

door, prepared to make his most ingratiating speech when it should be opened to him, but it did not open. He knocked a second and a third time, but the only answer vouchsafed him was the ghostly echo of his knock. His somewhat pompous, conventional manner slid from him, and he became just a hungry man, in search of food. He lifted the latch with some hesitation and went in. He saw a measure of potatoes upon a long table, and after some rummaging he found a slab of bacon, and some tea and coffee. He arranged his booty beside the potatoes, but no gustatory consolation could ensue without a fire.

Quite elated he gathered dry sticks and litter and made an admirable heap ready for ignition by means of a match. Mr. James drew forth his silver match case with dignity, only to find it empty. He began a search in his pockets, his dignity still intact, but before the hunt ended, his dignity was somewhat dishevelled. As he turned his last pocket inside out, and found not even the stub of a match but plenty of loose coin, he flung the latter from him with something that in a less dignified man might have been termed petulance.

Mr. James began a methodical search in the shanty for matches, but found none. He discovered some tin cans as empty, as was he himself, these suggested that similar cans full of substance might be forthcoming. With his dignity somewhat readjusted he began searching for the life-saving tin can. Having looked everywhere save in a dark cupboard that seemed filled with blackened pots and pans, he finally got down on his hands and knees to peer into the most remote recesses of the cupboard. A row of cans rewarded this effort. He took a can and slit into it with his knife, but the blade sank into a corrosive white dust that rose and smote him in the eyes and nostrils, and wherever a particle lodged it burned like fire. He felt the need of air, and sought the open. After his eyes had partially ceased smarting he again ventured into the shanty. Very gingerly he lifted the can of corrosive dust, and looked at the label.

"Concentrated lye," was the legend he read, and with due respect and much care he put the can back in the cupboard.

Several round, short cans appealed to him, they looked as though they might hold devilled meat of some kind, but upon opening one the odor that rushed out seemed the acme of all mal-odors. He looked at the label.

"Chloride of Lime," he read, and with no abatement of care he placed this can back in its place. Mr. James left the shanty with one last, longing look at the potatoes and bacon.

For a time the gentleman chewed the bitter quid of reflection, as he sat disconsolately upon a rough brown stone. This yielding no great satisfaction he rose and began a tour of investigation. He had never seen very much of his island, but Mr. James was no great lover of beauty and he felt a certain sense of aggrievement that Harold was not with him. He remembered the enthusiasm with which that young man had advocated the purchase of this identical piece of property. He felt rather bitter that a frivolous girl should have brought about the present state of semi-alienation from his son, his son who had been as wholly his own as any other piece of his property had been. His dignity and pomposity dropped from him like a cloak, and he was nothing but a lonely old man at the mercy of a cruel Fate. He was walking rapidly to keep up with the pace of his thoughts when his foot caught in a trailing vine and the inevitable thing happened, his feet went up and his head went down, and his whole rotund body fell spraddling to the ground. As he sat up to investigate, he discovered a trailing vine attached to the toe of one of his patent leathers, and the vine was thickly spread with small red berries. The sight of those berries had a wonderfully modifying effect upon his irritation, they took him back to his boyhood days, when he had tramped the woods for just such edibles as these.

"Some people are born with checker berries, some achieve checker berries, and some have checker berries thrust upon them!" Mr. James was becoming facetious with the prospect of a checker berry festival before him.

With no undue haste he began picking the delectable berries, and when he had gathered a reasonable quantity he sat

down in a dignified and orderly manner and began eating the fruit of his labors. Anticipation, however, had proved greater than realization.

"Mumm!" he grumbled, his placidity very much rumpled, "Mumm! I'd as soon eat the pith of an elderberry stalk!" with this he threw his hoard of berries away, but they had carried him back to boyhood.

"I wonder if there are not some ground nuts to be found, they used to taste good when I was a boy," and Mr. James began searching for the small edible nut that grows in the ground like a diminutive potato. He had forgotten how the leaves looked so he began pulling up the green-growing things and finally brought forth a bunch of roots from which he extracted a small bulb. He peeled it and put it in his mouth. It was not satisfactory as a gustatory delight, and he spat upon the ground but he could not rid himself of that abhorrent taste upon his tongue.

"It must have been a wild onion!" he averred as though he had been analyzing a botanical specimen.

Mr. James being a man not easily deviated from his purpose continued his search for the edible nut, which should satisfy his craving for food. After much devastation of woods vegetation he at last brought up what he had been seeking. He knew at once that at last he had found the

real ground nut. Yes, by the very way the skin peeled off he recognized the edible of his boyhood. But again disappointment chilled his joy.

"Gritty as a sand bed and tasteless as a raw potato," came the verdict, as Mr. James wiped his mouth, with his handkerchief. He stood in deep thought for a few moments, racking his mind for some forgotten thing, "Crinkle root!" he ejaculated with delight, "That I know has a taste, a very decided, but very pungent taste." A very pleasant expression dispersed itself over Mr. James' round face, and he rubbed his head where a few hairs were combed over a shining bare surface.

"Crinkle root," he muttered meditatively, "crinkle root, big leaves straggling along—" he described, "Ah!" he pulled up a handful of leaves, shiny and waxen and certainly not large, their roots were as yellow as gold, and very bitter. Mr. James made no remark, but the corners of his mouth were drawn down as though the bitterness had touched a spring and let loose a spirit of pessimism. Mr. James continued his walk, but, however, high his thoughts may have been, his eyes were bent upon the ground, searching for the big, straggling leaves of the desired object. He did not pull heterogeneous vegetation.

"Ah!" exclaimed the millionaire with

satisfaction, "This is more like it," and he bent and pulled carefully upon a clump of deeply notched leaves, and he held within his grasp his heart's desire, "This is something like," he approved.

Mr. James gathered a lapful of roots, seated himself most comfortable and began feasting upon the pungent edible. He had eaten a handful of the roots before he realized how very pungent they were. He stopped chewing a moment. How hot his mouth was!

"Damnation!" he whispered, for even in this wildwood Mr. James would maintain a semblance of himself and his dignity. He pushed the remainder of the roots away, and like one beaten in a race he accepted his defeat, and sat quiescent.

A ball of fire began to burn in his interior; the ball seemed to emit Hadeistic flames that bored through his digestive apparatus like hot gimlets. Mr. James was in agony. He held his somewhat adipose diaphragm with both arms, but he found no relief. He rose and paced the sward but still the gripping, burning, twisting ache within. Mr. James was wholly unaccustomed to pain, he had had no Spartan training, and many people spent a good share of their time ordinarily in seeking to make him comfortable, but in his extremity when he needed a little care he was alone and unaided. The sweat of distress stood upon his forehead

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