocket, dragging out a wallet. From out of this he presently extracted a five pound note, and slammed it on the bench between them.

"Here's a Bradbury that says you're a liar," he drawled.

Briller hesitated; then when he saw that Wharton was in earnest, he stiffened.

"Covered!" he snapped, coming up

weights were having a fist-feast of a semi-final. He grunted a greeting to his brother scribes. Lin Briller, grinned cheekily at him as he sat down beside Sanderson, sports editor of the *Observer*.

Sanderson, a veteran sport scribe who knew the friendship between Wharton and the old fighter, struck a match for the fresh panatella which Wharton took from his case.

"Playing a lone hand tonight, Bill?" he opined.

Wharton waited until the tip was glowing evenly before he replied.

"You know, Jack," he said slowly, "they say rats always desert a sinking ship. Well, if they believe this is one of those times, I've never seen a time when so many rats will prove so wrong!"

"Phew! Kinda nasty tonight, aren't we, Bill?" said Sanderson without heat. "Haven't let young Briller get under your skin, have you?"

Wharton snorted. "What you and I have forgotten about fights should be about twice what that little runt knows—and that's no double talk!"

Sanderson nodded. He said: "Bill? I know how you feel about things, and if it's any comfort to you, get this: I've seen the Kid, and I know what you're counting on, and brother, I think Tom's Sunday punch can reach Panama!" He chuckled. "The bright laddie who does the splash on my sheet nowadays doesn't seem to agree with us!"

"Good for you, Sandy," said Wharton, mollified, "we oldsters know a good thing when we see it."

They were interrupted by the roar of applause from the outer edges of the tiered gallery, signalling the approach of the first main bout.

"Here comes the Chorus Girl," grunted Wharton.

The Panama Kid came through the aisle in a swaggering walk. His flamboyant robe with his name done in gold letters on the back, billowed behind him. He mounted to the ring, leaped agilely over the ropes and danced around the canvas, his hands above his head. The bit of showmanship went over well with the crowd.

Wharton said grimly: "See what I mean, Jack?"

her mother. A year later, she died:

Continued on Page 10.

RETURN OF BURNETT

Continued from Page 9.

A thunderous noise filled the Garden as the gallery saw the Battler enter the gangway and follow it down, behind Pop Jones.

"Tany rate, Tom's got the edge on the applause," grinned Sanderson.

Tom Burnett ducked under the ropes and walked across the ring to shake hands with the Kid whom he was seeing for the first time. Then he went to his corner and sat down on his stool, body easily relaxed against the ropes. Bill Wharton watched the two through eyes in which puzzle and wonder alternated.

While the fighters were having their hands taped, Gene Martin, the announcer, was introducing the usual crop of hopefuls.

Wharton got to his feet. "Back in a minute, Jock," he said.

Sanderson grinned. "I know—you two always say the grace before meat, eh?"

Bill Wharton slipped between the chairs to the ringside and rested his elbows on the canvas. Battling Tom Burnett leaned sideways over the ring while Pop laced the gloves.

"How does it feel, Tom?" Wharton asked.

"Great to be back, Mist' Wharton," smiled the Battler.

Wharton indicated the press box with a nod. "The prophets think you're doomed."

Battler looked at the newsmen, shifted his gaze to the chattering Panama Kid's corner, came back to Wharton, and grinned.

"What do you think, Mist' Wharton?"

Wharton's grin matched his. Satisfied, he nodded and turned away.

The notice bell clanged as he passed Lin Briller's chair on the way back.

"The curfew," said Mr. Briller conversationally to a neighbouring reporter, "tolls the knell of parting day."

Wharton paused. He took his face nearer to Briller's.

"The lowing herd," said he between his teeth, "smells, and is always heard!"

The introduction and weights were given, the acknowledgment of the audience drowned out the referee's instructions to the men. Both returned to their corners; the house lights dimmed, impacting the brilliantly lit square on Wharton's vision. The Panama Kid slipped out of his robe and whirled completely around on his toes, his upthrust gloves clasped above his head. He drew a dutiful round of applause from the house which was tensely waiting for the opening bell.

"He'll be begging them to kiss him next, the blasted *Prima donna!*" growled Wharton.

Tom Burnett was quietly rubbing his feet in the resin in his corner. Sanderson, who had been looking at the Kid, suddenly leaned over to Wharton.

"Hev. Bill," he said, low, "do you see what I see?"

Wharton moved uneasily. "Yeah. And I was wondering."

The gong sounded, a flood of applause burst loose, and Battling Tom Burnett stood up to meet his challenger.

AHAM, A HAM, that's what he was," chortled Briller, "a ham standing waiting to be carved!"

When the knock-out came in the second round, Wharton had risen with the rest to look at the limp form of the Battler on the canvas.

He heard, in a daze, but did not identify the mingled groans and cheers which went up at the final count. He did not see when the

sobbing Pop Jones gently lifted Battler's head and tilt the flask of brandy down his throat. He did not hear the snarled oath from Sanderson which stopped short Briller's triumphant rush towards his chair; nor see the quiet which settled over that young man's face as he looked down on the bent head of the news editor.

A *thud, thud, thud*, uncannily like the hammering fists of the Kid, brought back his senses and made him raise his head. The Garden was empty, except for the attendants knocking down the ring posts.

He rose in sudden energy, resolution on his face.

"Hullo, Mitch?" he spoke over the 'phone to the *Mail* a few minutes later. "Are you filled up?"

"We—ell," the desk man's voice was dubious, "we are giving a column to the cycling handicaps, but it can be killed if you've got something hot".

"Okay," snapped Wharton, "kill it. I'll have a story for you in half hour."

"But—is it big, Mr. Wharton?"

"The biggest for me yet, Mitch," he said; and there was a huskiness in his throat. "You wait."

He hung up the receiver and sat down at Sousa's desk.

FOR FORTY MINUTES, Wharton wrote steadily, then he signed his name at the bottom of the last sheet and bowed his head to the desk.

The opening of the door made him look up. Battling Tom Burnett, his face shiny with the unguen rubbed into it, walked over and sat down heavily on the edge of the desk. His gaze met, and locked with Wharton's. "I—I couldn't do it, Mist' Wharton," he said.

Wharton did not reply. His eyes, still on the Battler, seemed to have receded into his head. Unconsciously, his fists closed, snapping the pencil he held. The harsh blare of an automobile horn in East Queen Street forced into the room, slapped against the four walls, and went out again, unheard by either man. Tom Burnett said urgently:

"I couldn't do it, Mist' Wharton—you know I couldn't do it!"

Wharton nodded slowly. Did he hit you hard, Tom?"

Battler smiled wintrily. "He's too young to do that to me, Mist' Wharton, but I can't make th' folks know—that's the least I can do for him!" Wharton's eyes dropped to the paper he had just written and signed. Soundlessly, he read it over

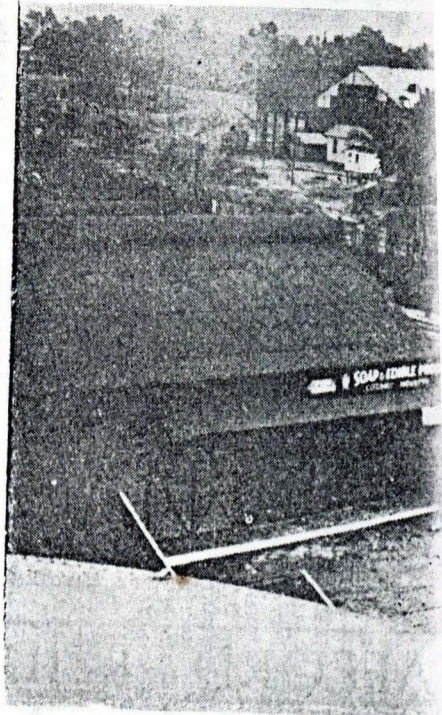
"You see, Boxing Fans, twenty years ago, when both Battling Tom Burnett and your writer were young, a boy fell in love with a girl. This, you will agree, is an everyday occurrence. It has happened before, it will happen again. Very well. This boy and the girl were married, and shortly afterwards, they had a child. And shortly afterwards, things began to go wrong.

"Perhaps we can say they fell out of love; perhaps we can say—anything. However, like two sensible people, they agreed to move apart before the bonds of tragedy should link them together, forever. When the time required by our laws should have elapsed, they would be divorced.

"Your writer, who was and still is proud to call himself a friend of that boy, was asked to take over the arrangements. He it was who took her to the pier and saw her embarked, with her child on their way to

Continued on Page 24.

COCC



Panorama showing the front sections of the giant Soap & Edible Products plant in Kingston, Jamaica. Jamaica Government Railway premises occupy the background. The enterprise of co-operators, S&EP produces three-quarters of the island's requirements in soaps, cooking fats, margarine.

By
LINCOLN
WALLACE

PHOTOGRAPHY

BY

ROY
ALLEN

COCONUT

the election December, directors whose them did not voting probably industrial ques tory, and one effect or another bean area.

From a ste a position when ble oils and margarine and industry had a more impressive plying all requ In latter years the toilet soap days of the U- had undertaken ter West Indian part of their la

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It was unhesita is through, product The plant's present tion by the Carib satisfy Jamaica wh partly during the higher living stand to take up the slac was not excluded t

CATS ARE SO MODEST

(Continued from Page 11)

Garder has been a police surgeon most of his long life. And if he says the bullet is from a thirty-two, why, then I think we can agree with him, eh Constable?"

Brownie opened his mouth to speak, thought better of it and stepped back. In the Force, the man who sought promotion had to be wary as a cat with his superiors. . . . yes, as wary as a cat a cat a cat he had not even seen a cat a cat GAWD A'MIGHTY!

He twisted his head from side to side, a thought pushing and pounding in his brain as wary as a cat not even seen a cat but, that was wrong! He had seen a cat heard them two cats now what do you know about that!

He rubbed his palms together, saw that they were wet; looked up, saw something else. He slashed and tore at the vein of an idea, saw the rough ore emerging, glimpsed shining truth in spots.

Possible! he whispered; and again: possible!

But why had someone not heard? Or he not seen?

And he remembered why. Constable Brownie heard the Inspector arranging bail for the Chinese. Tai! Sneering Lo Tai could tell him something! Lo Tai mustn't go! Brownie stepped forward again.

"Lo Tai?" he said quickly, "do you keep a cat?"

The young Chinese eyes shone like two black buttons.

"Answer me!" snapped Brownie. Lo Tai veiled his eyes and nodded. The C.I.D. man sniggered and the Inspector uttered a short: "Blast!"

Brownie spun and faced the officer:

"Scuse me, sir," he said hoarsely, his eyes goggling, "please give me five minutes before releasin' the prisoners?"

"What is it now, Constable?" asked the weary officer.

"Back in five minutes, sir!" he flung over his shoulder.

He was back in three. He re-

NEW ENTERPRISE

C H A R A C T E R I S T I C of the spirit that is causing Caribbean pioneers to reach out for industrial markets once held by overseas concerns exclusively, is the Jamaica Mattress Supplies establishment, whose imposing new headquarters at East Street, Kingston, Jamaica, has just been completed.

Jamaica Mattress Supplies began in 1920 as the enterprise of the late C. A. Gulley, whose aim was to capture the Jamaican market in plain coil and cotton mattresses. At his death in 1938, it passed over to his widow Mrs. Edith A. Gulley and brother-in-law, Ernest A. McMillan (inset), who extended it to the manufacture of fully upholstered furniture suites and pieces, spring mattresses, cushions, etc., and who after establishment in the Jamaican market are now seeking a place in the Caribbean bazaars.

J. M. S. does not want only to SELL to the neighbouring West Indian territories: its motto is reciprocity. Mahogany from British Honduras, cotton from the Leeward Islands (possibly glass in future from British Guiana silicate) go into the goods it now offers the trade.



☆ ☆ ☆ HOLIDAY FEATURE STORY

BY
VIC STAFFORD REID

For . . .

CATS ARE SO MODEST

WHEN young, second-class constable Archimedes Brownie swung down Princess Street towards Barry Street, he was keeping a date. Only, he was not aware of it, otherwise he would have gone quietly.

Softly! Softly! Hush in the presence of death.

As it was, the click of his boot-heels on the pavement gave him a sense of alertness, and what was more, importance; for, to a man who had barely scraped past the regulation bar of five feet eight inches, a sense of importance was necessary to make up the loss in stature.

Not that this failure of the pituitaries to complete a job should stand in the way of a man and his promotion. No sir! 2cc Archimedes Brownie was determined that this would not happen in his case.

Which only goes to show what reading does to a man. For many of the hair-raising geniuses living in the yellow backs which he surreptitiously stored in his locker at headquarters were men of short stature, compact and lithe like himself, with an uncanny ability for plunging headlong into the mystery and emerge hugging the two and two that always added to the missing four.

Yes sir! One good chance at this mathematical acrobatic, and they would see what they would see!—thought 2cc Brownie.

of raw gasolene which stung his nostril.

"The fool!" growled Brownie. He leaned over and shook him. "Hi! why th' hell do you park so near the corner!"

The driver shrugged away his hand and muttered in his sleep. Somewhere close, two cats made scurrying love-play atop a wall. 2cc Brownie clutched the sleeping man's shoulder and tugged.

"Hi! Wake up, you—! Wake up!"

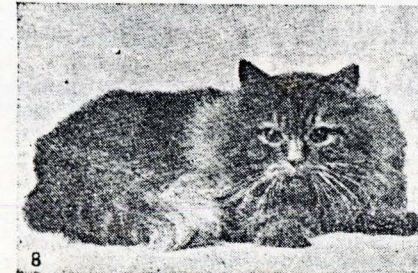
And just about then, it happened.

A heavy detonation tore the night open and pushed sound hard against Brownie's eardrums. Out of the corner of one eye, he glimpsed the flash. It appeared to have emanated from above a low wall about twenty yards westward. The driver jumped in his seat, banging his head against the hood.

"Wha—wha—wha—!" came from him in a howling gasp.

Brownie yelled: "Sounds like a gun!" and hit the pavement running.

He fumbled at his holster as he raced for the spot where he had seen the flash. Opposite the place, he stopped dead. For a moment, his eyes laced the scene. The lights from the cab lit up the length of Barry all the way to Pechon Street. It lit a length of inanimate buildings, and emptiness. He whirled and leaped for the wall. His fingers caught and gripped the top, the nails grinding rawly on the rough surface.



2nd C. C. Brownie was flabbergasted until he recalled that cats making love are just as particular about being seen as are human beings . . . !

new wind walked in mighty strides from one fringed head to another. Drifting in with the wind, a bell tolled dimly on a shunting engine in the nearby railway yard.

Requiem, thought Constable Brownie. The bell built a phrase in his mind without conscious architecture: **Temple-gong requiem for a wandering son of Buddha.**

The head lay in a welter of blood near a large, multicoloured oil patch. Incongruously, Brownie thought of a halo. He felt under the shirt for his

He looked at the sea of Asiatic faces. The black face of the scared taxicab driver was yet a steadying anchor.

"You," he said, "what's your name?"

"Rutt-Ruttledge — David Ruttledge," stammered the man.

Brownie thrust his hand in his pocket and withdrew a key.

"Here, there's a call-box at the corner. Tell them **West Ten** calling—tell them it's murder!"

At three-thirty a.m. the Inspector

Not that this failure of the proprietaries to complete a job should stand in the way of a man and his promotion. No sir! 2cc Archimedes Brownie was determined that this would not happen in his case.

Which only goes to show what reading does to a man. For many of the hair-raising genuises living in the yellow backs which he surreptitiously stored in his locker at headquarters were men of short stature, compact and lithe like himself, with an uncanny ability for plunging headlong into the mystery and emerge hugging the two and two that always added to the missing four.

Yes sir! One good chance at this mathematical acrobatic, and they would see what they would see!—thought 2cc Brownie.



BEJEWELLING the roof of Princess' Street deserted canyon, a cluster of white stars gleamed and glinted against the dark backdrop. From the clock in the grey parish church tower at South Parade, a brace of chimes came out, hung for an instant on the thick midsummer air and glided away.

"It is two of the clock, Citizens, and all is well," murmured Brownie the incorrigible romanticist and tried the lock on a closed shop front, without breaking his stride. He took off his cap and whistled a wind into the steaming interior and grinned happily that tomorrow was to be his day off. He placed the cap lightly on the back of his head, rounded the corner at Barry and entered Chinatown.

Brownie gave a cluck of annoyance and stepped towards the car which was parked much too near the street intersection. Running lights full on, pointed west one of the front doors hung open. A quick glance at the rear number plate confirmed his angry thought: **some dam' careless taxi-driver.**

The driver was hunched over the steering wheel, evidently asleep. The constable climbed to the running board. He sniffed at the odour

Brownie's eardrums. Out of the corner of one eye, he glimpsed the flash. It appeared to have emanated from above a low wall about twenty yards westward. The driver jumped in his seat, banging his head against the hood.

"Wha—wha—wha—!" came from him in a howling gasp.

Brownie yelled: "Sounds like a gun!" and hit the pavement running.

He fumbled at his holster as he raced for the spot where he had seen the flash. Opposite the place, he stopped dead. For a moment, his eyes laced the scene. The lights from the cab lit up the length of Barry all the way to Pechon Street. It lit a length of inanimate buildings, and emptiness. He whirled and leaped for the wall. His fingers caught and gripped the top, the nails grinding rawly on the rough surface. He drew himself up, saw that the narrow yard between the wall and the house was a **cul de sac** in which nothing moved. He dropped back to the pavement and dusted his palms, a puzzled look in his eyes.

With a quick rush of feet, the now thoroughly awakened driver was beside him.

"What happen?" he cried, "what happen, Constable?"

Brownie did not reply. His eyes were searching the house behind the wall. An instant afterwards, he heard the sound for which he waited. A window screeched open on rusty hinges. He was about to shout at the head which poked through the aperture when he heard a straggled gasp of horror.

2cc Brownie turned about and sent his glance in the direction of the rigidly pointing finger of the taxicab driver. In the shadow cast by the trunk of one of the **acacias** which here lined the edge of pavement, what seemed to be a bundle of old clothing lay on the asphalt. The constable took four quick steps forward and saw it was the body of a man. He drew his torch, knelt and played a ray on the wizened face of an old Chinese. Outside the core of light, stray beams found and danced in a dull-red reflection. The old man stared unwinkingly at the light.

"Jesus!" whispered the taxicab driver, "Jesus Chris!"

Through the top of the **acacias**, a

recalled that cats making love are just as particular about being seen as are human beings . . . !

new wind walked in mighty strides from one fringed head to another. Drifting in with the wind, a bell tolled dismally on a shunting engine in the nearby railway yard.

Requiem, thought Constable Brownie. The bell built a phrase in his mind without conscious architecture: **Temple-gong requiem for a wandering son of Buddha.**

The head lay in a welter of blood near a large, multicoloured oil patch. Incongruously, Brownie thought of a halo. He felt under the shirt for his heart. He felt in vain, found himself squatting back on his haunches and considering, with some apprehension, his first murder.



MORE windows banged and screeched and the night came alive with the magpie chattering of frightened Chinese. Feet, dozens of shuffling feet ringed the kneeling constable. He looked up in to the slanting eyes of dozens of yellow faces peering down at the tableau on the ground. One leaned closer, gurgled in his throat and cried in a high-pitched voice:

"Aie! Aie! Wong Wong!"

Instantly, the words were taken up and flung around in a curious sing-song. It bordered on the maniacal; played irritably on the constable's nerves, tied his brain in knots, tangled his thinking. Quiet . . . quiet . . . a man needs quiet at a time like this . . . **quiet, you fools. . . .**

"Shut up—th' whole dam' lot of you!" shouted Brownie.

Anticlimatic, the sudden silence was deafening, set his ears tingling. Brownie rose and wiped his steaming face.

"That's better," he snapped.

He looked at the sea of Asiatic faces. The black face of the scared taxicab driver was yet a steadying anchor.

"You," he said, "what's your name?"

"Rutt-Ruttledge — David Ruttledge," stammered the man.

Brownie thrust his hand in his pocket and withdrew a key.

"Here, there's a call-box at the corner. Tell them **West Ten** calling—tell them it's murder!"

At three-thirty a.m. the Inspector sat back and threw up his hands wearily and said:

"Can't make head nor tail of these Chinks, Sergeant, but I'm reasonable sure one of them living in that house shot and killed old Wong. That is, if we accept Constable Brownie's statement that the gun flash came from above the wall; though in the light of what happened later—ah me!"

He reached over and chose his second cigar from the box on the table. The Sergeant nodded gloomily while his superior flared a match for the tobacco.

"The question of time is the bugbear, Sergeant," said the Inspector from behind the smoke, "time—and Constable Brownie's eyes!"

Brownie rested on one foot and returned the Sergeant's unkind glower and for the fiftieth time tried to think backwards. There was something wrong. There was something gnawing at his mind, something of which he should have taken greater cognisance. His mind felt bruised and beaten.

"Everything was in our Constable's favour, Sergeant; the street brilliantly lit, he on the spot immediately or almost immediately after the shot is fired. Yet, our Constable sees nothing, nothing, not even a cat! Where was our Constable's eyes?" asked the Inspector of the ceiling.

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Brownie shifted his feet uncomfortably and looked at the six Chinese, five old and one little more than a lad, whom the squad had roped in. They were all members of the household in which old Wong had played his last game of *fantan*. All of them, even Lo Tai, the younger Chinese was openly sneering at him.

They had none of them denied that Wong had won a substantial sum; but they were just as definite that he had left with it, around one-thirty a.m., and that afterwards they had gone straight to bed. The fact that thirty minutes had elapsed between old Wong's departure and the fatal shot had emerged from the Inspector's examination to kick Brownie hard in the stomach. Of what had happened to the money during that mysterious half hour, they all declared ignorance.

Ruttledge, the taxicab driver, had also been brought in. He had volunteered the information that he had driven old Wong from his Portland Road residence, to Chinatown, and had been awaiting him as he always did. He had known the old man for five years; had often driven him to this house. This was confirmed by all six Chinese. Ruttledge, tired from a day's cabbage, had promptly fallen asleep, only to be awakened by the report.



SECOND-CLASS constable Brownie looked helplessly down at his palms. Some pinkish substance had worked under the nails. He made up his mind to clean them as soon as he left the Inspector's office. Untidiness, plus inefficiency, was a sure gateway out of the Force. And according to the Inspector, tonight he had not been especially smart.

"Any news from the mortuary, Sergeant?"

The husky C.I.D. man sheathed the optic daggers with which he had been impaling the unfortunate Brownie and faced his chief.

"They promised t' ring soon as they found th' bullet, sir."

"Taking a devilishly long time about it," said the Inspector gruffly.

Brownie raised his eyes from contemplating his nails and met Tai's contemptuous gaze. He had an inordinate desire to walk across the room and smash his fist into the sneering face. *Sphinxes*, he thought, *yellow Sphinxes*. Any of those impassive foreheads could be concealing a fiendish killer's brain. He suppressed the desire to hit someone by shifting his eyes to the exhibits on the table.

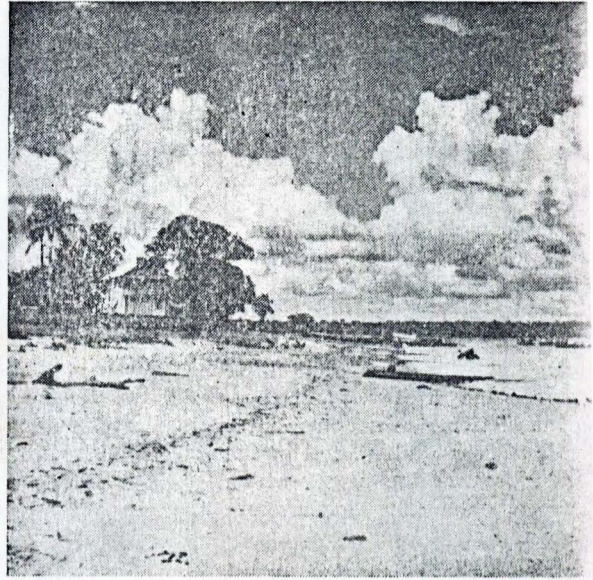
Just the kind of stuff an old orthodox Chinese would carry around; a dice inscribed with Chinese characters, a broken packet of crackers, a couple of keys and a torn laundry bill also bearing Chinese characters. These were spread on a badly scorched piece of yellow cloth which had been found near the scene by a detective. With all these clues, any of his slick heroes of fiction would have had the murderer behind bars in no time. But he? He was just a—

The telephone buzzed harshly. The big sergeant reached for the instrument and said into it:

"Crimnalvestgashunparmen yes yes thir'-two right."

He hung up the receiver and spoke to the Inspector.

The Gateway to
the hinterland
of
British
Guiana



This spot of Guiana, the name of which means "Meeting of the Waters", is one which Government should push forward.

BARTICA

by
BERT HUMPHREY

ABOUT sixty miles from Georgetown, on the Essequibo River, and just a few miles from where the three great British Guiana rivers meet—The Mazaruni, Cuyuni and Essequibo, lies the little village of Bartica, generally known as 'The Gateway to the Guiana Hinterland'.

This delightful spot, which can be traced back to a settlement since about 1807; has seen many ups and downs, but in 1920 when the diamond boom started, Bartica started too to improve, and has been developing ever since. A road runs from Bartica to Garraway Stream, approximately 90 miles, which takes traffic to the Potaro District; while a branch road at about 73 miles from Bartica, takes miners to the Mazaruni district in the vicinity of Isano. Bartica is definitely the place in Guiana for a timber port, and for the jumping off place to the rich hinterland districts of the Mazaruni, Potaro, Essequibo, and Cuyuni, as well as the Rupunnuni Savannahs.

This peaceful village has also been often written of as a Tourist Centre and the waterways in the neighbourhood of the Village called Bar-

tica Lake; make this a most beautiful and healthy spot for an all year round holiday.

As a village, or at least a place where two or three people gathered together, Bartica is one of the oldest villages of British Guiana, tracing its origin back so far as to 1807, when Lieutenant Stainton St. Clair passed up the Essequibo with acting Governor of the day, he saw "a small settlement consisting of three small huts placed on top of a gentle declivity which commanded a fine view down the Essequibo to the right hand and up the Mazaruni to the left."

About 1830 the Mission of Bartica Grove was founded. In the Rev. Bernou's book we see what it looked like fifteen years later. The Mission stood on the point to the north of the present village boundary, and consisted of a large church, and several large two-storeyed houses and some half-dozen smaller ones, each of

"Th' spital, suh. Found th' bullet. Thir'-two calibre revolvuh."

"A thirty-two, eh?" mused the Inspector slowly and looked up, startled. For, from the hitherto self-effacing Brownie had come one trenchant word. "Foolishness!" he said distinctly.

The Inspector frowned and stared at the flustered constable.

"Did you say something, Constable?"

"Nossir! Yessir! Er, no—" his voice trailed lamely away.

"Well?" barked the officer, "which is it?"

Second-class constable Brownie swallowed hard. The damage had already been done. He stepped forward and stood at attention.

"Scuse me, sir," he said urgently, "what the doctor says and what I know is different!"

The officer's eyes narrowed. He

inhaled cigar smoke, exhaled cigar smoke, rested the cigar in the ash tray, intertwined his fingers and leaned forward on the table, his eyes lit up in surprised interest.

"What you know, Constable?" asked in dangerously pleasant tones "why, then you haven't told everything?"

Brownie shuddered. He said quickly "Yessir. Nossir. I mean—"

Bang! went the table under the Inspector's hammer fists and a rose then settled on the surface.

"Out with it!" he bellowed. "Don't speak in riddles!"

A tiny muscle twitched at the base of Brownie's jaw. He took a deep breath and made the plunge.

"That sound did not come from thirty-two, Inspector," he said firmly.

"Why man, why?" shouted the officer, "speak up!"

K

cies of Getting A Port Workers' Card, or Seeing The Man At The Corporation.

True, he joined a Union, but you don't get to heaven by buying a Bible.

One night Charlie hungered. Now, he hungered in East Queen Street in general, opposite Beale's in particular, where a hundred watts of electric energy slid from the flaky armoury of two dozen beef patties. Charlie snaked a hand into the patty-tray. Mr. Beale saw the hand, blinked, and flank-attacked Charlie. Hunger brings on anger, and Charlie struck hard at one of Mr. Beale's three chins. Mr. Beale fell. In falling, his head struck the edge of the counter. After three days, he awoke.

THE JUDGE SAID CHARLIE WAS A THUG, and ordered a de-thugging course of five years at the Rae Town Place. There, Charlie joined the Block C fraternity. In the

no Getting A Card, nor Seeing The Man was now necessary in this soft, sweet, suckers' world.

He bought a zinc-fence collar and a black lodge-cap and a brand new deck of cards. When the philosopher had entered the Place in the early twenties, gentlemen were then hiding their identities behind high collars and black lodge caps.

And, it is here we join Charlie.

ONE CLOUDY NIGHT Charlie ruffled the deck under a street light in Port Royal Street. The little brown man in the peaked cap leaned over the oil-skins covering the portable table. He slid his left hand diagonally across his right wrist, flipped another card face down on the table and edged the third to settle quietly between its companions. All his movements were smooth and synchronised. The pasteboards slithered fast and low, whispered silkily as they passed, no hint of their suits showing. The little brown man etched a laugh.

The little brown man in the peaked cap spread his hands, palm upwards, and shrugged his neck in the

"Da lucky girl for a pound," slugged Charlie monotonously.

The man who had said Gawdjudge, said it again. His fingers trembled slightly as he pushed the note to the table. Light gleamed dully on the black stone of his myal guardring. He twirled the ring for luck. He grinned when he spotted the "girl".

Charlie's hand fanned air.

"Show me da lucky girl," he repeated.

Two stevedores were unlucky.

At 11.10, Charlie folded his portable table and told the men good-night. The men looked at him in unison. Their eyes were cold.

"God kill you," said one with teeth in his voice. The words were like cutting blades.

Charlie said goodnight softly. He

pose," said Gabidan. He spoke with his mouth opened wide. Somehow, he contrived to make the words sound obscene. "Since he wasn't laying bombs against a ship's hull, the waterpolice couldn't be expected to interfere."

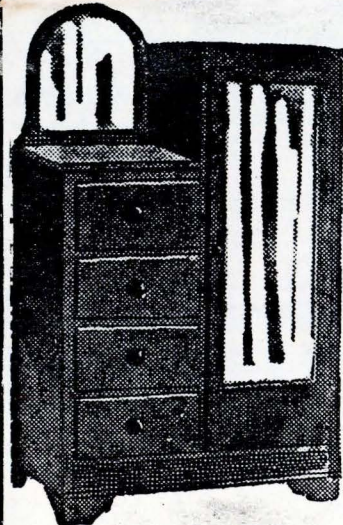
The w.p. squirmed.

"Who was he gambling with, you lug!" snarled Gabidan.

The w.p. rocked gently under the hammer. Anyone could see he was agitated. But he was a veteran who knew every inch of caulk on the waterfront, and now he reeled off the names with something of the speed of a stepped-up rivet-hammer.

"Got that, Brownie?" snapped Gabidan unexpectedly. Gabidan was on the prowl, in his meanest mood.

(Continued on page 24)



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nor does a table make a

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ANYBODY'S NECK

(Continued from Page 21)

Those names should have been too fast for even Brownie.

But Brownie said yes he had got them and would apply to the shippin' office tomorrow for their addresses, sir.

THE SUN WAS HIGH IN THE AFTERNOON SKY. The room was close. Gabidan scratched a match for his cigarette, sucked in the smoke with habit, without pleasure. He tickled his ear with the matchstick, broke it and left it in the ashtray. The ashtray had a dragon ornament. The dragon jeered at him with its tongue. Gabidan slapped the desk with his palm, rose, shook his head wearily, took his cap and left the office.

He was going to the garage for his car when he saw Brownie on the verandah of the barrack-room. Gabidan veered towards the verandah. Brownie was reading a book. Gabidan said: "What are you reading runt?"

Brownie did what Regulation Number — says any constable must do when he sees any Inspector.

"A book on Psychology, sir," said Brownie from the remote rigidity of 'shun.

Gabidan's left eyebrow threw up its hands in astonishment. Gabidan cleared his throat, smiled wanly and said: "Oh, Psychology."

"Psychology, sir," agreed Brownie. "Quite, Psychology. Er, let's go up to the office for a minute," said Inspector Gabidan.

Up in his office, Gabidan poured what bees make. "You are a good lad, Brownie, you have a Head"

Brownie inclined the Head, and might have blushed, but you couldn't tell because of his colour.

"I can't forget the Cats and the Alamein, ha, ha."

Brownie murmured: "Sir?" The corners of his mouth went down.

Gabidan said: "Now, last night, Brownie; what do you make of it?"

"Oh, that, sir? Nothin', sir."

"I can't get a thing on it. I have held on to those four men for as long



Mile-posts

Died: suddenly, in London, in April, Dr. Harold Moody, Founder-president of the League of Coloured Peoples, brother of Dr. Ludlow Moody of Jamaica and kinsman to Norman W. Manley, K.C., three short weeks after he returned from the West Indies in connection with a campaign to raise funds for a Coloured Cultural Centre in London. West Indian nationalists and Negroes the world over mourned the loss of a great leader.

Charlie's scrawny neck had been no iron safe.

"Sit down, Brownie. Have a cigarette." Gabidan was not surprised.

Brownie took the cigarette. His palate did an invisible jig as his eyes took in the brand. Good, that. Gabidan said: "Well?"

Brownie said: "Yes, sir. I went to each of them cells and I told each of them that his fingerprints had been found on Charlie's starched collar. Three of them were frightened. The Big One was not. The man who had twisted Charlie's neck had not touched his collar. A knee in the small of his back, two hands clamped on his neck, and urreck, sir. The P.M. had shown a contusion in the small of his back. However, I figured this was our man. I told him the others had said that he had threatened Charlie. He used certain nasty words to me, but I had another idea and left him at that. By the way, sir, I borrowed an item from those exhibits in the big obeah case as I know you wouldn't mind, sir," Brownie said with diffidence.

"To hell with it, man. Continue," said his Chief. "What was the idea?"

"Yes, sir. I had noticed his myal necklace and ring, so when I went back, my tunic was opened so he could also see mine. He soon saw it alright, sir, and he said Gawdjudge he didn't know I was a sensible man too. I told him yes I had been sensible, much more than he had been. He asked how. I told him hell (beg your pardon, sir) man, don't you know ghost don't like water? He asked then what happen. I said hell (beg your pardon, sir) man, when you killed Charlie and his ghost came out and saw the rain fallin', he simply fastened himself on to your myal necklace and will be there to your grave. And, sir, it was then he smelled it."

GABIDAN'S EYEBROWS RODE TOGETHER. "Smelt what?"

"Smelt the cowhorn and rubber parin's I had a constable burnin' outside the cell, sir. I borrowed those, and the necklace, from the exhibits."

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BY

SPALDING'S

GOLF
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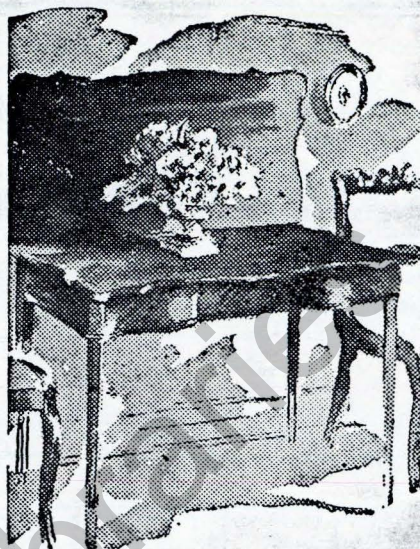
A Foreign Industry Goes Native

(Continued from Page 14)

From the outset the agents for foreign drugs had naturally assisted doctors' prejudice by declaring that never could any local article equal the foreign equivalent. Now, as Laboratory drugs increased in volume on the market, a few more aggressive than the others took up samples and sent up to the Government Laboratory for test, telling clients and friends that there could only be one judgment — spurious. Government chemists, however, assessed the drugs as being genuine; and, somehow or the other, the information got around back to the Lab. Bennett promptly pounced on it and used it for all such a testimonial could be worth.

It was not long after that friends and interested onlookers realised the possibilities of the venture and suggested the formation of a limited liability company. Principal among these were Messrs. Louis Hamilton, the well-known businessman; Hugh Levy, contractor and businessman; A. N. Willis, C. A. McPherson, W. G. Morais and Dr. J. L. Varma. The Lab was reorganised and geared for bigger and more varied production. The period of trial had passed and that of establishment was about to begin.

FROM the production of drugs to the manufacture of patent medicines and tonic wines is an easy and logical development. The year that saw the possibility mooted that Jamaican agricultural workers would go to the United States also saw the first appearance of Phospho-pep Tonic Wine on the Jamaica market. Consumers at first smiled to think that anything could be produced in Jamaica to substitute even for the great elixirs that came from abroad; then, tolerantly, they paused to sample it. By 1944



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2cc Brownie Goes

(Continued from Page 19)

sized up Calligan for an enfilade. "Very quiet, Calligan," he murmured and raised an enquiring eyebrow at Brownie.

Calligan went into a slight crouch. His big shoulders trembled. He panted through his mouth like an animal. His eyes darted from side to side. The CID sergeant moved in with his revolver levelled for a possible belly shot.

Suddenly Calligan's shoulders drooped, his hands fell to his sides and he sobbed. "Ah 'ad to do it—ah 'ad to kill 'im—'im was takin' 'er away!"

He made no move when the sergeant slipped the handcuffs over his wrists.

"But where can the knife be?" asked Inspector Gabidan dazedly a few minutes later. Brownie grinned. "I can make a good guess, sir."

He thrust his hand inside the back of the radiophone, searched around the chassis and brought out the red stained knife.

"Yes, sir," he said, handing it to the Inspector, "all he did was to open his eyes as the lights went out. At that moment, he could see better than anyone else. So he just jabbed—hard. He then slipped the knife from the stick and pushed it under the radio chassis."

"Then Garvey's bruise—"

"He was sittin' beside the Indian, sir, and when the man felt the knife pass inside him, he just clutch' wildly and a finger caught Slim's cheek."

The Inspector used the word again. This time he used it in a sort of wonder.

"I Prefer POLIFLOR"

Gabidan's left eyebrow threw up its hands in astonishment. Gabidan cleared his throat, smiled wanly and said: "Oh, Psychology."

"Psychology, sir," agreed Brownie. "Quite, Psychology. Er, let's go up to the office for a minute," said Inspector Gabidan.

Up in his office, Gabidan poured what bees make. "You are a good lad, Brownie, you have a Head"

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"I can't forget the Cats and the Alamein, ha, ha."

Brownie murmured: "Sir?" The corners of his mouth went down.

Gabidan said: "Now, last night, Brownie; what do you make of it?"

"Oh, that, sir? Nothin', sir."
"I can't get a thing on it. I have held on to those four men for as long as I can, but they have got to be released."

"Why, sir?"
Honey soured. "Man — don't be a dam' fool!" Gabidan exploded.

"No, sir," agreed Brownie hastily, a small grin wobbling at the bottom of his eyes. His fingers caressed a dehydrated moustache in the nondescriptiveness of his face. A fly settled on his finger. He breathed heavily on it and the fly skidded into air. Wheels rattled past in East Queen Street and a high pitched voice screeched: "Water Coconuts! Wayay wayay cocay!"

Gabidan waited. He opened a file on his desk so it wouldn't appear as if he was waiting. Brownie said: "Sir? I would try psychology."

Two little memories held hands and danced around on spidery feet inside Gabidan's head. They shook their fuzzy heads at Gabidan and shrieked of Carnivoras and North African battleplaces. And thus, Brownie's head was saved from the file.

Gabidan said: "What do you mean?" Brownie told him. Gabidan looked pained. But he swallowed and said: "Go ahead."

2CC BROWNIE KNOCKED AT INSPECTOR GABIDAN'S OFFICE. Gabidan yelled that he should come in. Brownie went in, obeyed the Regulation, and said: "He has confessed, sir."

Gabidan rubbed his ear and talked the way a man talks when he is

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not surprised. "Which one?"
"The big one, sir."
Gabidan remembered the big one

BUT Edgar Wallace

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of the four stevedores. As great as hams, were his shoulders. His hands could crack an iron safe. Fingers

"If I should die, call Jackson"

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and the sympathy
of friends will
heal your pain at the
last parting... but the
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your loved ones is reverently
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necklace and ring, so when I went back, my tunic was opened so he could also see mine. He soon saw it alright, sir, and he said Gawdjudge he didn't know I was a sensible man too. I told him yes I had been sensible, much more than he had been. He asked how. I told him hell (beg your pardon, sir) man, don't you know ghost don't like water? He asked then what happen. I said hell (beg your pardon, sir) man, when you killed Charlie and his ghost came out and saw the rain fallin', he simply fastened himself on to your myal necklace and will be there to your grave. And, sir, it was then he smelled it."

GABIDAN'S EYEBROWS RODE TOGETHER. "Smelt what?"

"Smelt the cowhorn and rubber parin's I had a constable burnin' outside the cell, sir. I borrowed those, and the necklace, from the exhibits."

The Inspector was slightly outraged. He said as if he meant it: "My God!"

"Yes, sir. He asked me if I had smelt the Thing. I said which Thing. He said the myal Thing. I jumped, and looked at him as if he was already dead. I fumbled at the cell lock as if I wanted to get out quick, and I shouted that I hadn't smelt It but then I couldn't smell It since it was not meant for me but for the man who was keepin' It from Rest Eternal. Then he seemed to go off his head a little, sir."

Gabidan eased on his lungs. He said slowly: "You son of a . . ."

"Yes, sir. The other two constables came in and we held him. When he calmed down, I told him how he had confessed and whether he would like to sign what he had confessed. He said yes for what was the use of livin' if Charlie would forever be on his neck, especially with that Smell. He signed, sir."

Gabidan took the paper. He did not look at it. He looked at Brownie.

"But — but — how could you guess he would break — I mean —"

"Psychology, sir," murmured Brownie gently, the corners of his mouth like fallen arches.

The Inspector said a word. The final double consonants had his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

2cc Brownie brightened. "That was the very word he used, sir!"

Then he rose and obeyed the Regulation.

BRIGHTEST

AND

BEST

by VICTOR REID



THE call sheared neatly between the low roar of the fires and the high sizzle of the sauce pan and pinged on Nora's ear.

"Mum!"

Nora thought: *That will be Baby El.*

The bright, worked-down blade of the old kitchen knife flickered up the stalk of pungent green eskellion, snipping off tiny lengths for the seasoning. Nora let fall the nubble of fleshy portion of eskellion and reached for the bunch of parsley. The blade began its snipping journey up towards her fingers again. She thought: *Junior will be looking down at her now, his brow puckered, telling her she should call again.*

Heat filled the cubicle of kitchen and brought beads of sweat to her forehead and mouth. She reached for a handful of scotch bonnets and wrinkled her nose at the sharp tang which rose when the blade cut into them. Now for the garlic—and yes, for the salt.

She thought: *El will be nodding her head knowingly now, and tucking in her mouth as she rears back on sturdy legs to fill her lungs for that never-failing final yell....*

"Mu - u - m!"

"Coming, darling!" Nora cried.

She scrubbed her fingers together, rubbing away adhering specks of seasoning, dabbed her face with the apron, took a last quick look at the saucepan and hurried out of the kitchen.

From the sole of her Clark's to where the bow of her hair-ribbon hung rakishly over one eye. Baby El was a good forty inches. Her round eyes darted from Nora to Junior while a little smile of triumph tiptoed at the corners of her mouth.

Nora asked: "What is it, dear?"

For answer, Baby El pointed a chubby finger up at Junior and said succinctly: "Da Christmas Tree."

Junior was dangerously risking all his weight out on a limb of the old *lignum vitae*.

"Careful, Junior," Nora said automatically.

A small expanse of exposed bark showed where he had mightily laboured.

"The cutlass won't cut, Mother," he said.

"Hand it down," Nora told him.

She ran an expert eye over the crooks of the branch on which he had been working.

"Not enough crooks—won't do," she said.

She tucked under her skirts and stepped to a low limb. She chose a branch whose many shoots would tend to nice honing. Quickly, she commenced hacking at the branch, angling the cutlass so it bit into the wood, sending the chips flying, first one side, then the other, until only a sliver held it to the tree. Then she stepped down again and bore on the branch until it creaked away from the limb.

"Mumsy, da stronger! Mumsy, da stronger!" applauded Baby El, dancing on the toes of her Clark's.

"No, no, Baby El, you will wear out your shoes!" Nora cried.

She took up the branch and carried it into the shade. She laid it on the ground and sketched imaginary lines with her finger around it. "Trim it like this, Junior, you see? But mind your fingers with the cutlass."

Behind her, Baby El danced on her Clark's.

"Mumsy, da stronger! Mumsy, da stronger!" she sang as she danced.

THE man who had brought it around had said the shop scale said six pounds. Nora held it by the narrow end, the end through which the bone protruded, and hefted it. It had a good heft. Felt good, this heft. Felt all of six pounds. And look at it! Skin a healthy brown, nice fat showing under the skin; and with this small bone, anybody could see there would be plenty of solid flesh. When you pulled back the skin from the wide end where the cleaver had cut, you could see the solid flesh underneath. She smiled and hummed a tune.

Funny how at this season these tunes sang in your head, eh? eh? Tunes like, *God rest ye merry gentlemen*, and *Good King Wenceslas*, and yes, yes, that lovely old tune with its calm, singing quality that called for in-thinking during those merry moments to come, that *Brightest and Best of the Suns of the morning*.

She hummed as she worked the knife beneath the brown skin and built the cavities that would take the seasoning. In, out, now in, now out. Ah! Right here is where the pimento will go! Pimento, to diffuse sweet, rich odours. No ham this Yule? Why worry? Why worry when there's a leg of seasoned pork! Eh? eh? *I will tell him this tonight*, Nora thought.

"Oh, Mumsy?"

The roaring flames had settled down to a glow of burning coals. The saucepan had ceased to sizzle. Six pounds of leg of pork was ready for the heated stone oven. The quiet call came easily to her ear.

That will be June and Pinky, the dears will wait. She stuffed the mixed seasoning into the cavities her knife and built. She sprinkled brown sugar over the brown flesh, rubbed the grains into the exposed end, hefted the leg again and nodded, satisfied. She felt the tinsheet before the door of the oven, found it too hot and pushed it aside with the aid of a towel wrapped around her hand. Good waves of heat swirled through the open doorway.

She settled the triangle of meat in the roasting pan and slid it into the oven. Right up to the centre, so that these waves of heat will evenly swirl all around it. Crisp outside, and juicy inside it will be, with flakes of brown skin easily peeled off for Baby El to suck on. The brown, flakes will be Baby El's. Otherwise, there will be war.

Nora smiled and hummed the tune with the calm, singing quality.

"Mumsy?"

"Coming, dear."

June and Pinky were on the floor of the verandah seated either side of the empty kerosene tin. Scores of disused cigarette silver-paper wrapper were neatly packed beside them on the floor. A jar of paste held the papers down.

"Oh, Mumsy, we want to paste on the paper now," June said. June's eleven years made her spokesman over Pinky's nine-and-a-half. Pinky looked earnestly on Nora.

"Very well, dears, let me show you how."

Nora removed the jar, took up one of the small sheets and dipped the brush in the paste. She paused.

"What about the earth?"

"Can't we put it in afterwards?" Pinky enquired.

Nora smiled. "No, dear, too much handling of the tin afterwards will cause the paper to peel off. Here, let me."

She took up the tin and went outside to the garden. She scooped handfuls of earth, still damp from the swift early morning showers.

She packed the tin with nice-smelling earth, took up the filled tin with an effort. She staggered, half-bent, up the steps and gasped as she placed it on the verandah. She stood up, and pushed the air from her eyes.

"Whoosh! There, now, we can go ahead."

THE clock on the side table showed a few minutes to six. Through the window of the children's room, a little white star hung low to peep at the beds on which they slept. On tiptoe, Nora straightened the room. Baby El had a hand around Junior's neck and her cheek rested on his chest. June and Pinky slept quietly away from each other.

Nora went back to the hall, clicked on the light and began cleaning up in there. A car stopped at the gate and she peered outside. No. It wasn't Richard. He wouldn't be coming home in a car this Christmas Eve. It was the neighbour across the street come home in a taxi and he carried large packages and waved to her and called:

Compliments of the season—Merry Christmas!"

And Nora smiled because she saw already he was a little too merry and wondered if Richard had also met up with the boys, and called to her neighbour:

"Same to you!"

Guiltily, she found herself wondering if that largish package under his right arm, not the one with the Christmas tree, was the one with the ham. Ham was a good thing for Christmas. Her back ached a little.

She stood by the window and watched her neighbour walk up the path to his house, and listened to the joyous shouts from the house as he staggered inside with all his large packages. Her fingers clenched a little.

She turned from the window and took up the candles which June had earlier bought at the corner shop. She commenced cutting them, three bits to each candle. This way, the dozen would become three dozens. They would burn at least for an hour.

What could be keeping Richard so late? What had he to wait out for? Hadn't the Boss said no bonus this year?

And they living at peak, with the weekly pay envelope just covering the weekly living. Christmas, and broke.

Please God, make him come home. You and me, together, will make a happy Christmas for him.

THE cookies were still warm from the oven when Nora packed them in the four jars and placed them beside the silver-papered kerosene tin. She mixed the ju

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING ISSUE

of lemonade and placed it on the tray with the four pretty glasses grouped around it. The clock showed minutes past eleven. She thought she would now wake the children.

Just then, she heard a car at the gate.

"Nora!"

That was Richard's voice.

"Oh, No-o-ra!"

Richard's voice with a merry lilt to it.

She ran for the door and met him at the verandah. His face and his voice was gay as he shouted at her: "Come on, ol' girl! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

"Mum!" came a voice from the children's room.

Nora said hurriedly: "Quiet, Richard, you will wake Baby El!"

"Wake them! Wake them all! It's a merry, merry Christmas, I tell you! The Boss came through after all and I've been out shopping!"

Nora clutched his shoulders. "Wait, Richard!" Her voice was serious. "Wait for me out here while I get up the children."

She ran back inside the house. "Coming, darling!" she called at Baby El.

She had up June and Pinky. Between them, they would see after Baby El. Junior would take care of himself. Then she hurried out to Richard. She had so much to tell him.

WHITE-BURNING candles gleaming on green leaves. Bits of candles, burning steadily, in the crooks of a lignum vitae branch. Children's voices, rising and falling in the songs and hymns of Yule. Children's faces, happy faces, in the soft glow of burning candles singing out the minutes before Christmas Day.

Hark! the herald angels sing . . .

And Richard, quiet in his chair, his forgotten pipe on the table beside him and his arm tight on her waist; looking, looking into candlelight on a branch of lignum vitae stuck in a tin of damp earth.

And there was Baby El, singing around the cookie in her mouth while she gazed in round-eyed wonder at the things candle-light could do. . . .

Glory to the new-born King!

And across the street, her neighbour and his family on their verandah gazing at the beauty of candlelight on a lignum vitae branch, while behind him, his own store-bought tree with its myriad artificial multi-coloured lights stood, forgotten.

Peace on earth and mercy mild. . .

And Nora sat and prayed in thankfulness that she had found the strength to tell Richard that he should put away the Christmas Tree and expensive cakes and the ham and all the stuff he had bought on his bonus and let them have the Christmas she had planned.

So while the children sang their lilting carols, Nora, somewhere deep inside her, felt moving that lovely old tune with its calm, singing quality,

*Brightest and best of
the Suns of the morn-
ing,*

Dawn on our darkness. . .

*imported
from
Canada
brought
by
ship
from
America*

BARTICA

by

BERT HUMPHREY

ABOUT sixty miles from Georgetown, on the Essequibo River, and just a few miles from where the three great British Guiana rivers meet—The Mazaruni, Cuyuni and Essequibo, lies the little village of Bartica, generally known as "The Gateway to the Guiana Hinterland".

This delightful spot, which can be traced back to a settlement since about 1807; has seen many ups and downs, but in 1920 when the diamond boom started, Bartica started too to improve, and has been developing ever since. A road runs from Bartica to Garraway Stream, approximately 90 miles, which takes traffic to the Potaro District; while a branch road at about 73 miles from Bartica, takes miners to the Mazaruni district in the vicinity of Issano. Bartica is definitely the place in Guiana for a timber port, and for the jumping off place to the rich hinterland districts of the Mazaruni, Potaro, Essequibo, and Cuyuni, as well as the Rupunnuni Savannahs.

This peaceful village has also been often written of as a Tourist Centre and the waterways in the neighbourhood of the Village called Bar-

tica Lake; make this a most beautiful and healthy spot for an all the year round holiday.

AS a village, or at least a place where two or three people are gathered together, Bartica is one of the oldest villages of British Guiana, tracing its origin back some hundred and forty years. When in 1807, Lieutenant Stainton St. Clair passed up the Essequibo with the acting Governor of the day, he saw "a small settlement consisting of three small huts placed on top of a gentle declivity which commanded a fine view down the Essequibo on the right hand and up the Mazaruni on the left."

About 1830 the Mission of Bartica Grove was founded. In the Rev. Bernou's book we see what it looked like fifteen years later. The Mission stood on the point to the north of the present village boundary, and consisted of a large church, three large two-storeyed houses and some half-dozen smaller ones, each en-

closed in its own fenced garden. Four years before his famous discovery of Kaituk Fall in 1872, Charles Barrington Brown landed here and visited the District Magistrate, a Mr. Grant. He described Bartica then as being a small village with one grass-grown street along the river's edge, shaded with mango trees having a good church, a few wooden houses and a lot of thatched huts.

With all confidence I visualize this beautiful village, "Red Earth at the Meeting of the Waters" once more raised to the dignity of a town, a fitting model for new and similar settlements far to the south and west, to which Bartica will form the gateway and entrepot. I visualize a light railway following the course of the Potaro Road and tapping the all but inexhaustible timber resources to its immediate south, which will be loaded into deep-sea ships off the river wall. With its long and checkered past, Bartica has a bright and prosperous future, the happy threshold to the developed interior of the Glorious Guiana of tomorrow.

"Th' spital, suh. Found th' bullet. Thir'-two calibre revolvuh."

"A thirty-two, eh?" mused the Inspector slowly and looked up, startled. For, from the hitherto self-effacing Brownie had come one trenchant word. "Foolishness!" he said distinctly.

The Inspector frowned and stared at the flustered constable.

"Did you say something, Constable?"

"Nossir! Yessir! Er, no—" his voice trailed lamely away.

"Well?" barked the officer, "which is it?"

Second-class constable Brownie swallowed hard. The damage had already been done. He stepped forward and stood at attention.

"Scuse me, sir," he said urgently, "what the doctor says and what I know is different!"

The officer's eyes narrowed. He

inhaled cigar smoke, exhaled cigar smoke, rested the cigar in the ash-tray, intertwined his fingers and leaned forward on the table, his eyes lit up in surprised interest.

"What you know, Constable?" he asked in dangerously pleasant tones, "why, then you haven't told us everything?"

Brownie shuddered. He said quickly "Yessir. Nossir I mean—"

Bang! went the table under the Inspector's hammer fists and ash rose then settled on the surface.

"Out with it!" he bellowed. "Don't speak in riddles!"

A tiny muscle twitched at the base of Brownie's jaw. He took a deep breath and made the plunge.

"That sound did not come from a thirty-two, Inspector," he said firmly.

"Why man, why?" shouted the officer, "speak up!"

"Too loud, sir. Must be a forty-five or—or—a—shot-gun!"

The Inspector crouched in his seat, stared at him, leaned back again, stared at the sergeant. Three furrows gathered at the base of his high nose; his jaw hung slack.

"A shot-gun? A shot-gun? My God, Sergeant, the man must be mad!"

The CID man chuckled a little, his big shoulders shaking.

Brownie hesitated. "Well, not a shot-gun—but—but—"

"A shot-gun! Brownie, I could slay you!" he grated.

The Inspector scrubbed the back of his neck with his palm and tightened his mouth, fighting for control.

"Look here, Constable," he said in easier fashion, "you are displaying a commendable keenness, even if late; but I may tell you that Doctor

(Continued on Page 29)

...pector standing back for the Chinese. Tai! Sneering Lo Tai could tell him something! Lo Tai mustn't go! Brownie stepped forward again. "Lo Tai?" he said quickly, "do you keep a cat?"

The young Chinese eyes shone like two black buttons.

"Answer me!" snapped Brownie. Lo Tai veiled his eyes and nodded. The C.I.D. man sniggered and the Inspector uttered a short: "Blast!"

Brownie spun and faced the officer:

"Scuse me, sir," he said hoarsely, his eyes goggling, "please give me five minutes before releasin' the prisoners?"

"What is it now, Constable?" asked the weary officer.

"Back in five minutes, sir!" he flung over his shoulder.

HE was back in three. He returned with an air ridiculously reminiscent of a conspirator, his hands clasped behind his back, his head bent slightly forward. "Lo Tai?" asked Brownie, "is it customary for men of your race to carry around crackers in their pockets?"

The Inspector and the C.I.D. sergeant said: "Crackers?", together and glanced at the table.

Brownie said: "Crackers, sir, fire-crackers," and kept his eyes on Tai. The youth shook his head. He spoke in fairish English.

"Before he go, me give him."

"Why?" said Brownie swiftly.

"Him ask for them--to give friend."

Brownie nodded as if satisfied.

"Were they broken--opened?"

"No--sir!" he whispered; which made it manifest that 2cc Brownie's stocks had risen in the last few seconds.

Ah, thought Brownie, sneer gone, my son?

"You retired--went to bed soon as Wong left; but I expect you did hear some sort of noise perhaps the noise of a startin' car, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Me hear car engine lace. Me think Wong gone."

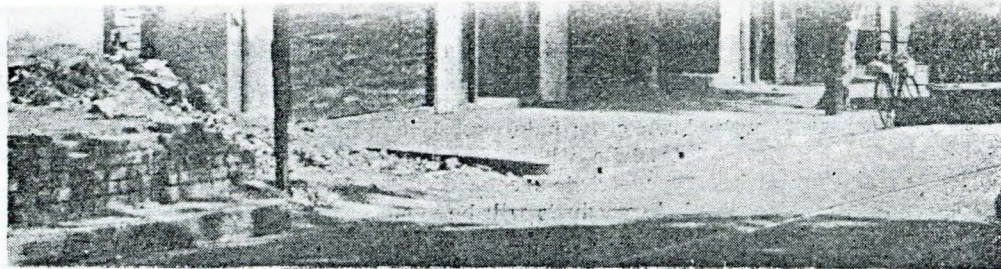
"Ah, you heard a la- a racin' engine, ther a car movin' away, right?"

Lo Tai nodded dumbly. Brownie, grinning slightly, turned to look at the frowning Inspector.

"Which was why, sir, your constable saw nobody at the wall from which the report came."

The Inspector reared upright in

seems to reach out for industrial markets once held by overseas concerns exclusively, is the Jamaica Mattress Supplies establishment, whose imposing new headquarters at East Street, Kingston, Jamaica, has just been completed.



Jamaica Mattress Supplies began in 1920 as the enterprise of the late C. A. Gulley, whose aim was to capture the Jamaican market in plain coir and cotton mattresses. At his death in 1938, it passed over to his widow Mrs. Edith A. Gulley and brother-in-law, Ernest A. McMillan (inset), who extended it to the manufacture of fully upholstered furniture suites and pieces, spring mattresses, cushions, etc., and who after establishment in the Jamaican market are now seeking a place in the Caribbean bazaars.

J. M. S. does not want only to SELL to the neighbouring West Indian territories: its motto is reciprocity. Mahogany from British Honduras, cotton from the Leeward Islands (possibly glass in future from British Guiana silicate) go into the goods it now offers the trade.

his seat.

"Eh?" he ejaculated, "what are you talking about?"

"About the murder, sir. There were only three persons in Barry Street. One of them was dead."

The Inspector's eyes seemed to have withdrawn in their sockets. His forgotten cigar smouldered in the ashtray. The Inspector raised his head and locked his eyes with Brownie's.

"But, then," he said slowly, "you are a perfect alibi!"

"Yes, sir," replied Brownie quietly, his tones even, "I am a perfect alibi for the second report!"

"The second report?" asked the Inspector amazedly.

Brownie took two steps towards the driver.

"Ruttledge?" said the constable, "take a look at these."

In his hands held out to the driver was an empty cigarette tin and a length of fine cord. A faint reek of gasoline was in the air.

"Recognize them?" asked Brownie softly, "I found them in your taxi outside--don't move!"

But Ruttledge was mouthing curses and tugging at his hip pocket where the trigger-guard had caught in the cloth.

"Sergeant!" rapped the Inspector, once.

Surprisingly quick, like a great cat the big C.I.D. man went in close and swung from his hip and Ruttledge's face disappeared in a bloody smear. The gun fell from his hand

and slithered along the floor to Brownie's feet.

It looked like a toy pistol. It was a thirty-two.

LATER, when the room was cleared, the Inspector pushed the box of cigars across the table and nodded his head at Brownie and said:

"Go ahead."

2cc Brownie said: "Thank you kindly, sir," and took the cigar and placed it in the upper right pocket of his tunic. He fastened the flap with two neat fingers and dropped his hand to the cap on his knees.

"As I was saying, sir," he said, "when he saw old Wong comin' out, Ruttledge started the car and pulled the hand throttle wide. Then he stepped out, the gun well wrapped in the chamois cloth, and shot the old gentleman. With his engine racin', the muffled sound of the gun went unnoticed from the house. He robbed the body, got in the car and probably circled the block and came back and parked where I saw him. A length of cord, soaked in gasoline, was attached to the cracker he had taken from the old man's pocket. He placed it on the wall and paid out the cord to the car. By the way, sir, he was the flic-friend for whom Wong requested the crackers. When I asked the question, Lo Tai's eyes flickered in Ruttledge's direction, you may recall, sir," he said respectfully.

The Inspector had noticed no such action, but he was a preacher of ob-

servation in police methods, so he nodded.

"When he heard me comin' along, he lit the fuse and waited. With the headlights on, the small flame licking along to the explosive escaped my attention, as he knew it would, me being more interested in the fact that he was breakin' the law by parkin' where he shouldn't. But at the right moment, sir, I remembered the pool of oil near the body and knew a car must have stayed there for some time."

"What made you think of a cracker instead of a gun?"

A fleeting smile gave a nimble beauty to Constable Archimedes Brownie's nondescript features.

"Some of the pink paper coverin' off the crackers had worked under my nails when I jumped and grabbed at the wall and-er-it was the cats, sir."

The Inspector stared at him, gagged on the smoke, coughed and mumbled:

"Ca-ca-cats?"

Brownie nodded. "Yes, sir. Nobody could have been about near that wall."

"Wha-? But why, man, why?"

2cc Brownie drew down the corners of his mouth and somehow contrived to look coy.

"Just before the report, sir, they were makin' love on top of the wall. And, sir, ask anybody," he leaned forward, his eyes earnest, "ask anybody, cats never make love when they can be seen! No, sir!"

THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA,

For the Encouragement of Literature

Science and Art.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA, W.I.

February 22, 1977

Mr. Victor S. Reid,
Chairman,
Jamaica National Trust
Commission,
72 Hope Road,
Kingston 6.

Dear Mr. Reid,

Enclosed are the copies of the following articles as requested in your letter of February 15, 1977.

Caribbean Post

March 1946	-	Return of Burnett
Christmas 1946	-	Cats are so modest
January 1947	-	Brownie goes on bogie beat
April/May 1947	-	Anybody's Neck
November 1948	-	Blest and best

I hope they are satisfactory.

Sincerely yours,

Althea Silvera.

Althea Silvera (Miss)
Research Officer/ Circulation Mgr.

AS/jl

enc.