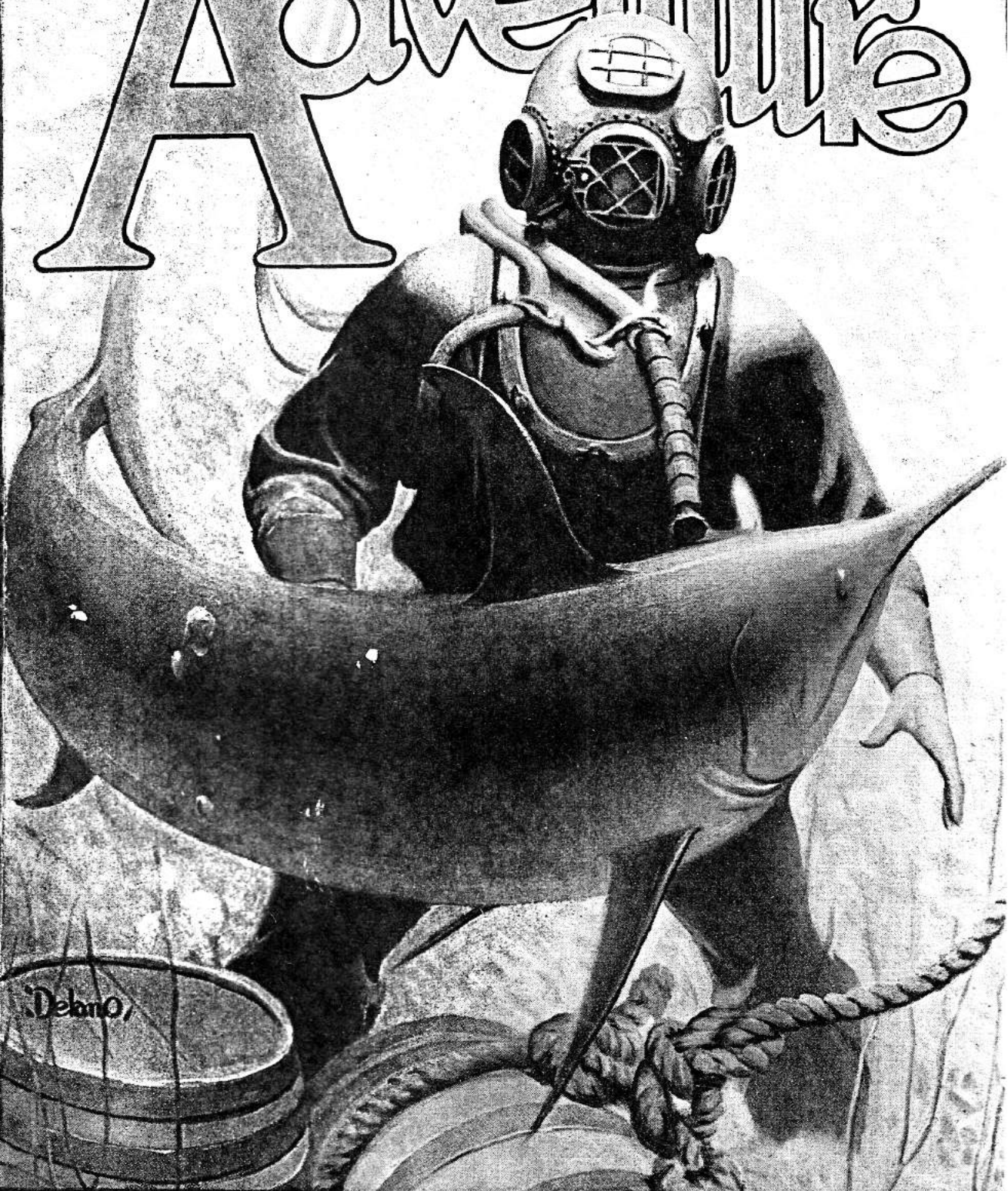


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By COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG

WATER,

"IT'S a failure, and that report sure does prove it!"

Mr. Robert McElroy, vice president of the Continental Wheel Company, leaned his huge bulk forward and, in his best conference manner, started to pound the table. Unfortunately, the Pullman Company provides no tables in the great American conference room, and McElroy's fist hit only empty air. Sheepishly he drew in his arm and sank back into the leather cushions of the smoking compartment. The Broadway Limited roared along toward New York.

"My dear man, it proves nothing of the sort. That Wickersham report merely shows it hasn't had a fair trial yet." Mr. Augustus Graham regarded his traveling companion benevolently, unimpressed by table pounding. "I'll leave it to these gentlemen," he added, and turned to the other travelers crowded in on the leather cushions of the Pullman, who were regarding dismally the snowflakes swirling by in the January night.

"You've had wide experience, Mr. Pollock. Would you say it's had a fair trial yet?"

Mr. Max Pollock, his reverie of Hollywood and its studios interrupted, took a fresh grip on his cigar, regarded Mr. Graham judicially.

"Well, if you ask me, the answer is yes and no. Now in my studio, the rule is, no drinking, no drunks; but when they get off the lot—" he shrugged his shoulders—"what can I do? What can anybody do with people like that?"

McElroy laughed.



"There you are, Mr. Graham."

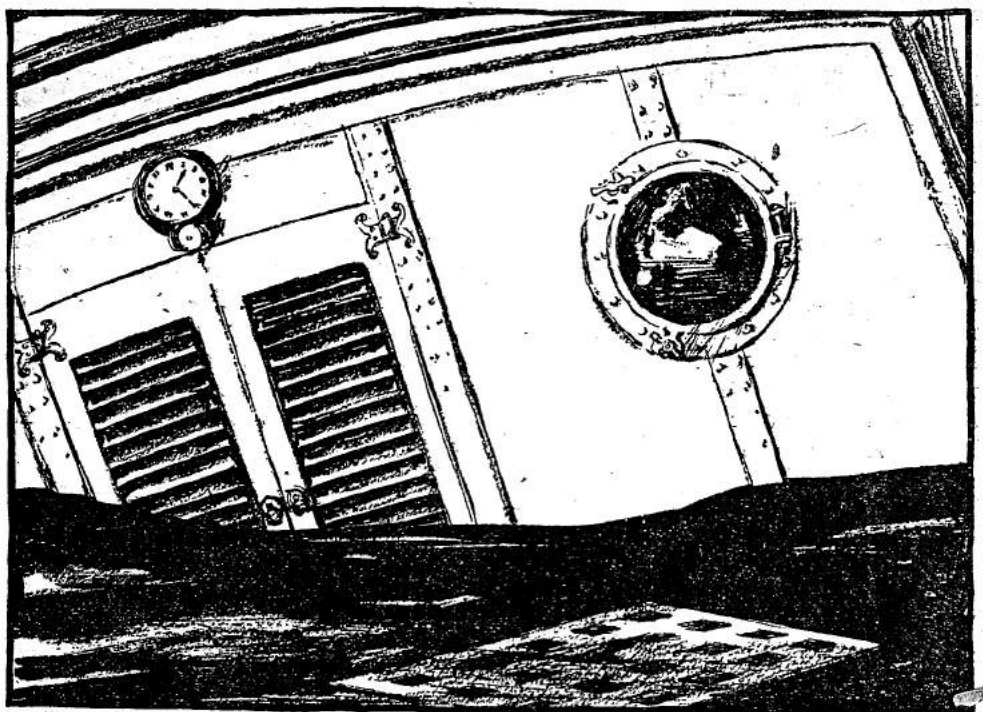
Graham shook his bushy head.

"Not at all, not at all. Hollywood—bosh! The decent people of this country are all for law enforcement. I tell you, gentlemen—"

The Pullman swung round a curve. He lurched against Mr. Pollock, stopped abruptly. A shower of ashes from a fat cigar whitened his knees. Mr. Pollock clucked sympathetically, tried awkwardly to dust him off.

A Story of Deep Sea Diving

WATER EVERYWHERE!



McElroy fumbled for the bell over the arm rest, pressed it. A black head thrust aside the curtains; a pair of shining eyes gleamed through the smoke at the passengers.

"Get a brush, Columbus. Chance to earn your tip." McElroy nodded in the direction of his companions.

"Yes, sah, Mr. McElroy; yes, sah." The porter jerked a whiskbroom from his hip and expertly dusted off the broad knees.

"Now Columbus, we're dry as well as dusty. Get me a couple of ginger ales and some ice." Mr. McElroy winked at the grinning porter.

"Yes, sah, Mr. McElroy, right away. Fo' glasses, sah?" He vanished.

Graham looked questioningly at his neighbor.

"Columbus? I thought all porters were named George. You sure?"

"Oh, yes, I know him and he knows me. I always take this train. And I always get

in Columbus's car. Fine porter. Looks after me like a brother. D'ye ever see such a shiny round dome as that moke's got?"

Graham shook his head.

"Not on a white man, but I'm no anthropologist. Where was I?" He squeezed over to get out of range of Pollock's cigar, wrinkling his brow in thought. "Oh, yes. Since I left college forty years ago, I've been battling for prohibition, and now we've got it, I can't see us letting go because of a few bootleggers and the pig headed fools who patronize 'em!"

"If people want to drink, they'll get it, and the Government can't ever stop 'em," observed Pollock.

"It can't, eh?" exclaimed Graham. "What we need is the right kind of enforcement and they'll stop!"

"So?" queried McElroy. "What's that mean—prohibition agents in every home?"

Graham glared at him, started to answer. The curtains parted and Columbus entered with a tray, handed a glass filled with cracked ice to each passenger. Two swift jerks with an opener, and he filled each glass three-quarters full, then seized his tray and discreetly disappeared.

McElroy pulled a silver flask from his hip, gazed at it a moment, looked quizzically at Graham, then slowly slipped the flask unopened back to his pocket.

"Here's to the noble experiment!" He lifted his ginger ale and drank it at a gulp.

"And here's to a fair trial for it!" Mr. Graham answered.

"Well, my friend, I'm afraid we'll all die of old age first," observed Pollock. "Say, Mr. McElroy, what's in that flask? Some rye, maybe?"

"Perhaps, but I won't shock our friend here," answered McElroy. He held his empty glass up to the light. "He thinks all you have to do is to pass a law and then every one who doesn't observe it is a thug."

"Hardly that, but then you're too old to reform. Wait till all you old soaks have died off. Then we'll enforce it."

"Rot. You'll never stop 'em."



McELROY bent forward, looked past Graham to the outside of the divan, where squeezed hard against the window of the car by three overfed business men, the fourth passenger in the smoking compartment was puffing silently at a cigaret, his empty glass perched on the shiny metal top of the washbowl projecting over his knees. The vice-president of the Continental Wheel Company studied him a moment. He had taken no part in the discussion.

"Say, Mister—er—Mister—"

"Martin," said the other quietly.

"Martin," continued McElroy. "You're enough younger than we are not to be an old soak, anyway. What's your opinion? You saw that report. Think they'll ever enforce it?"

"I doubt it."

Graham turned sharply round, examined Mr. Martin carefully. A young man, perhaps thirty-five, athletic, face bronzed, with little wrinkles round his eyes, habitually half closed as if seeking protection from the weather. The plainmen down in Texas used to look like that, thought Graham.

"You doubt it, eh? Why?"

"Human nature, I suppose. If a man wants a drink, he'll get it somehow."

"Not if the right people are enforcing the law," asserted Graham positively. "Then he can't."

"I wouldn't be so sure, if I were you," suggested Martin. "I thought so once myself, but not any more. I know better now. It's hopeless."

"You see!" cried McElroy triumphantly, jabbing Graham playfully in his bulging stomach. "Nobody thinks so any more."

"Just idle statements," replied Graham, easing away slightly. "Unfounded opinions." He turned again toward the window. "You say you know now. What's that mean?"

Martin tossed his cigaret stub away, tried to reach into his pocket for a fresh one. Pollock drew a massive cigar case from his vest and genially offered it.

Martin extracted a cigar and looked at the band.

"My favorites! Can't afford 'em though, except aboard ship. Thanks." He bit off the end, lighted it, puffed meditatively a moment. "Guess I'll be where these grow in a few days." He blew a smoke ring toward the ceiling of the Pullman, turned again to his interlocutor.

"You remember the *Sarah Thompson* case?"

Graham looked puzzled, shook his head.

"The *Sarah Thompson* case? No. Who was she?"

"She was a ship. I don't suppose you do; it's over seven years, now. Well, I'll tell you then."

Martin settled himself a little more comfortably, took a long pull at his cigar, blew the smoke lingeringly out as if reluctant to part with its fragrance, and continued:

"Back in 1923, the keeper of Gay Head Light—that's on Martha's Vineyard—spotted a ship one morning about fifteen miles to the southward. Nothing unusual in that—lots of ships pass that way; but this one attracted his attention because—as the hours went by, she stayed there. Every now and then as he worked around his lighthouse, cleaning lenses, oiling machinery, he'd look out to sea, and there she lay, not anchored, drifting a bit perhaps, but not moving over half a mile between dawn and dark. Next day she was still there, a little too far off for him to make her out very well through the old spyglass that had come down from whaling days; but even so, plainly enough just drifting lazily, and once every watch, steaming up a bit to hold her position.

"Well, things are pretty lonely round a lighthouse, especially in the Fall after the Summer colony has left, and that keeper developed a lively curiosity about what any vessel might be doing, drifting aimlessly that far offshore; but after a couple of days with nothing happening, he quit paying much attention, and went back to his regular business of wondering instead how soon the ocean'd wash away

Gay Head and tumble the lighthouse into the sea.

"The third morning, after he'd put out the light and made things shipshape for the day, he glanced to seaward and there she was as usual. By that time he was used to her, and was only taking her in casually as part of the scenery, when suddenly a huge cloud of smoke and steam shot up and blotted her from sight. You can bet that brought him to. He grabbed his old spyglass and trained on the spot, but when the cloud had cleared away, it was goodbye ship. There wasn't anything between him and the horizon but the ocean waves!"

"You don't say!" muttered Pollock. "A whole ship gone like that?"

Martin puffed vigorously on his dying cigar, blew out a cloud of smoke, waved it away.

"Righto, Mr. Pollock. Rubbed out, just like that. Well, the lighthouse keeper stared a minute, then dropped his glass and shot down the steps of that lighthouse tower two at a time and made a bee-line for his dory. It was past sunrise and he didn't have to worry about the light. He hopped aboard the dory, kicked over the engine, grabbed the tiller and headed out to sea. The sea wasn't so bad and the little dory rode the waves at top speed but it was over twelve miles out, and more than an hour dragged by as she kicked along, with the old boy in the sternsheets keeping a sharp lookout for any lifeboats heading in. Nothing in sight.

"Finally he got there. Not much in the way of wreckage to mark the place, a moderate oil slick, a few broken crates. Then he spotted a man in a lifebelt bobbing up and down among the waves. He steered for him, saw three or four more floating nearby, came alongside the nearest one, speared his life jacket with a boat-hook, heaved him in over the gunwale. The poor fellow was drowned, which didn't surprise the keeper any. Even in a lifebelt, you can't live very long in a choppy sea. Without stopping, he made for the next, and one by one he dragged in the others, till he'd found five altogether, all

in lifebelts and all doing a dead man's float.

"Well, by that time, he had a dory full and there weren't any more in sight, so he threw out his clutch, let the dory roll, and started to examine the bodies to see if any of 'em might by chance be showing any signs of life. And then, as he turned them over, the old man's blood ran cold. They hadn't drowned after all—there wasn't a man in the lot whose body wasn't full of knife wounds. They'd been murdered!"



A LOW whistle echoed from McElroy's lips, then only the roar of the train rushing through the winter night broke the silence as Martin paused, puffed slowly again on his cigar. Graham looked at Pollock, then at McElroy; then all three turned puzzled eyes on Martin.

"Gentlemen, the clutch on that engine slammed in, that dory left the scene four bells. The lighthouse keeper with five stiff's on the floorboards staring up at him with wide open eyes didn't waste any time making knots for home.

"The wires to Boston fairly sizzled when that cargo came into Vineyard Haven, and the next boat over from the Massachusetts mainland was loaded down with State troopers, district attorneys, and Boston newspaper men, all hot on the scent of piracy on the high seas!

"The State's attorney, the troopers and the reporters all quizzed the keeper, then chartered motorboats and headed for the scene of the crime, but by that time the breeze had freshened and there wasn't any 'Cross marks the spot' or anything else but a steady succession of monotonous waves rolling by twelve miles south of Gay Head, and they didn't throw much light on the mystery.

"The district attorney went back to Boston, ready to drop the case as hopeless; but after reading the papers next morning (the reporters had lots of pictures featuring Gay Head Light, the keeper, the slashed life jackets, and even—in a tabloid of course—a faked photo-

graph of the bodies floating in the sea) he changed his mind, announced the crime would be sifted to the bottom, and the Governor of Massachusetts wired the Navy Department for assistance.

"And so the *Osprey*, the Navy's diving ship, was ordered to proceed from New London, and the next day, there we were, on as good a position as we could get from the lighthouse keeper, with all our boats out, dragging the bottom. It was a tough job. The keeper couldn't give us the bearing within half a point, and we had to guess the distance offshore by the time it had taken his dory to get out there; so four days went by and we'd swept two or three square miles of ocean before one of our surf boats finally made a strike and buoyed off her grappling line in fifteen fathoms of water. Then we laid out four mooring buoys round the spot and prepared to dive."

"What was your job, Mr. Martin?" asked Graham, interrupting him.

"I was skipper of the *Osprey*."

"Oh!" Graham looked at him with increased respect. "So you're the Lieutenant Martin we've heard so much about?"

"I don't know what you've heard, but I'm Lieutenant Martin—just returning to the *Osprey* to go south with the submarine flotillas for Winter maneuvers off Cuba."

Mr. Pollock pulled out his case and proffered another cigar.

"Lieutenant Martin! Well, well, who would think this could happen! Did you see that submarine picture we made last year? From nearly four hundred feet, we had a diver rescue her!"

Martin laughed dryly.

"No, I didn't see it. When I heard about the four hundred feet, I kept away. The Navy, Mr. Pollock, should pay off its divers and hire your movie star. But never mind. Four hundred feet! Well, as I was saying, we made a strike in ninety feet of water and as that's not a bad depth for an ordinary human being, we moored the next morning and rigged ship for diving.

"Biff Evans, my chief boatswain's mate, was the first man over. As sea-going as they make 'em was Biff, with four hash marks on his sleeve and more adventures on the bottom to his credit than your scenario writers ever dreamed of, Mr. Pollock. The dressers slid him into his suit, bolted on his breastplate, and hung a hundred pounds, more or less, of lead on him to ballast him properly on the bottom.

"Meanwhile, the district attorney buzzed round as if he had Biff on the witness stand, trying to tell him about a hundred things to look for; while a couple of reporters kept their pencils and their cameras going full speed, but none of 'em fazed Biff, who sat nonchalantly on the dressing bench taking a last drag before the dressers clapped his helmet on.

"When the district attorney had finished filling Biff full of useless instructions, I leaned over, gave Biff his orders and stood clear. Down came the helmet over Biff's head, a couple of sailors braced his shoulders while a third gave the helmet a sharp twist to lock the neck joint, then screwed home his face plate. Two husky gobs grabbed Evans by the arms and helped him stagger across the deck on to a stage hanging from the starboard boom. A winch heaved round, up went the stage with my boatswain's mate clinging awkwardly to it, outboard, and then down over the side into the sea till the waves covered him and the air exhausting from the back of his helmet gurgled up alongside our hull.

"Evans tried out his control valves, signaled 'O. K.' on his lifeline, stepped off the stage. The tenders dragged him forward through the water to where we had the grappling line coming in over the rail. Biff grabbed it, wrapped his legs round it, and through the water I could see him wave. The tender slacked away, Biff slid down the line and disappeared. In a few seconds only a mass of bubbles rising through the water marked his descent.

"The lifeline stopped running out; Biff was on the bottom. Three jerks on his line, 'More slack.' The tender paid it out. And then a long hour went by with Biff moving slowly round down below, the tender 'fishing' his lifelines carefully, paying out or hauling in slack as Biff signaled, and taking mighty good care he didn't let any stray line out to get fouled up in the wreck while Biff explored.



"THERE was plenty of suppressed excitement on the quarterdeck as we watched those clouds of bubbles moving slowly back and forth through the waves; the district attorney ran round like a chicken with its head off, his eyes glued to those bubbles, falling over coils of mooring hawsers with every step. And the two reporters with him climbed the superstructure and hung like monkeys as far outboard as they could get, trying for the best angle for a photograph of the diver's air coming up through the sea.

"At last Biff signaled he was clear of the wreck again and ready to come up, and an even more trying hour went by with Biff dangling at the end of his lifelines as the tenders raised him a few feet at a time, 'decompressing' him on the way up."

"Decompressing?" What's that, Lieutenant?" asked McElroy.

"A diving term," explained Martin. "You see, the diver's under heavy pressure at the sea bottom, and if you brought him up in a hurry to the surface where the weight of the sea's all off him, the sudden drop in pressure might burst his blood vessels—give him 'the bends,' we call it. So we decompress him, bring him up in easy stages, with a long wait at every stop to let him work out of it gradually. It's a damned nuisance and hard on the diver besides to keep him hanging on a line an hour or more like a hooked trout; but there's no help for it. You stand by and wait and that's what we did as

best we could on the *Osprey*, as Biff Evans came up from the ocean floor.

"At last he was just under the surface; we lowered the stage, hoisted him aboard. He staggered off the stage, the bench was shoved under him, a gang of dressers flew at him, and lead shoes, lead belt, diving harness, went flying in all directions. The dressers grabbed his shoulders, twisted off his helmet. Biff's head stuck out grotesquely above the copper breastplate, his face drawn and pale.

"A flying wedge consisting of the district attorney and the reporters shot through the circle of tenders, and started to interview Biff before he could even draw a decent breath of fresh air.

"Stand clear, you guys, I'm all wet.' And with that Biff leaned over and poured nearly a bucket of water out of the neck of his suit, not caring much where it went; he soaked the district attorney from the knees down.

"She's the *Sarah Thompson*, Cap'n,' said Biff, straightening up. 'Her boilers are blown up, stack all' torn away, and she's sure a wreck abreast her fireroom hatch; but for'd an' aft o' that, she's O. K, an' ridin' on an even keel.'

"What kind of ship is she, Biff?' I asked him.

"Looks like a coasting steamer to me, Cap'n,' he replied. 'Some small cabins under the bridge, one cargo hold for'd an' another one aft; an' both cargo hatches broached.' He turned to the dripping attorney facing him. 'An' while I didn't go explorin' too far, it looks to me like them holds is full o' kegs.'"

"So! A rum runner, hey?" exclaimed Pollock.

"Yes, you guessed it," answered Lieutenant Martin, "and to make a long story short, she'd been hijacked by her own crew. With the aid of our wireless, the district attorney soon learned that the *Sarah Thompson* had sailed from Boston for Halifax two weeks before, and cleared from there a few days later for Bermuda. If your memories

go back clearly to 1923, you'll recollect that in those days a real 'Rum Row' flourished twelve miles out from Block Island to the eastward. And that's what the *Sarah Thompson* had been doing there—selling her cargo to small boats at night.

"Apparently after three days of it, they'd received enough cash for the liquor to satisfy the crew; anyway; so they murdered the captain, stole the money, tied on their life jackets and then shoved off in a small boat before dawn, after dropping a few sticks of dynamite with a long fuse down the stack to blow up the ship and cover the crime. There must have been a fight in the lifeboat—over the swag, maybe; at any rate, five of the hijackers went overboard punched full of holes. The rest of 'em and the *Sarah Thompson's* boat got clear long before the lighthouse keeper hove in sight, and so far as I know, the law never caught up with 'em, though I did hear a rumor a few months later that some members of the *Sarah Thompson's* crew had been seen in Havana.

"However, that's neither here nor there with this story. The authorities were out to break up rum running, and here was an American ship that should have been in Bermuda sunk off Gay Head with a hold full of hootch. The district attorney couldn't get the crew, but he was determined to punish the owners, and for that he needed proof. I got orders from the Navy Department to lend a hand in obtaining the evidence."

"Very properly, too," broke in Mr. Graham. "Best thing the Navy can do in time of peace."

Martin looked at him curiously. No use arguing.

"That's for Washington to decide, so far as I'm concerned," he said mildly. "Anyway, we resumed diving. The next man down worked his way into the forehold and, after a tussle—Biff Evans was the only good diver I had—lashed one of the kegs and sent it up. It was full of ale. My third diver sent up

another one, and then I was ready to quit, but the district attorney wouldn't hear of it. That wasn't enough evidence for him; no defense attorney was going to ruin his case in court by claiming those were only a few kegs she was carrying for ship's stores maybe; he wanted at least a dozen kegs to prove to the judge that she was loaded down with it. He was the doctor, so after sending that ale below and locking it up in our forehold, we secured for the night and lay in our moorings, the weather holding calm.



"WE TURNED to again in the morning, rigged Biff out and dropped him overboard. Biff was a wonder in a diving suit and I figured that he could send up the ten extra kegs we needed, all in one dive, and finish the job; but something was the matter with him and all he managed to lash and send up was two kegs in half an hour; and his last twenty minutes on the bottom, none at all. Of course, it's pretty tough working in a diving rig; I've seen good men put in a whole dive on a wreck trying to close one door, for instance; so we just waited and kept pumping air below while Biff worked.

"Finally we got 'four' on Biff's lifeline—the signal to haul him up. The tenders heaved him off the bottom and, as usual, we decompressed him in the water, meanwhile getting the next man, whom I hadn't figured on needing again, dressed up to his breastplate.

"Biff wound up his decompression time at the ten foot stage, and we lifted him aboard. There was the usual flurry on the quarterdeck as the tenders undressed him; then free of his rig, Biff started forward while I turned to instruct the next man.

"As Biff went by me, I noticed he was wobbling pretty badly, and fearing the bends had him, I grabbed his arm to help him into our recompression tank for treatment, when I got a whiff of his breath and let go.

"Biff Evans was dead drunk!

"I stared at him, cursing myself for my carelessness. Biff must have got at those two kegs in the *Osprey's* hold before he made his dive, and I'd put a half-drunk sailor over the side to work on a wreck in fifteen fathoms of water, where the effect of breathing oxygen under high pressure had evidently completed his jag. In that state he might easily have fouled himself in the shattered hulk and been killed before we could get another man down to rescue him. So you can bet I breathed a sigh of relief to see him safely back on the topside, and I sent a couple of gobs along with him to put him in his bunk and see he didn't break his neck getting below.

"By noon we were through diving for that day. My other two divers had been down, sent up a keg apiece, and got up on deck again without mishap. And there we rolled the rest of the day, heaving gently to our moorings and unable to work any further for lack of divers.

"Meanwhile, I posted a sentry over the kegs in our hold to make sure nobody else broached the stuff, and then I turned in.

"The weather held fair, which was unusual luck; but I didn't fully appreciate that till a couple of years later when I worked off Block Island again on a sunken sub and found the regular Fall weather out there just one gale after another. However, on this occasion, when the sun rose next day, what little breeze there was died down and the sea smoothed out, ideal for diving.

"Biff came aft to the dressing bench, and as his rig went on, I examined him minutely to see that he was all over his last jag and hadn't started a new one. I wasn't taking any more chances—diving is dangerous enough when you're in full possession of your senses. But I needn't have worried. Biff was a little pale but perfectly sober, so I let the dressers clap on his helmet and over he went.

"On that dive, things worked out better. In ten minutes, he'd sent up two kegs and he got four hoisted out altogether before he finally signaled to rise. That wasn't so bad; it left only two more of that dozen to get and we had the next man all ready except his helmet, to drop overboard when we'd hoisted Biff in.

"But when Biff's rig came off, I got the shock of my life. Biff was so drunk he couldn't stand!"

"You don't say!" muttered Graham.

"How could that happen?" asked McElroy, amazed.

"That's exactly what I wanted to know," replied Martin briefly. "A couple of seamen carried Biff below and meanwhile diving stopped right there. The tenders undressed the man they had ready to go overboard. My head was in a whirl; I could have sworn Biff was sober when he went down, and I knew it was impossible for him to have taken a drink on the bottom; and yet there he was, absolutely soused. If such things could happen down on the *Sarah Thompson*, I didn't dare to let another diver get a chance at all that hooch."

"Well, well," mumbled Pollock. "In a diving suit, too. Now once when I was managing Harry Houdini, who could get out of anything, we were playing Brooklyn, and some sailors from the Navy Yard put Harry in a diving suit and for once his act was a flop. He couldn't get out!"

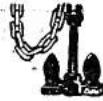
Lieutenant Martin nodded.

"Yes, I heard about that. But to get back to the *Osprey*, to say I was puzzled was putting it mildly. Once in a diving suit under water, you can't even scratch your nose, let alone take a drink. But nevertheless, you couldn't get around it. There we were with Biff Evans drunk, and every gob on the ship watching him enviously as he snored in his bunk."

"I'll bet you had lots of volunteer divers after that," chuckled McElroy, looking at Graham knowingly.

"I would have had if they could

have figured it out," agreed Martin, "but they couldn't understand it any more'n I could. As for me, it was serious if the word ever got round as to how he got tanked up down there. Biff Evans might navigate soused at the bottom of the ocean, but the other boys—they were lucky to keep alive down there when they were sober.



"SO THERE we lay, doing nothing; the *Osprey* heaved to the ocean swells while Biff peacefully slept it off, and all hands racked their brains—not all of 'em for the same reasons, either.

"Next morning, instead of diving, the jimmylegs hauled Biff up to the mast and stood him up there, still a little wobbly.

"Biff," I said, "you're charged with getting drunk on duty. I'll have to give you a summary court-martial when we get back to New London. Meanwhile you're under arrest. Got anything to say for yourself?"

"Suits me, Cap'n," he answered, and started for the ladder going below.

"Not so fast, Biff," I called. "Come back here! How'd you drink that liquor?"

"The master-at-arms grabbed him, jerked him back. Biff leaned against the mast for support, looking uneasily from me to the jimmylegs, and then sideways at his shipmates who were clustered in a knot in the port wing of the bridge, with their ears pinned back, listening eagerly.

"Sorry, Cap'n, but I can't tell you," he answered at last. "Some o' these other lads might get in trouble if they knew how."

"And from that decision I couldn't budge him. I threatened to disrate him to ordinary seaman, to put him in irons, finally to see that the court-martial gave him a long stretch in Portsmouth prison. But nothing moved him, he just clung to the mast and shook his head at each threat.

"At last I grew desperate. I had to

have the explanation, and I took another tack.

"See here, Biff," I offered, "if you tell me how you did it, I won't punish you at all—no court, no disrating, no nothing. And you might as well come across; if you don't, we'll up anchor and neither you nor anybody else will dive again on this job!"

"Biff let that sink in awhile, then gave up.

"All right, Cap'n, that's a bargain." He shifted a bit to brace himself a little more securely against the mast, then gazed over the side at the waves awhile till he'd collected his wits.

"You see, Cap'n, it was like this. After I'd sent up them first two kegs, I knocked off lashing an' scouted round the *Sarah Thompson's* hold lookin' for what else she might have, but there didn't seem to be nothin' but kegs. Finally I run acrost one solitary case o' whisky; there musta been a lot onct but they'd sold it before she was sunk. Course the whisky wasn't no good with me in a divin' rig, so I shoved it under a tarpaulin layin' on the deck, figgerin' that before I made my next dive, I'd drop a husky fish line over our own stern, an' when I got down again, I'd lash the case to that so's when night come an' the coast was clear, I could haul her up on deck an' stow it in my bunk, sorta as a protection in case I got the bends from divin'. Y'know, you sure need relief quick then, Cap'n." Biff eyed me gravely.

"Yes, Biff, I know all about that."

"You're right, Cap'n, the bends is terrible an' us divers oughta be prepared. Where was I? Oh, yes, I'd just hid that case o' whisky. Well, I stumbled round her deck, the air whistlin' through my helmet an' me lookin' at that bulge under the tarpaulin an' feelin' worse'n worse all the time. The pressure down there sure has a queer effect on a man. Biff, I says to myself, wot d'ye get outa all this divin' anyhow? You know a diver sorta gets used to talkin' to hisself on the bottom, down on a wreck

with nobody but a lotta stiff's maybe, to keep him company. A dollar an' twenty cents an hour, I answers myself, an' that's practically nothin'! You're right, Biff, I says, it ain't practically nothin'. Let's go scoutin' in the skipper's cabin up there an' see if maybe you can't find somethin' they left behind, the Old Man's watch'r his pocket-book maybe.

"So I lightens up my suit till I'm pretty buoyant an' in one jump I hops from the focsle to the bridge, an' then slides aft into the skipper's cabin. It was a small room, hardly six-by-eight, an' I had to duck my helmet mighty low to get through the door. Onct inside, I rummaged round the bunk, through the desk, in the locker, an' I didn't find nothin', just old clothes an' useless papers. Them hijackers'd certainly done a clean job on the skipper's valuables. I was fumblin' hopelessly in the desk agin, about ready to quit an' go back to lashin' up more kegs, when my helmet begins to feel mighty heavy on my shoulders.

"That's queer, I sez to myself, I ain't been down an hour yet, an' here the pressure's gettin' me already.

"I stood there a minute'r two, figgerin' out how long have I been down, an' all the time my helmet keeps gettin' heavier an' heavier an' the breastplate starts to cut into my shoulders.

"This is sure funny, I thinks. Nothin' like this has ever happened to me before. An' I puts my hand up to my helmet to see wot's ailin' it.

"Well, Cap'n, the minute I raises my hand, I was scared stiff. My hand wasn't in water at all; it was in air! An' that's wot's ailin' my helmet—it was in air too, an' without no water to buoy it up any more, the whole weight had settled on my shoulders. For a minute I was sure scared, wonderin' wot's happened to the water. Then it comes to me wot's goin' on. The air exhaustin' from my helmet floated up, nacherly, but since the deck overhead was watertight an' the

door was a coupla feet lower'n the ceiling, it couldn't get out no way an' started to fill the top o' the cabin. An' as the cabin was small; it didn't take long for the whole upper part to fill with air, meanwhile forcin' the water out the door till the air got down level with the top o' the door, when it started to blow out that way too an' the water didn't go no lower. An' there I was, with water up to my neck, but my helmet in the air.'

"Biff sighed at the recollection, his gaze wandered regretfully over the rail into the sea where the grappling line led down through the ocean depths to the *Sarah Thompson*.

"Well, Cap'n, that gave me an idea. I ducked out that cabin door, jumped down on deck, snaked that case o' whisky out from under the tarpaulin, heaved it up to the skipper's cabin, waited a minute till the air from

my exhaust blew the water down to the door level agin, then I set one o' them bottles on a shelf above the water-line, unscrewed the face plate on my helmet, knocked the top o' the bottle off against the bulkhead, shoved the neck through the open face plate, drank damn near the whole quart, screwed back my face plate—an' staggered back to the surface!"

Lieutenant Martin ceased talking, tossed away the dead stump of his cigar, looked challengingly at Mr. Graham.

"Well, how about my theory now?" he asked.

Mr. Augustus Graham, speechless for once, rose abruptly, departed without a word, while McElroy, chortling with glee, fumbled for his flask.

"I always admired them divers," said Pollock, holding out his glass.

"Here's to 'em!" echoed McElroy.

A Chinese Hunting Ground

By WYMAN SIDNEY SMITH

THE strangest hunting ground for small game to be found anywhere in the world is probably the countryside outside the ancient walls of Nanking, China, where thousands of grave mounds dot the slopes of the hills, and a great Drum Tower, described over six centuries ago by Marco Polo, dominates the horizon. Rabbits, ducks and pheasant may all be obtained in a day's shoot and the chances are even of bagging a hog-deer, or a wild boar.

Our hunting party left in two open carriages for the two-mile ride through the city streets in early morning, while the beat of the silk weaving looms came from courtyards and tea houses were preparing

for the day's business. Six centuries ago on such a morning the imperial astronomers were consulting the wind, rain, snow and thunder gods for the Emperor of China; but now the massive walls of the city stand solitary and aloof as we pass through them by a great swinging gate and look upward to their tops seventy feet overhead.

A few hundred feet beyond the city walls we pay the carriage driver, take out our guns, and hire a coolie to carry our lunch basket to a spot four miles distant which we expect to reach by noon.

Then we walk down the wall to one of the old moats where a flock of mallards