

ing on the Valley Road had determined to "fix" him. But he chose a flimsy weapon when he resorted to vile vituperation and ugly oaths. He put into his venomous objurgations every suggestion which hatred could conjure.

Edgar Bruce merely said, "Common rot!" when a story of Polton's latest cure was retold for his benefit. Other dissenters there were also but none so virulent as Bowers. Bruce could laugh it off, but Bowers—well Bowers knew of a better cook than Polton for Camp III.

And Bruce saw a day when even Polton's "magic" could not cause him to laugh. Bruce was stricken. Everybody had a name for the malady, but Bruce in writing to town for the usual cure drew rein at the term in common use and laboriously inserted one from pharmacopeial parlance—which sounded worse. He waited until worn of patience for this stuff to come but the nights of wakefulness played havoc with his nerves and Edgar Bruce was willing to resort to any means of freeing himself of the constant itching sensation. At last he gave in. Polton could cure any ailment ever brought before him—why not the one which no camp is seldom free from? He lounged round the cook-house all of one afternoon until Polton could stand his shifting no longer.

"What is it, Bruce?" he inquired, taking Bruce by so sudden an attack that he was non-plussed.

"I may as well confess," replied Bruce, shyly, "that I was beginning to believe there is something in that 'clockcraft' of yours. The niggers have held you up as a god and have been worshipping Time since you got them staring at that tin timepiece you have. Do you think you could cure the—the——"

Polton relieved him, "I can cure anything, Edgar," he said. "Every cure I make only adds to the mysterious power I——"

Polton's deep grey eyes were fixed on Bruce.

God, I believe you can, Polton—not by the clock,—Heavens! what eyes you have—what are you doing with me?"

"I am curing you," said Polton, maintaining the slow, measured manner of

speaking he usually employed in getting a patient's attention. "You will sleep soundly tonight and waken in the morning without any recollection of the itching you claim to have had."

A fakir might have used the same language. But even a fakir can be a benefactor and whether disease is driven out by vegetable concoctions or mental medicine it matters not—the result is the same.

Next morning Edgar Bruce went jauntily to his office and was in a hilariously good mood when Bowers came in.

"Good morning, Bowers; you look like a battlefield this morning. What's the war?"

"You feel funny this morning, it seems," jeered Bowers.

"Not so funny as you look," laughed Bruce. "What are you wriggling about?"

"You know cursed well what about. How is it you ain't wigglin'?"

Bruce became suddenly aware of his freedom from the habit of the past three weeks which had brought more mirth than sympathy from the white element of the camp.

"Oh, I see," he laughed. "It's got *you*, has it?"

"No, it ain't *got* me; it's been witched into me by that pagan cook you have been worshipping lately. Darn his skin! When I heerd he wuz treatin' you fer monkey-complaint, I hopes good an' hard that he ketches it hisself. But he aint got the ketchin' natur and I guess I hev."

Bruce was checking over some articles tooted into camp the previous night while Bowers gave this lucid account of his inoculation.

"What luck!" he irrelevantly exclaimed.

"Luck! Air yu crazy? I aint no believer in yer luck."

"You will admit, however, that this stuff came along in time to be useful." He held up a package bearing the doctor's totem. "Take it—it may do what 'luck' could never do."

Bowers grabbed it feverishly, read the directions and was off at a pace he seldom made, to try the medicine.

It was a dead failure! For the next