

trouble, was composed of men. It came, went and eddied like dust in the wind. Here and there three or four sailors' uniforms appeared in a group. Here and there two or three of the brown-clad, swarthy, waxed-moustached policemen stood at corners of streets, directing those who paused to keep on with the movement of the others. These groups were watched by the bacchanalians as if the quarter from which trouble would come had already been determined.

"This is no place," thought Lassiter, "for the Blake Professor of Experimental Psychology!"

The crowd, surging forward through the cross street at this moment, engulfed the hack. Passersby leered at the gleam of Martin's glasses and at the solemnity of his face that was so

well as me. Them devils will skewer ye as quick as they'd look at ye." He grabbed the professor's sleeve. "Follow me!"

Lassiter heard the machete-words being struck against the paving and house walls and the "Yah-yah-yah!" of the charging guards; he could see the sparks fly. However clear his conscience, he concluded to cast his fortune with the sailor-man. The idea of holes in oneself is odious. He, too, ran, and, infected with the other's spirit, he too looked back over his shoulder and uttered an unfriendly, unacademic sentiment.

"My name's Mike Brophy, of the Coyote," said the sailor. "An' speakin' of names, there is Valencia's beer garden ahead of us. We may get in there an' up the stairs. Do ye mind the way

"Oh, that's all right, old aleut," replied the sailor. "I'm sorry ye fell down. Them white clothes ain't no good for that purpose."

Lassiter noticed a patronising tone in the red-headed, blue-eyed sailor's voice and he found himself wishing to assert, at least, an equality. "Doesn't amount to anything," he said roughly.

"Where ye from," asked the other. "Boston."

"Play chess!" Lassiter thought he was being ridiculed. He was silent.

"I seen a board over in the corner." "Well," said Martin, who prided himself on some skill in the game, "I do play."

"Let's have a game!" exclaimed Brophy, mopping his forehead. "That is, unless she wants to play with ye."

The girl seemed to understand this, for she shook her pretty head as she brought the board to them. Lassiter found himself intent on the game before he knew it. Brophy was no mean player. Gradually even the threatening signaling of police rattles outside was forgotten. The Irishman won.

"Play another!" Lassiter inquired. "No, I guess not," said the sailor. "Say! Yer know it takes brains to play chess—what? Why don't ye play with Flo? She likes ye. She likes quiet gents like us."

The girl, however, who seemed to catch the meaning of this, blushed and moved from behind Lassiter's chair where she had sat during the play. She picked up a guitar from the sofa and began to sing one of her crooning Cuban songs which wandered here and there in soft ease. Her large eyes interrogated those of Martin as she played; when she had finished she tilted her head so that the front of her brown neck showed a straight line and laughed softly.

"Say, this is a good place, me bye?" said Brophy.

"You bet," replied Martin.

"We don't want any drinks, do we?" "Oh, no."

"Well, then, if we don't get out before it's light, an' they catch us in this section, we'll get pinched. You couldn't fight yer way loose like me. So good-bye, Flora. Yer daddy is still downstairs keepin' folks out of the coffee shop." The girl looked at the floor. She was very pretty in that pose and unconscious of it. She twined her round fingers in her scarf, as if embarrassed, speaking in a low tone to Brophy. As for Lassiter, he made his farewell with a beaming smile, and a wide-sweeping bow.

"We're goin' out onto the back street," explained Brophy on the stairs. "An' make our get-away."

Martin disregarded that explanation. He said, "She told a special good-bye to you."

"What did she say?" "She asked me to bring ye up again to-morrow night. She wanted to know first if ye was married."

"Can't be possible!" exclaimed Martin, wiping his eyeglasses. "I believe that knowledge is even a richer store than I had thought—occupying a wider field," he said as if to himself.

"Yer talk like a pair of rubber boots, mate," said Brophy, opening the iron gate leading into the dark street. "An' watch out now! They'd go fer my uniform on sight. We'd better take different tacks, mate. I'll get ye into trouble." "Oh, no," Martin replied. "I'll stick till you get out of this and back to the ship."

Brophy grunted, but Martin felt a touch upon his shoulder. He knew that it was the affectionate clutch of the big freckled hand of his companion, and he could feel the flow of a pleasant unaffected sympathy that gave a surprising

measure of content and satisfaction.

The deserted alley through which they felt their cautious way opened onto a dimly lighted street. Brophy's alert eyes saw the two policemen at the corner a moment before their attention, drawn by Lassiter's white alpaca suit, had awakened them into action. The two Americans could see them lean down to beat on the sidewalk with their clubs; they could hear answering signals from the other end of the alley and the sound of running feet. They were trapped. Policemen bore down on them from both directions.

"Listen!" growled the sailor, almost pulling Lassiter off his feet. "Ha! There is three of 'em! I'll take these two. The other one is yours. We'll fight our way out of this, do ye mind!"

A warm tingling crept over the professor's body. "Aye, aye, sir," he said joyfully.

"When ye see the flash of a gun, be sure to quit," cautioned Brophy. "An' when ye close in, cover yer head from them night sticks an' go fer their legs if ye have a chance. Belay there! Ye shrimps!"

The first two officers were upon him. Just before Martin turned to meet his man he saw the sailor side-step the first onslaught and by a skillful movement of his leg throw one of the foreigners into the gutter. "Star spangled banner!" laughed Brophy. He was closing with the second man. Even after Lassiter turned to meet his own opponent, he could hear the give and take of blows. Crack! the sound of the night stick. Bam! the impact of the closed fist. He felt a strange emptiness in his stomach—the despairing, sick feeling of those unused to contest. Then upon the fleshy part of his neck he received the first blow of the lignum vitae.

It was a delicious tonic. The pain of the blow was sharp but welcome; it awakened a new set of emotions, filled the distressing hole in Lassiter's stomach and brought him onto his toes with the joy of conflict. The policeman was fighting viciously. His club, his left fist, his sharp kicks seemed to come from every direction. Lassiter, ducking his head and body to a well protected crouch, plunged into this rain of blows with which the officer, acting with experience, expected to confuse his prey. The clasp of the policeman's body was satisfying. Lassiter, digging his toes into the dirt, rushed his adversary across the alley and against the masonry. With a free hand he pounded on the chin of the policeman, directing upward jabs that brought forth gasping Spanish ejaculations. They went down together. In the dark Lassiter felt for the night stick and twisted the bent wrist that held it until the grasp had been relaxed.

They were up again in an unscientific conflict of fists. Bam! Lassiter felt that another such on his cheek-bone would determine the issue. He shook his head, grunted, drove his arm forward. Bam! This time the solid blow had landed on the policeman's mouth. Lassiter felt that the satisfaction of this punch had a money value of several hundred dollars. Back and forth it went. At last a moment came when the Cuban officer, now fighting blindly, had disengaged himself and fallen back for another rush. It allowed Martin a chance to glance over his shoulder. One of Brophy's adversaries was stretched out in sleep on the pavement; the sailor was sitting on the other. He was a grinning spectator of Lassiter's contest.

"Go it, me bye!" came his panting voice. "If I don't help ye, ye'll feel better satisfied."

Lassiter braced himself again, threw out his knee, and with a crooked arm caught the charging policeman on the



"Lassiter ran and, infected with the other's spirit, he too looked back."

out of keeping with the occasion and the time of night. He seemed like a newly-starched and ironed shirt blown by the wind into an environment that booted ill to its continued whiteness. Even Lassiter himself felt so when a cigar, projected out of one of the open-front saloons, landed with its hot, scattering fire on the horse's back.

The animal plunged, slipped on the cobbles, and was up again, his old blood coursing wildly in anger and terror. The driver was struggling with the reins, sawing at the bit; the crowd was scattering in front of the horse's plunges. Lassiter "thought it best" to open the door and step out into the street.

He at once found himself borne away in the stream of men; indeed, he only had one chance to see his horse and vehicle being led by three of the gesticulating, comic-opera policemen in the opposite direction. The driver was standing upright on his seat, waving his arms. After several moments of anxiety and elbowing, he found that the darker the shut-in street became, the thinner was the crowd. In fact, he disengaged himself and leaned up against a plaster wall, straightening his necktie and wondering what he had better do next. He felt in his pocket. His money was gone!

"They are child-like, playful people!" he said to himself softly.

As if they had answered him, a great roar went up back there where the lights burned and the pianos drummed. Shouts, imprecations in Spanish, the scurry of the crowd, bobbing of hats, the sharp barking of police rattles and one good old American impropriety of speech lifted above the tumult, convinced him that the expected fight had begun. He could not see how he could help very much. Rowdyism was not his inclination. Therefore he walked away from it.

He had not gone very far, however, when pistol shots cracked out behind—the signal of distress of Cuban police who have had their clubs taken away, and as if in immediate answer came the yell and the clatter of a detachment of the Rural Guards bearing down upon him from the other direction—from the corner toward which he had been directing his steps. Far in advance of them loped a huge Irishman in the uniform of the United States Navy, engaged in his flight and at the same moment, as if to establish his nationality, he was daring them to fight, running and threatening at the same moment.

He was far enough in advance of the detachment to stop when he recognized in Lassiter's panic-stricken face the countenance of an American.

"What's the matter with ye, man?" he cried. "Run!"

"I haven't done anything," Martin gasped.

"Ye was born in the States, an' that's enough, me bye! They can tell it as

the saloon men is tryin' to get the shutter on!"

"Where are we going?" gasped Lassiter. He could see the crowd scattering like peas on a barrel top. Even the sailors, engaged in beating about with the policemen's clubs, were taking to flight.

"Stop here," said Brophy. "Valencia is so fat he can't move quick. Put yer foot in that door crack! Move quick, you skip jack!"

The professor obeyed his superior, and their combined strength forced the rotund Valencia back until there was room enough to squeeze inside, where, except for the street light which peeped in at the shutter cracks, it was pitch dark. The air was still heavy with cigar smoke and the odour of wet glasses. Lassiter could hear the panting of his companion and their fat host and then the sound of blades beating on the door and commanding voices.

A hand reaching out through the ink of the gloom clutched his shoulder. "Come wid me," whispered Brophy, "there is stairs somewhere here."

"Fine!" said Martin. He was beginning to enjoy himself. He felt the delight of flight into the unknown, mysterious regions of the second floor. It was a surprise to him when Brophy pushed open the door at the head of the stairs that a flood of light came forth, showing the living quarters of Valencia. When the door had been closed behind them, he saw that sitting on a sofa in front of the heavy curtains over the windows was a Cuban girl of no mean appearance. She smiled as if she had expected them.

"We're safe here," Brophy was saying. "An' this here lady is Valencia's oldest daughter. She don't speak our jabber, but she's a lady. Flora, let me introduce yer to this here guy. He's a friend of mine, an' all right, I guess."

Lassiter bowed, the girl smiled; the room was both clean and cool. "Thank you for your kind words," Martin said to Brophy.



"Over his shoulder and uttered an unfriendly, unacademic sentiment."