

one of the articles on the list had given him. His snub nose wrinkled with doubt. He looked anxiously at his superior. "Would ye mind, sir," he tentatively suggested, "if I asked one question?"

The officer's voice sounded cold and far away: "Trooper Conners, you've got your orders."

Conners sighed, and turned, reluctant. The lieutenant glared after him. "Was the man impertinent, or only simple?"

It was a question which had perplexed the service ever since a large Irishman with the reddest hair Arizona had ever seen, had sidled up to the recruiting sergeant at the Phoenix station and suggested that the recruiting sergeant step over to "Hennessy's" with him and have a drop of something, and a chat over it. This was Conner's way of saying he wanted to enlist. The recruiting sergeant had prophesied that the service would change that way of his, but Conner's way had come nearer to upsetting the service. No drill could square those quivering shoulders, or brisk that deliberate step. No function, however military solemn, could quite wipe out the scorable flicker from his pale, deep-set eye. It was impossible to put finger on that faculty that not only eroded, but seemed unconsciously to undermine discipline. There was contagion in the man that subtly affected his associates. It was impossible not to unbend when that amiable, conniving blue eye rolled upon you; impossible not to laugh when that deep, musical chuckle bubbled up out of Conner's throat. For his superiors he had neither contempt nor insubordination, only obviousness of rank—a mere inability to grasp the idea of military government—and when, as in the case of Lieutenant Farrar, there was added keen personal admiration, the officer was apt to find the situation difficult. Conners had an exasperating way of communicating official messages—as a confidential whisper, of adding comments as to what he thought the officer meant, of improving on his instructions. Brought to book for this offence he was ready to explain why his performance was superior to the original order. Sometimes it was; and this was not to be borne! Yet Conners could seem to make no logical connection between his eccentricities and extra guard duty. He went through his punishment with a vague, wondering smile at the inexplicableness of an order of life that rounded on a man for communicating ideas.

So now as he went, with his supple, unmilitary swagger, along the streets of Shungopovi, and down the tortuous trail that doubled around the rock turret, his look was clouded with doubt, and his under-lip thrust forth in judicial meditation. He delivered his order to the trader in the store, huddled at the foot of the pinnacle. Then, with what money he had, he filled his pockets with sticks of peppermint candy and little bags of tobacco.

He knew the two besetting weaknesses of the Hopi Indians, and it occurred to Conners that such gifts might not be inconvenient.

While he waited, lounging on the counter, he took off his heavy campaign hat, and two Indian children, brown, shivering waifs, who had drawn near, fascinated at the sight of so much candy, precipitately retreated.

"Hey, quatsi," said Conners, coming toward them, holding out a piece of peppermint. The littler, wailing, clung to her sister, who backed hastily against the wall. Her voice, dominating the sobs of the younger, imperturbed the trader, who slapped his knees with shouts of delight.

"Eh?" demanded the bewildered Conners; "an' what's got the kids?"

"Well, if you want to know, it's yer hair," said the trader, with much enjoyment.

"What the devil d'ye mane?" growled Conners.

"Well, you would set the Colorado afire!" said the trader, grinning at Conner's fiery bush. "Don't know as I ever see anything like it myself, but they"—turned his thumb in the direction of the round-eyed sisters cuddled against the wall—"ain't never seen no kind of a red-headed man in their lives. There ain't but one thing in this country that's such a colour." He pointed with a chuckle at the glowing bed of coals.

"They think it's somethin' to warm yer hands at."

Conners clapped his hand to his head as if he expected to find it hot.

"Well, I'm damned!" he brought out at last. "Did ye ever hear the like o' that?" The idea appeared to amuse him, for he chuckled.

"Well, did ye ever hear the like o' that!" he repeated, as he closed the

trader's door behind him. He walked a little way. Then a new idea seemed to strike him. He looked up at Shungopovi, with his slow-dawning smile. He pulled out his bandana handkerchief, and, as a man might look up precious metals for future profit, Conners bound the handkerchief over his hair carefully till the last stubborn lock was concealed. Then, putting on his hat, he took his deliberate way upward again, toiling, peering up at the roofs above him. "They don't like it," he muttered. He stepped through the hole in the wall that led into Shungopovi, and from the far end of the passage looked back at the narrow aperture through which flashed a glitter of turquoise sky, and shook his head. "I don't like it meself," he concluded. He turned; he started. Behind him, close as his own shadow and as black, stood a villager. The dark folds of his blanket almost met his inky forelock. The glitter of the eyes through the slit somehow made Conners feel the cliff edge was very near his back. The Hopi pointed toward the archway.

"Go away through there!" The sentence fell softly from his tongue.

"Eh?" Conners hesitated, perplexed—then a reminiscent grin lighted his face. "Oho! I give you tobacco out there in the plaza! Friend!" He thrust out his

sickness; and that the power that sends me is greater than Washington. I give you a sign." He sprang back and snatched off his campaign hat. His wild hair, red as a blood orange, coruscating in the noon sun, flared forth. The light, electric atmosphere of the mesa seemed to set every lock on end.

The Hopi leaned forward with a soft exclamation rising to a laugh. "Hi-y-i-i!" His white teeth gleamed delight. His hand reached toward the fiery bush.

Conners stepped back, raising his hand with a platform gesture. "Tewa!" (fire) he said sternly, "owiwuhta!" (flame).

The man hesitated, poised, incredulous, while Conner's brain rocked with the fear of failure; then timidly, still half unbelieving, the Hopi extended his hands, and spread his fingers toward Conner's hair, as toward a burning fire.

"Where's that man Conners?" the lieutenant demanded of the sergeant.

"Where's that dam' red-headed Irishman?" the sergeant shouted to a trooper.

"He's come up," the man declared. "I saw him half-an-hour past goin' through the plaza wid an Injun."

"An Indian!" the exasperated officer growled an order in his throat, and a curious squad of corporal and two troopers set out for the plaza.



"Come to-night to the house where the soldiers are and I will give you candy—red candy."

hand. A stick of peppermint was in it, but the Hopi stood immovable, his arms tight folded in his black blanket. "Let the chief who says 'friend,' lead his people away through there!" he repeated.

The dual significance flashed on Conners.

"He thinks I'm the boss of the gang," he chuckled, but while he smiled he looked into the eyes of revolt. He had but the space of his smile to consider in, but inspiration, that flourished for him under pressure, was already budding in his fertile brain. Involuntarily he raised his hand and drew his hat harder down over the bandana handkerchief.

"Not my people," he smiled slowly, significantly wagging his head—"none of mine! They came with me. They are my servants, but they are men of Washington. I am nearer kin to you."

The Hopi's eyes ran over Conner's khaki with a half-satirical flicker; and faintly appreciatively, Conner's face reflected it. But he sidled closer.

"I wear these clothes because if they know, they would not come with me, and I need their strength. But do they talk your tongue? Do they take your hand?"

The Indian stood like a bronze, but his smile abated, and his eyes were fixed on his interlocutor.

"I come," said Conner, leaning forward impressively, "to take away the

To these men, who laboured all day between the cliffs and the houses of death, Shungopovi had seemed a city of the dead, but Conners had reanimated it. The white plaza was spotted with black and orange—muffled figures, light and silent, all drawing from the fringing houses toward the centre of the square, where a tight-packed ring leaned and looked up; and in their midst on the platform of the high kiva hatchway, in the broad wash of the desert sun, flamed the hair of Conners; and it was Conner's voice that sounded, rolling beathen words under his tongue. There was a full minute before the corporal remembered his duty.

Remonstrating, expostulating, with curses behind his teeth, they brought Conners before the lieutenant. That officer was already sufficiently harassed by the inexplicable disappearance of three carbines. It was a bad moment to bring any more irregularities before him.

"I was only explainin' to thim," Conners explained to the angry Farrar. "They don't like us bein' here, an' I was only tellin' thim that what ye were goin' to do wasn't anny bar-ram at all."

"Who told you what I was going to do?" demanded Farrar.

"Ye gave me the list," said Conners, aggrieved, "an' there was on'y one guess I could make."

"When you get orders, don't make guesses," said the officer sternly. "You'd

get yer throats cut with this wigwag." "We'll a date more likely get 'em cut without it," broke in Conners eagerly. "Report to the sergeant for duty until the town is clean. Then you can go under arrest." The officer's eye looked through Conners, and his voice was far away. From that tone, Conners decided there was no appeal. But his expression of profound perturbation did not seem to revert to the sentence of arrest.

"If on'y I'd had a minute more—just a minute—I'd 'iv had thim," he muttered regretfully, as he followed the detail out across the sea of rock that sloped away to the south of the village. "He's a fine boy, the lieutenant, no doubt of it, but he knows less about people than I do about swaddlin'-bands."

The ledge of the aerie on which Shungopovi hung was split, as if some mighty knife had plunged and pried it into narrow clefts, whose ends ran down to oblivion. Thither the bodies had been brought and gathered into heaps on the lip of the precipice. And thither followed native women, leading naked children, large-headed and lean, like change-lings, furtive as foxes. They seemed unagitated, merely curious, reassured possibly by the place to which the bodies had been brought. Conners knew that in such clefts as these, covered with stones, the Hopis were wont to bury their dead, but he knew also this was not the method of interment the lieutenant intended.

"It's the devil's own service!" he sighed. "Now, why couldn't he leave me be? Just as I would be tellin' 'em how it would be! They was comin' to me hand like a bird to a bush!" He looked down to where the tents of the new camp showed white. "Now, how will I ever get hold of thim again?" he muttered.

A light touch on his hand brought his eyes back again. A child, a boy of six, bronze and naked, a red feather braided in his hair, pulled him gently by the sleeve. He was pointing at one of the Hopi bodies, covered with a blanket.

"What are you doing with my father?" he asked in the native tongue.

"Who was your father?" questioned Conners in the same language.

"Lolama, the very big chief," said the child sulkily.

"Oho!" said Conners, and a twinkle re-kindled in his brooding eye. "I am sending your father to the Maho-ki. You are the very big chief now."

"Give me candy," said the child, edging closer. He used the single English word with staccato effect.

Conners looked all around, spying the horizon, like a thief who fears to be seen, then down at the child, and laughed with his deep-throated chuckle.

"Come to-night to the house where the soldiers are, the house of the three ladders at the end of the street, and I will give you candy—red candy." He pulled out a piece and held it aloft. The child clutched covetously, and Conners returned the sweet to his pocket.

"No, Yonder, to-night," he said, pointing toward Shungopovi.

A woman came softly and took the boy's hand. Conners watched the red feather glinting away among the rocks, with a half-smile that wrinkled into a frown.

"It's all such takin' chances," he muttered.

Out of Shungopovi, across whose roofs the western sun lay level and golden, down the trail worn in the solid granite, he watched a procession of two burros prodded on by a trooper in their rear. They crawled under a load of great tin cans that clattered and creaked, and flashed like a burning-glass when the sun caught them. And with that fiery glint came the suggestion that sent a shiver over Conner's imaginative skin.

Into the deep rock-clefts the men were lowering blanket-wrapped shapes. Sleeves stripped to shoulder, perspiration dripping off their faces, with cracking muscles and bending backs, they laboured in a desperate race with day. The "after-glow" was an aurora in the west, and the land a slate-coloured silhouette on the heavens before the work was complete.

"Powers above," muttered Conners, wiping his forehead with his bare forearm: "if we're associatin' wid this disease much longer we won't need our throats cut to kill us."

Beneath his campaign hat he had kept his handkerchief over his hair, and his face under it showed flushed and dubious. Slowly he unscrewed the cover from a great square tin can.

Into the lovely, purple twilight rose

\*Skeleton house—home of the dead in Grand Canyon.