

most anything handy rather than go back to ranching at home in Oregon. The old man was sore for a long time, and never sent me any money, but he couldn't never get me back, just the same, with them cattle up there. I guess I'd have killed every one of 'em if he had. He's all right now though since I've made my pile and it keeps gettin' bigger. Sometimes I do get awful tired of it here, but there don't seem to be any way to quit and if I did there ain't nothin' in particular to do instead. When I landed here I didn't have but eighty cents; then pretty soon things began pickin' up for me, and I was the first fellow in camp to pay for things with gold eagles. Ever since then the fellows have called me "Gold Eagle Jack." I've scraped together more'n enough gold eagles now to make three millions," I says, lookin' at her proud. Then right away, I was sorry I'd said that last—my three millions in a minute seemed like three cents.



Oh—it's me all right—me, sized up to about three cents.

Her mouth said a good many things before she spoke, and made me mighty uncomfortable.

"Three millions ought to buy most any kind of a toy you'd want," she says, finally.

"I guess it will," I says, complacent "Money'll buy about everything."

"It will not buy what I want," she says, lookin' off at the mountains.

"You must be wantin' the moon," I says.

"It's something I have to work for all by myself," she says.

"Well," I says, "here's hopin' you'll make good."

Then the camp began to show up, and we galloped along pretty lively without saying much more. When I turned to leave, when she hit the trail to the Carlton 'dobe, she says, holdin' out her hand and thankin' me for showin' her the way. "I hope I shall see you again."

"If I'm on earth," I says.

THE next day I was surprised—as surprised as I ever am—when Carlton asked me up to the 'dobe shack. I went, of course, but I didn't feel right. Their chairs may be all right, but I didn't feel right sittin' in 'em. Carlton tried to make me jolly up, and his wife did too—but I couldn't make it some way—they've got such all-fired fine ways with 'em. Every time I knocked the ashes from Carlton's cigars on that fool fancy ash tray with those grinning heads on it, I felt just like those grins were all at me. Then when I tried it without looking, I'd knock the ashes all over the shiny table. The things they fixed up to drink in baby glasses worried me, too. I couldn't make myself into no bird takin' a drop at a time on my bill—and I always took the thing at one swallow—or two, at the most. Then I was way ahead of all the rest and had to take more, when I didn't want it, so's to come out even. If it hadn't been for that little lady, Miss Margaret Joyce, I'd never have gone again, but I couldn't help myself as long as she was there. But I couldn't talk to her the same. It wasn't like out on the desert.

One night she got to singin' for me, and I felt comfortable then for the first time in that shack. I just leaned back and listened. Carlton had been down to the city and brought a whole lot of roses back with him and the place was full of 'em. The little lady had one in her hair that I got set on havin' while she was singin'. So when I was about to go, I says off hand, "I want that rose." She shook her head.

"Give it to me," I says, stern as I knew how. Then she took it in her hand and looked at it a long time. I waited as patient as I could till she shook her head again. "Give me that rose," I says, then, without any frills. And then she gave it to me.

But what was it do you suppose made me all of a sudden feel just like a beggar? Not a prosperous cup-full-of-pennies beggar—but a seedy cuss without any arms or legs or even a tin cup? "I don't want your rose," I says, mighty quick, throwin' it down without another word and goin' right off. Of course, I couldn't explain the thing, so next time I thought I'd square it by taking her something real handsome. So I took a whopping diamond and had it set with a rough hunk of gold, then put into a pin. It looked fine to me. But there was something wrong—she wouldn't

take it—I didn't s'pose she'd be that sore about the rose. It puzzled me a good deal to know just what to set on next to bring. Finally I took up all my best specimens and told her to take her pick or take 'em all, which ever suited. She took a piece of rose silver—my star specimen—and said it would be just the thing for a paper weight. I felt some better after that.

ONE day we went out to ride. It all seemed natural, all right, just as soon as we hit the desert again. I felt a bit different in my saddle than in them rocking chairs. She seemed to like it fine, too, and we went again the next day, and the next, till it got to be a regular thing. That was what I woke up for every morning. I didn't care for nothing else. Little Miss Joyce certainly kept me going some.

The little lady was a good deal of a kid. She used to like to get off her horse and chase gophers and hunt horned toads and catch lizards. Of course, I had to humor her so's to make a good playfellow. I was kind of surprised to find how much of a ten-year-old I had left in me. I really enjoyed playin' around. Though I didn't much like diggin' up every kind of cactus we run across and trying to get it home for her without stickin' myself to pieces—the other things more than made up for it. She used to pile up rocks and put outlandish marks on 'em, talkin' all the time about totems and a lot of stuff I didn't understand. But I helped her pile the rocks and laughed with her just the same. One day I got to talkin' about the desert—there's a lot to it, you know, that some people never get. I told her just a few of the things I'd learned from it.

"Say that again," she says, shutting her eyes just like she was puttin' some shorthand down in some corner of her brain. But she didn't get

nothin' more out of me that day, for some way that shut me up like a clam.

One day she told me she was going home to Boston. That made me slow up my horse very sudden. Her hand was on the horn of her saddle and I reached over and took hold of it. "Don't go," I says, "don't go, kid."

She tried to take her hand away, but I held it tight. Then she looked at me and I saw she was scared—downright scared. "I won't hurt you, kid," I says, "sure I won't." But I didn't let go.

Then I looked at her mouth and her lips, curved in a new way that was too much for me, and I made up my mind—I pulled my horse up close to hers then—I leaned over and put my arm around her. I guess I must have imagined it, but I thought she leaned from her saddle a little to meet me—and then—I kissed her.

The sky and the desert went swimming around and when I got a grip on myself so's to see things straight again—I couldn't see the little lady for dust. I couldn't catch up with her either—no matter if I did whip poor old Black Tip as he's never been whipped in his life before.

That was the last I saw of her. When I went up to the 'dobe next day she was gone, so I didn't get to see her again. Carlton said Miss Joyce had gone sooner than she expected—that she had to leave without saying good bye to any one. There was a good many dregs in that drink for me, but I downed it and went around tryin' to catch up with my work and go on the same as if nothin' had happened. But I couldn't do it. I felt as good for nothin' as quitch-grass.

THEN one day I got this book. Take a look at it. What do you think? She's tried to put the sage brush and the alkali dust and the desert and the mountains and some of the people of this place inside of the covers of a book. And she's put me into it as kind of a leadin' clown.

I've felt small at times—middlin' small, that is—like when the other fellow pays when you really didn't mean to be busy, or like when you're down in 'Frisco, growin' forgetful of time and the trail home, and some one is just smart enough to snap up some of the claims you've been puttin' off workin' till the last minute. But this is a different kind of smallness—and to lather it on, I feel awful bad with it too.

I wish I could find a word that would say just right the way it makes me feel. I s'pose there are a lot of words in the dictionary that ain't used much, which might help some, but they'd likely turn out to be too shopworn to do the work proper. It seems to me there ought to be some new word coined just for this kind of feeling. Not a crocodile word with tear's streamin' through all the letters and crepe flying out of the end—not that kind—but a good word that would start out

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Down Below With the Stokers

By Felix J. Koch

OVER water, under water, but not touching water—one foot from the deadliest hell-fire with which a malignant Satan might ever hope to torture the accursed, five feet from water, countless fathoms, deep, here one will meet some forty-five sturdy fellows, divided off into crews of fifteen men each, who for the miserable pittance of seventy or eighty German marks a month, at most, purchasing value at their hands about \$17.50 to \$20 in American money, and a fare that would be an insult to the American workman—labor, the year round, happy and content. These are the stokers of the great Atlantic liners.

Probably, all in all, two thousands souls are aboard the boat. Possibly, aside from their superior officers, not one per cent have seen, or will get to see the stokers. Yet these are the men behind the guns, so to speak. The descent to their arsenal is both noisome and forbidden, and so the great army of annual crossers on the Atlantic ferry steer shy of the haunt of the stoker. First a pass from the chief engineer needs to be obtained, granted ever grudgingly. Then one must climb from the steerage deck, down the iron rungs of ladders that reek, veritably, with oil and paint, and in and among the great engines, and between the steam piping, till one reaches a point where the very handrail is too hot to clasp. Downward, foot by foot, sea-fashion, that is—backward into the very bowels of the liner. Then, not content with achieving this depth alone—between two mighty boilers, into the home haunt of the stoker.

Probably nowhere on the earth, or on the waters thereof, can one be extended a warmer reception than that afforded at the stoke hole. The chamber is perhaps ten feet wide, and from the sooty floor, both fore and aft, a wall of iron rises, perpendicular and grim, forty feet sheer, up to the captain's deck, where a narrow bit of deep blue stands forth in bold relief between the lattices which guard the top. Little wonder that no breath of

air may stir itself within this chasm, and that the atmosphere be suffocatingly close and warm.

Add to this the furnaces—six great glory-holes, opened momentarily that the stoker may orge the hungry flames, three mighty furnaces kept ever at full blast, and one may faintly realize the value of a breath of salt breeze to the denizens of the darkness—dirty, sweated and begrimed, who dance about in the light of the flames, show-

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Typical stokers lined up on deck.