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Mr. Packlepoose told her the story.

# JUST THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED

BY

EDMUND VANCE COOKE

Author of

"The Story Club," "Told to the Little Tot," etc.



NEW YORK

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230 East Twenty-third Street



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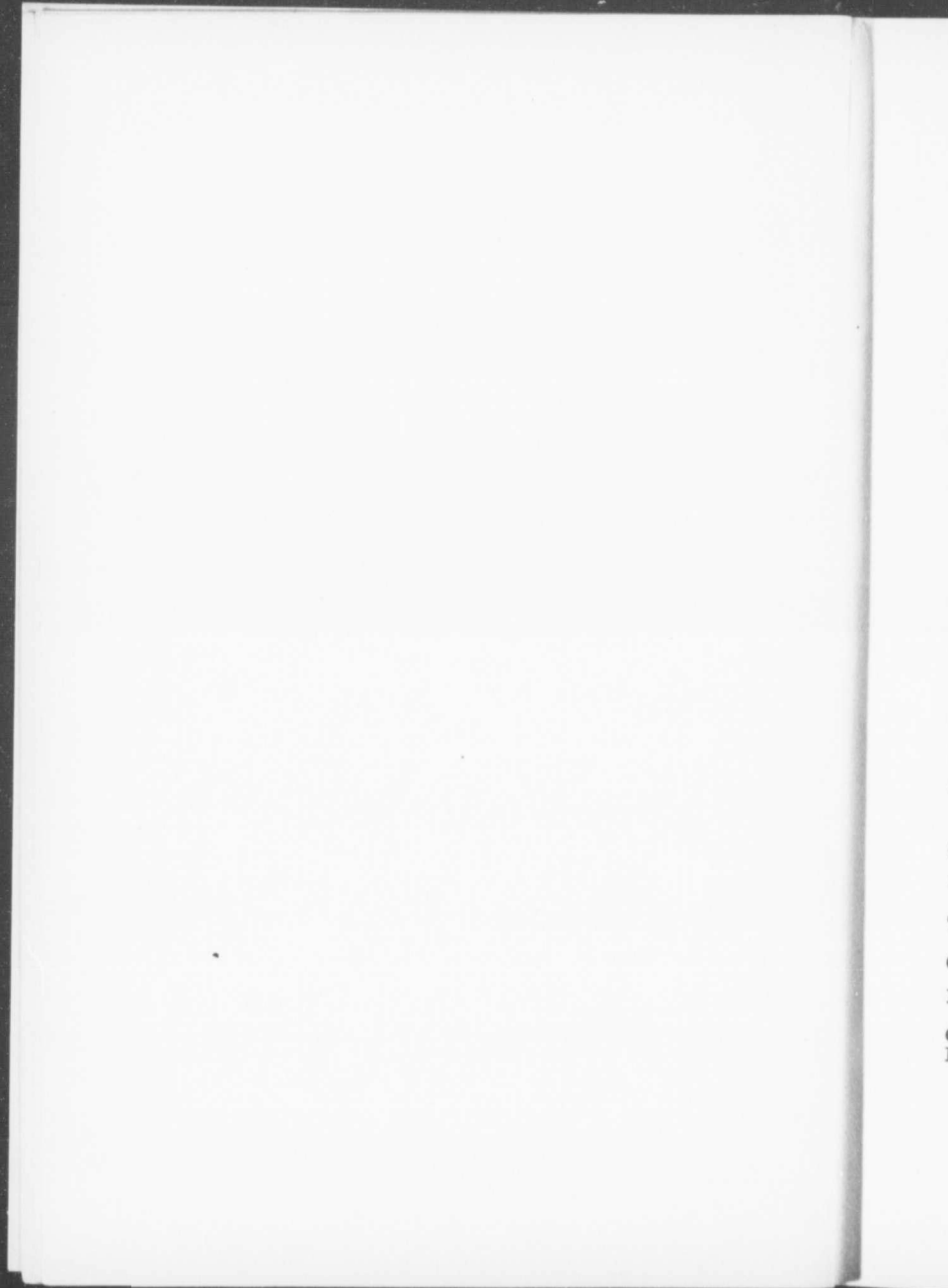
*[Just Then Something Happened]*

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TO

Dody, Teeny, Paudy, and Sonshine,  
whose demand for "more stories" brought these adventures out of the Nowhere into the Here, this bookful is lovingly dedicated by their paternal chum.

877347





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# JUST THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED

## I

WHY DO SOME THINGS HAPPEN AND OTHER THINGS NOT HAPPEN? BUMPYBAMBOONEY, THE PORCH-LIGHT AND THE PRINCE. OH, DID YOU NEVER KNOW THAT THERE WERE LIONS IN LAKE ERIE?

**J**UST then something happened. I just want to mention in the beginning that there are a good many things which *happen*. A good many things happen, of which you and I never hear, and a good many things which don't happen we read about in the newspapers.

I don't pretend to know why some things happen and other things do not happen, but everybody knows it is so. The trouble is that people are such poor judges of the

## JUST THEN

things which do, or do not, happen. Now, you probably never knew that there were lions in Lake Erie. I'm not surprised at that. I never knew it either. But, as you can see for yourself, the question is not "Did you know it?" or "Did I know it?" but the question is "How did it happen?"

Mr. Packlepoose was hurrying home to see Bumpybambooney, and it happened. Of course Mr. Packlepoose wasn't his real name. That was just Bumpybambooney's pet name for her papa. And of course Bumpybambooney wasn't *her* real name. That was just Mr. Packlepoose's pet name for his little girl.

Of course he was very fond of Bumpybambooney and Bumpybambooney was very fond of him. You can tell that from the names. So he was hurrying home to supper and to Bumpybambooney, and that's how it happened. That's how he happened to be chased by the wolves and how the lions happened to get into Lake Erie.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

It was getting dusk and Bumpybambooney was waiting for him with her nose pressed against the glass. Every once in a while she would run and snap the porch-light on, and off, and then on again, so that her papa could see it if he were coming. She often played this way, pretending that she was a princess in a lonely castle (a "beleaguered castle" she called it when she didn't forget the long word), and that her papa was a prince coming to rescue her. When she snapped the light on, that was a signal that the good fairy of Light was fighting with the Darkness demon and the Prince was to come. Or sometimes she pretended the porch-light was the fierce eye of the one-eyed dragon and then she snapped the light off as a signal that he was asleep.

But this evening she found it was a little too early for a light and so she snapped it off and resumed her station at the window. She could see the corner where the street-cars stopped and she could see the end of

## JUST THEN

the road which led from the Park, for their house was only a short way from the Park where the Zoo was.

Remember, I said where the Zoo *was*, for they were just about to move the Zoo from the Park in the East End away over to Riverside Park at the other end of the town. Bumpybambooney was sorry for this, for she liked to go over to see the big awkward grizzly bear and the floppity ostrich and the moose that made the funny noise like a horn blowing up and down the scale, and the gray foxes and their cousins the coyotes and the camel that reminded her of a gigantic walking peanut with a head to it, and the nervous lions always walking to and fro and the funny monkeys who looked at her as if they wanted to talk to her, if they only dared.

She knew she was going to miss the Zoo, for even when she didn't go near it she knew it was there because she heard the coyotes yelping every night about bed-time and she liked the strange half-afraid feeling it gave

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

her and the little shiver that ran up and down her back-bone. She could play a good many games with herself when the coyotes howled. She could be Davy Crockett with the wolves snuffing at the crack under the door. She could be a traveler in a tree,—oh, a very little tree!—so little that it bent beneath her weight and the wolves could almost reach her toes as they leaped into the air and snapped at them; ouch!

But now it was all over. Why, this was the very last day of the Zoo in the old Park. She knew they were to move it that very night or the next morning. Had she not been over that very day to see some of the animals turned out of their dens into the wagon-cages which were to carry them to Riverside? She had stayed until the skies turned cloudy and then she had come home to escape the storm, and to wait for her papa and supper. Or dinner. Sometimes it was supper, sometimes dinner. Anyway, it was good to eat.

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My! but it was beginning to rain hard and to blow. She could see the tent at the corner flapping in the wind. Oh, didn't I tell you about the tent at the corner? It really wasn't a tent at all, but it was a piece of canvas on a frame and shaped like a tent. You see there was a man-hole at the corner leading down into the big new sewer and every few days some men came and took off the big, round, iron cover (like a huge stove-lid) and went down to do something to the sewer. While they were working, with the cover off, they put the tent over the hole, so nobody would fall into it, I suppose. Bumpybambooney used to watch for the coming of the "little tent," and she played a game with that, too. Usually she was an Indian and the sewer men were Indians of another tribe and the "little tent" was their wigwam. And she would have a war-dance with herself and then dress up in a bath-robe and feather-duster and pretend to shoot arrows and to hurl tomahawks at the wigwam and, when

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the sewer-men were through work and took the little tent away, she would pretend she had won a great victory and had driven the enemy off. Then she would hold a sun-dance and would get her bubble-pipe and pretend to smoke the pipe of peace. She was half playing to-day that the wind was her friend and the slanting rain was the arrows which were shooting from the skies against her enemies. But they would be shooting at her papa, the prince, too, so her games didn't mix very well.

Now there came a heavy gust of wind and a perfect sheet of rain, just in time to catch the men who were coming out of the man-hole. They ran to the shelter of a tree leaving the little tent standing there; but it didn't stand very long, for another gust of wind lifted it and blew it up the street lickety-skelter. The men started to run after it. No doubt they should have stopped to put the lid back on the man-hole, but it was raining so hard that they thought no one

## JUST THEN

was on the street, everybody having sought shelter.

Just then something happened.

Bumpybambooney saw it clearly, even though it was growing dark. Down the road which led from the Park a man came running. He wasn't running with his head down and with the easy swing of one who was trying to escape the rain, but he was running with his head forward, his face up and his hands almost reaching out, like a man running for his life. Bumpybambooney had never seen a man running for his life before, but she knew, as if by instinct, that something was wrong with the man, and she gave a sharp scream, for the man was her papa. The next moment the scream rose to a cry of terror, for back of her papa she saw a pack of coyotes, two lions and a grizzly bear all strung along in a row.

She guessed in a second what had happened. Her papa had been hurrying home by the short cut through the Park and the







He was running like a man running for his life.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

wind storm had overturned the wagon-cages, which were not nearly so strong as the regular ones. The cages had broken and the animals were out and chasing her papa!

Bumpybambooney ran to the door and pulled it open, flashing on the light. She knew her papa was a good runner and if he could only reach the porch, run into the open door and slam it shut, he would be safe. It seemed to her she was only a second running to the door, but when she opened it and looked out, her papa was nowhere to be seen.

For a moment or two she thought perhaps he had run in somewhere, but then she saw the hind-quarters of the grizzly bear disappearing down the man-hole and she knew that her papa had fallen down into the sewer and the animals had gone down after him.

Can you think of anything worse than that? He couldn't get back through the man-hole, because the coyotes and the lions and the big bear were behind him. There

## JUST THEN

was nothing to do but to go ahead through the rushing water. And the sewer ran into the lake! There was one lucky thing, however, for Mr. Packlepoose, and that was that the animals were so close behind him. They would most certainly have caught him if he had not fallen into the sewer, and when the coyotes fell in after him, they landed in a heap at the bottom; but he was up and splashing along the great, round, high tube toward the lake.

The coyotes snapped and snarled among themselves and then the lions landed on top of them. The lions made short work of the coyotes but, while they were fighting, Mr. Packlepoose got quite a start. As for the grizzly bear, he was so big and the dead coyotes clogged the bottom of the man-hole so much that he couldn't get through at all, but just stuck there with his head in the water and drowned. This also helped Mr. Packlepoose another way, for the dead coyotes and bear held part of the water back,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

so that they lessened the quantity in the sewer. The water rose in the man-hole as if in a well and soon overflowed the street, so that when the men came back with the tent they found the street turned into a river, with a bear's hind-quarters as an island in the middle. As for poor Bumpybambooney she was crying her eyes out, for she felt sure her papa was drowned and eaten by the animals.

Meanwhile, Mr. Packlepoose was wading, slipping, sliding, gasping and swimming in the big drain. The lions were growling and getting after him as fast as they could. Mr. Packlepoose did not expect to get out alive, but he was going to keep fighting as long as he could, for that is the brave way always. Foot by foot he made his way and the lions were after him. Yard by yard he went and the lions followed behind. Rod by rod he struggled and the lions struggled, too. Furlong by furlong, even, for it was a long way to the lake.

The nearer he got to the end the more

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

water there was and at last he was swept out of the waters of the sewer into the broad open of the lake. A little bit later the lions came out, too, and still after him. That's how it happened there were lions in Lake Erie.

The sewer opened into the lake right near a pier and the storm had stopped. On the pier were some men fishing, for it is said that fish bite well in the early evening after a storm. What was the amazement of the fishermen to see a man swimming in the lake, pursued by lions. As soon as they could regain their senses they shouted to Mr. Packlepoose and threw him a rope. He grabbed it and they pulled him out onto the pier. "That's the biggest haul I ever made," said one of the fishermen.

Nobody threw a rope to the lions and Mr. Packlepoose did not even wait to see what became of them, but, after thanking the fishermen, he hurried home to Bumpybam-booney.

## II

SAY, WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN YOU GO TO SLEEP?  
"GO AWAY!" SAID BUMPYBAMBOONEY AND  
THE TRAIN DIDN'T STOP AT GOSHEN BECAUSE  
THE WIND BLEW BACKWARD

WHEN Bumpybambooney got ready for bed that night, she was very happy. She laid her clothes on the foot of her little white bed (though she usually managed to kick them onto the floor before morning), and she put her shoes on the dresser, because she didn't remember that she should have put them in the shoe-bag in the closet. She ran up and down on the bed a few times, for she quite forgot that her mama had told her it would ruin the springs, and she tried to see how far she could jump from the bed without falling over when the rug slipped on the polished floor.

## JUST THEN

But after a while she snuggled down in bed and demanded a story. Then she got up to get a drink and then she got up to take off her hair-ribbons and then she got up to brush her teeth and then she remembered that she had left Mehitable Ann standing on her head in the corner while they had been playing circus in the afternoon. As no well-bred, self-respecting doll can sleep in comfort while standing on her head, Bumpybambooney got up again to put her in her trunk, where, safely on the bottom and with plenty of clothes piled to the top, she no doubt slept very comfortably indeed.

Then Bumpybambooney got into bed again and said she would go to sleep if her papa would tell her a story; so Mr. Packlepoose told her the story of Little Philly Phillips of Philadelphia.

By the time the story was finished, Bumpybambooney was fast asleep. Little did she dream, if she dreamed at all, that the next morning she would tell her papa to "Go



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

away!" Where do you suppose children go when they go to sleep? Some people say they do not go any place, but, if so, why aren't they always the same when they wake up as when they go to sleep?

Sometimes you are tired and cross when you go to sleep and you wake up laughing. Sometimes you are good-humored when you go to sleep and you wake up cross. Now, if you haven't been anywhere, or done anything, or seen anyone, why shouldn't you be exactly the same when you awake as when you go to sleep?

Bumpybambooney was very sleepy the next morning when her papa kissed her and told her it was time to get dressed for breakfast and for school. The little girl hunched up on her hands and knees and tried to open her eyes. It was a bleak and cloudy morning and that didn't make her feel any better, so she flopped over and let her eyes go shut again. "Come, Bumpybambooney," said Mr. Packlepoose, turning down the clothes

## JUST THEN

for the cool morning air to strike her. The little girl curled up into a ball and said: "Go 'way, papa, go 'way!"

Mr. Packlepoose laughed at her and after a while he succeeded in getting her out of bed, but she didn't feel a bit good and it took her the longest time to get her clothes on. When it came to washing she just dipped her fingers in the basin and rubbed a little ring around her nose and said she was done.

So her papa took a wash-rag and wet it good and put soap on it and washed his little girl's face and neck and ears. "Go 'way!" screamed the little girl, "the soap's running through my ears into my eyes! Go 'way!"

"All right," said her papa, as he kept on washing her, "I'll go away this very day. Then you'll be sorry."

"I *shan't* be sorry. Go 'way!" cried Bumpybambooney.

Mr. Packlepoose was very quiet for the rest of the early morning. As soon as breakfast was finished, his little girl came around

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the table and kissed him and her mama, and started to school. Mr. Packlepoose called her back and kissed her again, saw that she had her rubbers and her umbrella, and said: "Good-by."

When she came home at noon, he was nowhere to be seen. "Where's papa?" she asked.

"You told him to go away," answered her mama.

"But I didn't honest truly mean it," said the little girl, in dismay.

"But he's gone," answered her mama.

If Bumpybambooney had known where her papa was at that moment she would have been frightened, for, as I figure it, it was just about the time the Big Wind blew backward. After Bumpybambooney had gone to school, Mr. Packlepoose had kissed Mrs. Hockamaboury good-by and had hurried down to the Union Station. "Who's Mrs. Hockamaboury?" did you ask? She was Bumpybambooney's mother and that was the

## JUST THEN

funny name the little girl had given her. Of course she should have been called Mrs. Packlepoose, or else Mr. Packlepoose should have been Mr. Hockamaboury, but Bumpy-bambooney never thought of that.

There was a train standing in the station all ready to go. The whistle blew and the bell rang and this is what they said:—

“ Whoot, toot! ding, dong!  
If you're coming with us, come right  
along.  
Ding, dong! whoot, toot!  
If you're coming with us, you'd bet-  
ter scoot.”

So Mr. Packlepoose climbed aboard and I think he had bought a ticket only as far as Goshen, intending to come back the next day. To be sure, I never saw the ticket, because a gray-faced man with spectacles and gold braid came around pretty soon, saying,

“ Tickets, tickets! a red one, a blue one;  
Give me an old one, I'll give you a new  
one.”

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Mr. Packlepoose gave up his ticket and the wheels ran along the rails singing merrily:—

“ Lickety click, lickety, click,  
Here's a boy as bad as Nick;  
Lickety, click, here's a stick;  
Hit him a lick and hit him quick.”

I have no idea what boy was meant, unless it was the boy who got on at Toledo. He had light red hair, so light that it looked almost pink, and his face was so freckled that it was almost like a buckwheat cake. He had little, round, blue eyes, a wide, flat nose, which seemed to be trying to see how close it could cuddle down to his face, and when he grinned it showed where his teeth were out.

He grinned at Mr. Packlepoose and Mr. Packlepoose smiled at him. Then he sat down by the side of Mr. Packlepoose, swinging his feet and looking straight ahead. Once in a while he would half turn and grin at Mr. Packlepoose, but would look away again very quickly if he thought Mr. Packlepoose

## JUST THEN

was watching him. At last he said, "My name's Sonnybud and I like popcorn."

Mr. Packlepoose answered, "They call me Mr. Packlepoose and I don't like ants in the marmalade."

Just then the train-boy came through and called:—

"Chocolate's bitter and sugar is sweet;  
Mix 'em together, they're easy to eat.  
Lemon drops, caramels, don't let 'em spoil!  
You'll like 'em better than cod liver oil."

"If I had some money, I'd buy you some chocolates," said Sonnybud.

"I'll lend you a dime," said Mr. Packlepoose, so Sonnybud bought the chocolates, but forgot to give Mr. Packlepoose any.

After a while the brakeman stuck his head in at the door and called:—

"Goshen! Goshen!  
Everybody out for Goshen.  
Don't leave your wraps,  
Don't forget your traps,  
And don't fall in the ocean."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Now as there was nothing but dry land in sight, this seemed rather silly, and yet it proved to be not so silly after all, for just then something happened.

The day had been getting darker all the time and a great dark-violet cloud had appeared in the West. It grew larger and larger and spread over the whole sky, and out of that cloud came a big wind. "Whir-r-r-z-z-z-z-z-z!" blew the wind and everything loose leaped up before it as if trying to get out of the way.

Maybe it was the same wind which had been blowing the night before, only I think that wind was blowing Westward and I am almost sure this one was blowing Eastward. Maybe it was the same wind coming back. Yes, that's it, most likely. It had been in such a hurry the day before and now it was in a greater hurry to get back, for it was blowing and going faster than it had before.

As the train-man called "Goshen!" and the engine had called "Whoot toot!" and

## JUST THEN

the engine-man had pulled the lever to stop the train, you would naturally have expected the train to stop. It did stop, too, but hardly for a second, for just as Mr. Packlepoose and Sonnybud got up to get out, they found that the train was going faster than ever, but going the wrong way. You see the wind had caught it and was blowing it along the rails in spite of all the engine-man could do. Stronger and harder blew the wind and faster and faster the train went, faster than it ever had before, or ever will again, I dare say. It passed stations as if they had been mile-posts and all the while poor little Bumpy-bambooney was at home wishing that she had never told her papa to go away. Little did she know how fast he was going away. And he kept on going, until the train came to New York.

Of course it couldn't go any further than that, for that's the end of the line. And what do you think? The gray-faced man with the glittering glasses and the gilt braid tried to



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

make Mr. Packlepoose pay his fare from Goshen to New York, but Mr. Packlepoose said that he was going to spend his money to pay his fare back to Bumpybambooney.

And Bumpybambooney was at home, so sorry she had told her papa to "Go 'way!"

### III

WELL, WELL! A BIG BLUE ACORN TRIES TO CATCH MR. PACKLEPOOSE. HIDE-AND-SEEK IN A HOTEL. IF YOU RUN ALONG THE HOUSE-TOPS OF NEW YORK AT NIGHT, SOMEONE MAY INVITE YOU DOWN THE SCUTTLE-HOLE

OF course it was dark by the time the train reached the Grand Central, so Mr. Packlepoose took charge of little Sonnybud as he got off the train.

He found that the next train West started from Jersey City and as he had never been in New York before and wanted to go across the river anyway, he asked a big policeman what was the best way to get to the ferry and to see a little bit of the city at the same time. The big policeman had a head like an acorn turned upside down. His helmet looked like the point of the acorn, only it was blue. His face looked blue,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

too, because of the net-work of purple veins running through it, and it dropped straight down the sides and bulged over at the jaws and chin, like the cup of the acorn. He looked hard at Mr. Packlepoose and he looked hard at Sonnybud and then he said, "Yous kin go out on the street an' take a surface-car, or yous kin go up on the roof an' take the Illyvated, or yous kin go down cellar an' take the subway, but I t'ink yous had better take the patrol wagon."

"The patrol wagon!" said Mr. Packlepoose, smiling, for he thought the Blue Acorn was joking him.

"Yes, the hurry-up cart, for I'm t'inkin' yous is the kidnapper from Injianny."

"Oh, no," said Sonnybud, "this isn't a kidnapper. This is Mr. Packlepoose and we were blown away and he's going to put me on another train, so we can get home again."

"Oho!" said the Blue Acorn cunningly, "that's a likely story. Yous kin fool the kid all right, but yous can't fool me, *you*,

## JUST THEN

Mr. Packlepoose. Packlepoose! ho! ho! I'll bet ten dollars agin a brass nickel that's not yer name at all, at all."

"Of course it isn't my real name," said Mr. Packlepoose laughingly.

"What did I tell yous!" cried the acorn policeman. "That's the way wid all yous crooks. One honest name is niver enough for yous. I'll take charge of the kid an' it's him to go back to his payrints, but it's the hurry-up wagon for yous."

Nothing that could be said would convince the Blue Acorn that Mr. Packlepoose wasn't a kidnapper. Now, Mr. Packlepoose knew that Sonnybud would be in safe hands if left with the policeman and that his people would be notified and he would be sent home as fast as though he himself took him there, but he didn't want to be arrested himself. It isn't pleasant to ride through the streets in a patrol wagon, to be locked up all night and to be dragged into police court in the morning, no matter how innocent you are.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

But above all, he wanted to start back to Bumpybambooney and he wanted to start on the next train.

So Mr. Packlepoose decided to do what perhaps he ought not to have done. He stooped down and picked up Sonnybud and said to the Blue Acorn, "Well, here he is!" and thrust the boy into the policeman's arms. Perhaps you have noticed that when anyone thrusts something at you, you naturally take it, whether you want to or not, and that is just what the Blue Acorn did. As the policeman received the boy in his arms, Mr. Packlepoose turned and darted out of the door of the Station onto Forty-second Street. He had a perfect right to run out onto Forty-second Street, if he wanted to.

The Blue Acorn was so confused for a moment, he didn't know what to do. Then he yelled to one of the station ushers to "Mind the b'y," set Sonnybud down and ran after Mr. Packlepoose, yelling, "Stop the kidnapper!" at every jump.

## JUST THEN

He was fat and heavy and he couldn't run as fast as Mr. Packlepoose, who was across the street almost before the big policeman got started.

As I told you, Mr. Packlepoose had never been in New York, but he knew that if he wanted to get away it would never do to run along the street, for someone would stop him before he had gone a block; so he ran into the doors of the Grand Union hotel. As soon as he was inside, he stopped running, so as not to attract attention, but walked briskly to one of the elevators which was just going up. As the elevator door slammed shut and the car shot upward, the Blue Acorn came into the hotel door on Park Avenue, and another policeman with him. "Where did the kidnapper go?" demanded the Blue Acorn, staring around wildly.

It happened that the house detective had been sitting in the lobby of the hotel and had noticed Mr. Packlepoose's haste, but had thought nothing of it until he saw the

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He was fat and heavy and he couldn't run fast.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

policeman. Then he guessed that the man who had gone up in the elevator was the man wanted. He at once got all the bell-boys and porters he could find and they crowded into the next elevator after Mr. Packlepoose.

"What floor?" the elevator boy had asked of Mr. Packlepoose.

"Top," answered Mr. Packlepoose, thinking he might as well go as far as possible.

When he stepped out and the elevator had started down, so that he was alone, he hardly knew what to do next, but as he could hear shouts floating up the shaft, he knew they were after him, so he ran around the corner of the hall-way at once. You could hardly imagine a better place for a game of hide-and-seek than the hallways of the Grand Union. It is an old hotel and new parts have been added from time to time, so that the halls are full of unexpected turns and corners and pockets and steps up and down and around. Mr. Packlepoose could have

## JUST THEN

hidden there a long time and have kept the big policeman "it," but now that there were so many helpers, it was hardly a fair game. Besides Mr. Packlepoose didn't want to play a game, nor did he want to stay in the hotel. His idea was to go to another elevator, or to the stairway, and so get out of the hotel and on the way to the ferry and Bumpybambooney.

Pretty soon, however, there were policemen and detectives and bell-boys and porters chasing him and at last he was forced to run down a side hall, which had no other outlet. He could hear foot-steps coming both ways along the main hall, so he knew that he couldn't go back, and he also knew that if they looked down the side hall, where he was, he would be found. And if he were found, he was lost!

There was a room door at the end of the hall, with a red light over it. Of course that meant that this door led to a fire-escape, but Mr. Packlepoose did not like to open the

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

doors of the rooms because the people might be in them. And if they weren't in them the doors would be locked.

But the foot-steps were coming nearer and Mr. Packlepoose just had to do something. He tried the door with the red light over it and, to his great joy, it was unlocked. Just then a bell-boy appeared at the end of the hall and yelled, "There he is!"

Mr. Packlepoose jumped into the room, slammed the door and locked it. "Ow! ow!" shrieked Somebody, by which Mr. Packlepoose learned that Somebody was in the room, that Somebody had gone to bed and that Somebody was frightened. Mr. Packlepoose did not stop to see who Somebody was, but ran to the window and threw it open. The bell-boy and the Blue Acorn were pounding on the door. Mr. Packlepoose stepped out onto the fire-escape and closed the window. He had hoped that the fire-escape led all the way down to the ground and that he could get down unseen, but to his dismay

## JUST THEN

he saw that it only ran to a roof a little bit lower down. Once there, he would have to find another fire-escape and there were so many dark shadows and uneven places, he was sure the policemen would be on the roof after him before he had gone far and they would yell to someone on the street below to catch him as he dropped down.

As Mr. Packlepoose went down to the roof below, the Somebody in the bed got up and unlocked the door. Then she bounded back in bed and covered up her head. "Where's the kidnapper?" yelled the Blue Acorn bursting into the room.

"Out of the window," answered Somebody under the clothes.

Mr. Packlepoose ran along the roof and though he got something of a start, the policemen and the detective and the porters were not very far behind him. Two or three times, confused by the darkness, he nearly fell down into the court. Once he ran square up against a brick wall.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Now we've got him!" yelled the Blue Acorn.

But there was a ladder against the wall, which led to another roof. Mr. Packlepoose ran to the ladder and clambered up it in a jiffy, dropping down flat on the roof above.

As he reached the top the Blue Acorn and his followers reached the bottom. "Stop, thief!" yelled the Blue Acorn and in another minute he was nearly up the ladder and three or four of the others just behind him. Then Mr. Packlepoose jumped up and seized the top of the ladder and overturned it, dumping the lot of them in a heap at the bottom. Perhaps it was wrong, but they looked so funny that Mr. Packlepoose couldn't help laughing.

He now found himself on a stretch of almost level roofs, one adjoining the other, so that he ran on and on. But of course he could not get outside the block, for there was no way to get across the street. The Blue Acorn and his squad were not long delayed. They

## JUST THEN

at once replaced the ladder and followed Mr. Packlepoose.

He tried to dodge them by running in the shadows, where there were any, but they kept him in view and very soon they were close behind him again. There were no more ladders to run up or down, no doors to dodge into, and it seemed as if Mr. Packlepoose would surely be caught in another minute.

He dodged behind a chimney for a second's rest and just then something happened.

Of course you know that the people of New York must sometimes get up on top of their houses, if only to repair the roofs, and perhaps you know that on every flat roof of the old style of houses is an opening called a scuttle. As Mr. Packlepoose stepped behind the chimney, the lid of a scuttle was cautiously lifted and a woman's voice called softly, "Here you are! Quick! quick!"

Was Mr. Packlepoose surprised? Indeed he was. But he saw it was his only chance of escape and he squeezed down the scuttle

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

immediately and you may be sure he did not forget to hook it tightly behind him. A moment and he heard the heavy tread of the Blue Acorn and the patter-patter of the others pass over the roof. Presently there was a knocking at the scuttle and Mr. Packlepoose's heart sank, for he thought the Blue Acorn must have seen his escape. "Let me in!" came a hoarse voice through the scuttle. Mr. Packlepoose could hear it, because his head was close up under the scuttle, but the woman who had let him in had retreated somewhere.

Another minute and he heard the Blue Acorn and his crowd come tramping slowly back. The man on the outside of the scuttle heard them too and called "Let me in, I say. Let me in." Then Mr. Packlepoose heard the shout of the Blue Acorn, "There he is! there he is!"

There was a hurry of feet, a short struggle and a few cries and then all the foot-steps died away and there was silence.

## JUST THEN

Mr. Packlepoose felt his hand seized by the house-maid who had admitted him. "Shh!" she said, "come this way."

There was nothing else for him to do, so he went. As soon as the light fell on him, the woman gave a hushed scream. "Where's Bill?" she demanded.

"Unless I am greatly mistaken," said Mr. Packlepoose, "Bill is now in the hands of the police."

At first the woman seemed angry, then afraid. Then she looked at Mr. Packlepoose again and seemed rather pleased. "So he sent you in his place?" she said. "Well, you'll look better'n him. Of course you know all about the job?"

"Not a thing," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Well, if that ain't like Bill," said the house-maid scornfully. "And you ain't even lit up."

Mr. Packlepoose understood by this that she meant he did not have evening clothes on,



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

but he only said, "He didn't even tell me your name."

"Janet," said the house-maid. "Now listen. We'll have to hurry, 'cause you're late. Old Humphrey's girl, Miss Minnie, is gettin' married to-night. There's lots of people and lots of presents and some of 'em are small and worth takin'—the presents, I mean—diamonds and pearls and such truck. There's detectives to keep any of 'em from gettin' away. And you're a detective."

"I see," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"But you can't be a detective in a swell wedding in those clothes," said Janet. "Wait! I'll go get you a suit of young Mr. Humphrey's. It'll just about fit."

So saying she disappeared. Once more Mr. Packlepoose was in a position where he hardly knew what to do. He certainly wasn't going to steal Mr. Humphrey's clothes and yet, if he went downstairs among the guests in his everyday suit, he would be noticed at once. How could he explain his

## JUST THEN

presence in the house? If he told the truth, that Janet had admitted him, she would be discovered as a thief and he would be thought to be her partner in guilt. If he explained that he did not know Janet, but came through the roof to escape the police, that would make matters worse. He wished he were on the roof again, even if the Blue Acorn got him.

At last, he concluded that the best thing was to go ahead like an innocent man and let what would happen. So, without waiting for Janet's return, he walked calmly down the stairs. On the fourth floor he met no one. On the third were dressing-rooms with men and maids who glanced curiously at him, but he looked straight ahead and walked on. The second floor was crowded with guests and most of them were going in and out of the rooms where the gifts were displayed. Mr. Packlepoose glanced in and saw a couple of men lounging around, who did not seem to be quite like the others and who looked at the rest out of the sides of their eyes. "They're

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the detectives," thought Mr. Packlepoose and tried to look as much like them as possible.

As he was going down the fourth flight to the ground floor and was thinking that maybe he could get out of the front door, he was met by an elderly gentleman coming out of the supper room. He had an air of owning the place and he wore jeweled rings on his fingers, a heavy gold fob and two diamonds in his shirt front. He glanced sharply at Mr. Packlepoose's clothes and Mr. Packlepoose gave him a look out of the corner of his eye and a slight bow.

"You're the outside man?" said the jeweled gentleman.

"Mr. Humphrey, I believe," returned Mr. Packlepoose at a guess.

"Where have you been?" said Mr. Humphrey crossly. "Don't you know the bridal couple are to catch the Chicago Limited and you're to go in the auto which carries the gifts?"

Mr. Packlepoose took a deep breath, for

## JUST THEN

this was just what he wanted. "Shall I help bring them down?" he asked.

"They *are* down," said Mr. Humphrey sharply. "Of course they're only taking the smaller trinkets. The chauffeur is waiting for you."

Mr. Humphrey stepped to the door, where a large touring-car was standing. A policeman stood by to guard it, a maid sat within and the chauffeur was at the wheel. "Now, Foster," said Mr. Humphrey to the chauffeur, "don't mind the speed limit, but hurry. Jones," he said to the maid, "you scatter the trinkets around the state-room and make it look like home." Then he turned to Mr. Packlepoose and said, suddenly, "What were you doing upstairs?"

Luckily for Mr. Packlepoose, the car was just starting. He swung in and called back, "I was visiting Janet!" and left the indignant Mr. Humphrey standing there.

When the car reached the ferry, Mr. Packlepoose went to the telegraph office and sent

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

word to his wife and to Bumpybambooney, who was grieving at home because she had told her papa to go away.

“Just starting for home,” the telegram read. “Back to-morrow.”

## IV

DID YOU EVER SEE A SEA-MONSTER WITH ONE RED EYE, ONE GREEN EYE AND A NOSE WHICH POKES INTO FERRY-BOATS? THE BLUE ACORN FINDS MR. PACKLEPOOSE AND MR. PACKLEPOOSE JUMPS INTO THE AIR

**Y**OU may be sure Bumpybambooney and her mother were glad to get Mr. Packlepoose's telegram. They were also very much surprised to receive it from New York, for they thought he had gone the other way, as indeed he had.

They had not been at all worried, for, as I told you, they had not expected him back till the next day. Bumpybambooney had been counting the hours until she could tell her papa that she was sorry she had told him to "Go away," but Mr. Packlepoose did not return the next day and this was the reason. When he went aboard the ferry at Twenty-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

third Street the night had turned very dark and foggy. Out upon the river the fog was so dense that you could not see the lights of the city and the boats which passed seemed to come up out of nowhere and melt away into nothingness, like gray ghosts. There was a constant blowing of fog-whistles and they sounded as dismal as if the boats themselves were feeling badly.

Perhaps the wisest thing for Mr. Packlepoose to have done would have been to stay with the auto until the boat reached Jersey City, but he wanted to see the boat and as much of the river view as could be seen in the darkness and the fog. "Good-night, Foster; good-night, Miss Jones," he said. "I'm much obliged for my ride to the ferry."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Foster, in a low tone, as Mr. Packlepoose started away, "but I don't think you ought to leave the machine. The ferry is a very bad place for thieves, I've heard, especially in the crush getting ashore. I've got the machine to mind,

## JUST THEN

you know, and detective work isn't much in Jones's line."

"No?" answered Mr. Packlepoose, laughing. "Well, it isn't in mine either, you know," and he walked away.

When Foster heard this, he was frightened. The more he thought of it, the more he was sure that Mr. Packlepoose was a thief in disguise and that he had gone to find his fellows, so they could all attack the auto together and carry away everything they could lay their hands on.

"Say," he whispered to Miss Jones, "the governor has been flim-flammed. He's gone and hired a crook for a detective. You go see if there's a copper on this boat."

So Miss Jones ran around the boat till she found a policeman and brought him to Foster, who told his story. "You come wid me," said the policeman. "If he's the real t'ing I'll know him, and if he's a crook I want to get my hands on him."

So they began a careful search of the boat



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

and came upon Mr. Packlepoose standing near the rail on the upper deck. The policeman touched him on the shoulder, and Mr. Packlepoose turned and looked into the face of—of whom do you think? Of the Blue Acorn!

You see when they had captured Bill on top of Mr. Humphrey's house, they thought they had the man they had been chasing, but when they got him down into the hotel, the Blue Acorn saw that it was not the man he had seen with Sonnybud in the depot. The Blue Acorn was very much disgusted to think that Mr. Packlepoose had got away and more than ever sure that he was a very dangerous criminal to have escaped when escape seemed impossible. He went straight to his precinct and told his story and when the lieutenant at the station heard that Mr. Packlepoose's first question had been as to how he could reach the Twenty-third Street ferry, he at once sent the Blue Acorn to watch the trains at Jersey City.

## JUST THEN

The Blue Acorn had watched all the foot passengers who went aboard the ferry, but he never thought of Mr. Packlepoose going aboard in an auto and so he had missed him. Then he had gone aboard to cross to Jersey City himself to see if he could catch Mr. Packlepoose when taking the train.

"Ho! ho!" said the Blue Acorn. "Is it you, Mr. Packlepoose, you kidnapper, you. Pretendin' to be a detective, oh!"

Now wasn't that hard luck for Mr. Packlepoose? He knew that if the Blue Acorn arrested him now and told his story in police court the next morning, sustained by the testimony of Foster, Miss Jones, Mr. Humphrey and possibly of Janet, it would go hard with him.

And there was no way of escape. There stood Foster and the Blue Acorn in front of him. Even if he could run away, they would catch him as soon as the boat reached Jersey City. His description was probably telephoned to every station. If he jumped

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

into the river, he would be run down by some boat and drowned, no matter how good a swimmer he was. There seemed no possible way to get out of it and Mr. Packlepoose gave himself up for lost. Wouldn't Bumpybambooney be sorry if she knew?

Just then something happened.

As I told you, it was very foggy and the big boats seemed to come from nowhere and sink away into nothingness. There was a sudden clanging of bells and shrieking of whistles and shouts of men. A ferry-boat coming from the opposite way suddenly appeared right in front of the one they were on. In another second there would have been a collision, but the ferry going to New York veered off to starboard and the ferry going to Jersey City reversed its engines. This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. As the ferry they were on swung to the right and almost stopped, there was a deep hoarse roar from behind. There was the glare of lights, a green eye and a red eye, as of some

## JUST THEN

great sea monster. Then there was a jar and the big boat from behind grazed the ferry. Luckily it did not hit squarely, or it would have gone through the sides of the ferry and sunk it, but the shock was enough to throw the Blue Acorn, Foster and Mr. Packlepoose in a heap together, Mr. Packlepoose landing on top.

I said that the red and green lights looked like eyes. This would make the bow of the boat its nose and perhaps you have noticed that in the very tip of the nose of the boat are two holes, like nostrils. These are called hawse-holes, I believe, and the big heavy chains of the anchor hang from them.

Mr. Packlepoose jumped up from where he had fallen, sprang to the rail of the ferry-boat and jumped into the chains of the big steamer (which was just swinging away) almost without knowing what he was doing.

When the Blue Acorn and the chauffeur looked for him, he was gone. They searched the boat from end to end, they watched every

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

one who got off at Jersey City and they watched the trains, but no Mr. Packlepoose appeared.

The Blue Acorn was the maddest policeman you ever saw. "I do believe that felly is a spook," said he. "That's t'ree times I've had me hands on him and he got away iv'ry time."

Meanwhile Mr. Packlepoose was in the chains of the big boat steaming out to sea and Bumpybambooney was at home, little knowing that her papa was indeed going away.

## V

CHUBBY CHARLIE FINDS A HOODOO AND DEAR!  
DEAR! THE BLUE ACORN FINDS MR. PACKLE-  
POOSE A LONG WAY AWAY, WHILE THE BIG  
BOAT GETS ITS NOSE FROZEN

WHEN Mr. Packlepoose leaped for the ocean steamship and landed in the chains, he clung desperately to them and huddled against the side of the boat. In the fog and the darkness he was not seen and for a while he did not want to be seen. For the first few seconds he thought the angry Blue Acorn would shoot him and then he thought that if they should put him off the big steamer and send him back to New York by the pilot-boat, or otherwise, he would surely fall into the hands of the police after all and his last desperate effort to get away would only make them firmer in the belief that he was a dangerous

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

criminal. They might put him in jail, for he didn't know how long, or at least hold him for trial and no one could tell when he ever would get back to Bumpybambooney at that rate.

So Mr. Packlepoose clung to the chains for a long time and then climbed up as best he could and fell upon the forward deck. The lookout, stationed in the bow, was a sailor called Chubby Charlie. He was broad and thick and not very tall. His legs were bowed, his back was bent, his arms were like the limbs of trees and his hands were like hooks. His head was like a cabbage, his nose like a beet and his whiskers under his chin were like sprays of spinach. When he saw Mr. Packlepoose he bawled out, "Something just come aboard, sir!"

"What is it?" asked the captain.

"It looks like a man, sir, but it might be a 'oodoo, sir."

"A man!" cried the astonished captain.  
"Where'd he come from?"

## JUST THEN

"Over the bow, sir."

"Send him aft."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the sailor, aloud, and then he muttered, "and very glad to get rid of the 'oodoo, sir."

So Mr. Packlepoose was sent to the captain and found a grizzled man, with stern blue eyes and wide beard blown over his chest.

"Stowaway, eh?" said the captain.

"No more than you are, captain," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Are you entered on the passenger-list?" asked the captain.

"No, but I expect you to instruct the purser to enter me."

"Oh, indeed," said the captain, harshly, "and why?"

"Because it's really your fault that I am here."

"How's that?" asked the captain, impatiently.

"Well," answered Mr. Packlepoose, coolly,



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"you see you bumped into me before I bumped into you."

The captain cooled off at this and burst into a grin. He understood that Mr. Packlepoose had got aboard during the near-collision with the ferry-boat and it tickled him the way Mr. Packlepoose explained it.

So Mr. Packlepoose was given the freedom of the boat and soon became good friends with the captain, the crew and the passengers, all except Chubby Charlie, who insisted on calling him "the 'oodoo," and vowed he had brought the fog, had almost brought a collision and would do them some horrible harm yet.

Mr. Packlepoose told the captain all about Bumpybambooney and as the captain had little boys and girls of his own, he was very much entertained and interested. "I'm glad that you told me," he said. "I'll have your accident reported to New York and New York can wire your home, so Bumpybambooney will know where you are."

## JUST THEN

"That's very kind of you," said Mr. Packlepoose, but he wished he had kept quiet and with very good reason. The broad-bearded captain reported to New York by wireless how Mr. Packlepoose came over the bows of the vessel and the story was such a good one that it got into the newspapers. The *World* printed a column story about the man who had been bumped aboard an ocean liner and one paper even printed imaginary pictures of Mr. Packlepoose and Bumpy-bambooney. It was those names which did it. The Blue Acorn would never have got it through his helmet if it had not been for those ridiculous names, but when he read those, he at once rushed to his precinct and told his story of how the kidnapper had escaped from the ferry-boat and was now on a boat bound for Liverpool.

And then the police sent a cable message to England to arrest Mr. Packlepoose as soon as the steamship arrived. And they sent

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

a wireless message to the captain of the *Titania* to keep a strict guard over Mr. Packlepoose to see that he didn't get away again. The captain was both surprised and shocked to receive this message. In his direct, blunt way, he sent for Mr. Packlepoose at once. "Good-evening, captain," said Mr. Packlepoose, "it's nasty weather on deck."

"Yes," said the captain, "the fog has fallen again, but if I have to put you in the cage, you won't mind whether it's sunshine or dark."

"The cage? What do you mean?" asked the bewildered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Aren't you Packlepoose, the kidnapper?" asked the captain. "Aren't the New York police after you on the charge of breaking into the house of one Humphrey? Aren't you accused of impersonating a detective and resisting arrest?"

"Yes," said Mr. Packlepoose, "but I'm not guilty of any of those things, except

## JUST THEN

that I did resist arrest, just as you would have done."

"Maybe so, maybe so," said the captain. "I haven't time to waste in talking to you. If you will promise to behave yourself during the voyage and deliver yourself peaceably into the hands of the English police at Liverpool, I'll let you go. If you don't, I'll have you locked up."

"I shan't make any such promise," said Mr. Packlepoose. "I've done nothing to be hounded by the police."

"Very well, very well," said the captain. He turned away but in a minute or two a petty officer appeared and with him was the big sailor called Chubby Charlie. "Come along," said the officer and Chubby Charlie grinned and laid his great hook of a hand on Mr. Packlepoose's shoulder.

Just then something happened.

There was a cry on deck, a few short, sharp words. The throb of the engines stopped, the ship gave a lurch out of her

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

course and then there was a shock and the ship stopped. "We're wrecked! we're wrecked!" cried the passengers and instantly there was a panic. Men shouted, women screamed, and everybody rushed on deck. There they found that the ship had run into a huge ice-berg.

The ice-berg was so large that the ship looked like a row-boat alongside of it. Luckily the ship had not run squarely against it, or it would have been smashed and sunk. Instead it had run up and into a huge crack in the berg which had broken the shock.

When the first alarm was over, all hands set to work to see what could be done to get the vessel free. The stern of the boat lay in the water, but though the screw was reversed, the engines could not pull her off. There was nothing to do but to lighten the boat and the crew worked all night. The fog lifted during the night and the next day was clear and bright. The big berg was slowly drifting southward, carrying the big steamer in

## JUST THEN

its grip. The great danger was that the berg would turn over, for of course the water was melting the ice down below and just as soon as the bottom below water became lighter than the top above water, the berg would turn over, carrying the ship and all the passengers with it.

As for Mr. Packlepoose, however, he could see no reason why they should not get some enjoyment out of their novel experience, for he had never been upon an ice-mountain floating in the middle of the ocean in summer before. So he started to climb to the top of the berg and Chubby Charlie followed after.

"Why are you tagging me?" asked Mr. Packlepoose, but Chubby Charlie only grinned a grin that looked like a scowl and kept on. As he would not answer, Mr. Packlepoose paid no more attention to him. Besides it was a hard climb up the ice-berg and he needed all of his breath. When he reached the top, what do you suppose Mr.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Packlepoose found there? An Eskimo sledge stuck fast in the ice. There were thongs of skin hanging to it, where the dogs had been harnessed, and there was an Eskimo spear, or harpoon, used by the Eskimos in hunting. It had drifted away down from the frozen North on the ice-berg and some poor Eskimo was even then, perhaps, mourning the loss of his arctic automobile!

Mr. Packlepoose tried to pull the sledge loose, but it would not budge. Just then came the long whistle from the steamer, the signal for all hands to return. Mr. Packlepoose turned to hurry down, for he was a long distance away, but he found his way blocked by the sailor, who stood in his path like some angry animal. As I told you, he was big and broad and thick and tremendously strong. He seized Mr. Packlepoose in his great hooks of hands and thrust him down upon the sledge. Before Mr. Packlepoose knew what was happening, Chubby Charlie had tied his hands behind his back

## JUST THEN

and tied him to the sledge with the thongs. Then he slipped a gag in his mouth, so Mr. Packlepoose couldn't shout, and left him there helpless. "You stay with the hicc-berg you run us into, you 'oodoo," said the superstitious sailor. Then he made his way down the berg alone.

Mr. Packlepoose could see the passengers and crew scramble back upon the ship; could see the smoke of the furnaces as the engines worked and strained. Then he heard a great shout as from all the people and guessed that the steamship had got off. Sure enough she was and in a short time she had steamed away.

It isn't pleasant to be bound fast to the top of an ice-berg all alone in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, but Mr. Packlepoose had one consoling thought. "Anyway," said he to himself, "I shan't be arrested by the Liverpool police and sent back to a New York jail."



## VI

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SLIDE DOWN HILL  
ON AN ARCTIC AUTOMOBILE? OUCH! THE  
BIG, BITEY BEARS ARE COMING AND PRESTO!  
HERE'S A SHIP-LOAD OF MONKEYS

**Y**OU wouldn't expect it to be very warm on top of the ice-berg, but it was. As the day grew warmer the glare from the shining ice seemed to make it twice as warm as it beat down upon Mr. Packlepoose lying there in the midst of it. Mr. Packlepoose was nearly frozen underneath and nearly blistered on top, for he lay almost on the ice and at the very tip of the ice-mountain.

Chubby Charlie had tied him well. The more Mr. Packlepoose tugged to get loose, the tighter the knots became and the more the thongs cut into his flesh. He was hungry, he was thirsty, he was half-frozen and half-

## JUST THEN

roasted; and if Bumpybambooney could have seen him she would have cried to think she had ever told him to go away. All this was bad enough, but there was something worse to come, for Mr. Packlepoose wasn't the only one on the ice-berg. And the other one was hungrier than he! The other one was a polar bear.

Mr. Packlepoose had sunk back from one of his struggles, and looking down the side of the berg opposite to that which he and Chubby Charlie had climbed, he saw something yellowy white on the surface of the ice. He never would have noticed the thing if it hadn't moved. And he would have thought it a patch of snow, but instead of sliding down, it was sliding up, up to where he lay securely fastened to the sledge. The bear had drifted all the way down from the Arctic Circle and had been without food for days. It would be fiercely hungry and very savage. What was Mr. Packlepoose to do? For a while he thought there was nothing to do,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

but to lie still and be eaten. That wasn't very pleasant to think of and still less pleasant to have happen. He looked down again and the yellowy white spot on the ice was a little bit higher up.

If Chubby Charlie hadn't gagged him, he might possibly have twisted around and gnawed himself loose from the sledge, but with a gag in his mouth, this was out of the question. Meanwhile the polar bear crept a little nearer.

Mr. Packlepoose struggled again and felt the sledge move under him. The warm sun had melted the ice around it and it was no longer stuck fast. That wasn't much relief, but at least it was a change. The polar bear was crawling a little nearer.

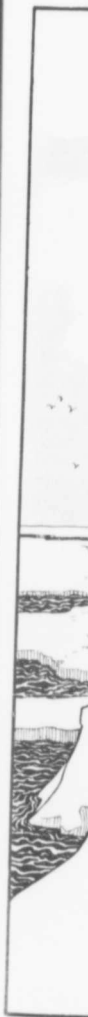
You remember that the Eskimo harpoon was stuck fast in the ice, too. Mr. Packlepoose dragged himself and the sledge over to it and managed to get the end of the harpoon against the thongs. Then he sawed them up and down. It was slow work for

## JUST THEN

the thongs were tough, the harpoon none too sharp and his foot-hold slippery. The polar bear had seen him and was crawling upward faster now. He was weak from hunger, but the sight of a dinner bade him make every effort to reach it.

At last one of the thongs was cut through. Mr. Packlepoose's wrists were sore and swollen, but he managed to work one of his hands free, then the other; and then he loosed the thong which held the gag in his mouth. His jaws had been pried apart so long that it was painful to move them, but at least he could yell and he did. The bear looked up in surprise but moved faster. He was glad his dinner was alive. He was so near that Mr. Packlepoose could see his eyes and his white fangs.

And now, even though Mr. Packlepoose was free and had a harpoon, what chance did he stand against a huge and hungry bear? Well, perhaps he stood a chance if he could keep the bear off and topple it





There were three bears coming for him.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

down the ice-berg before it toppled him down.

Mr. Packlepoose stood awaiting the bear, with the harpoon in his hand, when he heard a growl on his right. He turned his head and saw a second bear climbing toward him and before he had time fairly to take in the new situation, there came an answering growl on his left. There were three bears coming for him and if the first one didn't get him, the others certainly would. Nearer and nearer they came. What was the use of fighting them? Yet what else was there to do?

Again he gave a hasty look to the right, to the left and straight ahead. He didn't dare to look behind him. And now the three bears were so near that they were just outside the reach of his harpoon and they stood on their hind legs, huge, hungry, horrible. Another minute and they would fall upon him and tear him to pieces.

Just then something happened.

## JUST THEN

Across the air, there came the sound of a steamer's whistle. It was as if someone were too far away to use a speaking trumpet, but had seen him through the glass and was trying to cry "Ice-berg, ahoy!"

Mr. Packlepoose stopped neither to look, nor to listen, but flung himself upon the Eskimo sledge and gave it a push. The three bears made a rush but they were a second too late. Mr. Packlepoose was flying down the ice on the Arctic automobile, faster than the wind.

The sledge was of wood, bound together by thongs, so that when it hit the water it did not sink. Instead it skimmed and skipped along the water, exactly as you have done when shooting the chutes, only, as the sledge had such a fine start down the slippery ice, it was the very fastest and farthest "shoot the chutes" you ever saw or thought of.

Mr. Packlepoose and the sledge went straight toward the ship and the ship came toward him. A green flag floated at the



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

masthead and the sides were crowded with swarthy faces eager to see the man who had been sailing the seas on an ice-berg with a crew of polar bears.

As Mr. Packlepoose gazed back at these people, he was fully as much surprised as they, for alongside of every human face was the face of a monkey. But whether it was a man ship, or a monkey ship didn't matter to Mr. Packlepoose. He was glad enough to be taken aboard and when he was aboard he found that the ship was loaded with organ-grinders returning to Italy and every grinder had his organ and every organ its monkey.

Wouldn't Bumpybambooney have been glad to know that her papa was safe once more even though the ship was taking him farther away. And wouldn't she have been glad to be with him and heard all the organ-grinders playing different tunes at once and all the monkeys chattering and taking off their hats and looking so bewildered because

## JUST THEN

there was nobody who would give them any pennies.

There was one very old man with a gray face and kindly brown eyes. He had short, thick, gray hair; long, drooping, gray eyebrows; and a long, drooping mustache. Wherever his beard showed through his skin, the stubble was gray, too. He had a monkey, which looked surprisingly like him. Its face was gray, too, with the same bushy gray above its forehead and the same plaintive, brown eyes.

The gray monkey was the most disappointed of all the monkeys when it failed to get any pennies. One day it presented its cap to Mr. Packlepoose and it looked so pitiful that Mr. Packlepoose put his hand in his pocket and give the monkey a coin. Instantly there was a chattering and jabbering and all the monkeys surrounded Mr. Packlepoose, reaching for pennies. "No, no!" cried Mr. Packlepoose, laughing and waving them away. At that the biggest mon-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

key of them all jumped on the little gray monkey and tried to take its money away from it. The gray monkey defended its booty bravely, which made the big monkey so angry that it seized the gray monkey and flung it into the sea. Mr. Packlepoose seized a life-preserver and jumped into the sea to save the gray monkey.

The ship had to lower a boat to save them both and the captain was very much provoked. "Have you no more sense than to delay my ship and risk your life on account of a miserable monkey?" he demanded.

But the old Italian kissed Mr. Packlepoose's hand, with tears in his eyes, and when the ship arrived at Naples, Mr. Packlepoose had two friends, an old, gray Italian and a gray, old monkey.

His first thought on landing was to get word to Mrs. Hockamaboury and to Bumpy-bambooney and his second thought was to find at once the quickest way to get back to them.

## VII

MY! WHAT A BIG MOUTH, AND THREE BOLD, BAD  
BANDITS ATTEMPT TO PUSH MR. PACKLE-  
POOSE INTO IT. OUT OF THE AIR COMES FLY-  
ING THE BIRD-BEAST WITH A COW'S TAIL

THE name of Mr. Packlepoose's old friend was Benevuto, and when the ship entered the Bay of Naples, Benevuto went almost mad with joy. The water gleamed in a blue half circle and the sky shone in a blue dome and the city rose on the shore as if going up a flight of steps to heaven.

Back of the city towered Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano. Mr. Packlepoose had always wanted to see this volcano and when he found that he could not get a ship back for three days, he planned to visit it. He could have secured passage sooner in a ship to New York, but he didn't want to go to New York, because he wanted to get back to

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Bumpybambooney and not to get into prison; so he found a ship which was sailing to Boston and engaged passage.

Now, as you remember, Mr. Packlepoose had only started from home to go to Goshen and he hadn't much money with him. It had cost him nothing to get to New York and he had spent little on the *Titania*, but he had insisted on paying his passage on the Italian boat, so that by the time he had cabled home, he had barely enough to buy a second cabin passage to Boston. He knew nobody in Naples and had no way of getting any more money.

But in Naples many poor people live on a very few cents a day. Macaroni is cheap and wine is plentiful and nothing more is needed. If they haven't a roof they live out of doors, and if they haven't clothes a few rags will cover them. So Mr. Packlepoose thought he could get along while waiting for his boat. Also, it gave him a chance to visit Mt. Vesuvius.

## JUST THEN

On the Strado del Toledo he met his old friend Benevuto, who was so happy in being in his beloved Naples and so glad to see Mr. Packlepoose. "Where are you going?" asked Benevuto.

"I'm going out to see Vesuvius," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Oh no, no," said Benevuto, "not to-day. To-day there is the great air-ship flight by Count Zepaulhin. He is to fly further and longer than any man has ever flown before in his great, big, grand air-ship. You must stay to see him go up. Vesuvius is there always, but Zepaulhin and his grand ship of the air you may never see again."

Mr. Packlepoose smiled and answered, "You are mistaken. I look at it just the other way. I can see many balloons and air-ships and flying-machines at other places and other times, but this may be the only chance I'll ever have to see the great Vesuvius. My ship sails this week and this is my only chance."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"But where is your carriage? Where is your donkey? Vesuvius is ten miles away and oh! quite high to the top. You must have a donkey, at least."

"No," said Mr. Packlepoose, "I am going to walk. I have no money to hire a donkey."

"No money!" cried Benevuto, "are you not rich?"

"No, indeed," said Mr. Packlepoose, laughing, and he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a few coins. "That is all I have left."

Benevuto wrinkled his brows, shrugged his shoulders and lifted his hands. "And I have been telling all my friends that you were the rich American lord, that you sailed on ice-bergs for pleasure and gave monkeys silver dollars."

Mr. Packlepoose laughed again and jingled the few coins. "You can see how rich I am," he said, gayly; "but now good-by. I'm off for Vesuvius."

## JUST THEN

"No, no! wait, wait!" cried Benevuto.

"I may never see you again."

"No," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"And you are so poor!"

"Yes," smiled Mr. Packlepoose.

Benevuto suddenly burst out crying.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"I cry because I shall never see you and Gobbo any more. You are poor. Gobbo will get you many pennies, as he did for me. You will never be poor any more." So saying, he thrust the gray monkey into Mr. Packlepoose's arms, kissed Mr. Packlepoose on both cheeks, kissed the monkey and ran away, crying.

Mr. Packlepoose was too astonished to protest. Before he could call Benevuto back and explain to him that he wasn't quite that poor and didn't want the monkey, the kind-hearted Italian was gone. Gobbo snuggled down into his breast and looked up with a



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

wistful expression and there was nothing for Mr. Packlepoose to do but to take him along. So Mr. Packlepoose and Gobbo set out for Vesuvius.

I suppose if Mr. Packlepoose had been wise, he would have started in the afternoon, or early evening, so as to have the climb in the cool of the night and reach the top in time to see the sun rise, but he had never climbed mountains before and did not know what hard work it was. He enjoyed the walk along the road to Vesuvius very much. The sky was so blue and the air was delicious. He saw so many things which were new and strange to him. The people dressed in bright colors and were so gay and happy. If everything else failed, Gobbo was as funny as a monkey and what can be funnier than that?

He noticed that all the people were going one way. He met all and overtook none and none overtook him. All seemed to be going into the city to see the air-ship and Mr.

## JUST THEN

Packlepoose told Gobbo they would have the volcano all to themselves.

But the climb up the mountain was hot and tiresome. Mr. Packlepoose was glad when evening came and it was cooler. After a while the moon rose and the night was beautiful. Then the sky turned cloudy and it was dark again. But after a while, Mr. Packlepoose reached the top and sat down to wait for morning, as there was nothing else to do. He was afraid he might stumble into the crater, for Vesuvius is a hollow mountain, you know, and as it was about a half mile deep, a fall down might have skinned his shins, don't you think?

The wind, which had been shifting all day, now blew quite strong and steadily from the East. Mr. Packlepoose sat down on the softest piece of lava he could find and Gobbo snuggled down and went to sleep on his shoulder. Mr. Packlepoose nodded, too. He did not know how long he had slept when he was awakened by the gray monkey which

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

was chattering excitedly. Mr. Packlepoose started and turned his head and bumped into something cold and round like the end of a gas-pipe. It wasn't a gas-pipe, though; it was the muzzle of a pistol and when Mr. Packlepoose saw what it was, he thought it looked more the size of a sewer-pipe, he was so frightened.

"Sst!" said something on the other side and when he turned his head that way, he saw the muzzle of another pistol.

"What do you want?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"Money!" came the answer.

"I have no money, except a few silver pieces," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Pstt!" said something behind him and a sharp, pointed dagger stuck him in the back. Mr. Packlepoose sprang to his feet and the dagger was kept pressed to his back, forcing him forward. Presently a hand seized his collar and stopped him. Just then the moon shone faintly through a light cloud

## JUST THEN

and Mr. Packlepoose saw the great black mouth of the crater yawning before him.

"One thousand meters to the bottom," said the voice on his left.

"Money!" said the voice on his right.

"Or down you go," said the voice behind him, and as Mr. Packlepoose shrunk back, he again felt the prick of the dagger.

Mr. Packlepoose put his hand in his pocket and drew out his few coins. "All I have," he said.

One of the robbers struck his hand and the money fell jingling down the crater. "You a rich American and trying to fool us," he growled.

"If I am a rich American," said Mr. Packlepoose, "you dare not kill me, for my friends will pursue you and punish you."

"Your friends; posh! Will your friends find you in the bowels of Vesuvius? Come! money before I count three, or down you go. Will you give it?"

Poor Mr. Packlepoose strained his eyes in

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the darkness, but there was nothing to see. "One!" said the robber.

Mr. Packlepoose shouted suddenly but the bandits only laughed, for there was no one to hear. "Two!" said the spokesman.

"Wait a minute, a second," pleaded Mr. Packlepoose. "I swear I have no money and I have not a friend in Italy, except one poor man. But when I get back home to America, I promise you I will send you money."

The robbers snorted in scorn and the spokesman opened his mouth to say "Three!" and it looked as if Bumpybambooney would never see her Papa Packlepoose again. One robber jammed a pistol against his right temple, one rubbed a muzzle against his left ear; one pressed a dagger against his backbone. And the spokesman opened his mouth to say "Three!"

Just then something happened.

Something big and black appeared in the air above, like a huge bird-beast. Something

## JUST THEN

long and swishing like the tail of the bird-beast struck Mr. Packlepoose in the face. With a yell Mr. Packlepoose jumped for it, kicked the robber on the right in the face, just as he cried "Three!" and swung out over the crater. The other two robbers dropped to their knees with cries of terror, for they thought the huge thing was a visitor from heaven.

Of course, as you have guessed, it was the air-ship. The wind had been changing so much all day that it hadn't been able to start until evening. Although that was not the best time to start, the wind was blowing toward the land and not toward the sea and so Zepaulhin had started. Wasn't it lucky for Mr. Packlepoose that he had?

Now Zepaulhin tossed out a sand-bag and it hit the robber with the dagger swish! on the head, knocking him flat. The other one started to run down the mountain side, fell and broke his leg. When the three bandits were found the next morning, they told a



Mr. Packlepoose was clinging desperately to the anchor-rope.





## SOMETHING HAPPENED

remarkable story of how Satan had come out of Vesuvius, kicked one of them in the face, stunned a second and broken the leg of a third and had then flown away toward Turkey.

Meanwhile Mr. Packlepoose was clinging desperately to the anchor-rope of the air-ship and was going farther away from Bumpybambooney. Gobbo, who had been clinging to Mr. Packlepoose through the whole adventure, now climbed to his shoulder, then onto his head, and then up the rope, looking around as if inviting Mr. Packlepoose to follow. Climbing a rope for a man is not so easy as for a monkey, but Mr. Packlepoose clutched it with both hands, wound his legs around it and went up. Zepaulhin reached over and pulled and hauled him aboard. It was a new sensation for Mr. Packlepoose. There he was flying Eastward on an air-ship and Bumpybambooney was at home wishing she had never told her papa to go away.

## VIII

THE HILL-FINGER WITH THE EMERALD RING. A  
WELL FULL OF WATCHES AND WHAT'S THAT  
COMING? WHY, IT'S A PIRATE AIR-SHIP.  
R-R-R-RIP! AND MR. PACKLEPOOSE FALLS OUT

AS they flew along, Zepaulhin had to watch the movements of the air-ship carefully. He had to keep the engines going, steer it to pick out the best air currents and to guard against accidents of any kind. Yet he was very curious to know how Mr. Packlepoose had seemed to spring out of the mouth of the volcano, and as Mr. Packlepoose couldn't help to run the air-ship, he just lay still and told Zepaulhin the story of Bumpybambooney and of the bandits of Mt. Vesuvius.

"But why didn't you give the bandits your money?" asked Zepaulhin. "Money isn't worth fighting for."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Indeed it isn't," answered Mr. Packlepoose, "especially if you haven't any."

"You mean to say?" inquired the count.

"That I haven't a sou," supplied Mr. Packlepoose.

"And how are you intending to get back to Bumpybambooney after you are out of the air-ship?"

"That's just what is bothering me," answered Mr. Packlepoose, "but I'll find a way."

"Well," said Zepaulhin, "as it is my air-ship which is making you miss your boat, I am sure you will allow me to lend you enough to get you home in comfort."

"Thank you very much," said Mr. Packlepoose, "and if ever you crawl out of a volcano up the rope of my air-ship, I'll do as much for you."

The count pulled a handful of gold pieces out of his pocket and handed them to Mr. Packlepoose and you may be sure Mr. Packlepoose was glad to get them, for now,

## JUST THEN

so he thought, he would not be delayed in getting back to Bumpybambooney, if ever the air-ship landed in safety.

The ride was so exciting he hardly wanted the air-ship to land. If you have ever ridden on a bicycle, or sat in the bow of a fast steamer, or coasted down hill on a sled, you can imagine something of the fun of riding in an air-ship, if you can imagine doing all three at once, up in the air.

When the morning came, Mr. Packlepoose was startled to find they were over the sea, but Zepaulhin said "It's the Adriatic, but we're going fast and we'll soon be in Turkey."

The world seemed spread beneath them like a map. They passed the sea, as well as plains, mountains, rivers and villages. Wherever they passed, people stopped and pointed up at them, then turned and ran away, as if in terror. Some even got guns and fired at them.

"What's the matter with them?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"I can't imagine," answered the count.  
"People are usually delighted to see an air-ship and watch us till we get out of sight."

Now they came to a large plain, miles long and miles wide, but without a living creature visible. "Our petrol is getting low," said Zepaulhin. "I wish we'd come to a city, so we could descend."

"It looks as if there couldn't be a worse place to descend than here," answered Mr. Packlepoose. As he spoke, they came in sight of a single, sandy hill in the very center of the desert plain. It was the only elevation the eye could see for miles. Somewhere about it a spring struggled forth and grass and a few trees made a green ring all around the hill.

"Oh, look," cried Mr. Packlepoose.

"What do you see?" asked Zepaulhin.

"An emerald ring and a hill in the middle, like a finger sticking through."

"I see more than that," answered the count.

"Look on top of the hill."

## JUST THEN

Mr. Packlepoose looked and saw a barn-like building on the top of the hill. From one end of the building came a single rail, which ran to the edge of the hill and stopped. "What is it?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"I can't think why the thing should be here," answered Zepaulhin, "but it looks like a hangar—an air-ship shed. Yes, and there's a tank in the rear for petrol or gasoline. We'll go down."

The air-ship fluttered to the top of the hill, like a huge bird, but to their surprise they could find no one. The long shed was empty and no one was in sight.

"Well," said Zepaulhin, "we must have some petrol, so we'll just help ourselves and leave a gold piece in payment."

While the count was getting his supply, Mr. Packlepoose took some bottles and went to look for the spring, so they could have some fresh water. He found it in a pretty little natural grotto, and after he had drunk he filled his bottles. To get the coolest, cleanest

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

water, he pushed the bottles to the bottom. As he lifted one up, it slipped from his hands and struck the sandy bottom. Mr. Packlepoose reached down for it and his fingers scraped the sand and struck something hard. He scraped away the sand a little more and instead of the flat stone he expected to find, he found a flat, circular iron, like a lid. In the centre of the iron was a ring, but when Mr. Packlepoose put his fingers through and tried to move the iron, it was like pulling at a wall.

He got into the spring, spread his feet and, using both hands, lifted as hard as he could and succeeded in moving it. The iron seemed to be the lid of a sort of well and when Mr. Packlepoose had got it off, he was amazed, for through the waters of the spring, as if through a glass, he saw a well-full of gold pieces, and watches, and chains, and rings, and jewels of every kind.

Of course Mr. Packlepoose did not take any of them, for they were not his, but he

## JUST THEN

was also sure that they did not belong to whomsoever put them there. He ran and told the count.

"This must be a robber's den," cried Zepaulhin.

"And they have an air-ship like yours," said Mr. Packlepoose. "That's why the people were afraid and why they fired at us."

"An air-ship pirate, the very first in the world!" cried Zepaulhin. "I wish I could see their machine."

Mr. Packlepoose suddenly pointed toward the West. "You have your wish, I am afraid."

Far off on the horizon was a tiny speck in the clear air and, as Mr. Packlepoose had guessed, it was the pirate air-ship returning. Zepaulhin looked at it through his binoculars. "We must get away," he cried. "It is the biggest air-ship I ever saw."

In a few minutes they were flying Eastward again and the new supply of petrol made the engines work to the limit. But,



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

fast as they were moving, the pirate-ship was faster and loomed constantly larger and larger. "It is possible," said Zepaulhin, "that they have not seen us, as we are so much smaller. It is possible that they may stop at their hill and not follow us at all."

Mr. Packlepoose seized the glass and watched. "They are stopping," he cried. "No, they are just circling the hill. Now they are flying as near to it as they can. I'm afraid they have seen that someone has been there. They are landing; no; yes; no; they are coming this way."

"We must do our best to keep ahead of them till night," said Zepaulhin, "and then perhaps we can get away in the darkness. If they catch us, they will surely try to kill us, for they can hardly afford that anyone should know their hiding-place."

"They are doubtless armed," said Mr. Packlepoose, "and they are doubtless desperate. I haven't as much as a pen-knife myself."

When darkness fell, Zepaulhin made sev-

## JUST THEN

eral doubles and turns and twists in his course, but all to no avail. When the moon came up, the pirate-ship loomed larger than ever in the air behind them. Closer and closer still it came until Mr. Packlepoose could see three faces peering over the side of the car. One was long and thin and cruel, one was short and snubby and brutal, and one was round and fat and beastly. Each face was surmounted by a Turkish fez and each man seemed armed to the teeth. As they stood up, he saw that they carried rifles in their hands, pistols in their belts and short swords at their sides. "I wonder they do not shoot," said Zepaulhin.

"I guess they want to have the pleasure of catching us and cutting our throats," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"The city!" cried Zepaulhin, and he pointed down. "They don't fire for fear of attracting attention. If we can find a square or an open place we will alight," and he started the air-ship downward.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

But there are very few squares in Constantinople and before Zepaulhin could see a place to land, the pirate-ship came up from behind with a rush and rammed into them. One of the pirates stayed at the wheel to steer and Zepaulhin was obliged to stay at his. The other two pirates leaned over the car and when the ships came together, they hurled their daggers at Mr. Packlepoose. Luckily the lurch made their aim untrue and they both missed him. The pirate-ship swung around to ram them again and this time it aimed at their gas-bag and cut right through it. The Zepaulhin ship fluttered and flopped like a wounded bird and then turned completely over, throwing Mr. Packlepoose clear out of the car. The pirates gave a yell of triumph and sailed away.

Zepaulhin's air-ship fell and the count fell with it, but he clung desperately to the framework and, though he received a terrible jolt, he was not killed, but was found next morning and taken to a hospital. But what about

## JUST THEN

Mr. Packlepoose, who had fallen clear out of the car?

He would surely have been killed instantly had not a very curious thing happened.

You see the air-ships in coming together had not been able to watch where they were going and they had come right over the Mosque of St. Sophia. At the moment Mr. Packlepoose fell out, they were right above one of the minarets. Of course you know that a mosque is built with a huge round dome in the center and minarets, which are pointed like steeples, at the corners. Had Mr. Packlepoose been speared by the minaret, it might have killed him, but the top just happened to catch his coat and held him.

There he was suspended in the air on the top of a minaret in Constantinople a couple of hundred feet above the ground, but the pirates were gone and he was not killed. Away over in America, a little girl was so sorry she had ever told him to go away.

## IX

WHAT SORT OF AN ANIMAL ALIGHTS ON STEEPLES,  
RAINS DOWN GOLD PIECES AND CHATTERS  
LIKE A MONKEY? AND HOW CAN YOU MAKE  
A LONG LADDER OUT OF A SHORT PIECE OF  
ROPE?

WHEN the tip of the minaret caught Mr. Packlepoose and turned him upside down, the gold which Zepaulhin had given to him fell out of his pockets and went jingling downward.

Mr. Packlepoose noticed from the sound that some of the pieces seemed to fall but a short distance, but he paid no particular attention to that at the time, as he was in such danger of breaking his neck. But as soon as he could wind his arms and legs around the top of the minaret so that he was not in danger of falling, he looked down and saw, in the moonlight, that there was a little

## JUST THEN

balcony built around the minaret and one or two of his gold pieces had doubtless lodged there. The balcony was pretty high up from the ground, but it was pretty far down from him. Mr. Packlepoose could reach around the cone of the minaret, but it was much too big around, a little farther down. The only thing to do was to wait for daylight for someone to discover him, but even then, what good would it do? How could anyone get him off? No ladder could reach him and the thought came to him that he must stay there until he fainted from lack of food and water, or until his strength gave out and he fell off. Already his arms and legs were aching and he wondered how long he could hold on.

They ached much worse before sunrise and it seemed to Mr. Packlepoose that every minute must be his last; but he was determined to hold on until daybreak anyway, even though he didn't see how daybreak could help him.

Another thing. He was so sleepy and ex-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

hausted it seemed to him his eye-lids weighed a pound apiece, but if he should fall asleep, he was afraid he would fall somewhere else. Several times he dozed off and awoke with a start of terror, as he felt his arms and legs letting go their grip. At last, his eyes closed in spite of him.

Just then something happened.

A strange thing it was, or at least it seemed strange to him, for he heard a voice which seemed to come out of the air below him.

Mr. Packlepoose looked and saw that it was dawn and that a man had come out on the little balcony and was saying something in a loud voice. Then Mr. Packlepoose remembered that this was the muezzin of the mosque and that it was his duty to summon the people to prayers at daybreak. That was what he was doing now. "God is great. There is no God but Allah and Mahomet is his prophet. Prayer is better than sleep. Come to prayer!" he cried and then he stopped suddenly and listened intently, for

## JUST THEN

his quick ear had caught a sound above him.

"Pick up the money and help me to get down!" called Mr. Packlepoose. At the sound of his voice, the muezzin crouched and beat his forehead against the floor of the little balcony, crying to Allah and the Prophet. As his hand struck the balcony, it chanced that he touched the gold piece and a gold piece is a language that all peoples understand. The muezzin grasped it and felt it carefully and then put it to his mouth with a cry of pleasure. Mr. Packlepoose spoke again and the muezzin turned his face toward the sound. Then Mr. Packlepoose saw that the man was blind.

That seemed to Mr. Packlepoose to be the last straw. A man with all his senses would have trouble enough to help him, but what could a blind man do? He felt he might as well let go and end the agony at once. Now Gobbò had been snuggling in Mr. Packlepoose's pocket, or clinging to his shoulder



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

all the night. At the sight of the muezzin he set up a chattering and the poor muezzin was more bewildered than ever. What sort of a being was this which flew through the air, alighted on minarets, threw down gold pieces and chattered like a monkey? Presently he turned and disappeared and if Mr. Packlepoose had been Bumpybambooney, he would have cried with disappointment. But after a while the muezzin returned with another man dressed in flowing white robes and with a white turban.

“Rope!” cried Mr. Packlepoose, motioning with one hand to show what he needed.

The white-robed man made a motion as if throwing something into the air and shook his head, meaning that there was no way to get the rope to him. Now it happened that when Benevuto gave Gobbo to Mr. Packlepoose he had left the string on him and Mr. Packlepoose had not taken it off. This string would hold Gobbo’s weight, but would not hold that of Mr. Packlepoose, of course.

## JUST THEN

"Well, Gobbo," said Mr. Packlepoose, "there is no use of your dying up here in the air. I can get you down, even if I can't get down myself." So Mr. Packlepoose wound the string around his hand and arm, then dropped Gobbo into the air and gradually unwound the string. When the white-robed one saw the monkey coming, he clapped his hands and ran away, but soon came back with a good, stout, hempen rope. Mr. Packlepoose's string did not quite reach to the balcony and he was just about to let the monkey drop the rest of the way, when the white-robed one shook his head vigorously and motioned. So Mr. Packlepoose held Gobbo on the end of the string suspended in mid-air and the white-robed one tossed the end of the rope to Gobbo. Gobbo missed it the first time, but caught it the second and then Mr. Packlepoose wound the string up, again pulling up Gobbo and the rope.

Gobbo got back into Mr. Packlepoose's pocket and Mr. Packlepoose had a rope!

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

But alas! it was a short rope, and even if it had been long enough he would have had difficulty in fastening it to the top of the minaret. So Mr. Packlepoose tied the ends of the rope together and put it around the minaret and around himself, so that the rope held them in a sort of ring. Then, by putting his feet against the minaret and his hands on the rope, he could push his body against the rope and hold it so tight that it could not slip. Then he took a step downward and backward, easing the pressure on the rope. It slipped down a bit and he pushed outward again to stop it. So, by slipping the rope a little, and stopping it when it went too fast, he gradually worked his way down to the balcony.

The white-robed one motioned him to take off his shoes before he could enter the minaret of the mosque, because the Mussulmans believe the mosque is holy ground. Then he motioned to Mr. Packlepoose that he must throw Gobbo over the balcony, because a

## JUST THEN

monkey could not be allowed to enter the mosque.

Mr. Packlepoose shook his head and shook his fist. Gobbo had saved his life and he would as soon have thought of throwing himself over the balcony. The two Turks then tried to seize the monkey, but Mr. Packlepoose dodged into the door and down the steps ahead of them. Luckily for him, the blind man got into the other's way and they both fell down, so Mr. Packlepoose got away and out into the narrow, dirty streets of Constantinople.

Here he had no great difficulty losing his pursuers and losing himself also. Few of the streets were named or numbered and there were few squares or open places, but what seemed most curious to Mr. Packlepoose was the number of homeless dogs which went wandering around all over the city.

"Heigh-ho!" said Mr. Packlepoose, "I wish I were home with Mrs. Hockamaboury. I've had no sleep and I've had no break-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

fast. I've lost my money and I've lost my shoes."

If Bumpybambooney had known, don't you think she would have been sorry she had ever told her papa to go away?

## X

TWO WHITE PRIESTS, THREE BLACK PIRATES, A  
WILDERNESS OF DOGS AND A MONKEY! THEY  
LEAD TO THE LADY-WITH-THE-BLUE-EYES  
AND A SEWED-UP SACKFUL OF PACKLEPOOSE

**A**S Mr. Packlepoose wandered around, he began to attract more attention than he liked. And Gobbo added to the attention. Soon quite a crowd of people were following him and Mr. Packlepoose was very much annoyed. Gobbo, however, did not seem to mind it. He took off his cap to the people repeatedly and they all laughed. "Why, Gobbo," said Mr. Packlepoose, "you are up to your old tricks, aren't you?" And Gobbo looked up into his face as much as to say, "Why not?"

Mr. Packlepoose also said to himself, "Why not?" Then he laughed a little, looked at his bare feet, felt in his empty

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

pockets and said, "Why not?" So Mr. Packlepoose stood up against a building and sang:—

"Bumpybambooney has such a sweet face;  
Her nose sticks right out of the middle.  
Her eyes never wander away from their  
place  
And her voice is as sweet as a fiddle.

O, fiddledee, fiddledee, fiddledee dee!  
It's Bumpybambooney I'm waiting to  
see;  
Her eyes are to smell with, her nose is to  
see  
And I wish I had Bumpybambooney  
with me."

Gobbo was crazy with joy. He frisked about, jumped up and down, rolled over, took off his cap time and again and kept up a constant chattering, as if to say:—

"Give me a penny  
and see what I'll do.  
If you have many,  
give me a few.  
Haven't you any?  
Then give me two."

## JUST THEN

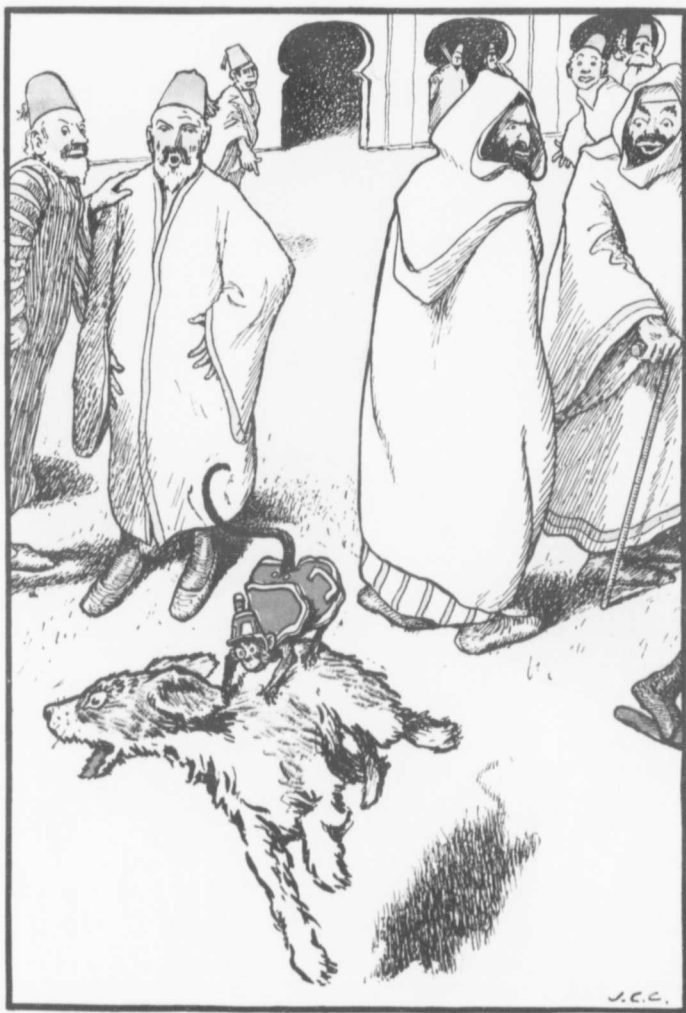
The men gave him a few small coins and the children would have given him more, if they had had them. As it was, they offered him toys and play-things, which Gobbo would not take. One little boy gave him a pocket-knife, which Gobbo clutched tightly in his hand. Things were going along finely for Mr. Packlepoose. "Who knows?" he laughed to himself, "but Gobbo will earn me enough in time to get back to Bumpy-bambooney."

But just then something happened.

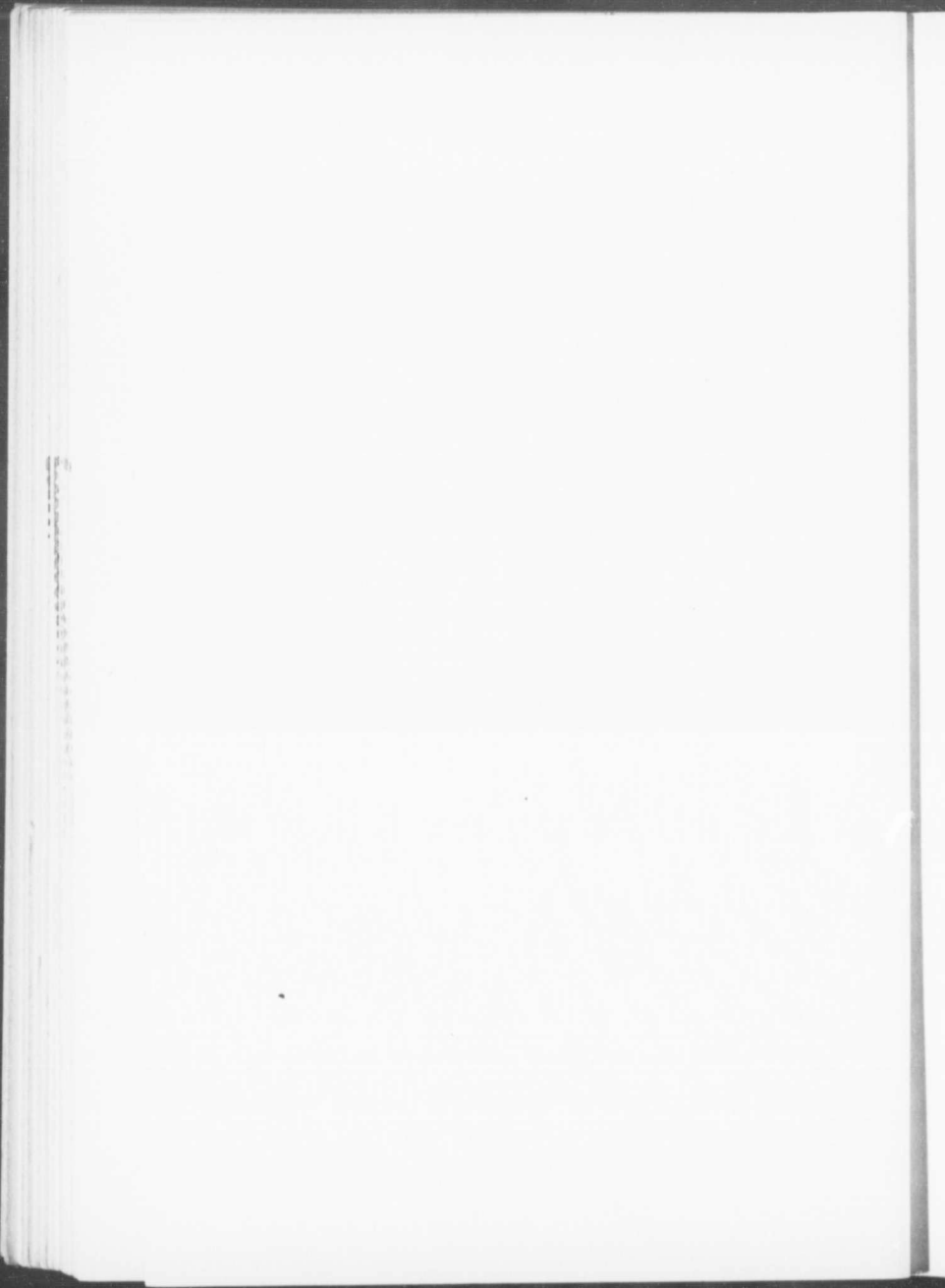
Two figures in white passed along the street and one of them suddenly stopped and half turning his head, paused as if listening. The other seized him by his sleeve, but the first one pointed in the direction of Gobbo, who had resumed his chatter. What Mr. Packlepoose noticed as peculiar was that the man pointed without looking and then Mr. Packlepoose noticed that the man was blind. It was the muezzin.

Now to Mr. Packlepoose, it did not seem





Gobbo leaped upon him and the dog set up  
a howl.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

to be a very serious offense to run through a mosque with a monkey, but he knew the Mussulmans were very strict about their religion and its temples. He thought it was just as well to avoid trouble if he could, so he turned his back to the white-robed men and started to walk in the opposite direction.

As he did so, he saw three fez-topped men approaching and one had a face which was long and thin and cruel, and one had a face which was short and snubby and brutal, and one had a face round and rough and beastly. With one accord they stopped and looked toward Gobbo and then their cruel eyes sought out the monkey's owner. So there stood Mr. Packlepoose in the narrow street, with the pirates on one hand and the priests on the other. Just then, too, one of the many wretched street-dogs snapped at Gobbo and Gobbo leaped upon him and bit him. The dog set up a howl and instantly all the other dogs of the street, as well as the people, rushed at poor Gobbo, for these wretched

## JUST THEN

beasts are considered holy by the Mussulmans. Though Mr. Packlepoose would have avoided trouble if he could, he was not going to see Gobbo hurt if he could help it, so he rushed into the thick of it after Gobbo and the three pirates and the two priests rushed after Mr. Packlepoose. The street was in an uproar. The dogs barked, the people yelled, the pirates cursed and Gobbo screamed and scolded. A hundred hands tried to seize the little gray monkey, but he was quicker than any of them and darted through a door, which was open just a crack. The crowd stopped, but Mr. Packlepoose broke through and followed, scarcely thinking what he did. He found himself in a covered passage, with Gobbo still ahead of him and badly frightened. The passage led to an open court and Mr. Packlepoose guessed that he was in somebody's house and that if somebody caught him there he would have trouble.

All around the court-yard there were numerous doors and windows of irregular sizes

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

and through one of these Gobbo had disappeared, but Mr. Packlepoose could not tell which one. He stood there in the center of the court, staring about him. Outside he could hear the mob shouting and the dogs barking. Inside, all was still for the moment, though he fancied he heard a low murmur as of smothered and half-frightened laughter, but he expected some Terrible Turk with a scimitar to appear any moment and cut off his head.

And, indeed, he now heard heavy footsteps and a fierce voice. There seemed no way to go and nothing to do and Mr. Packlepoose was in a tight place.

Just then something happened.

It was a very small thing which happened, but it was enough just then.

A small door opened, a small hand beckoned. Mr. Packlepoose dashed toward the door and squeezed through it and stood looking into a pair of blue eyes.

The eyes were all he saw, for the lady

## JUST THEN

wore a haick, or veil, over the rest of her face. She hurriedly led him into a room where four other women were lolling about, laughing and playing with a monkey. The monkey was Gobbo, of course.

Each of the women wore loose silken trousers, with a loose sort of an apron-skirt over them. At sight of Mr. Packlepoose, the women screamed and covered their faces with their skirts, for a Turkish woman must not let her face be seen by any man not of her own household. Mr. Packlepoose could not help smiling at them, and not wishing to embarrass them he started to back out, but the Lady-with-the-Blue-Eyes would not let him. She turned to the rest and said something, pointing to his bare feet, laying her hand over her stomach and pointing again to Gobbo, by which Mr. Packlepoose knew she was telling them that he was poor and hungry and would do them no harm any more than his own monkey.

Having put on their veils they gathered

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

about him, as if he were as curious an animal as Gobbo. They felt of his American clothes and they brought him some Turkish shoes. They also gave both him and Gobbo food and showed him a little closet-like room with a couch where he might go to sleep. And Mr. Packlepoose went to sleep on the instant and so did Gobbo. They slept there all that day and far into the night. When Mr. Packlepoose awakened, it was because of a warm light held close to his eyes and a cold knife against his throat. He opened his eyes to see two huge, ox-like men regarding him. He did not cry out, for there was no one to whom to call and the two men made no sound and said no word. They motioned Mr. Packlepoose to stand up and when he did so, they put a long sack over his head and threw him on the couch again. Gobbo began to whimper and without a word they thrust him into the sack also. "Poor Gobbo!" said Mr. Packlepoose.

Then the men sewed up the end of the

## JUST THEN

sack. It was very smothery, but enough air got through so that Mr. Packlepoose and Gobbo could breathe. One of the men slung the load on his shoulders like a bag of meal and carried the sack till he got tired. Then the other carried it a way and finally Mr. Packlepoose could hear the lapping of water.

Now they dumped him into a boat as if he were a sack of potatoes and now Mr. Packlepoose knew what they were going to do to him. All his life he had read of how the cruel Sultan had had offenders sewn into sacks and thrown into the sea and now he was about to be drowned like a superfluous kitten himself. Mr. Packlepoose reflected that he had always been kind to kittens and it did seem a little hard that he should be drowned without even a chance to struggle for his life.

The two men jumped into the boat and began to row. Splash, creak! splash, creak! splash, creak! went the oars for a long time. They were getting a long way from shore.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Then they stopped, took a heavy weight and tied it around Mr. Packlepoose's feet, dumped him into the water, and rowed rapidly away.

Away over in America a little girl was so sorry. How much sorrier she would have been had she known that her father was sewn in a sack and dumped into the sea, with a fifty-pound weight tied to him to keep him down.

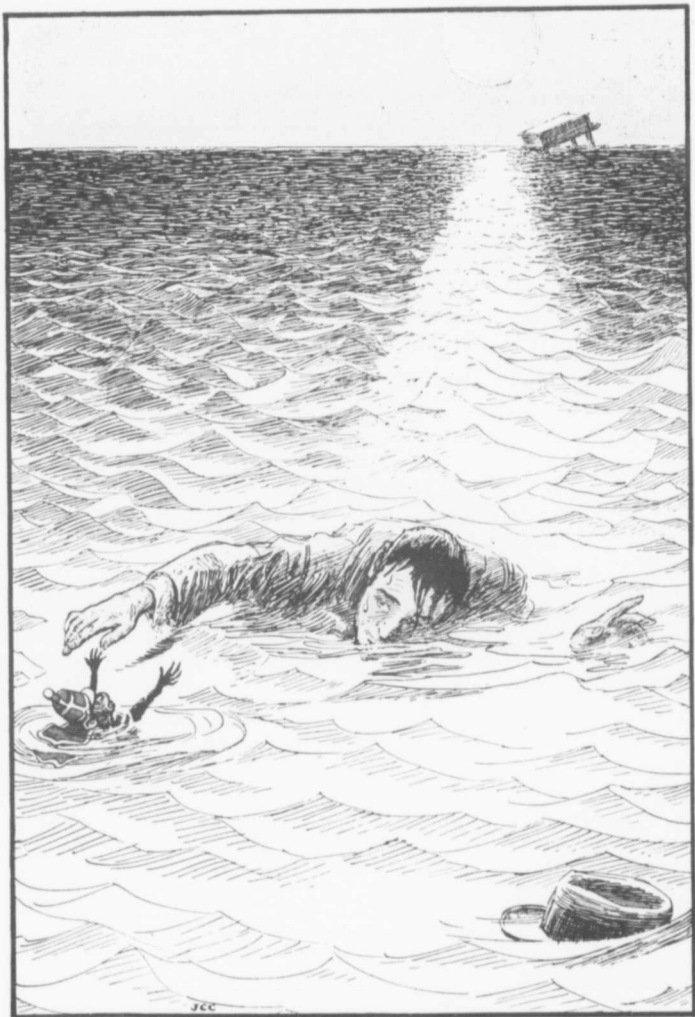
## XI

AN AUTOMOBILLYBOAT LOOKS LIKE A SCOW ON  
STILTS AND YOU COULDN'T CATCH AN OYS-  
TER WITH YOUR TAIL LIKE GOBBO DID.  
THE MAHOGANY MAN WANTS TO PLAY  
MARBLES

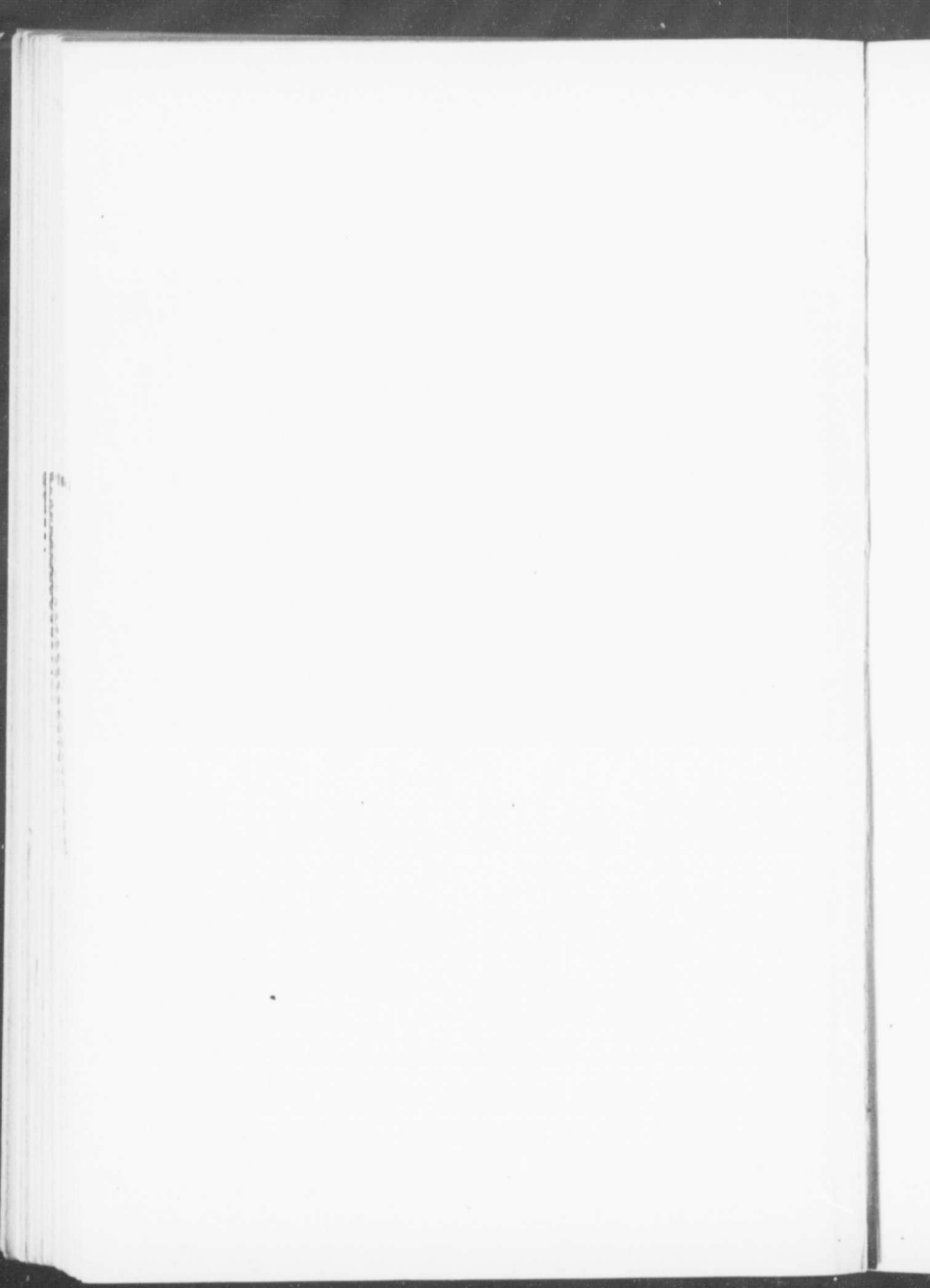
G**O**BBO gave a little whimper of terror and pressed against Mr. Packlepoose's hand.

Just then something happened.

One thing which happened was that they struck the bottom, but that didn't help any. The other thing was that Mr. Packlepoose felt something pass from Gobbo's hand to his. It was the pocket-knife which the delighted little Turkish boy had given him the previous morning. Throughout the adventures of the day and night Gobbo had held on to the knife, as he had been taught to keep everything given to him until his master took it away.



A little terrified face appeared above the water.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Mr. Packlepoose opened the knife in a flash, ripped up the sack, thrust out Gobbo, cut the cord away which held the weight from around his ankles and struck out for the surface. Of course all this happened in just a few seconds after they had been thrown from the boat; but it seemed to Mr. Packlepoose that his lungs would burst before he got his head above water. When he came up he took several deep breaths and told himself he had never known how good air tasted before.

Now a little, chattering, terrified face appeared, now bobbing above the water in the moonlight, now sinking underneath. "What's the matter, Gobbo?" called Mr. Packlepoose. "I thought all animals could swim." But Gobbo struggled over to him and climbed upon his shoulders, still fussing. Suddenly Mr. Packlepoose shouted. He had seen a strange, strange vessel beating down, or rather shooting down, toward the Mediterranean. At the first glance in the

## JUST THEN

moonlight, it looked like nothing quite so much as a scow on stilts and, indeed, when Mr. Packlepoose came to examine her later, by daylight, his first startled impression still seemed to be pretty nearly correct.

Presently, there came an answering hail and the strange vessel swung around, more like an auto than like a ship, and passed close enough to throw him a line. The boat backed squarely up to him and took him in over the stern just as if there were no screw there and, a little later, Mr. Packlepoose found out that there wasn't. The screw on this strange boat was in front and pulled rather than pushed. When she got to going fast the entire boat rose out of the water and only the screw remained under, so that it looked as if she were flying through the air. The boat hung in a sort of frame and the legs of the frame, so to speak, dipped into the water and on the bottom of each was a flat piece which you might call a foot, each tilted upward a little, so that the faster the

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

boat went the nearer to the surface came the feet, until they just skimmed over the top of the water like the runners of an ice-boat.

The sailors hauled Mr. Packlepoose aboard and he was content to lie there till he could rest a bit, but Gobbo, who had clung to him, still kept up a chattering and complaining.

"You don't know enough to know when you are well off, Gobbo," panted Mr. Packlepoose, but Gobbo jumped up and down and pounded something on the deck.

"Whatever is the matter with you?" demanded Mr. Packlepoose. Looking, he saw that an enormous oyster had fastened itself to Gobbo's tail. It was the weight of the oyster which had made him swim so poorly and it was the pinch of it which made him complain. Evidently, when Mr. Packlepoose had thrust him out of the sack, Gobbo's tail had swished into the open shell, lying on the bottom of the sea, and when it closed,

## JUST THEN

poor Gobbo had brought the oyster unwillingly along.

Mr. Packlepoose laughed, seized the oyster and broke it open, releasing poor Gobbo's tail. The monkey jumped about delightedly, now licking his pinched tail, now darting upon the oyster and tearing it from its shell and then fawning upon Mr. Packlepoose in gratitude. After a round or two like this, he settled down in his master's arms and pressed something round into his hand.

"A marble!" said Mr. Packlepoose. "First a knife and then a marble. Well, what else did those generous little beggars give you yesterday morning?"

He was about to toss Gobbo's treasure overboard, when he thought to himself that Gobbo's feelings might be hurt if he should see his gift thrown away, so Mr. Packlepoose slipped it into his pocket.

About that time a sailor touched Mr. Packlepoose upon the shoulder and signaled him that he was to go into the cabin to see



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the master of the automobillyboat, for that was what the strange vessel was called. The master of the strange boat was strange also. He sat upon a sort of a throne in the main cabin, which was cushioned and furnished like a parlor.

The man's skin was a rich brown and shone as if it had been oiled. His hair was as white as linen and was brushed smoothly back from his brown brow. "He looks like a mahogany bed with a white spread," thought Mr. Packlepoose.

The Mahogany Man took a pipe from his mouth and spoke in Spanish.

"*No intendiente*," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

The Mahogany Man tried German. "*Ich verstehe nicht*," said Mr. Packlepoose.

The next question came in French. "*Je ne comprends pas*," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

The Mahogany Man tried Arabic, but Mr. Packlepoose only shook his head, and the

## JUST THEN

Mahogany Man tried Russian. "I don't understand," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"Well, why didn't you say so in the first place?" cried the Mahogany Man impatiently and put his pipe back into his mouth and smoked furiously. For the first time, Mr. Packlepoose noticed what an oddly shaped pipe it was, for it was like a small, iron stove and had a stem, jointed and black, exactly like a small stove-pipe.

"Of course you know who I am," said the Mahogany Man, gasping and choking over his pipe, but puffing away bravely. Then, without waiting for an answer, he added with importance, "I am the Ramjam of Squat. Naturally, I cannot associate with you. Out of the ocean you came. Into the ocean you go." He choked again over his pipe and gasped, "Oh, I wish I could stop this stove from smoking!"

"Allow me," said Mr. Packlepoose politely. Taking his pipe from between the teeth of the Ramjam of Squat, he turned it

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

upside down and knocked it against his heel. Then he blew once through the stem and handed it back, saying, "Your Ramjamness will find that it has ceased smoking."

"Wonderful! You are a man after my own heart. Who are you?"

Mr. Packlepoose drew himself up proudly and answered, "I am the Packlepoose of USA, Husband of the Hockamaboury, and Father Plenipotentiary and Comrade Extraordinary to the Only Bumpybambooney."

The Ramjam of Squat opened his eyes and mouth in amazement, seized Mr. Packlepoose by the hand and pressed his forehead to it.

"I am honored to receive you," he cried. "Really, you must stay to breakfast. I am just on my way to Mocha to get a cup of coffee. If you will be good enough to spend the day with me, we shall have tea at Ceylon."

"My dear Ramjam," cried Mr. Packlepoose, "surely you know that Mocha lies at

## JUST THEN

the extreme end of the Red Sea, nearly two thousand miles away."

"Very good, very good!" said the Ramjam; "then we shall have time to stop at Jaffa and pick up an orange to begin upon. They have very good oranges there."

To Mr. Packlepoose this didn't seem to make the matter any better, but as if there were nothing more to be said on the subject, the Ramjam turned to another topic and said, "And now I will tell you the story of the Seven Copper Kettles and you shall tell me of the Bumpybambooney, which is, no doubt, a very interesting animal. But first you must have some dry clothing, as befits your rank."

The Ramjam clapped his hands and a slave brought silk and velvet clothing and toggled Mr. Packlepoose up until he felt like a masquerade. Then Mr. Packlepoose and the Ramjam matched stories, as they called it; first one telling the best story he knew and then the other trying to tell a better one,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

and the time flew so rapidly that Mr. Packlepoose really didn't know whether it was that morning or the next.

At last he noticed that the Ramjam seemed to be losing his temper. He tried hard to keep him good-natured by telling his very best stories, but the better stories he told the sulkier the Ramjam became. Mr. Packlepoose did not guess that the Ramjam was very proud of his ability as a story teller and did not like to have anyone beat him at it.

Finally, after Mr. Packlepoose had told the story of "The Worm Who Clad the King," the Ramjam said, "Oh, very well, story-telling is a child's game anyway. I'm sure I can beat you playing marbles."

"Marbles!" echoed Mr. Packlepoose in astonishment.

"You think we can't play marbles on ship-board, don't you?" asked the Ramjam in great glee. "But I want you to know that

## JUST THEN

the automobillyboat runs so smoothly we can play perfectly."

"But I haven't played marbles since I don't know when," laughed Mr. Packlepoose.

"What!" cried the Ramjam, angrily. "You a grown man and do not play marbles. Why, I thought every gentleman carried a supply." And reaching into his pocket, the Ramjam drew out a handful of crystal agates and flung them on the floor.

The Ramjam acted so much as if it were inexcusable not to play marbles that Mr. Packlepoose felt very much embarrassed. He tried to laugh out of it, but that made the Ramjam angrier than ever. "What!" he cried, lashing himself into a fury. "You do not play marbles, you cannot play marbles, you will not play marbles? I knew you were not fit company for a Ramjam!"

"Oh, but your Ramjamness," protested Mr. Packlepoose, "I do not mean to be disagreeable. I'll play marbles with you, if you like."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Oh, you will!" screamed the Ramjam. "But you have no marbies. You would play with my marbles and not allow me to play with yours. Pish! pash! The bow-string for you."

He clapped his hands and two slaves appeared. One had a sort of a slip-noose and the other Mr. Packlepoose's clothes. "The Packlepoose of USA desires to be dressed for breakfast," called the Ramjam, in a terrible voice. "Be sure to *tie his cravat tight*."

Now you might not know what the Ramjam meant by that, unless you know that in that part of the world the bow-string is used for the purpose of strangling criminals. It looked as if the Ramjam intended to have Mr. Packlepoose choked to death. "The Packlepoose of USA is tired of our society and he does not play marbles, so tie his cravat tight," said the Ramjam.

The Slave-of-the-Bow-String was a huge hulk of a man, very strong, very quick and

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

very cruel. The Slave-of-the-Old-Clothes was a little, cringing, trembling fellow. "What does the Packlepoose of USA deserve?" cried the Ramjam.

"He deserves death!" bellowed the big slave and leaping upon Mr. Packlepoose, he twisted his hands back, thrust the slip-noose over his head and pulled it tight. Poor Mr. Packlepoose was entirely helpless. It seemed only a matter of a minute before he would be choked to death.

But just then something happened.



## XII

WHY THE RAMJAM BUMPED HIS HEAD AGAINST  
THE FLOOR. YES, YOU CAN GET SEA-SICK IN  
THE DESERT AND IT MAKES YOU MAD TO HAVE  
YOUR BOAT BITE YOU IN THE LEG

THE Slave-of-the-Old-Clothes also made answer to his master and he said, "He deserves death, for he has deceived your Ramjamness. He *does* play marbles." Thrusting his hand into Mr. Packlepoose's old clothes, he pulled out a round, white object, passed it to the Ramjam and added, "It is larger than those of your highness, but it is only common white."

The Ramjam gave a cry of amazement. His eyes stuck out like two of his own marbles. He made a sign to the Slave-of-the-Bow-String, who released Mr. Packlepoose instantly. The Ramjam went down on his knees and in that position waddled across

## JUST THEN

the cabin and cried, "Mighty Packlepoose of USA, whose marbles are magnificent pearls, I bump my head before you."

Mr. Packlepoose was as much surprised as the Ramjam. It certainly was a magnificent pearl, round and pure and perfect. For a moment he could not account for it and then he remembered what Gobbo had thrust into his hand after the oyster was removed from his tail.

"Ramjam," said Mr. Packlepoose, "you are too changeable for me. "I cannot tell from one minute to another whether you are going to kiss my feet, or to have me eaten for dinner. If you don't mind, I'll let you put me ashore."

"Oh," said the Ramjam, "you are doubtless on your way to Mecca with your Great White Pearl. Far be it from me to deprive you of the honors which await you. You will see the Grand Sherif and will give him this scroll from me."

The Ramjam wrote a few words on a

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

piece of parchment and rolled it on a small piece of wood which he handed to Mr. Packlepoose with his pearl. Now, Mr. Packlepoose had no idea of going to see the Grand Sherif of Mecca, but the Ramjam acted so much like a madman that he considered it wise to go ashore. Anyway, the automobillyboat wasn't going his way and he had an idea that almost any port would have a cable office and an occasional steamer to Europe and thence to America and to Bumpybambooney. The automobillyboat hove to and the Ramjam ordered a row-boat lowered to take Mr. Packlepoose ashore at Jiddah, which is a port of the Red Sea.

The appearance of the automobillyboat caused a great excitement in Jiddah, it was so unlike anything the people had ever seen before, and when they saw Mr. Packlepoose, they supposed the strange, new craft was his. As soon as he stepped ashore a crowd of people, ranging from little toddlers just able to walk up to old men with gray beards,

## JUST THEN

surrounded him and cried, "Backsheesh! backsheesh!" which was their way of demanding money.

Mr. Packlepoose held his head high and walked straight through them, but very soon he was stopped by a soldier in turban, jacket and short, wide trousers. Then a customs officer came forward and demanded to know whether Mr. Packlepoose had any pearls. Mr. Packlepoose bowed. The officer told him there was a duty on pearls and Mr. Packlepoose bowed again, not knowing what else to do.

You will remember that Mr. Packlepoose had no money, except the few small coins which Gobbo had gathered for him and these were in the wet clothes he had taken off. He was now dressed in the gorgeous garments of the Ramjam, but had no money and nothing of any value except the Great White Pearl and Gobbo.

The automobillyboat now picked up its small boat and started off. A small, swift

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

felucca and a steamer, which happened to be in the harbor, started to give chase but the automobillyboat ran away from them like a bicycle from a pair of lame ducks. Mr. Packlepoose wished he had stayed on her, for it didn't look as if he were going to get along very well at Jiddah.

"Duty," demanded the Turkish official.

"No money," said Mr. Packlepoose. Then the Turk demanded his pearl and Mr. Packlepoose slowly drew it out of his pocket.

It had the same effect upon the official that it had had upon the Ramjam. If it had been a common pearl, the officer might have stolen it for himself, but it was so large and round and pure that no one less than a monarch might hope to keep it or sell it without suspicion. The official looked out to sea at the disappearing automobillyboat and looked at Mr. Packlepoose's clothes and at the pearl. Then he took a deep breath and bowed almost to the ground, for he thought Mr. Packlepoose must be a prime minister at the very

## JUST THEN

least. "If your lordship would be so kind as to allow your lordship's servant to see your lordship's passport," he said, pointing to the scroll which Mr. Packlepoose held in his hand.

Mr. Packlepoose handed it over and this is what the official read:—

Know all men that this is  
The Packlepoose of USA,  
who bears the Great White Pearl to the  
Grand Sherif and who is even a better story  
teller than is

(Signed) THE RAMJAM OF SQUAT.

Then there was a great scurrying to and fro. A feast was brought for Mr. Packlepoose and when he had eaten, camels were brought and the finest and best knelt before Mr. Packlepoose.

There seemed nothing for Mr. Packlepoose to do but to get on, though he didn't want to at all. But he couldn't explain having the Great White Pearl and the scroll from the

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Ramjam, unless he pretended, at least, to be going to Mecca and the Grand Sherif. So Mr. Packlepoose got on the camel and the camel lifted up and Mr. Packlepoose pitched forward and backward and away they went, Mr. Packlepoose, his camel and his escort of five Bedouins similarly mounted.

Mr. Packlepoose sat and rocked back and forth till he was seasick. "Wouldn't Bumpy-bambooney laugh if she could see me now," he said to Gobbo and though Gobbo didn't understand, he seemed to sympathize. They went over twenty miles the first day and camped in the desert at night. In the morning the chief of the Bedouins pretended that his camel was better than Mr. Packlepoose's and he insisted that they change. Mr. Packlepoose didn't know the difference so he changed camels with the chief and for a while he got along very well, but in the afternoon the camel got tired and ugly. Mr. Packlepoose didn't understand camels and the more he tried to make it go the worse it got. Just

## JUST THEN

as they got in sight of Mecca, the beast dropped to his knees, Mr. Packlepoose pitched forward and the camel turned its head and bit savagely at Mr. Packlepoose, catching him in the leg. Luckily for Mr. Packlepoose, the velvet of his trousers was thick and the animal only nipped his leg, but tore a piece right out of the trousers and swallowed it.

Mr. Packlepoose slipped off the beast and vowed he would walk the rest of the way to Mecca, which he did. As soon as he entered the gates of the city, he sent a messenger to the Grand Sherif with the scroll the Ramjam had given him and the Grand Sherif summoned him into his presence at once. "Now," thought Mr. Packlepoose, "in return for the Gréat White Pearl, he can hardly do less than to give me anything in the world in exchange and I shall ask him for a caravan to the coast and a ship to America, or enough money to get there in first-class 'style myself.'"

The Grand Sherif was a yellowish, brown-



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

ish man, with three parallel gashes on each cheek. He didn't seem very grand to Mr. Packlepoose, but he seemed very eager over something. The first thing he did was to ask to see the Great White Pearl. Mr. Packlepoose put his hand into his pocket to get it and found it gone. The camel had bitten it out of his pocket and swallowed it.

And there was Mr. Packlepoose without his pearl and without money, away over there in Arabia, and Bumpybambooney was wondering where he was and wished so much she had never told him to go away.

## XIII

TO MAKE A CAMEL THROW UP, SHOULD HE HAVE AN EMETIC TO EACH STOMACH? THE STORY-TELLER TO THE GRAND SHERIF MEETS THE KINGKICKER OF KIOWA AND THE SACRED BLACK STONE IS STOLEN

“THE Pearl?” demanded the Grand Sherif.

“The camel swallowed it,” answered Mr. Packlepoose.

“What camel?”

“The camel I rode from Jiddah.”

“Where is this camel?”

“I have no idea. After it tried to bite me and dumped me off, I walked into the city and the Bedouins took charge of it.”

“Summon every camel in the city!” commanded the Grand Sherif. “Lead them before this man. Let him pick out the camel with the Pearl, or let him fail at his peril. What sort of a looking camel was it?”

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Now if it had a horse or a dog, or some animal with which Mr. Packlepoose was familiar, he could have described it. But a camel! all camels looked alike to him and he could only answer, "Why, it was a sort of a dusty-looking camel and it had a hump and yellow eyes and wobbly lips and—and it looked like—like—well, like a camel, you know."

When they brought the string of several dozen camels before him, they all looked so much alike to his eyes that he burst out laughing and declared that he couldn't tell one from the other.

But it was no laughing matter. The Grand Sherif declared that if Mr. Packlepoose couldn't pick out the camel so that the Pearl could be found that he would be held as a slave.

"How would you get the Pearl if I found the camel?" protested Mr. Packlepoose.

"Cut him open," roared the Grand Sherif, "as I would you, if you had swallowed it."

## JUST THEN

"Why not give every camel an emetic, then?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

The Grand Sherif was tickled with the idea, but as every camel has four stomachs and there were so many camels and he gave every camel an emetic to each of its stomachs, they ran out of emetics before they ran out of camels and the Great White Pearl was not found.

So the Grand Sherif would not let Mr. Packlepoose go, and it would have done him no good if he had been released as he had no money, no friends, and no way to get across the desert.

Because of this he was allowed a great deal of freedom, though held as a slave. The Sherif remembered the words of the Ramjam and as all Eastern peoples are very fond of stories, he kept Mr. Packlepoose as Story Teller of his Household. This was all right as long as Mr. Packlepoose could think of new stories or remember old ones, but you know you can keep drawing water

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

from a cistern until it runs dry, if no new rain comes to fill it again. Mr. Packlepoose began to run dry of stories. One day, the Grand Sherif grew very disagreeable and threatened to sell Mr. Packlepoose into the interior of Arabia, unless he told him a dozen new stories that same evening. Mr. Packlepoose knew that if that were done, he would never get away from Arabia at all, so he resolved to run away, though where he should run, he didn't know.

It happened that there was great excitement in the Holy City (as Mecca is called) that day. The Sultan of Turkey was expected to make his pilgrimage to Mecca and to worship before the Sacred Black Stone in the Kaaba. Now the Sultan, of course, is the Grand Seigneur, the ruler of all the Turks and Arabs and all Mohammedan peoples, while the Grand Sherif is the descendant of the Prophet, the ruler of the Holy City and the head of the Mohammedan Church, so you can see there would naturally be a rivalry

## JUST THEN

between them and a dispute of authority in Mecca.

The Grand Sherif was very anxious to display his new Story Teller to the Sultan and so he was especially angry when Mr. Packlepoose became empty of stories and declared he would tell no more. Mr. Packlepoose knew of this excitement, but there was another commotion, of which he knew nothing. The Sacred Black Stone was missing from the Kaaba! The Stone was said to have been given by the angel Gabriel to Abraham and all true Musselmans turn toward it, in saying their prayers, no matter in what part of the world they may be. The Grand Sherif would rather have lost his best eye than to have had the Sacred Black Stone disappear at such a time, but gone it was. So carefully had it been treasured that it was imbedded in the wall of the Kaaba, but now there was nothing but a hole where the stone had been.

You may be sure that the Grand Sherif

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

was in a very bad humor and it was a very bad time for anyone in the city to make any suspicious movement, but Mr. Packlepoose had made up his mind to run away and one time looked as good to him as another.

So he started for the city gate, determined to hide in the mountains and to trust to luck. As he was going along with his head down, he heard a voice hail him in a low tone, "Hey there! You look as if you could talk United States, if you had to."

Mr. Packlepoose looked up and saw the strangest figure he had ever seen in Mecca. He wouldn't have been so strange in Wyoming, or Oklahoma, but in Mecca he was odd enough. He was mounted on a wiry broncho and he led a big black mule, carrying on each side a canvas-covered pack, which seemed, to Mr. Packlepoose's eye, to contain something with wheels. He wore a long knife in his belt and a rawhide lariat at the horn of his

## JUST THEN

Mexican saddle. "Who on earth are you?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"I am the Kingkicker of Kiowa," answered the other.

"What in the name of common sense is that?"

"What's there funny about it?" asked the Kingkicker. "Some fellows collect postage-stamps and coins, some the paintings of Old Masters. Some people spend all their lives chasing bugs and butterflies and some chasing dollars. I've got all the dollars I want and I don't care for bugs and oil-paintings, but I do like to kick kings. Nothing spiteful about it, you understand. I just like to hand 'em a swat, just to say I've done it."

"Tell me all about it," begged Mr. Packlepoose. "It sounds like a new bunch of stories, and a new lease of life."

"Well," said the Kingkicker modestly, "The King of England was easy. He is a high-up Mason, you know, and so am I, so I just invented a thirty-fourth degree and what



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

I did to him in the initiation was a plenty. The President of France is a Frenchman, as you may know, and the French have a boxing game in which they box with their feet instead of their hands. I got the president to explain this to me and in the course of it, I managed to get in a kick at him. The King of Spain fell out of his box at the bullfight one day and I dropped into the ring and lassoed the bull just before it ran over him. In the scrimmage, I pretended I had to push the king out of the way with my foot, which was enough to score. I got the Czar of Russia interested in American football and we organized a team among the Grand Dukes and such, and of course in the game it was easy to kick the Czar instead of the ball. With the Emperor of Austria it was harder, but what's bothering me now is how to reach this fellow they call the Grand Sherif and the Sultan. Do you know any way I can get to see the G. S.?"

"Why, he's the man for whom I want the

## JUST THEN

stories you've been telling me," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"No, you don't!" cried the Kingkicker. "You'd spoil my game entirely if he knew what I was about beforehand. Tell you what! You get me the chance to see the Grand Sherif and I'll give you a chance so you'll never have to see him again."

"That's easy," said Mr. Packlepoose. "Take this scroll and send it him and he'll admit you, or wait till to-morrow morning and you can see him and the Sultan at prayers in the Mosque."

"Good enough," said the Kingkicker. "Now put this hunk of rock in your clothes and hide it somewhere up in the hills. They'll do anything in the world to get it back."

"The Sacred Black Stone!" whispered Mr. Packlepoose. "It's death to any unbeliever who touches it. How did you get it out of the wall of the Kaaba?"

"Oh, I pried it out with my bowie knife and a little nitro-glycerine," said the King-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

kicker carelessly. "Course they'll kill you, if they catch you with it, but you might as well be dead as a slave in this beastly place. I'd go with you right now, only I've simply got to kick the Grand Sherif before I leave. Good-by. You'd better hurry."

I doubt if it would ever have occurred to Mr. Packlepoose to have done so audacious a thing as to steal the Sacred Black Stone out of the Kaaba, but now that it was in his hands, he thought to do just as the strange man, who called himself the Kingkicker, told him to. He hurried to the northern gate, the Bab-el-Mala, but, as might have been expected, the loss of the Sacred Black Stone was known to the authorities and everyone who attempted to leave the city was seized and searched.

That night all Mecca knew that the Sacred Black Stone had been found upon the person of the Story Teller to the Grand Sherif and that he was to be publicly beheaded the next day, immediately after morning prayers. It

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

would be a fine sight for the Sultan and the Grand Sherif, but it would be rather hard upon Mr. Packlepoose and rather sad for the little girl who had told him to go away, provided she should ever find it out.

## XIV

THE KINGKICKER DOES HIS DAY'S WORK. THE  
MAN IN THE GREEN MASK STOPS TO SPIT UPON  
HIS HANDS AND THE ONE WITH THE SNAKE  
TURBAN STEPS OUT OF THE DEAD HOUSE

**E**ARLY next morning Mr. Packlepoose was dragged out of the prison, his hands were tied behind him and his feet bound together with a strong rope, just long enough to permit him to walk. An Arab with a green mask and a long, sharp scimeter signaled him to go forward and drove him to an open space where a scaffold had been erected. On the scaffold was a block covered with purple cloth and Mr. Packlepoose knew it was the place where he was to be beheaded. He had been taken there early, else his jailer could not have got him there at all, for already the crowd was beginning to gather, notwithstanding that

## JUST THEN

the Caliph and the Sherif were to say prayers in the Great Mosque that morning.

They had chosen the most open space they could find, but no space could be large enough to accommodate the crowd. Some were passing by on the way to the Great Mosque. Some were not even going to the mosque, but were choosing places to see the execution. In the surrounding houses, windows were rented for the spectacle and even the roofs of the houses were filling up with women, for Mr. Packlepoose caught glimpses of moving figures through the lattices. Perhaps you know that the roofs of the houses in the East are a favorite resort for the women and to keep the women from being seen the roofs are surrounded by lattice-work. There was just one house in which nobody had appeared as yet. All its windows were closed and it looked as deserted and lonesome as Mr. Packlepoose felt.

As the people passed, they flung words of anger and revenge at the prisoner. "Thief!"

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

yelled one, in a white turban. "Robber!" cried another in a red turban. "Dog of an infidel!" screamed a third in a yellow turban.

One passer-by wore a turban which was the oddest Mr. Packlepoose had ever seen. It looked like a snake or a coil of rope. As the wearer passed, he turned toward Mr. Packlepoose, shook his fist at him and snarled like an angry dog, "Cheer up, pal! Soon as I get my day's work done, I'll be back." Mr. Packlepoose was amazed to hear the words in English, but the speaker had hurried on towards the Great Mosque.

When the Sultan and the Sherif entered the Great Mosque that morning, there was a terrible crush of "the Faithful," as the Moslems are called, to get in. The King-kicker had plenty of money and he bribed his way through the crowd and got a good place where he could see everything. He saw that the Stone was back in place, so he knew why Mr. Packlepoose was where he had just seen him.

## JUST THEN

There was a great dispute between the Sultan and the Grand Sherif as to who should be *imam*, that is, who should have the honor of saying the prayers and leading the devotions. Neither the Sultan nor the Sherif would give in, so it was agreed that they should lead the prayers together. They knelt side by side before the recovered Sacred Black Stone and bumped their foreheads on the ground, reciting their prayers vigorously, each trying to talk louder than the other and the multitude joining in. While everybody was in this position, the Kingkicker picked his way between the worshipers, ran softly up behind the Caliph (or Sultan) and the Sherif and gave each of them a quick kick. Each gave a little lurch forward, but neither opened his eyes or raised his head and of course no one else did so. The Kingkicker slipped back into the crowd undetected and after it was all over, the Caliph and the Sherif each claimed that the Angel Gabriel had given him a signal mark of his favor



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

during the prayer and then they had another dispute, as each proudly claimed that he had been kicked the harder.

"Ho, ho!" said the Kingkicker to himself. "Now that my day's work is done, I must look for that fellow who talks United States and see what I can do for him."

The Kingkicker certainly had no trouble in finding him, for everybody now turned toward the scaffold, where the Robber of the Sacred Black Stone was to have his head cut off. Mr. Packlepoose wondered if the Man with the Snake Turban would come back. Not that it would make any difference, but he would like to have his last moments helped by the sight of a friendly face. The time approached. The multitude crowded around. Everywhere was a mass of heads and faces, except in the Dead House, which was still deserted.

Now the Executioner with the Green Mask motioned to Mr. Packlepoose to ascend the scaffold. Now he signed him to lay his head

## JUST THEN

on the block. Now he raised his long, sharp scimetar in air.

Mr. Packlepoose looked into the eyes of the Green Mask and saw no mercy there. In a window he saw the Grand Sherif and the Caliph turn to each other and smile. They seemed only interested in seeing how well the executioner would do his work.

The Man in the Green Mask lowered his sword a moment to spit upon his hands. Mr. Packlepoose thought idly that he saw a glimmer of life in the Dead House. The multitude held its breath. The Grand Sherif sent a word of impatience to the executioner. Once more he swung his sword aloft.

Just then something happened.

From a door in the lattice on the roof of the Dead House, a man stepped. It was the Man with the Snake Turban. Taking a knife from his belt he hurled it like an arrow toward the executioner. It pierced his arm and the executioner dropped his sword with a cry of pain. The surprised Mr. Packle-



Once more he swung his sword aloft.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

poose got upon his feet. A cry of superstitious terror went up from the crowd, for they had not seen whence the knife had come. It looked to them as if it were a dart from heaven.

The man on the roof took off his Snake Turban and swung it around in his hand. A noose shot out and fell over Mr. Packlepoose and tightened around his body. Slowly he rose into the air and in a minute or two he was on the roof of the Dead House with the Kingkicker. Seizing another knife, the Kingkicker cut Mr. Packlepoose's bonds and hustled him down through the house and into a back room. There stood two motor-cycles which the Kingkicker had carried there on his mule, for just such an emergency. "We must make a dash for it," he said, and dash they did.

The appearance of the two men on those strange panting machines completed the terror of the Moslems and they dashed wildly out of the way. Once started, nothing could

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

stop the riders and the Moslems were so confused and crowded that the few who tried to pursue fell over each other.

Mr. Packlepoose and the Kingkicker reached Jiddah that same morning and to their great joy a steamer stood off the shore and her stacks were pouring out black smoke as if she were getting up steam.

The two men hired a small felucca to take them out and put them aboard the steamer.

But Gobbo! Gobbo was left behind and while he had a good home with the Grand Sherif and was only a little, gray monkey, you have no idea how badly Mr. Packlepoose felt to leave him.

## XV

WHILE BUMPYBAMBOONEY CHANGES HER WISH,  
CAPTAIN SMALLGROG, KNUCKLENOSED NICK,  
BANTY JIM, LARRY THE LOBSTER AND MR.  
BUMPS MAKE MORE TROUBLE FOR MR.  
PACKLEPOOSE. THE KINGKICKER SCORES  
AGAIN. BUMP!

CAPTAIN SMALLGROG of the *Arfandarf* was a little man with a crook in his knees, as if he were just about to make a curtsy. The fact is he had been a dancing master in his youth and had never got over it. Perhaps he should not have taken the Kingkicker and Mr. Packlepoose aboard without passports, but the Kingkicker shook a handful of gold in front of his nose and the captain liked the smell of it. So he took them aboard and stood on his bridge and called to his crew, as if he were calling off a quadrille:—

## JUST THEN

“Take your places. Form a ring.  
Salute your captain; balance; swing!  
Man the capstan, all hands round;  
The *Arfandarf* is outward bound.”

When Mr. Packlepoose heard the captain give his orders, he jumped in with the crew and helped haul up the anchor.

During all this time, events happened so rapidly and in such a strange manner that Mr. Packlepoose had had no chance to send a message home since he had been at Naples. Strange as it may appear, you can see that this was so, if you will recollect that he was in an air-ship from Naples to Constantinople, in the automobillyboat from the Dardanelles to Jiddah, in slavery in Mecca and in such constant trouble between times that he had had no chance at all to send word to Mrs. Hockamaboury and Bumpybambooney, and, as I told you, Mr. Packlepoose and the King-kicker reached Jiddah just in time to catch the *Arfandarf* and without a breath to spare.

When Mr. Packlepoose saw the British



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

flag on the *Arfandarf*, he was in hopes she was bound for England, but found instead that she was on the way to Australia.

I consider it, therefore, as somewhat remarkable that that very evening (only it was morning in America) Bumpybambooney had been saying, "Oh, I am so sorry I told my Papa Packlepoose to go away," when she stopped short and said, more cheerfully, "I'm not going to cry about his going away any longer. I'm going to wish for him to come back."

And sure enough he was coming back, for Captain Smallgrog was even then standing on the good ship *Arfandarf*, doing a dancing step and singing to his crew.

Captain Smallgrog was glad not only to get the Kingkicker for a passenger, because he had plenty of money, but he was glad to get Mr. Packlepoose, because the ship was short-handed and Mr. Packlepoose was willing to work his way. The Kingkicker wanted to pay for Mr. Packlepoose, too, but Mr.

## JUST THEN

Packlepoose said that he was already in debt to the Kingkicker and preferred to pay his way by working as one of the crew.

And now the captain signaled the engine-room and the man at the wheel, singing out:—

“ Give her two bells. Hold her ready.  
One bell, sou’ sou’ west, and steady;  
Give her all the steam there is;  
Three bells now and let her whiz!”

Mr. Packlepoose went into the fore-castle with the crew and the Kingkicker went into the cabin with the captain, where he spent most of his time trying to get the captain to run out of his course and take him to India. “ There are no kings in Australia for me to kick,” said he, “ and I’ll be out of a job.”

Mr. Packlepoose had never shipped as a sailor before, but he was willing to work and willing to learn, and it was not long before he was doing very well. All of us can do very well at almost anything, if only we try.

The food was poor and the work was hard, but Mr. Packlepoose was on his way and he

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

was satisfied. But if he was satisfied, the most of the crew were not. As long as the *Arfandarf* was in the Red Sea, the captain behaved very decently, but when they got far on their way into the South Pacific Ocean, the food was so bad and the work was so hard that the men growled and grumbled a great deal. Besides the captain kept nagging at them because they weren't graceful enough and tried to get them to two-step while shifting cargo and to schottische while holystoning the deck.

So Knucklenosed Nick, Banty Jim and Larry the Lobster got up a petition to the captain and went around to all the crew to get them to sign it. Knucklenosed Nick, who had once been an iron-molder, demanded an eight-hour day, with no work after the whistle blew. During a fog, when the whistle blew every minute or two, he didn't want to work at all. Banty Jim, who had formerly been in the British army, demanded jam for breakfast every day and Larry the Lobster, who

## JUST THEN

had a twinkle in his eye and had joined the mutiny because he thought there might be a fight, demanded five o'clock tea in the boiler-room every afternoon.

All the crew signed the petition except Mr. Packlepoose who didn't even look at it. "I'm glad enough to be getting part way to Bum-pybambooney without causing any trouble," he said.

"Aw, yer a scab," said Knucklenosed Nick.

"You're a bloomin' bounder," said Banty Jim.

"Maybe yez is a coward," said Larry the Lobster.

"Hold on," said Mr. Packlepoose good-naturedly, "I can't sign your petition, but I'll present it for you."

Now to present the petition to the captain was just what the others were afraid to do, for a captain on the high seas is like a king in an absolute monarchy and his word is law for the crew.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Mr. Packlepoose found the captain, the first mate, Mr. Bumps, the chief engineer and the Kingkicker playing cards in the cabin. He walked in and laid the petition in front of the captain. "Bless me," said the captain, "my good man, couldn't you bow a bit more gracefully and remove your cap?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Packlepoose, "let us all remove our caps," and he took off his own and the captain's at the same time. "I have a little petition from the crew. I may say that I have no complaint to make myself, but I am asked to show this to you."

"Most extraordinary," said the captain, holding it between his thumb and finger. "Er—jam for breakfast—eight-hour day—five o'clock tea in boiler-room—most extraordinary. Er—what would you suggest, Mr. Bumps?"

Mr. Bumps was as much unlike the captain as an onion is unlike a huckleberry. He had been getting redder and redder and he now swelled up till he looked like the frog in the

## JUST THEN

fable. "Do!" he shouted. "Leave the beggars to me! You, Packlepoose, back to your gang and tell them I'll have every man flogged at the main mast, chained in the calaboose, keel-hauled and hung at the yard-arm if I hear another word of this nonsense."

"Oh, say," said the Kingkicker, "if you're going to hang anybody at the yard-arm, allow me to recommend my raw-hide lariat. It's beautifully strong and works like greased lightning. He winked at Mr. Packlepoose, smiled at the captain and produced the lariat from under his chair.

"Surely," said Mr. Packlepoose, who had lived in America all of his life, you know, "surely you don't deny the right of petition. Why, it's the great principle of English and American liberty."

The captain made as if to utter a mild remark, but the mate yelled, "Right of petition! You double-decked idiot, don't you know that the captain of a ship is an absolute king and that——"

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"You don't say," interrupted the Kingkicker with a squeal of delight. He ran around behind the captain and gave him a kick which nearly lifted him off the floor. "One more tally for me!" he cried gleefully.

The poor captain looked so bewildered, the Kingkicker so delighted, and the mate so furious that Mr. Packlepoose burst into a laugh. The mate turned purple. He seized a pistol and leveled it at Mr. Packlepoose, who stood perfectly still. The mate's mouth worked as if he were trying to say something, before he pulled the trigger. He pointed the pistol at Mr. Packlepoose and pointed his hand at the door.

Just then something happened.

There was a sudden crash, a smash, a jar, a stop. Everybody was hurled from his feet. A cry arose on deck and they realized that the ship had struck a rock or a hidden reef. The captain scrambled up, hopped first on one foot, then on the other and sang to the mate and the engineer:—

## JUST THEN

“Reverse the screw and back her!  
Hard a port and tack her!  
She's crumbling like a cracker!  
It's against the law  
To take a chaw,  
Before you start to back her.”

The four men rushed on deck. The crew were already lowering the boats. Larry the Lobster and Knucklenosed Nick had one and Banty Jim was hastening to join them, with a can of jam under each arm.

If the captain were a king, he had lost his kingdom. Each one on board was looking out for himself. Mr. Packlepoose found himself in possession of a raft of water-tight cans inclosed together in a sort of crate. On his arm was the Kingkicker's lariat.

The boats had oars, but he had nothing to propel himself, nothing to make his raft go. The big boat settled lower and lower and the small boats pulled away to avoid the suction when she went down. Mr. Packlepoose's raft bobbed like a cork in an eddy, but he man-



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

aged to stay on and it stayed on top of the water.

So there was Mr. Packlepoose drifting on a raft in mid-ocean and poor little Bumpy-bambooney away over in America was trying to keep cheerful and to make herself believe that her papa was coming back.

## XVI

A LIVE MAN IS VERY GOOD FOR FISH-BAIT AND  
A BUNCH OF TIN CANS TIED TO THE TAIL OF  
A SEA-BEAST MAKES A FINE SHARKOMOBILE

**M**R. PACKLEPOOSE felt lonesome.

The men in the boats had pulled away, either without seeing, or caring. The wreck was under water. All around was the limitless sea. He had no oar, no sail. He could only drift.

How long he drifted he did not know. For a long time he lay, half-dazed, overcome by the hopelessness of it all. He saw no chance of ever getting to land and it looked as if he would stay there till he starved to death, or until a storm should arise and wash him off his frail craft.

His raft was large enough for him to lie down and after a night's rest, he felt some-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

what refreshed and more hopeful, but very thirsty. As the day grew older and the sun rose higher, he grew more and more thirsty and the heat beat down upon his unprotected head. He leaned over the raft and dipped his head in the sea.

As he did so, a huge, blue hulk rose through the water, a piggy looking eye showed for a moment, a white belly gleamed as the Thing turned over and a double row of terrible teeth snapped at his head.

As Mr. Packlepoose darted back from the shark, a black fin showed above the water on the other side of the raft. There were two of them. He sat in a huddle in the middle of the raft, almost afraid to move, at first, and the big blue shark and the great white shark swam around and around—and waited.

Mr. Packlepoose had read that a shark, especially the great white shark, will sometimes follow a vessel for days and the sailors

## JUST THEN

believe it waits for someone to die and be thrown overboard.

It is bad enough to have a shark following a full sized ship, but to watch one—or two—following a raft from which one could almost touch them, is horrible. Mr. Packlepoose knew that he would not dare to go to sleep on the raft again, for if a hand or a foot should hang over the edge, one of the sharks would snap it off in a jiffy.

Mr. Packlepoose sat still a long time, or it seemed long to him, and watched the big, cruel fishes swim around and around. "If I could only swim like that, I could get to shore," he thought. Then he laughed. "If I could swim like that, I couldn't live on shore," he said aloud.

The laugh made him feel better. So did the thought that after all he was a man and the sharks were only sharks. "If I can't swim like those beggars, maybe I can make them swim for me," he thought.

His hand fell upon the Kingkicker's lasso.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

He took his knife from his pocket and cut the raw-hide in two. He tied one end to a corner of the raft and dropped the lasso end into the water. The blue shark saw him bending over the water and became curious. A flash of his tail and he swept past the corner of the raft. Mr. Packlepoose dodged back and the shark just grazed the lasso noose. Mr. Packlepoose became interested. "Hurrah!" he said, "I've got to be my own bait if I catch this fish!"

The big, blue shark came around again. Mr. Packlepoose let an arm hang over into the water. Quick as a flash the big blue fish dashed at it. Mr. Packlepoose dodged back and gave a quick tug at the raw-hide. It tightened on the big fish just back of the terrible teeth and in front of the big fin. The big fish gave a plunge and the raft lurched through the water.

Then Mr. Packlepoose rigged a lasso to the opposite corner of the raft and caught the great white shark the same way. The

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

great white shark is, perhaps, the most muscular animal that lives. As you know, it can keep up with steamships for days, or even weeks, swimming by day and by night, so it must be very, very strong and untiring.

When the second shark was caught in the second noose, Mr. Packlepoose leaped to his feet and yelled with delight and the two sharks sped away like a couple of race-horses. Mr. Packlepoose now remembered another thing. Sharks are afraid of noise. Hearing the yells behind them and feeling the thongs around them, they dashed away in a straight line. "Hi! yi! yi!" yelled Mr. Packlepoose, "Hurrah for my Sharkomobile!"

## XVII

THE FEAST OF WHITE MAN'S DOG. HI! YI! YI!  
AND HERE COMES THE GOD-OF-THE-WATERS.  
RED RAGS AND HERR SCHNITZ ARE GLAD  
ABOUT IT, TOO

**A** RROWHEAD ISLAND is one of the smaller of the great group known as the Philippines. It is shaped like an arrow-head, or like a narrow triangle, and has a deep inlet on the short side, the side where the shaft of the arrow would go in. The island rises almost straight out of the water on all sides, so that the only way to land upon it is through the inlet. Moreover it is so densely covered with palms, banana-trees, rice grass, etc., that you could hardly force your way through it without cutting a path. Close to the water's edge this vegetation grows, so that the whole

## JUST THEN

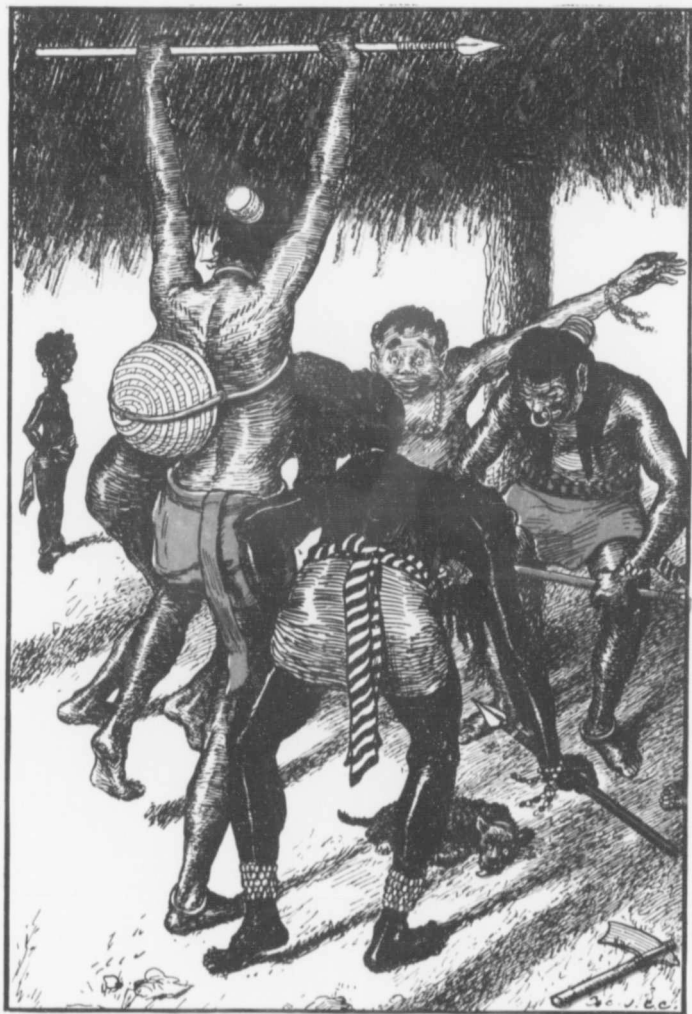
island looks like one big green plant, pushed up from underneath the sea.

On one side of the inlet, a little way inland, the native Igorrotes had cut out a clearing. In the middle of this clear space is, or was, the crudest sort of a hut. Down in the meadow of your Uncle Ezra's farm, you have, perhaps, seen a cow-shed made of four upright posts and a rude roof covered with hay or straw. This temple upon Arrowhead Island was very much like your uncle's cow-shelter. Under it a strange thing was happening. At least, it would look strange to a white man and did look strange to the white man who was watching it. Herr Schnitz was his name and he wasn't watching the scene because he wanted to, either.

Herr Schnitz was tied to a tree and his dog, his beloved Irish setter, was also tied. The poor dog lay in the middle of the open hut and a dozen naked Igorrotes danced around him. Herr Schnitz fired enough guttural German at them to have ripped







A dozen naked Igorrotes danced around him.

OF ALBERTA

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

open a gun-boat. To this the brassy-looking natives paid no attention, but danced and shouted and swung their spears. They were thoroughly happy. They were going to eat a dog—a White Man's Dog. One of them pricked the dog with his spear. The dog yelped with pain, the German stormed with anger, the Igorrotes shrieked with delight.

There was an answering shriek. It came from the ocean. "Hi! yi! hurrah! giddap! hi! yi! hi! yi!" came floating across the water.

"*Gott sei dank!*" exclaimed the German. The Igorrotes seized their spears, their bows and their long shields, crept to the opening and peeped out. A man, a white man, was coming across the sea, headed for the inlet. He stood straight up on his craft and was coming like the wind, yet there was no sail, no puff of steam, nor even the pant of a gasoline motor boat, such as Herr Schnitz had come in. The savages gazed in surprise which quickly changed to terror. There is always something terrifying in what we can-

## JUST THEN

not understand. This strange, shouting, hi-yi-ing being who came over the sea like a god of the waters sounded like an American. Of Americans they had learned to be afraid.

As you remember, the water was deep and the two shores of the bay narrowed toward this inlet. Quite naturally the sharks pointed toward the inlet. "Hi yi! hi yi!" shouted Mr. Packlepoose.

The Igorrotes waited for no nearer acquaintance, but crawled away into the jungle, like so many rabbits into a brier-patch. The sharks darted into the narrowing inlet. The raft wedged between its banks opposite the open space. Mr. Packlepoose jumped ashore and saw the whimpering dog. He had a tender heart for all animals and in an instant the dog was free. The grateful animal, recognizing a friend, crouched at the feet of his rescuer, his head between his paws and his tail thumping the ground. "Why, you dear old bundle of red rags!" cried Mr. Packlepoose, patting him, for that was what

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the bunch of reddish, silky-haired dog looked like to him.

*"Bitte, wollen Sie so gut sein auch meine Seile abzuschneiden?"* said a voice. Mr. Packlepoose looked around and saw Herr Schnitz. He didn't understand the words, but he comprehended their meaning at once. Of course he released Herr Schnitz and Herr Schnitz's dog was again grateful. Herr Schnitz stood bowing to Mr. Packlepoose. Mr. Packlepoose stood bowing to Herr Schnitz. Neither of them could understand the other. The dog understood both. He pulled at Herr Schnitz with his teeth.

"Yes, yes," said Herr Schnitz, in German. "Thou hast right, my dear dog. From here must we immediately away go. Here have I one good motor-boat if these accursed Igorrotes not it sunk have. Therein can we toward my steam-yacht, which is somewhere these islands around, to fly. With great foolishness attempted I, with my little dog,

## JUST THEN

on this island water to find. Perhaps to me nothing happened have would, but my little dog! already he eaten was, if you so beautifully arrived not had."

Mr. Packlepoose understood the dog better than he did his master. The dog wanted to get away before the Igorrotes got over their scare and came back and he didn't stand and talk about it. "I'm with you, Red Rags," said he.

The two men and the dog ran down to the bank and, sure enough, Herr Schnitz's gasoline launch was alongside, nearly hidden by overhanging branches. The raft blocked the inlet in front of it, but the shark team had disappeared. Doubtless as soon as the raft was held fast, the two big fish had broken their lines and escaped. Mr. Packlepoose was glad of it. He was through with them and he didn't want even a shark to be put to needless torment. To get the raft out of the road and the launch into motion was no great trouble.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Red Rags gave a bark of defiance as soon as they were out of reach of land. Then he snuggled down at the feet of Mr. Pucklepoose for he seemed to know that he owed his life to the strange man and not to his master.

## XVIII

THE BUTTERFLY CHASES THE TERRIBLE BIRD  
AND MRS. HOCKAMABOURY RECEIVES A  
STRANGE MESSAGE FROM PAPA PACKLE-  
POOSE, WHILE RED RAGS FINDS A WOW-WOW-  
WALLABY AND WISHES HE HADN'T

THE name of Herr Schnitz's yacht was *Der Schmetterling*, or *The Butterfly* and she was on her way to Australia to find a Dinornis. But butterflies flit this way and that and so Herr Schnitz's *Butterfly* had flitted into the southern end of the Philippines, and hence had picked up Mr. Packlepoose.

Of course Mr. Packlepoose didn't want to go to Australia to chase a Dinornis. As soon as he and Herr Schnitz (as well as Red Rags) reached *Der Schmetterling* they got along all right, for several on board could talk both German and English, besides other



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

languages, and they talked about the Dinornis all the time in all of them.

Dinornis, you know, means The Terrible Bird, and The Terrible Bird, when it lived, was almost as big as an elephant and it flourished in New Zealand a few centuries ago, before the white man came. Now New Zealand was at one time part of Australia and Australia is so large and the interior is so hard to get at that it has never been thoroughly explored.

Herr Schnitz believed that somewhere in the wilds of Australia, The Terrible Bird still lived and if he could catch one he would be famous for all time. Herr Schnitz was a very agreeable German gentleman, but he insisted that everyone should be as interested in the Dinornis as he was. He took a great fancy to Mr. Packlepoose and presented Red Rags to him as a token of his good will. He was very anxious to have Mr. Packlepoose help hunt the Dinornis, for he said that a man who could make a Sharkomobile in the

## JUST THEN

middle of an ocean and make it take him to land might very well find a *Dinornis* in the middle of a continent and make it take him to the sea. He offered to pay Mr. Packlepoose to go with him and as Mr. Packlepoose had lost the little he had had in the wreck of the *Arfandarf*, he was glad of the chance to earn enough money to pay his passage home. So *Der Schmetterling* landed at Brisbane and Mrs. Hockamaboury and Bumpybambooney were rejoiced, but a little puzzled, to receive a cable message, which said:—

“Looking for extinct bird in Australia.  
Home soon as found.

“PAPA PACKLEPOOSE.”

Herr Schnitz, his companions and Mr. Packlepoose at once procured horses and struck out for the interior. A sturdy little horse named Velvet fell to Mr. Packlepoose's use.

It was very hot in Australia and some

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

parts were very dry and barren. In other parts they found great rivers which presently lost themselves in huge marshes. Again they would come to dense forests and rough mountains. It was Herr Schnitz's idea that some of the natives could tell him where The Terrible Bird still lived, if they only would, so the little party wandered from tribe to tribe. Herr Schnitz would draw a picture of the kangaroo, or the flying fox, or the fork-tongued lizard and then point in different directions, with an inquiring look and gesture, as if to ask which way the animal could be found. These the blacks would recognize and would nod and point and utter a few words. Then Herr Schnitz would draw a picture of the Dinornis and the blacks would look blank and shake their heads, or else say nothing.

There was one black, whom they had found in Brisbane, and who knew some English and who was with them from the first. He was strong, rather short, had a black,

## JUST THEN

bushy beard and large welts or scars on his breast. He wore as few clothes as possible and the greatest favor they could do him was to allow him to carry one of the guns. Mr. Packlepoose called him Bushbeard.

They had expected Bushbeard to be of much service in talking to the blacks, but soon found that every new tribe knew nothing of the other tribes' languages, and they could understand Bushbeard no better than they could Mr. Packlepoose or Herr Schnitz. Bushbeard never sought out the other natives for them and the natives seemed more suspicious of him than of the white men.

One day, after a hard morning's travel, they came to a deep ravine. A mountain seemed to have split in two and formed a pleasant valley, through which a pretty stream trickled. One side of the valley sloped gently, but the other rose straight as the wall of a room and higher than a steeple. It was so pleasant that they rested here for several days. Mr. Packlepoose

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

took Velvet and rode around and up to the top of the mountain. You remember that the mountain was split in two, so naturally the split part was a high precipice in the middle and sloped down to the level, at the entrance of the valley. Mr. Packlepoose found a path, or trail, running down the hill alongside the cliff. In fact, these paths were not uncommon in the vicinity and showed that the place must be a favorite hunting ground of the blacks.

One day they missed Bushbeard, but early the next morning he came back and brought three men and two women with him. Their breasts were gashed like Bushbeard's. For the matter of that, nearly all the natives they had met had had some such marks, but these black breasts were scarred exactly like the breast of Bushbeard.

Herr Schnitz jumped up and went through his usual performance. At the picture of the kangaroo, the blacks pointed one way. At the picture of the flying fox, they pointed

## JUST THEN

another. At the picture of the fork-tongued lizard, still another. Then Herr Schnitz drew the picture of the Dinornis. The blacks hesitated and Bushbeard broke in with a short, sharp word. Then they pointed North, South, East and West. One even pointed upward. Herr Schnitz was much excited. He believed that he had found the home of the living Dinornis. He even believed that perhaps The Terrible Bird could fly, though all naturalists agreed that it had practically no wings at all.

Herr Schnitz divided the party into pairs and arranged that each couple should start in a different direction to look for the Dinornis and all should return to the camp in the ravine before dusk.

It so happened that Mr. Packlepoose was without a partner, but he said he would take Red Rags who would be as good as a man, or better. Away they went, the Germans greatly excited, Mr. Packlepoose rather amused. His route lay around the straight,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

high cliff, and he rode Velvet leisurely and rested often. "I guess an extinct bird can be found just as well by taking it easy as by hurrying, eh Red Rags?" he said.

He worked around to the other side of the mountain and gradually found his way toward the top. The afternoon wore away before he knew it and presently he found that he had wound around so much he didn't know where he was. Then Mr. Packlepoose thought it time to hasten a bit, but Velvet wasn't in nearly as much of a hurry and Red Rags wasn't in any hurry at all.

It was Red Rags that caused all the trouble. He did it, not by finding the *Dinornis*, but by finding the kangaroo. Red Rags was just foolish enough to attempt to chase it. Perhaps Red Rags was part dingo, because the dingo is the native Australian dog and is reddish in color and is the foe of the kangaroo. Herr Schnitz always said that Red Rags got his color from his mother who was an Irish setter but then maybe his

## JUST THEN

father was a dingo. Who knows? Surely he must have been part dingo, or how could he have known the kangaroo, for he ran after it and said, "Woo! woo! kangaroo-roo-roo!" Now the kangaroo is as tall as a man and while he usually runs away, or rather leaps away, he can fight if he is cornered and sometimes when he isn't cornered. This time the kangaroo ran.

Well Red Rags was as glad as a man. Some men, and boys, too, you know, are just like Red Rags and always want to be chasing something. "Wow, wow!" barked Red Rags. "Here's a wow-wow-wallaby, wow!"

Yes, Red Rags must surely have been part dingo, or else how could he have known anything about a wallaby, for the wallaby is the little, timid member of the kangaroo family. Of course this "old man" kangaroo of the giant kangaroo family was angry when he was called a wallaby, just as a big boy is angry when he is called a baby, but he pretended he wasn't angry at first. He paid





The kangaroo backed up against a tree.

OF ALGERIA

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

just enough attention to make Red Rags gladder than ever. The kangaroo went bounding out of the bush, as if he thought black hunters were after him with spears and boomerangs and dingoes. As I said he was an "old man" kangaroo and very wise and had often been hunted.

But Red Rags didn't know that. He thought the kangaroo was still frightened and so ran after him, barking,

"Woo! woo! kangaroo! woo, woo, wow!  
My name's Red Rags, ready for a r-r-row!  
row! row!"

The kangaroo backed up against a tall, straight tulip tree and stood on his hind legs. Red Rags wasn't dingo enough to know the danger and rushed in, leaping for the kangaroo's throat. The "old man" caught him in his little, short fore-arms and held him tight and lifting up his terrible hind foot, ripped poor Red Rags open as if he had been a bag of meal.

## JUST THEN

When Mr. Packlepoose saw this, he was grieved and angry. Without thinking of danger, he picked up a rock and threw it down hill at the kangaroo. The "old man" dropped Rags and started toward Mr. Packlepoose, who had no weapon of any kind, except the short riding-whip he carried. There was no use trying to fight a kangaroo six feet tall with a riding-whip, so Mr. Packlepoose used it, instead, on Velvet's hide. Velvet felt the lash in surprise, for Mr. Packlepoose never whipped him, and then he saw the kangaroo coming at them, in jumps of four or five yards each. Then Velvet forgot all about not being in a hurry, but put his head down and ran like a racer. My, how he ran! but the old man kangaroo was coming after them faster and faster and you may be sure that Mr. Packlepoose was more anxious than ever to get back to camp.

The pony had reached the top of the hill and now had to go down a long, rough path,

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

full of sharp turns and sudden drops. Usually Mr. Packlepoose would have guided the pony down this steep slowly and carefully, but now they had to go faster than the kangaroo or be caught. Gallop, slip, jump, run, went the pony. Leap, leap, leap, came the kangaroo. Straight ahead the trail seemed to come to a sudden stop and to shoot off into the air, but Mr. Packlepoose recognized the break as the place where the path ran down the edge of the cliff.

The pony went toward the edge so recklessly that it seemed he must go over the cliff. The kangaroo's tall body shot through the air with a great leap. Another leap like that and he would land on Mr. Packlepoose, and tear him from Velvet's back. He would hug him like a bear with his fore-paws and rip him like a tiger with his hind-claws.

The pony swerved and stumbled. The kangaroo leaped again.

Away over in America a little girl slept with a cablegram under her pillow, glad that

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

she knew, or thought she knew, where her father was. She did not know that her father was on the edge of an Australian precipice and that a great kangaroo was leaping straight at him.

## XIX

BUSHBEARD THROWS TWO BOOMERANGS AND  
THE SORCERER MAKES A MEDICINE DANCE  
TO FIND WHY THE DEAD MAN DIED. "THE  
DINORNIS! THE DINORNIS!"

HERR SCHNITZ had found no Dinornis that day, but he was not discouraged. He was on his way back to camp resolved to question the natives more closely and to force them to guide him to the haunts of The Terrible Bird. He rode along, with his head down, thinking of how he should manage to make the natives understand him. His companion rode just behind him. They carried their guns slung to their backs.

Suddenly, in the path before them, Bushbeard appeared. A moment later a dozen natives sprang up all around him. Some of the blacks carried spears, but each of them carried a long curved club, or two.

## JUST THEN

Though the natives had always been friendly there was something about these, now, which Herr Schnitz did not like. Almost without thinking, he reached to unsling his gun. Instantly Bushbeard raised his club and hurled it towards Herr Schnitz. It passed harmlessly by and Herr Schnitz roared at Bushbeard to know what he meant by such conduct. In answer, Bushbeard threw another club which also passed harmlessly by.

Herr Schnitz brought his gun around and leveled it. Just then his companion turned his head and cried out in alarm, "Boomerang!" and fell from his horse. The next instant the second club felled Herr Schnitz. The two clubs had turned in the air and had struck the white men down from behind. The natives gave a yell of triumph and when Herr Schnitz came to his senses he found himself at the camp and his entire party captured and bound. Their horses, guns and provisions were in the hands of



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Bushbeard and his fellows, for Bushbeard had at last found his own tribe and by attacking the German party in couples, it had not been difficult to capture them all.

Herr Schnitz raised his head painfully and looked around and now saw that Mr. Packlepoose was missing. "Either he has not returned," thought Herr Schnitz, "or he has escaped, or he is killed. But there is no hope for him in any case, for a white man alone, in Middle Australia, and without arms or provisions cannot hope to get out alive."

Now the blacks brought forward the corpse of a native who had died from some disease. The Sorcerer of the tribe came forward, with a skin around his waist, a bunch of feathers in his hair and a string of human teeth around his neck. He went through a startling performance which puzzled Herr Schnitz and his companions very much, but at last, out of the weird noises and the strange motions around and over the Dead Man, they made out what was happening. The

## JUST THEN

Sorcerer was asking the Dead Man what had caused him to die!

Presently the Sorcerer gave a strange howl and Bushbeard strode over to Herr Schnitz and told him that the Dead Man had spoken, that his death was caused by the white men camping in his valley and that his spirit would never be happy until the white men were killed and their kidneys eaten. Bushbeard seized Herr Schnitz by the hair.

Just then something happened.

Somewhere above them they heard the hoof-beats of a horse, galloping fast and faster. Naturally they all looked up. The white men were lying on the ground near the base of the cliff. The blacks, all but Bushbeard, were gathered around the Sorcerer and the Dead Man further out. It was getting dark.

As every eye turned upward, a dark shape shot out from the top of the cliff, like a huge bird and swooped downward like a bullet. "The Dinornis! the Dinornis!" shrieked

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Herr Schnitz, almost forgetting that he was bound and about to die.

The black hulk fell straight into the group of blacks and flattened out three of them. The remainder ran shrieking away, and Bushbeard with them, believing (and so did the white men, too, for a moment) that The Terrible Bird which Herr Schnitz so persistently drew and persistently sought had come upon them.

Of course it was not the Dinornis. It was the kangaroo. Velvet had swerved sharply just at the critical moment and the kangaroo had gone clear over Mr. Packlepoose and the pony, both of whom soon came clattering down the trail to the camp.

It was a surprised Mr. Packlepoose who found all his friends bound and nobody there to bind them, unless it could be four dead natives and a flattened out kangaroo.

"Ach, my high-respected friend, surely is it that you the fortunate and blessed man are. It joys me much this even so little re-

## JUST THEN

ward your great service you to offer for. Please, please, here remain you not longer us to satisfy, but take you all of the gold that you to desire would and to your American Bumpybambooney back return you," said Herr Schnitz.

You may be sure Mr. Packlepoose was glad to accept the offer but the first thing he did was to go back up the mountain to find poor Red Rags. He found the dog still alive and crawling pitifully, but pluckily, along. And not only did he find the dog, but he found a baby kangaroo and brought both the animals back to camp with him. Luckily there was a surgeon in the party and Red Rags was sewed up so well that in time he grew together as good as new.

The party now struck eastward to a railroad and reached it without further mishap. Mr. Packlepoose left them to continue their search for The Terrible Bird and took train to Melbourne. To his great sorrow, Red Rags' wounds were still too painful for him

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

to be taken along, so Mr. Packlepoose took the baby kangaroo which was already quite a pet and which he had named Jackyjump.

At Melbourne the Pacific liner, *The Waterbumps*, was ready to sail to San Francisco and to Mr. Packlepoose it seemed unspeakably good even to hold in his hand a ticket with the name of a United States city printed upon it.

Mr. Packlepoose now had enough money to get a first-class private state-room and he was rather inclined to treat himself well, after all his hardships, and to travel homeward in style, but he found the ship loaded to the guards and the berths all taken but one.

He was glad to get that one, though it was in a room with three other passengers, Mr. Shawk, Mr. Sleepnaut and Mr. Fishfeeder, three very peculiar men and whose peculiarities had quite an effect upon Mr. Packlepoose's trip and future fortunes.

## XX

FISHFEEDER TAKES OFF HIS BUTTONS, SLEEP-  
NAUT TAKES OUT HIS EYE, AND JACKYJUMP  
HAS SUCH A GOOD TIME THAT MR. PACKLE-  
POOSE IS DELIVERED TO THE POLICE-BOAT

**M**R. SLEEPNAUT was a fleshy man with a wide-open face. His mouth grinned and he had large juicy-looking eyes. His eyes were blue and what made them look odd was that one was a little bit larger and a little bit shinier than the other. Mr. Fishfeeder had a squeezed-together face. His eyes were slanting and seemed to be pushed into his nose. There was something odd-looking about his clothes. All the buttons on them were cloth-covered and of irregular sizes. Mr. Shawk was a rather large man with a broad, bald head and a big, bald nose. In fact, it looked as if his baldness began at the back of his

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

neck and ran right around to the nozzle of his nose. I was going to call it a tip, but it was too blunt for a tip; it was more like a nozzle. I notice these men and their appearance, because Mr. Packlepoose did so, as they were to be his room-mates for several weeks.

Mr. Packlepoose had been going by the name which Bumpybambooney had given him for so long that he had given that name to the purser of the boat, without thinking, and he had been introduced to his fellow-passengers as Mr. Packlepoose. Anyway, it was as good a name as any, so he didn't care.

He got along very well with his room-mates for a while and as there was little or nothing to do, he made up stories to tell to Bumpybambooney when he should arrive home and sometimes he tried these tales upon his companions. They would listen and sometimes applaud and then Mr. Packlepoose would tell them all about his little girl and some of his adventures since he had been

## JUST THEN

away from her. But for some reason or other they never told him about themselves in return. Shawk would listen greedily and would look at the others as if he expected them to say something, but Sleepnaut would only say, "My eye! aren't that a tale now?" and Fishfeeder would answer, "Bless my buttons! ain't it just?"

That was about all Mr. Packlepoose ever got out of them, but they were all very jolly over Jackyjump and made a great pet of him. Jacky played with all of them, but seemed to know that Mr. Packlepoose was his owner and always came back when he was tired of the others' play.

One evening, when they were about ten days out, the sun sank in a bed of black clouds and the wind began to blow drearily:—

"Whew—whew—whew-ew-ew!  
I'm whipping after you-ou-ou!  
Whatever you are, or who-oo-oo,  
You'll be sorry before I'm through,



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

For I'll worry you black and blue,  
Blew—woo—woo!"

Anyway, that's the way it sounded to Mr. Packlepoose and his room-mates.

They had all gone to bed when suddenly Mr. Shawk rose upon his elbow and said, "Say, fellows, just listen how the wind blows. If this boat should go down, there's something I should like to tell you."

"My eye!" said Sleepnaut.

"Bless my buttons!" cried Fishfeeder.

"All right," yawned Mr. Packlepoose, "just as soon as we're under water, you start to tell us. It may take our minds off being drowned."

"Oh, you may laugh," said Shawk, "but if I happen to be lost and you are not, be sure to save my big overcoat."

"I wouldn't give a button for your overcoat," said Fishfeeder.

"Maybe not, maybe not," cried Shawk softly, "but let me tell you that sewed up in

## JUST THEN

its back is the missing Murillo from the Vatican at Rome."

"What's a Murillo?" asked Fishfeeder.

"What's a Vatican?" asked Sleepnaut.

"Oh, get out!" answered Shawk. "The Vatican is the Pope's palace and Murillo was a famous artist. One of his paintings is called a Murillo and one of them is worth, oh, maybe a hundred thousand dollars. I cut this one out of its frame and had it sewed up in my coat, so I could carry it without anyone ever suspecting it. I've brought it all the way around the world so as to get it into the United States from the western side. I was afraid they might be watching for it, if I tried to get it through New York, or any eastern port."

"My eye!" laughed Sleepnaut. "Oh my eye! Aren't you the smart one?"

"I'm kind of smart, too," chuckled Fishfeeder. "Did you ever notice the buttons on my clothes?"

"Yes, yes, yes," said the other three.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Well, they're not buttons at all."

"Your buttons aren't buttons?" exclaimed Mr. Shawk eagerly.

"No, they're coins, and the rarest kind of coins at that. I've been all over the world picking them up from various collections. I've got the pick of the coinage of the world from ancient Chaldea down to the Panama republic. I've even got the only U. S. dollar ever coined in 1773."

"Why, there wasn't any United States in 1773," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"I know it," chuckled Fishfeeder; "that's what makes it so valuable."

"I've heard of it," whispered Shawk. "There's a big, big reward offered for it; fifty thousand dollars, I've heard. I don't believe you have it."

"It's the top button of my smoking jacket," boasted Fishfeeder. "Here! I'll show it to you." He reached for the jacket and ripped off the button, skinned off the cloth and showed the rare coin to each

## JUST THEN

of them. Then he put it under his pillow, saying, "Guess I'm about the cleverest of you, after all."

"You certainly are," said Shawk.

"My eye!" laughed Sleepnaut. "Oh, my eye! Is he just?"

He laughed long but quietly, then suddenly sat up in bed, put his hand up to his right eye and popped it out. It was a false eye, an enormous false eye, but that wasn't the strangest part of it. The glass was a mere shell to cover a jewel of marvelous purity and beauty. "The eye of the god from the Great Temple in India," whispered Sleepnaut. "It cost the lives of sixteen men to get it and I am the only one of the gang left. It is worth a king's ransom, or rather a god's ransom. Once I am safe in America with it, I can sell it to a Pittsburg millionaire for enough to keep me for life."

Mr. Packlepoose had listened to all this in amazement. "Are you fellows trying to fill me up with stories?" he asked. There

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

was a sudden dropping of jaws and he saw that they were telling him the truth. "Why, you're nothing but a bunch of thieves!" he cried. "Why have you told me this? I don't know whether I ought to keep your secrets or tell the captain to have you all arrested as soon as we land."

"Look a-here, pal," said Fishfeeder, with an ugly look on his narrow face, "don't you go to playin' nasty, or we'll dump you into the drink."

"Yes," said Sleepnaut hotly. "There's somethin' mighty queer about you, too, you know, from the stories you've told us."

"What do you mean?" demanded Mr. Packlepoose indignantly.

"Oh, come," said Shawk soothingly. "Let's not quarrel. Maybe you've tried to dodge the police in your time. Have a little sympathy."

Mr. Packlepoose reddened and the others laughed. "Ha, ha!" jeered Fishfeeder, "you landed him that time, Shawk. Guess

## JUST THEN

he just wanted to make us divvy with his threats."

"Oh, go to sleep," growled Mr. Packlepoose. "I'm disgusted with you."

He lay awake for a long time reflecting what he ought to do. The storm continued harder than ever and when he awoke the next morning, two of his room-mates were sick, oh, exceedingly sick. Sleepnaut's eye lay in a glass where he had popped it the night before and Fishfeeder's precious American dollar of 1773 had slipped from under his pillow. Both were too sick to pay any attention to their treasures.

Shawk was already up and gone. Mr. Packlepoose dressed and followed him on deck. "Good-morning!" cried Shawk, cheerfully.

"I just wanted to tell you," said Mr. Packlepoose, "that I have made up my mind I must inform the captain about your stolen picture."

Shawk smiled more than ever. His smile

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

seemed to run up his wide, white nose and clear around his bald head. "Come along," he said. "I'll go with you."

Together they sought the captain and Shawk said, "Captain, here's my room-mate who needs to be introduced to me."

"Mr. Packlepoose," said the captain, "this is Inspector Shawk of the U. S. government service. He is especially detailed on this ship to detect smugglers."

"But—but," stammered Mr. Packlepoose, "the picture——"

"Don't you see?" laughed Shawk. "I knew those fellows were crooks and I thought you might be one, too, because you were with them. I told my stealing story first, so as to get you others to brag about your thefts. I soon saw that you were straight, especially when you blushed so about having had a brush with the police."

"Yes," said Mr. Packlepoose, "I did run away from a policeman once, but it was

## JUST THEN

because I had done nothing and didn't want to be bothered."

"Well," said Shawk, "you can tell our room-mates that you didn't peach on them and you needn't tell them who I am."

"I wish I never had to see them again," said Mr. Packlepoose, "but I suppose I'll have to sleep in that state-room for the rest of the voyage."

The wind had died down and the sea was now rapidly getting smoother. Mr. Packlepoose went to the cabin to get Jackyjump, and found the two thieves just stirring themselves. He took Jackyjump out on deck and gave him his daily play-spell and his much-loved sugar. Jackyjump thrust his paws into Mr. Packlepoose's pockets and after much search found the lumps. He nibbled some, thrust some into his pouch and then took some out and put them into his master's pockets. It was very amusing and Mr. Packlepoose played with his pet a long time. He was interrupted by Shawk who



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

beckoned him toward their state-room. Inside the room, he found Fishfeeder and Sleepnaut greatly excited. "You—you—you!" they stuttered, as soon as he appeared, shaking their fingers in his face.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Mr. Packlepoose coldly. "I haven't told upon you. Not yet."

"Told upon us! huh! that's good, you thief," snarled Fishfeeder. "You stole my dollar of 1773."

"And you stole my eye," cried Sleepnaut.

"You fellows are crazy," answered Mr. Packlepoose. "You think all the world are thieves because you are."

"We'll search you then," screamed the two.

"Take your hands off me," demanded Mr. Packlepoose. Then he saw Shawk looking at him with a strange, suspicious expression. "You don't mean to say you suspect me, Shawk?" he inquired. "Well, I'll let *you* search me, but not those fellows."

## JUST THEN

"I hate to do it," said Shawk, "but if you don't mind, it may satisfy them." He thrust his hands quickly into Mr. Packlepoose's pockets one after another, into his trousers pockets, his coat pockets, his outside vest pockets and then into his inner vest pocket. A startled look swept over his face. Then he drew out the eye and the button together.

Mr. Packlepoose was the most surprised man on the Pacific Ocean. Sleepnaut and Fishfeeder would have pounced upon their treasures with howls of delight, but Shawk waved them back. "Well," said Mr. Packlepoose to Shawk, "unless you put them there, I have no idea how you took them out."

"That story won't help you very far," said Shawk. "As it happens, I haven't been near the state-room since I left it this morning, until I came back here with you."

Mr. Packlepoose was now in the hardest situation he had been in since leaving Bumpy-

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

bambooney. The thieves hated him, supposing him to be a meaner thief than they. Shawk and the captain were of the same opinion and Mr. Packlepoose knew, though Sleepnaut and Fishfeeder did not, that he and the two thieves would be put in jail as soon as the ship reached San Francisco.

He was so grieved and hurt by the suspicions and the seeming proof against him that he avoided the other passengers for the rest of the voyage and played with Jackyjump most of the time. As soon as the *Waterbumps* got in touch with wireless, Shawk asked for police to meet the ship upon docking and to take in charge three criminals.

And now they steamed through the Golden Gate and into San Francisco Bay. Mr. Packlepoose sat playing with Jackyjump (the only friend he had on board) with gloom in his heart. He had thought that the sight of America would make him sing for joy and that all his troubles would be ended and

## JUST THEN

here he was coming to his native land and a jail.

Jackyjump felt in his pocket for sugar, but found none. Mr. Packlepoose reached in to see if there were a piece left and suddenly dropped the kangaroo and ran to his state-room. The detective was packing up and was just leaving it. "Shawk!" cried Mr. Packlepoose, "I've found the fellow who put those things in my pocket."

"Oh, huh," said Shawk, with no show of interest. "Rather late about it, aren't you? Who?"

"Jackyjump! He must have picked them up, put them into his pouch and slipped them into my pocket when he was feeling for sugar. I never would have thought of it, if he hadn't just this minute put a pen-knife from his pouch into my pocket."

"Well," said Shawk, "somehow you never seemed to me like a crook and if your yarn is true, it will be easy to get Jackyjump to prove it in court. Of course I'll have to

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

turn you over to the police now, because I've wirelessly all about you and the police-boat will be alongside in a few minutes. By George! that's her whistle now. I've got those other fellows handcuffed. I'll risk you without the bracelets if you'll behave."

So poor Mr. Packlepoose prepared to go onto the police-boat. However, he felt a great deal better. He was sure he could prove that Jackyjump was the innocent cause of his trouble and that he would be released the next morning. Then, hey for home and Bumpybambooney!

Yes, he *felt* sure, but he didn't know who was on the police-boat to welcome him to America.

## XXI

WHO IS O'CONNELL O'SHEA? BUMPED OUT OF  
BED AND SHAKEN OUT OF JAIL. A JEWELLED  
HAND STICKS OUT OF THE RUINS AND THE  
FINGERS MOVE. "SHOOT HIM!" YELLS THE  
BLUE ACORN

SINCE Mr. Packlepoose had left  
America there had been a good  
many changes. Most of them need  
not bother us but one of them does, be-  
cause it bothered Mr. Packlepoose. In the  
city government of New York there had  
been what is called a "shake-up." Now  
you wouldn't think a shake-up in New  
York would make Mr. Packlepoose tremble  
in San Francisco, but it did. You see the  
Mayor of New York had a quarrel with  
the Chief of Police. The Mayor found that  
some of the police were worse than the men  
they arrested and men who should have been

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

arrested were let go because they paid money to the police.

So quite a number of the police were let go and some others quit of their own accord. Among those who quit was a big fellow named O'Connell O'Shea. Of course all these men had to look for other employment. Some of them became janitors, drivers, bar-keepers, but O'Connell O'Shea still wanted to be a policeman and as he couldn't work at it in New York, he looked for a place somewhere else and succeeded in getting an appointment to the police force in San Francisco. He was made a sergeant and was in charge of the squad on the police-boat which met the *Waterbumps*.

"I've got two world-beaters for you," said Shawk. "They're a couple of the smartest crooks on earth and they'd steal the hinges off the Golden Gate. This other chap is just a suspect and not dangerous. He's such a decent chap that if I hadn't taken stolen stuff out of his pockets myself, I

## JUST THEN

would swear he's innocent. And even as it is, he's got a story that will clear him, I think."

O'Connell O'Shea looked at the two "world-beaters" with respect and then at Mr. Packlepoose indifferently. Then his face changed and he uttered a whoop of joy. "Him not dangerous!" he yelled. "Ho, ho! he, he! Why, that's Packlepoose. He's the slickest ould scamp this side of purgatory. Glory be to the day I've got my claws on him ag'in."

Poor Mr. Packlepoose was in hard luck again, for O'Connell O'Shea was the Blue Acorn!

"Well, well," said Shawk, "he certainly is a slick one, for he had me fooled completely. Don't let him get away."

"No get-away for him at all, at all, anny moor," said O'Shea. "It's him as'll board at the state's own hotel for manny the year. I know enough to send him up for life. Come along, *you!*"



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

That night Mr. Packlepoose slept in jail, or rather he didn't sleep. He went to bed, but his troubles were too many. Between Shawk and O'Shea he was sure things would go hard with him. At the very least he would be held for trial and as there was no one to bail him out, he might be held in jail awaiting trial for months. It was a black outlook and Mr. Packlepoose didn't know what to do.

The Blue Acorn felt very, very good because he had Mr. Packlepoose in jail. He thought that it would give him back his place on the New York force and his soul longed for New York. Yet he could not forget Mr. Packlepoose's strange escapes from him before and though Mr. Packlepoose was securely locked in a cell he wanted to keep his eye on him. Perhaps he wanted to gloat over him a little, too. So he came to the grating of the cell at about day-break the next morning. "Yah, yous Packlepoose,"

## JUST THEN

he cried. "Got yez now where you can't make any get-away. Hey?"

Just then something happened.

There was a rumbling roar and the earth surged like the sea. Mr. Packlepoose was half dozing and thought he was still on the *Waterbumps*. Then he was hurled out of bed. The building rocked and toppled. The Blue Acorn gave a yelling shriek of terror and staggered away. The cell split open. Mr. Packlepoose arose and was thrown flat upon his face out into the corridor. He crawled away in his night-clothes as best he could. After a little he was on his feet again. Everybody had rushed out of doors. In a bed-room back of the office lay a dead policeman with the wall fallen upon him.

"He'll not need his clothes any more," thought Mr. Packlepoose and put on the blue trousers and heavy shoes, from where they had been placed near the bed. Then came another tremble and without waiting

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

to clothe himself further, he rushed into the street.

Thousands of people were rushing along, many of them half naked. Flames burst out of many buildings. An earthquake had helped Mr. Packlepoose out of jail. The city was on fire.

For the rest of that day, Mr. Packlepoose almost forget Mrs. Hockamaboury and Bumpybambooney. There was so much to be done for other people. At first there were men and women entangled in fallen ruins. There was fire to fight. There were injured people to be cared for.

Mr. Packlepoose was thankful to have escaped alive and unhurt and he worked from day-break until afternoon without food or water, only anxious to help someone who needed help. It was a solemn and a terrible time.

The firemen were blowing up the buildings to save them from catching fire. The soldiers had taken charge of the city, for

## JUST THEN

though some men had been like Mr. Packlepoose and had tried to help, some others had thought only of themselves and had tried to rob even the dead people. The soldiers had orders to shoot anyone caught robbing the dead.

It was toward the middle of the afternoon and Mr. Packlepoose was looking for something to eat and drink. As he passed a fallen building, he saw a man's hand sticking out of a pile of rubbish. On the little finger was a beautiful pigeon's-blood ruby, set round with diamonds, but it was not that which attracted Mr. Packlepoose's notice. There was something more valuable than rubies and diamonds there, for, as he looked, he saw the hand open and shut. Without pausing to think, Mr. Packlepoose rushed in and stooped to remove the timbers and trash from the buried body.

"Shoot that t'ief!" called a voice.

Mr. Packlepoose looked sideways and there was O'Shea pointing with his club straight





OF ALBERTA

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

at him. A soldier turned sharply. He saw Mr. Packlepoose stooping near a jeweled hand. He saw the pointing policeman. Instantly his rifle went to his shoulder. He was only a few feet away and he could not miss. More than one man that day had fallen from the too ready action of the soldiers who had been inclined to shoot first and to ask questions afterwards. Without a doubt Mr. Packlepoose would have been killed, but

Just then something happened.

The thing which happened was the second earthquake shock. The ground split. The soldier fired in the air and fell backward, half stunned. The Blue Acorn was thrown violently to the ground.

Curiously enough the shock loosened and lifted the timbers which held the man with the ring. Mr. Packlepoose seized him and brushed the dust and dirt off his face and lifted his arms. The breath came back to the man's body. He opened his eyes and

## JUST THEN

realized that Mr. Packlepoose had saved him from a horrible death. He gasped a word or two, then took off the rich ring and pressed it on to Mr. Packlepoose's finger. Mr. Packlepoose didn't want the ring, but all the jewels of the Indies seemed worthless at such a time, so he didn't think much about it. At that moment, The Blue Acorn sat up and rubbed his head.

The Blue Acorn sat up and rubbed his head and stared at the sight of the rescued man giving the ring in gratitude. He stared at the soldier lying there like one dead. A look of superstitious horror struck his face. He crawled over to Mr. Packlepoose and knelt before him and said, "For the love of Mary in Hivin, let be, let be. Never agin will I lay a finger on yez, or say a word against yez. I don't know what yez are, but the worrld busts itself every time anny wan would do yez hurt. Plaze, plaze, won't yez lave me and this poor town in peace?"



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"I'll be glad enough to leave it," said Mr. Packlepoose. "You show me how, that's all."

The Blue Acorn took off his belt, his coat and his helmet. "Put on those and make for the ferry. If anny sojer says a word to yez, show yer badge and this pass. Don't let annyone stop yez or this half of Ameriky will fall into the center of the earth. Don't jump into the bay, or the ocean'll dry up. Don't fly up in the air, or the sky'll fall down. Wurra, wurra, wurra, good-by, good-by!"

## XXII

PACKLEPOOSE THE POLICEMAN MEETS AN OLD  
FRIEND. FISHFEEDER FINDS IT DIFFICULT  
TO WALK ON THE WATER AND THE DELIVERY  
WAGON SAILS FOR SEATTLE

**M**R. PACKLEPOOSE made his way to the ferry, but the second shock had sent hordes of people the same way. It was impossible even with his uniform and his badge to get near it. Perhaps he could have forced his way through, but Mr. Packlepoose considered that all these people had as much right to get away as he had and he didn't think it fair to take a policeman's advantage and crowd through, especially as he was only a make-believe policeman.

A man in the crowd near him peered up into his face and clutched his arm. Mr. Packlepoose looked down and saw the narrow face of Fishfeeder.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Say," whispered Fishfeeder, "can you get past the guards with those blue clo'es?"

"Yes," said Mr. Packlepoose shortly, for he did not like Fishfeeder.

"Then come with me," whispered Fishfeeder.

As I said Mr. Packlepoose did not like Fishfeeder, but when you do not know at what moment the earth may open and swallow you up, likes and dislikes seem very small, and rich men and beggars, good men and crooks, all seem pretty much alike. So, as Mr. Packlepoose was blocked in one way, there seemed to be no good reason why he should not go some other way, even with such a man as Fishfeeder. It was a relief to know some fellow-man at such a time, even if he were a bad man.

Fishfeeder wormed his way along the outside fringe of the crowd and Mr. Packlepoose followed. Soon they had left the crowd and were making their way along the water-front. Everywhere were soldiers pac-

## JUST THEN

ing up and down. Presently Fishfeeder stopped. "See that little boat-house?" he whispered, without pointing, but peering at it from under his lowered brows.

Mr. Packlepoose nodded.

"See that schooner out in the bay?"

"Yes," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"I got a row-boat in that boat-house and that schooner will take us to Seattle."

"Good," said Mr. Packlepoose. "Anything to get away from this terrible place. Come along."

"Hold on," whispered Fishfeeder. "The soldiers won't let us touch a thing. Leastways they won't let me. If you can get us into that boat, with those blue clo'es of yours (wherever you stole 'em), I'll get you to Seattle. If you don't, I'll put the sojers on to you as a fake cop and you won't last more'n a minute."

"Shùt up with your threats," said Mr. Packlepoose, "and come along." He put his hand on Fishfeeder's shoulder, as if he had

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

him under arrest and marched toward the boat-house.

"Halt!" A soldier barred the way.

Mr. Packlepoose showed the badge on his coat and reached into his pocket for the card the Blue Acorn had given him and which read:—

Pass Bearer,  
Mr. O'Connell O'Shea,  
in the discharge of his duties as  
Special Officer,  
By order of  
FREDERICK FUNSTON,  
Brig. Gen. U. S. A.

The soldier glanced at the card and stepped aside.

Sure enough, inside the little house under the pier was a boat and the two men took hold and slid it into the water. "Why, it's full of old rags and stuff," said Mr. Packlepoose. "Let's throw them out."

Fishfeeder stopped him with a motion and a look of horror. "I'm a dead man if you

## JUST THEN

do," he snarled under his breath, glancing toward the soldier, "and if I am, I don't go without taking somebody with me, even if it's only a fake policeman."

Mr. Packlepoose was trapped. He said nothing but helped launch the boat. Soon they were far out in the bay, with Fishfeeder rowing. "Say," said he, after a long silence, "you got a gun in those blue clo'es?"

"No," answered Mr. Packlepoose, unthinkingly. "Why?"

"Just wanted to borrow it to shoot a seagull. Got a knife?"

"No."

"Sorry. I wanted to lance a boil on the back of my neck," said Fishfeeder. "Nice lookin' ring you're wearing. Where'd you keep it when you were on the *Waterbumps*?"

Mr. Packlepoose had quite forgotten the ring, but he turned it on his finger and said, "A man gave it to me to-day for pulling him out of the ruins."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Fishfeeder laughed. "I got a lot of things they gave me," he sneered. He let go of an oar an instant and lifted the edge of the canvas in the bottom of the boat and Mr. Packlepoose got a glimpse of a strange jumble of pocket-books, clothing, jewelry and valuable articles. Right in the middle was a human finger with a ring upon it. Alongside it lay a knife with a dull red upon its blade.

"You miserable wretch!" gasped Mr. Packlepoose.

Fishfeeder stooped and grabbed the knife. "Look here," he said, "I guess you better get out and walk. Aboard the *Waterbumps* you was too good for us, though we made you own up you was dodgin' the coppers. Now you're broke out of jail and wearin' a thousand dollar ring and a policeman's suit and yet you're gettin' too good again. I guess you'd better walk." He clutched the knife threateningly.

Mr. Packlepoose looked at him steadily

## JUST THEN

and said nothing. This seemed to make Fishfeeder all the uglier. "Gimme that ring!" he yelled, "and then step off my boat. Gimme that ring! It's little enough to return for what you stole from me in our state-room. You're a disgrace to our trade, you are."

He arose to his feet with the knife in his hand to throw himself at Mr. Packlepoose, who hadn't a weapon of any sort. Even the Blue Acorn's club wasn't in his belt. It looked as if Fishfeeder had used him and was now going to kill him.

Just then something happened.

Often, after earthquakes, you know, the sea is so disturbed that tidal waves follow. One of these waves—a ridge of water like a small mountain range—struck the boat and stood it straight up in the air. Fishfeeder, who was standing with his back to the wave, was thrown the entire length of the boat and into the sea, the wave picking him up and carrying him along as if he had been a



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

straw. Mr. Packlepoose, who had seen the wave coming, threw himself into the bottom of the boat and clung to a seat for dear life.

Luckily the little craft was a good one and her bow was toward the wave. She quivered in the air and then plunged under the water, came right side up and was whirled like a top. Mr. Packlepoose was half senseless from the shock. Of course he was soaked through. His helmet was gone. One oar was left.

He threw off his heavy coat, grasped the oar and used it like the paddle of a canoe.

"Boat ahoy!" came a call and Mr. Packlepoose found himself near the anchored schooner. The back-wash of the great wave had brought them together.

"Stand by to catch a line!"

Mr. Packlepoose caught the rope and the boat was brought alongside. Soon he and it were on the deck of the schooner. Glanc-

## JUST THEN

ing around him, Mr. Packlepoose saw the worst looking crowd of men it had ever been his misfortune to look at. The beggars at Naples, the street mob of Constantinople, the fanatics of Mecca, even the dog-eating Igorrotes had looked better to him than these.

"My eye!" said a voice. "You're the last boat in. What made you so late?"

Looking at the speaker, Mr. Packlepoose saw Sleepnaut, Sleepnaut with only one eye. "Why, it's Packlepoose!" exclaimed Sleepnaut, "dear old Sunday School Sister Packlepoose, who stole my eye."

"If you're the captain of this craft," said Mr. Packlepoose simply, "I might as well jump overboard at once."

"Not a bit of it, pal, not a bit. I'm a square man. I stole the god's eye and did a good job. You stole my eye, which is fair enough. It's all in the game. Have you got it with you, so I can steal it back?"

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"I never took it," said Mr. Packlepoose, "and you know it. Jackyjump took it and hid it in his pouch. Then he put it in my pocket and then Shawk got it."

"My eye! but you're a clever one," grinned Sleepnaut. "I call that a clever yarn and you're the same joker as ever."

"I suppose you're captain here?" said Mr. Packlepoose.

"I'm better than captain," grinned Sleepnaut. "I'm the manager of the Quaker and Shaker Collection Company. The earth does the quaking and shaking. We do the collecting. We collect purses and other trifles. This ship is merely our Delivery Wagon. You seem to be one of our messenger boys and a very good one, for you have brought this collection through, which I had almost given up." Sleepnaut waved his hand toward the boat, in which, strange to say, most of the loot had stuck.

Mr. Packlepoose felt as if his heart had fallen into his stomach. "Is it possible," he

## JUST THEN

thought, "that I have become one of this horrible nest of thieves in spite of myself?"

Sleepnaut was pawing over the loot in the small boat and he looked up with an expression of pride and pleasure. "I congratulate you," he said. "You are our most successful collector. Our company is very generous and shares equally with its agents. Your fifty per cent. commission will make your fortune."

The members of the Quaker and Shaker Company, or, in other words, the crew of the ship, were looking at Mr. Packlepoose with envy. He had brought in the most loot and they considered him their most successful thief.

"I didn't collect them," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"My eye!" said Sleepnaut. "That's just the way you talked and acted on the *Water-bumps*. It's a very good joke, you know, but it's out of place when we're talking business."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Have it your own way," said Mr. Packlepoose, "but I shan't take any share of this plunder—any 'commissions,' as you call it."

"Ah, hah! a bit of conscience, eh? Well, that's decent of you. You stole my eye and you give me your commissions. A square deal. But I wish I had my eye."

During this conversation the ship had weighed anchor, the sails had been hoisted and the schooner had begun her slow journey northward. "When we reach Seattle," said Sleepnaut, "we'll all be rich. I'll give you back your commissions and a bit over, if you'll only give me my eye."

So there was Mr. Packlepoose on the ocean again and sailing away with a gang of thieves and cut-throats and considered by them to be one of their worst, which they would call their best.

Well might Bumpybambooney pray for her papa to return. Well might she be sorry that she had ever told him to go away.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

And somewhere among the dust-heaps and burning ruins of San Francisco, a baby kangaroo hopped wistfully about. He, too, was sorry that Mr. Packlepoose had gone away.

## XXIII

THE RAT POINTS THE WAY TO THE UGLY MUG.  
SINGLE EYE AND TRIPLE EYE HAVE A FIGHT.  
MR. PACKLEPOOSE IS PUT TO BED IN THE  
ROOM-WITHOUT-A-FLOOR

**Y**OU will remember that Mr. Packlepoose had started on many strange journeys since he had left Bumpybambooney and none had seemed to be surer of ending badly than this one. It seemed as if something terrible were bound to happen on an old sea-soaked schooner, manned by a crew of wicked men who spent most of their time in drinking and fighting and gambling, instead of attending to the sailing of the ship.

But as I told you in the beginning, there are many things which happen and just as many more which don't happen, and very often the things you think are going to

## JUST THEN

happen are the ones which 'don't happen. Exactly so. And the ones which happen are the ones you didn't expect would happen.

And so, in this case, nothing happened!

The schooner made her slow way up the coast, passing the mountain islands one by one and sailing through sunshiny seas. She arrived off Seattle without a mishap of any kind, and Sleepnaut called the Quakers and Shakers (as he dubbed them) together in the cabin.

"Now, my lads," said he, "we'll divvy up and leave this old hulk to herself unless somebody wants her as his share of the swag. Is there anyone who'll take a lovely old schooner warranted almost as old as a Cremona violin and just about as seaworthy? No? Well, then, we'll sail into Puget Sound, drop anchor, take to the boats and get to shore during the night and leave the old hulk to anyone who finds her. We've got no papers and it won't do for any of us to claim



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

her. Quarters will be at 'The Ugly Mug, you all know where."

"Sure!" answered the chorus.

Sleepnaut proceeded to divide the loot into piles and each wretch pounced eagerly upon his spoil.

"Yours," he said to Mr. Packlepoose, pointing to a heap somewhat larger than most. Mr. Packlepoose turned his back and walked away.

"You won't take it?" asked Sleepnaut.

"You know I won't," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"My eye, but ain't he the generous gent!" smiled Sleepnaut. "Then it's mine."

"Divvy, divvy!" yelled the crowd.

"No, you don't," said Sleepnaut, "but I tell you what I'll do. If this high-minded gent will give me back my eye which he stole, I'll give you fellows all his pile."

"Give it back," snarled most of the gang.

"*Make* him give it back!" said the rest.

Then up arose one fellow whose forehead

## JUST THEN

above and whose chin below sloped back from his thin nose and protruding teeth. He was called The Rat and he looked it. "Tell you what," he squeaked, "here's a square sporting proposition. One of these gents has the other's eye. T'other one has a pile of extry fine 'Frisco souvenirs. Let 'em fight to a finish for 'em, winner to take all."

"Bully!" yelled the gang and began to form a ring.

"Not here," said The Rat. "Time we was gettin' ashore, before we're nabbed. At the Ugly Mug in two hours."

"I haven't his eye and I shan't fight and shan't be there," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"Oh, yes, you will," said The Rat. "I'm your trainer. Half of us'll go in one boat and half in the other. If you won't fight old Left Lamp here, you'll have to fight me and all the rest of the crew, 'cause we're going to see that you get to the Ugly Mug in time."

And so it was. The anchor rattled to the

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

bottom, without the crew as much as furling the sails. The boats were lowered and every thief (first stowing away his booty about his person) jumped into a boat. A half dozen of them seized Mr. Packlepoose and took him along. All Mr. Packlepoose had from the voyage was an officer's plain suit of clothes he had found in a state-room and which he took from dire necessity, because it was plain it would never find its owner again.

The Ugly Mug proved to be a rickety saloon built upon a pier and directly over the Sound. Before the door swung a sign bearing the picture of a yellow mug and on the mug was the portrait of the proprietor, fat-faced, small-eyed and with black mustaches curling up to his eyebrows. It was a forbidding looking place, and inside it was worse.

There were bright lights and music from a tin-pan piano. The floor was sprinkled with saw-dust and the bar took up the entire side of the long room and shone with glass-

## JUST THEN

ware and mirrors. Through a haze of blue tobacco smoke, Mr. Packlepoose saw a half-drunken mob of sailors salt from the seas, miners fresh from the Klondike, lumber-jacks wild from the woods and the scum of the criminals from the city. A howl of delight greeted The Rat as he crept to the bar and squeaked, "Drinks for everybody."

The fiddler and pianist banged out a tune and the fiddler sang in a husky voice:—

"Take a bite o' rum  
And some pepsin gum  
And a swaller er two o' brandy,  
A whiskey skin  
And a rickey of gin  
And a stick o' pep'mint candy."

"Now, gents," said The Rat, "I invites your attention to a finish fight between Single Eye and Triple Eye for the championship of the Ugly Mug. As you see, Single Eye has only one eye, 'cause Triple Eye has got his other eye. That's why they're fightin'."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Gloves were thrust upon Mr. Packlepoose's hands and he was pushed into the middle of the floor, facing Sleepnaut, while the fiddler sang:—

“Put up your mitts;  
Don't throw no fits,  
'Cause there ain't no cop to hear you.  
Give the other chap a slug  
In his ugly mug  
And the Ugly Mug will cheer you.”

Mr. Packlepoose did not want to fight, but he believed that if you must fight, you should fight hard. He had always been so mild and gentle that Sleepnaut supposed he would box and feint and fiddle like a gentleman in a gymnasium. Instead, no sooner did they face each other than Mr. Packlepoose sprang at Sleepnaut fiercely, slammed him in his one eye with a straight right-hand blow and brought his left against the body just above the belt. Sleepnaut doubled up like a knife and went to the floor. Instantly the fiddler sang:—

## JUST THEN

"One, two, three, four!  
Better get up from the sawdust floor.  
Five, six, seven, eight!  
Two seconds more and you'll be too late.  
Now it's nine and now it's ten;  
Now it's too late to get up again."

A roaring cheer went up for Mr. Packlepoose, but The Rat sprang forward with a pair of gloves already on his hands. "Fight me!" he yelled and jumped at Mr. Packlepoose. They boxed for a moment and then The Rat clinched and brought his glove down on Mr. Packlepoose's head. Mr. Packlepoose dropped like a stone, or like the lump of lead which The Rat's glove concealed.

"Foul!" "Fine!" "He's out!" "He's dead!" yelled the crowd and gathered around the fallen Mr. Packlepoose.

The proprietor, a fat-faced man with a long curled up mustache, pushed his way through the crowd and anyone could see why he bore the same name as his place. "He's all right," called the Ugly Mug, with-



They dragged him out and down a long  
dark hall.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

out even looking at the fallen man. "Nothing wrong ever happens in my house. The Rat has put him to sleep, so we'll put him to bed. That's all."

The Ugly Mug lifted Mr. Packlepoose by the shoulders and The Rat seized his feet. Together they dragged him out of the room and down a long, dark hall. "Open Number Thirteen," shouted the Ugly Mug.

There was the rattle of a key in the door and the slip of a heavy bolt. Some servant had opened the door of Number Thirteen and stood behind it in the hall, the door swinging outward.

"Stand back!" said the Ugly Mug to The Rat. He lifted Mr. Packlepoose to his feet and shoved him through into Number Thirteen. The door slammed shut with the sharp click of a spring lock.

"Say," whispered The Rat. "I want his ring. Let me go into the room a minute."

The Ugly Mug snarled out a laugh. "You fool! you killed him."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"No!" exclaimed The Rat. "Well, what's the harm of my getting the ring then?"

For answer the Ugly Mug slipped the bolt again. Then he slowly opened the door. The Rat peered in and drew back. The room was without a floor! Below the waters of the Sound washed out toward the great sea.

Something had happened.

## XXIV

THE GREAT LAKES LIMITED. WHAT THE OBSERVATION CAR OBSERVED. THE CONDUCTOR FINDS A SHIPMATE AND LOSES A BOY. THE MOUNTAIN HAS A SQUARE MEAL

**D**ID you say, "Poor Mr. Packlepoose"? Oh, I don't know. The souse into the cold water was just what he needed. Instinctively he struck out and when he came to his full senses, he found himself swimming along and, of course, not far from shore.

A few minutes later he crawled out and shook himself like a dog. A railroad track ran along near the shore. A long train blocked the way. It was a solid vestibuled train which had left the station but a few minutes before and was now delayed by a freight blockade in the yards. Mr. Packlepoose walked down to the end of the train

## JUST THEN

to get past it and noticed that every sleeper bore the words, in gold letters:—

### “THE GREAT LAKES LIMITED”

Mr. Packlepoose's heart gave a jump. “If only I were on that train with a through ticket,” he thought, “in four or five days I could see my wife and Bumpybambooney.” But he had no ticket and no money and the train was shut up tight. He had heard of tramps riding the brake-beams under the trains, but Mr. Packlepoose was no tramp and anyway he had no desire to ride a few hundred miles, at most, and then to be put off among the mountains, or in the midst of the desert.

He went around the train and the two green end-lights stared down at him, like the evil eyes of a very superior goblin looking through his glasses. The bulge of the car-roof above seemed to be a brow, the jut of the vestibule a nose, or the place where a

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

nose should be, and the brass base of the gate grinned like the teeth of a skeleton.

“Pooh! pooh!  
Who are you?  
You’re a common person; please skidoo.  
I’m haughty and proud  
And I’m not allowed  
To associate with the vulgar crowd.”

That is what the Observation Car observed, or appeared to observe, to Mr. Packlepoose, and it provoked him.

“I’ll show you,” he said and he seized the bars of the gate and scrambled over. Just then the engine whistled and the train moved forward. Mr. Packlepoose passed inside and entered a vacant state-room and shut the door. He squeezed the water out of his clothes as best he could, washed his face and combed his hair and really did not look so bad as you might think when you consider that he had just come from a robber ship, a prize fight and a dip in the Sound with his clothes on. He lay down on the couch and

## JUST THEN

closed his eyes to rest a moment. It seemed to him he had been there but a few moments when a firm little hand stroked his face and a little voice said, "Pitty mans! pitty mans! Pitty man's dead. Wate up, pitty mans and don' be dead no more. Wate up and tell me 'tory."

Mr. Packlepoose opened his eyes. It was broad daylight. Somehow the conductor had overlooked him the night before and he had slept all night. A little boy had pushed his way into the state-room.

"Bless your little heart," said Mr. Packlepoose, "of course I'll tell you a story."

His clothes were quite dried out, so he sat the child on his knee and started the story of Prince Gobblequick and the rubber-tired doughnut. He had just reached the point where he says, "And then when the Prince had swallowed the doughnut, it stuck in his throat and the Wicked Fairy pretended to be a doctor and tried to get the Princess to puncture the doughnut by shooting down the

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Prince's throat with a rifle, when——”  
“Berth check, please,” said the Pullman conductor, opening the door.

“I believe I have no berth check,” answered Mr. Packlepoose.

“Where did you get on?” asked the Pullman conductor.

“Seattle.”

“Let me see your railroad ticket, please.”

“I have no railroad ticket.”

The Pullman conductor gave him a sharp look and went to summon the train conductor. Now the train conductor had formerly been a sailor and he was also the father of the little boy on Mr. Packlepoose's knee.

“Hurry up and tell me 'tory 'fore papa comes,” said the urchin.

“Well,” said Mr. Packlepoose, “the Princess got the rifle and put in a cartridge and aimed it down the Prince's throat as the Wicked Fairy told her to do. The Prince was gasping and choking and it seemed a question whether he would choke to death

## JUST THEN

before the Princess could shoot him, or die from the Princess' bullet before he could choke to death. But, of course, if the Prince died from choking to death, the Princess would be the ruler of the country, while if the Princess killed him, the Prince would be dead and the Princess would be put in jail and the Wicked Fairy would seize the throne for the Bad Man. Well, the poor deluded Princess pointed the rifle down the Prince's throat and pulled the trigger and——"

"Hello, shipmate, where do you hail from?" asked the train conductor, appearing at the door with the Pullman conductor. Mr. Packlepoose had on the first mate's clothes which he had got on the Delivery Wagon, and the train conductor was tickled to find a sailor, as he thought.

"From Seattle last," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"It beats me to know how you got through the gate without a billet," said the conductor, meaning, of course, the depot gate.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"I didn't get through the gate. I climbed over it," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"What? what!" exclaimed the conductor. "Douse my train-lights, but I don't see how you could do that."

"Come to the rear of the train and I'll show you."

"Oh, you came aboard over the stern," said the conductor. "Well, where are you bound? You don't want to be keel-hauled as a stowaway. Hope you've had a prosperous run and are loaded to the scuppers with coin."

"I haven't a penny," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"Well, shiver my car-wheels, but you must have had a high old time in Seattle. Where were you from before Seattle?"

"San Francisco."

The word fell like a stone in its effect. "You went through the quake?"

"And the fire," nodded Mr. Packlepoose.

"We can't make a ship-mate walk the

## JUST THEN

plank who's been through all that," said the train conductor.

"Sorry," said the Pullman conductor, shaking his head. "Rules of the Company. I can't carry him unless he pays."

"I have this ring," said Mr. Packlepoose. "You can see it's very valuable. Couldn't you carry me and feed me for that?"

"Nothing but money goes," said the Pullman conductor.

"Wish I had the money, shipmate, and I'd pay for you myself," said the train conductor. "Tell you what," he continued, turning to his companion, "maybe some of these rich land-lubbers aboard would buy it from him."

"We'll, we'll try it before we put him off," said the Pullman conductor.

"There's a cabin-load of 'em in the observation car now, matey," whispered the train conductor. "They ought to be feeling real good right after breakfast."

Mr. Packlepoose arose, sliding the little

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

boy off his knee. "I want my 'tory! I want my 'tory!" cried the little boy.

"Ah, let him finish to satisfy Bubs," said the train conductor.

"No time to waste," said the Pullman conductor gruffly.

"Well, I'm going to waste it just the same," said Mr. Packlepoose, sitting down again and taking the child on his knee, "and if you think you can put me off while I'm wasting it, you just try it.—Well, the Princess pulled the trigger and the shot went down the Prince's throat and he gave a hoarse cry and of course just as soon as she had fired the shot, the Princess came out of the spell which the Wicked Fairy had put upon her and when she found she had shot her beloved Prince, she fainted dead away. But what *do* you think? The Good Fairy had touched the bullet with his wand as it flew through the air and had turned the pellet of lead into a pellet of bread, just soft enough so that it wouldn't hurt the

## JUST THEN

Prince and just hard enough so that it would puncture the rubber-tired doughnut, which was very clever work of the Good Fairy, I think. And the gun went 'pang!' and the rubber-tired doughnut went 'bang!' and the Princess dropped the rifle 'clang!' and the Prince coughed up the doughnut 'whang!' and the Good Fairy fairly sang and boxed the ears of the Wicked Fairy till they rang. And they all lived happy ever after."

Then Mr. Packlepoose went into the observation car and stood in the center and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am just from the San Francisco disaster. I have nothing left of any value except this ring. I wish to sell it for enough to get me back to Ohio. Do any of you care to buy it?"

"Fake!" grunted a fat, red-headed man in the corner, putting his paper up before his eyes.

"Fraud!" sniffed the thin, yellow-eyed man at the writing desk, turning his back.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Phoney!" sneered the muscular, black-whiskered man, tilting his cigar and looking at the ring from under his heavy eyelids.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," protested a fourth man, with a thin, smooth face and white hair. "Aren't you a little bit uncharitable? I had a brother in the earthquake and if he has escaped, as I pray he has, I should be sorry to have him treated like this, if he needed help."

"Well, perhaps you're right," said the fat man, more good-naturedly, "but I've helped a thousand fellows, it seems to me, who claimed to be from San Francisco and I suppose I'm getting sore."

"Same here," said the yellow-eyed man.

"Me, too," said the Black Whiskers. "And it does seem as if we ought to draw the line at chaps who can afford to ride on the Great Lakes Limited. But I'm willing to chip in."

"I don't want you to chip in," said Mr.

## JUST THEN

Packlepoose. "I'm merely trying to sell a very valuable ring at a very low price."

The white-faced man took his glasses out of his pocket and put them on. "May I see your ring?" he asked.

Mr. Packlepoose held out his hand. The white-faced gentleman turned even whiter. "My brother Richard's ring!" he cried. "I gave it to him myself and I saw it on his finger not ten days ago."

"Told you so," said the fat, red man.

"He's a looter," said Yellow Eyes.

"It would serve him right if we threw him off the rear platform," said Black Whiskers. "We'll soon be at the Hughill cut-off."

"Wait, gentlemen, wait," said the white-faced man, in trembling tones.

"If that is my brother's ring, it has his name and age engraved inside, 'To Rich at 43'. If, by any possibility, this man is not a thief, he will show me the inside of the ring."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"If he doesn't, we'll break his neck," said Black Whiskers.

Mr. Packlepoose took off the ring. Sure enough, it was engraved just as the white-faced man said and the poor old gentleman cried over it a little.

"Look here," said Mr. Packlepoose, "you ought to be glad instead of sorry, for I can tell you that your brother is saved. He gave me that ring for finding him in the ruins and pulling him out."

"A likely story!" roared the fat man.

"I wish I could believe it," said the white-faced man, half sobbing.

"He ought to be shot," said Yellow Eyes.

"I'm sorry he's a sailor," said the train conductor. "Guess we'll have to dump him off and send him back to 'Frisco."

"No, no," almost yelled Mr. Packlepoose, losing control of himself. "I shan't go back to San Francisco. I'm on my way to the Hockamaboury and I've been trying to get

## JUST THEN

to Bumpybambooney for months and I shan't go back a step."

Of course Mr. Packlepoose was wrong to get excited, but when you remember all he had gone through I think you will agree that he had some excuse. It was the last straw when they threatened to send him back to the earthquake and the fire and the Blue Acorn. But it never pays to lose one's temper, no matter what your troubles are, and it was bad for Mr. Packlepoose to lose his. The people on the train stared at each other, raised their brows and shook their heads. "Poor fellow! poor fellow!" said the white-faced man, "don't excite yourself. You're among friends."

"I hear lots of 'em went that way in the quake," grunted the fat man.

"Crazy as a loon. Just notice his language," whispered Yellow Eyes.

"He's dangerous anyhow," said Black Whiskers, "and I don't propose to have my life in danger by leaving him loose. Leave



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

him to me. I'm the sheriff of Chuckaluck County and I know how to handle these fellows."

He drew a pair of hand-cuffs from his pocket and approached Mr. Packlepoose. "If you try to put those things on me, I'll brain you," said Mr. Packlepoose, grabbing at a chair.

By this time, everybody in the observation car thought he was a dangerous lunatic. They arose and prepared to attack him. The sheriff drew a gun. "Now, then, all together; rush him!" he yelled.

As they came for him, Mr. Packlepoose darted out on the back platform and slammed the door shut, holding it tight.

"What 'e matter, nice mans?" said a little voice, for the conductor's small "Bubs" was there all by himself, everybody else being attracted by the trouble inside the car.

Mr. Packlepoose hung grimly onto the door, though he knew it was only a matter of minutes before they would force it open

## JUST THEN

and then they would have him. What would happen to him then? Would they put him into an asylum? Or a jail? Or send him back to San Francisco? Would they——

But just then something happened.

The train was crawling along the side of the mountain, along the Hughill cutoff. Below, the mountain sheered off for a thousand feet. Above, it arose for a mile or more with a steep slope. Down the steeps above them, with the speed of a waterfall and the roar of a dozen Niagaras, an avalanche came crashing. Great trees bent like straws, huge boulders as big as houses leaped into the air like pebbles. The train was directly in its path.

Mr. Packlepoose gave one glance, grabbed the little boy, swung over the gate and dropped off. Right opposite was a cave, or recess, with the mountain stretching a shelf of rock over it. Mr. Packlepoose squeezed the little boy in as far as he could and crowded after. The great avalanche swept

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the entire train into the valley, crushing it as if its cars were so many strawberry boxes. Mr. Packlepoose and the little boy were alive, but the opening where they had crawled in was buried beneath thousands of tons of rock. It was as if the mountain had shut its mouth and swallowed them.

I am not going to say that Mr. Packlepoose wasn't frightened. If it had not been for the little boy, I am sure he would have felt bad enough to lie down and die. Indeed, there didn't seem to be anything else to do. But with the little boy to think of, he tried to be cheerful and to keep up his courage. He felt around the cavern to see if there were any possible opening. There were thin cracks and crevices, through which a little light and air entered, but beyond, the tons and tons of rock lay piled. On the surface of the innermost rock, drops of water seeped through, enough to relieve their worst thirst. Bubs began to cry and Mr. Packlepoose began to tell him stories. Stories and stories

## JUST THEN

and stories he told till Bubs went to sleep. He and Mr. Packlepoose both slept for several hours and then Bubs awoke and demanded another story. So Mr. Packlepoose told him the story of Aladdin and the Forty-first Thief, which he said would explain the difference between old-time magic and new. In the story the Forty-first Thief had got Aladdin's ring and lamp away from him and had imprisoned him in the robbers' cave. He had no way to get out except by use of his magic wand and his magic wand was a stick of dynamite. Aladdin had just placed the magic wand where it would do the most good and had retreated to the farther end of the robbers' cave to say the magic words:—

“ Snap, crack and crash!  
Rock be chalk and cheese.  
Split, splat and smash!  
Open! I sneeze, I sneeze!”

Across the continent Bumpybambooney waited and did not know that her father was

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

in the stomach of a mountain and could not hear her cries to him to come back. And inside the mountain, Mr. Packlepoose told the story of Aladdin and the Forty-first Thief and said the magic words, like Aladdin did, and pointed his finger at the wall.

And just then something happened.

## XXV

THE SECRET SEVEN AND THE HOGHEIMER COMPANY. DOES CHOKE-DAMP MAKE YOU CRAZY, OR CAN A HORSE TALK IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH?

THE Montana Monarch is a famous mine. It is very rich and the Hogheimer Company which owns it is very rich, too. Also very greedy. Whenever it could, it has made its miners work as many hours each day as it could for as little money as it could. It has made them trade at stores which the Company owned and charged them more for groceries and clothing than the goods were worth, so that the miners were usually in debt to the Company for provisions instead of the Company owing money to the men for wages.

So the Secret Council of Seven called a meeting to consider a strike. They had to

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

be very secret about it, because the Hogheimer Company didn't allow the men to meet for such a purpose if they could help it. These men met in the new shaft of the lower level, the very deepest place in the mine. And the mine was a very deep one and struck far into the mountain.

The Secret Seven hated the Hogheimer Company and the Hogheimers hated the Secret Seven. "I move we call a strike of all the Montana Monarch workers," said one.

"I say call a strike of all the miners of the state," said a second.

"I move it be of all the miners of the country," said a third.

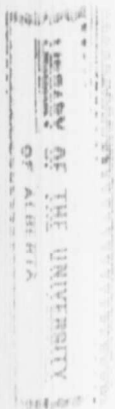
Then up arose Jim Lovell, a tall, sharp-featured fellow, who was the best friend and the worst enemy anyone could have. "No," said he, "there's no use striking against the Hogheimer Company. Let us strike, but let us strike in a different way. Let us strike the worst possible blow. Let us completely destroy this mine as a warning to all other

## JUST THEN

Hogheimers. There is enough giant powder and dynamite stored in this shaft to blow up the mountain. I'm going to lay a fuse to the powder, so as to shake the rocks down upon the dynamite and destroy the mine. Get out of the mine, every one of you."

Without waiting for consent Jim Lovell fixed the fuse and fired it. It was a desperate and a criminal act and shows how hate makes hate and what hate does for men. Toward all other people Jim Lovell was a good-natured, kindly man. Toward the Hogheimers he was a reckless foe, caring nothing for their rights, or the rights of others who stood in the way.

Jim Lovell fired the fuse. The rest rushed for the main shaft. Now powder and dynamite do not always explode just as you think they will. Besides Jim Lovell had not arranged the stuff so that it would explode in any particular way. He only wanted to rip up the mine so that it would be of no value to its owners, and he relied upon the





## SOMETHING HAPPENED

mere quantity of the powder and dynamite to do it.

Jim fired the fuse and the Secret Seven ran. Before they had time to get out of the mine, Bang! R-rip! Crash! Bang! Roar! The Secret Seven turned white with fear and looked at each other tremblingly, all except Lovell, who grinned. "Guess we might as well stay here as go out," he said.

"No, no, let's get out quick!" said the others.

"What's your hurry to get into jail?" said Lovell. "If we go out, we'll be nabbed as dynamiters. If we stay in, we may be rescued as heroes. There's no hurry."

The explosion had wrecked the lights and much of the machinery and the mine was as dark as a pocket. Now a cage came down the main shaft, lowered from the derrick at the top. The mine boss was in it.

Lovell slipped back into the darkness and the others clamored to be taken up. They said nothing about Lovell and the mine boss

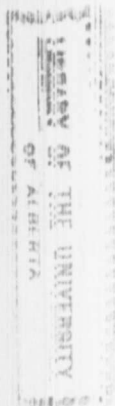
## JUST THEN

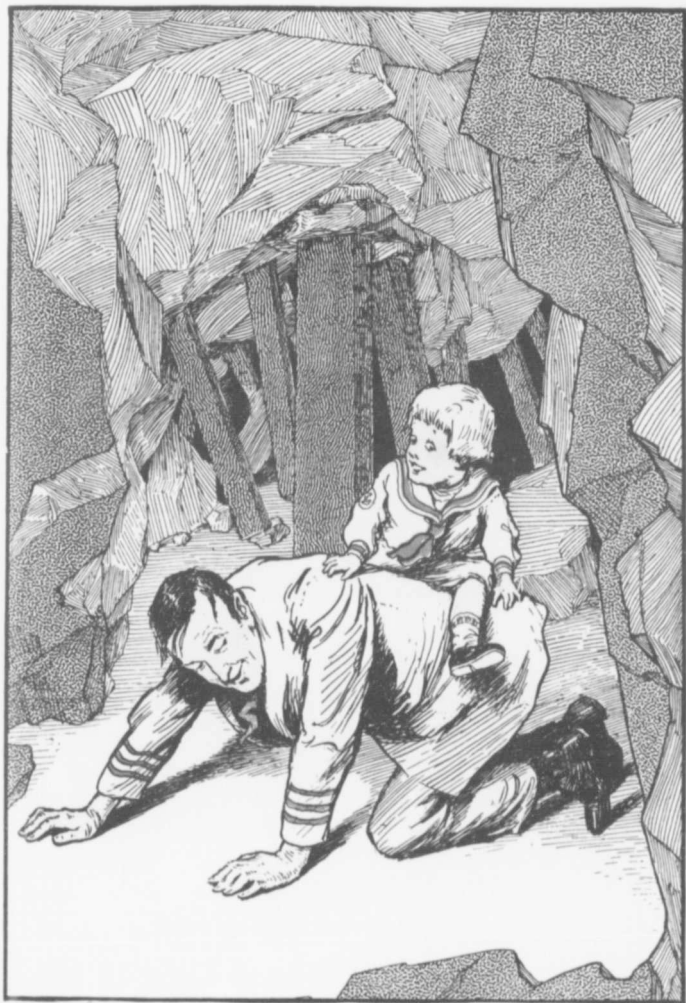
had not even known that they were in the mine. They vowed they had had nothing to do with the explosion and they secretly hoped Lovell would never be found, for fear he might boldly tell all the circumstances.

As for Lovell, he slipped back into the mine and wandered around in the darkness. But the great explosion which had wrecked the electric lights had also stopped the fans which sucked the foul air out of the deep mine and pumped fresh air in. At that great depth, with the fans stopped, Lovell began to think of choke-damp, a gas which kills anyone who breathes it in a minute or two. Any moment he expected to feel the fearful choke-damp in his nostrils and the grip of death on his throat. As he crawled along, hardly knowing which way he was going, suddenly he heard a voice.

Lovell's heart almost stopped, for it was a voice which had never been heard in that mine. Then he thought he was going crazy, for the voice said, "Pitty horse, pitty horse.

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Hang on tight, 'cause old horse has to feel  
his way.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Giddap home, pitty horse; le's run away home." It was the voice of a child, little more than a baby. How could a little child be down in that mine and so near where his great explosion had just occurred, almost great enough, he had thought to blow the mountain off the earth. And on a horse!

Then he heard the horse's voice which seemed to try hard to be cheerful, "Heh-eh-eh-eh-eh-eh!" whinnied the horse. "Yes, little driver; old horse is going home best he knows how. Hang on tight, 'cause old horse has to feel his way."

"Who are you?" almost yelled Jim Lovell.

"Who are *you* and where are we?" sharply answered the horse.

"We're at the bottom of the Montana Monarch, with the lights out and the fans stopped and we may choke to death any minute. How in the name of Satan did you and the kid get here?"

"We were walled up in a cave by an avalanche. I was telling Bubs here the story

## JUST THEN

of Aladdin and the Forty-first Thief when the strangest thing happened. The side, the *inside* of our cave split open, making a crack as wide as a door. Bubs and I came through and here we are. You say we're in a mine. Can't we find our way to the main shaft and get out?"

"Easy enough," but I don't want to go out," said Lovell.

"Well, we do. Which is the way?"

"Get down on the ground and find the rails."

"The rails?"

"Cert. The rails the ore-cars run on. Then follow the rails."

"But the rails run both ways and they must lead into many different cuts. It's as black as pitch and we'd be lost in five minutes. In fact, we *are* lost."

"Oh, punk!" said Jim Lovell. "I'll start you the right way and after that you can tell by the point rail. Whenever you come to an intersection where the track leads two

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

ways, feel for the point rail and you can pick out the main track. I'll show you if you'll promise me you won't say anything to anyone about me."

"But you'll die if you stay here."

"That's my business. Promise!"

"How can I promise? This little boy would be sure to let it out."

"All right then," said Lovell stubbornly. "Stay here and smother."

"Thank you kindly," said Mr. Packlepoose, "but Bubs and I don't care to smother. I'll have one look around and then I'll make the best fight to get out I can."

He drew a match from his pocket and struck it. It flared an instant, showing the vague outlines of a ragged cavern with great masses of rock blocking the way, a little boy with bobbed hair, a desperate miner, and a cheery-faced man holding a match. Then it puffed out.

"Choke-damp!" cried the miner. "No light can burn in choke damp. We'll all go

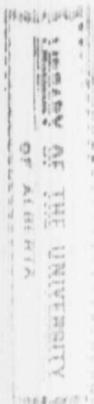
## JUST THEN

out like that match in two shakes of a rattler's tail."

There was an awful pause. The little boy began to cry softly. Jim Lovell sat straight up, then reached over and patted the little boy with one hand and gripped the hand of Mr. Packlepoose with the other. "It's all over," he said solemnly. "I'm sorry I couldn't save you two."

Mr. Packlepoose shook his hand free. "It isn't all over," he said. "That match wasn't smothered out. It blew out." He wet his finger and held it up. A draft quickly cooled one side. "I'm going toward the wind," he said, "to find where it comes from."

They wound their way around the huge masses of rock and came to the shaft where the Secret Seven had met and it was like looking through a tunnel. The entire end of the shaft had blown out and the hole led out onto the side of the mountain. This had released part of the energy of the explosion and explained why it had not done





## SOMETHING HAPPENED

greater damage to the main part of the mine.

"Why with this side-hole and the main shaft open, it was just like being in a big chimney," laughed Mr. Packlepoose. "There was a perfect draft all the time."

"That's so," responded Lovell, "and anyway, there's never any choke-damp in a copper-mine. I must have been looney in there."

Mr. Packlepoose picked up Bubs and started on his way toward his own child who was still hoping for the return of the papa she had told to "Go away!"

## XXVI

THE CALMEST MAN SENDS MR. PACKLEPOOSE TO  
BILLINGS WITH BUBS. WELL, WELL! AT LAST  
WE KNOW WHY THERE ARE NO SODA FOUNTAINS  
ON RAILROAD TRAINS

LOVELL ran after them and said,  
"Come to my shack and have dinner  
with me. I got you out of your  
cave the back way and you got me out of the  
mine by a side door. Let's stick together a  
while longer. I bet the kid's hungry, too."

"Bubs is *so* hundry," cried the little one.

"All right," said Mr. Packlepoose. "I  
could eat a brick without butter myself."

"Say," said Lovell, as they sat at table,  
"ain't you going to tell me all about your-  
self? I can't make you out. You talk as  
neat as a school teacher, you got on sailor  
clothes, you're as poor as a tramp and I

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

find you in a mine with a little boy who don't belong to you. What's the answer?"

"I shan't tell you," said Mr. Packlepoose. "The more I tell of myself the more people think I'm insane and the more trouble I get into. I can hardly believe, myself, all that has happened to me since I left home. If you want to know my name, it's Packlepoose. That isn't my real name; it's a nickname which my little girl gave me, but it happened that I gave it as my name to a little boy whom I met on the first day of my journey and by a series of events it has stuck to me. I'm obstinate about it now and I have decided to be Mr. Packlepoose to the end of the chapter; that is, till I get home."

"Well, I like your nerve," said Lovell (and he didn't mean it in a slangy sense), "and I'd like to give you a lift. I haven't got much money, but if a little will help——"

"Thank you," said Mr. Packlepoose, "but that's another thing about which I've de-

## JUST THEN

cided. Every time on this trip that someone has been kind to me and has loaned me money, some horrible accident, by which I've lost it all, has happened immediately. I owe more than I can easily pay and I've decided not to borrow another cent if I have to walk all the way to Bumpybambooney."

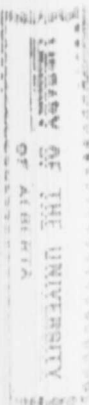
"Never heard of no such place," said Lovell.

"She isn't a place," answered Mr. Packlepoose.

"Oh, some of your folks. Well, don't you want to telegraph her?"

"That's still another thing. Every time I have telegraphed, or cabled, or even tried to do so, to the effect that I was starting homeward, there has been some unbelievable thing which has stopped me and turned me aside. I don't want to be superstitious, but I'm going to deliver the next telegram myself."

"Well, you're certainly an odd duck," said Lovell. "What is it that you want then?"



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"You don't know what I've been through, or maybe I wouldn't seem so odd. All I'm asking now is to be allowed to touch the shores of old Lake Erie and then I'll swim home!"

Mr. Packlepoose laughed as he said this, and so did Lovell and so did Bubs. "Come along, Bubs," said Mr. Packlepoose, "we've got to find the railroad." He took the little boy by the hand and they bade Lovell good-bye, struck directly toward the track and down the track to the station, which was a mile or two east of the place where the avalanche had wrecked the train the day before.

Going down the track they had to dodge wrecking trains and hospital cars and supply-trains, as well as the freight and passenger trains held up by the avalanche and the wreck. Railroad men, from assistant general passenger agents down to freight handlers swarmed and sweated and shouted and worked. If it had not been for Bubs, Mr.

## JUST THEN

Packlepoose would have had no attention whatever, everybody was so busy.

Mr. Packlepoose walked up to the calmest man he could find and held the little boy up before him. "This is Bubs, son of Conductor Shipman of the wrecked train. He lives in Billings where his mother is. I rescued him and if you like I'll take him to Billings and see that he finds his mother."

The Calmest Man fired a few rapid questions at Mr. Packlepoose. "What sort of a looking man was Shipman? And the Pullman conductor? How long had you been on the train? What time did the train leave Seattle?" etc.

Then he took out a card and a fountain pen, scribbled a few words and said, "We're making up an emergency train right now to start East inside of half an hour. This card will take care of you and the boy as far as Billings. Make it as easy for Mrs. Shipman as you can. If at any extra expense, send bill to our offices in St. Paul."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Poor little Bubs did not know what had happened to his papa. He was quite happy in Mr. Packlepoose's company and very glad to see his mother upon arrival at Billings. As for poor Mrs. Shipman, she wept with joy to see Bubs who was saved and wept with grief over Bubs' father who, she feared, was lost in the wreck.

After doing what he could to comfort her, Mr. Packlepoose took his leave, and as far as I know, he never learned whether the sailor-conductor came out of the wreck alive or not. I hope he came out alive.

Mr. Packlepoose went up to the hotel and sat down at the long writing table which stretched along the office. He wanted to think what to do next and how he could continue his journey eastward. Opposite to him sat a rather heavy gentleman with a gray beard and the air of a man who knows things and does things. Mr. Packlepoose looked at him and felt sure he had seen his picture in the newspapers and magazines.

## JUST THEN

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but is it possible you are Mr. Hill."

"It's *possible* I am Mr. Mountain," returned the old gentleman, "but what of it?"

"Well," said Mr. Packlepoose, "I've just been through the Hughill wreck on your road. I'm very anxious to get home and I thought I might be of enough service to you for you to send me East."

"Humph!" said the old gentleman. "If you can tell me one single thing to improve our service, I'll send you to St. Paul to talk it over with the General Passenger Agent. But it must be something which hasn't been suggested before."

"Oh, that's easy," said Mr. Packlepoose. "Which is the most popular drink in America?"

"Tut, tut. I haven't time to bother with that," said the old gentleman testily. "Beer, I suppose."

"Wrong!" said Mr. Packlepoose. "It's ice cream soda. Now there isn't a train in



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

America running a soda fountain. The entire traveling public is deprived of its ice cream soda. Put a fountain on every through train and the reputation of your road is made."

The old gentleman showed signs of vexation and then burst out laughing. "I had never thought of that before," he said. "I shall have to keep my promise. The law doesn't allow passes, but I'll buy you a ticket to St. Paul and give you a letter to—let me see, we'd better make it to Mr. Noble." The old gentleman chuckled to himself and then added, "I won't say that he'll accept your suggestion, but it will be a new one to him, I'm sure."

That's how Mr. Packlepoose got as far as St. Paul, but when he presented the old gentleman's letter at the office of the General Passenger Agent in St. Paul, what do you think happened? What? Why, nothing at all, or at least nothing important.

He gave his letter to the office boy, who put it on the desk of the stenographer, who

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

read it and handed it to the chief clerk, who sent it back to Mr. Packlepoose, so that it never got to Mr. Noble at all. Then Mr. Packlepoose took his letter and read:—

“I don’t know anything about this man except that he mistook me for Jim Hill and made me laugh. A laugh is worth more to me than money. I promised to send him to you and I always keep my promises. That’s all.

“JOHN SMITH.”

The old gentleman had played a joke on Mr. Packlepoose, but Mr. Packlepoose didn’t care, because he had got as far as St. Paul anyway. But that is why there are still no soda fountains on railroad trains!

## XXVII

WHO EVER HEARD OF A PROMOTER OF PEANUTS?  
THE SHARPENER OF LADIES' LEAD PENCILS,  
THE CRANKER-UP OF MILLIONAIRES' MOTOR  
CARS AND THE NEEDLE-THREADER FOR NEAR-  
SIGHTED BACHELORS, ALSO THE RESCUER  
OF CRAMP-CATCHERS

**M**R. PACKLEPOOSE went down from the railroad offices and into the street. It was late in the afternoon. He had had luncheon on the train, for the old gentleman's ticket money had included meals as far as St. Paul, but he was now without money again and with no supper in sight and no bed to sleep in.

To be sure, it would not have done him much good if he had had a bed, because he had no place to put it.

Now, you boys and girls who have been following Mr. Packlepoose, have you ever thought what you would do if you had no

## JUST THEN

money, nothing to eat and no place to sleep? You eat your three meals a day because somebody serves them to you, and sometimes you are cross and ungrateful and you say you don't like *this* which is on the table and "Why don't we ever have *that*?" which does not happen to be on the table. And sometimes when father or mother says, "Bed-time!" you pout and fret, when you ought to be glad you have a good, clean, comfy bed to go to, as Mr. Packlepoose would have been glad, had he had one.

So Mr. Packlepoose said to himself, "What can I do?" He knew, as you know, that all food comes directly, or indirectly, from the earth, but he couldn't plant a crop and wait for it to grow, could he?

The next best thing would be to hire out to someone who had a crop, or who had money, but he would have to do a month's work, or a week's, or at least a day's work, before he would be paid and that wouldn't get him supper and bed and breakfast. He



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

couldn't beg. He wouldn't steal. What then could he do?

The first thing he saw was a peanut and fruit stand. Walking up to the owner he said, "How's business?"

"If it was as good as it is bad, it would be better," said the man, with an Irish accent.

"Why don't you advertise?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"Go on wid ye! How could I be after advertisin' the peanut business?"

"I'll do it for you, if you'll give me one-half the profits," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"Wan half the profits! Sure I don't make enough to kape body and soul from partin' and how could I give yez wan half the profits."

"Because I'll increase your business. If I don't sell out your entire stock before dark, you needn't pay me a cent."

"Me whole stock! Man alive, I don't sell that much in a wake."

"Is it a go, then?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

## JUST THEN

"It sure is and it's a fine laugh I'll have on yez. Advertisin'! ha, ha! advertisin'!"

"Then you must do as I tell you," said Mr. Packlepoose and proceeded to tell his plan. Then he stood on the edge of the side-walk, balanced a shelled peanut on the end of his nose, barked like a dog, tossed it into the air with a motion of his head, caught it in his mouth and ate it. He did this a few times with a perfectly serious face and a little crowd gathered. Then he called, "Here are your genuine St. Paul peanuts, hot from the roaster and only ten cents a dozen. Every man who buys a dozen gets three shots at Shamus Dugan. Hit him once, you get a bag of these incomparable peanuts. Hit him twice, you get a dozen oranges. Hit him three times, you get a ticket to your own funeral. Step up and try your luck. Peanuts are good for that empty feeling and as long as your children are eating oranges they are not making mud pies on the piano."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

One or two young fellows handed in their dimes with a grin and Shamus gave them the peanuts "hot from the roaster," as promised. The peanuts were so hot the buyers dropped them at once and didn't even try to throw. The crowd laughed and a few bought bags of peanuts and fruit and hurried on. Then a man with gloves on tried the game. Mr. Packlepoose placed Shamus at the curb and the thrower against the wall across the sidewalk. When he tried to throw he bumped his elbow against the wall and the crowd laughed again and more buyers came.

But now up came a tall, sinewy policeman with a long, thin stick and crowded all the people off the sidewalk. "Move on you!" he said to Mr. Packlepoose and Shamus. "You're blocking the whole street."

"My dear man," said Mr. Packlepoose, "I'm only talking. That's not against the law."

"Where's your permit?" asked the policeman.

## JUST THEN

"My permit's in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States," smiled Mr. Packlepoose. The tall, sinewy policeman didn't quite understand this, so he passed on, saying, "Don't let me catch you here when I come back."

But before he came back, it was all over. To sell anything is only a matter of attracting the attention of enough people and it was not long before the astonished Shamus Dugan had sold his stand out as clean as a waxed floor and was scratching his head over the difficult problem of dividing the money, which he had in a cigar box. At first he was going to give Mr. Packlepoose half of all he had taken in, but Mr. Packlepoose pointed out that he had only asked for half of the profits. Then Shamus was only going to give him half the dimes paid for the peanuts to throw, but Mr. Packlepoose showed him that that was only a means of advertising and that the greater profits came from the regular sales. Then Shamus held out the cigar-



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

box to Mr. Packlepoose and said, "Here's me safe and the combynation lock is not har-rd for a clever b'y to open. Take what yez want, for the bottom would scarce be spotted if it wasn't fer yourself."

Mr. Packlepoose laughed and took out a dollar only, giving the rest back to Shamus. As he turned away, he noticed an auto containing four half-grown boys standing at the curb. The chauffeur stepped out and touched the visor of his cap, saying, "I salute you as a fellow-member of the Self-Supporting Sons of Society."

"But I'm not," said Mr. Packlepoose.

"Oh, yes, you are. Step into the club-room and you shall be initiated at once."

He motioned toward the auto and Mr. Packlepoose got in. "Is this auto your club-room?" he asked.

"It is," answered the chauffeur and also our work-room. We are on the way to our headquarters, where we dine and sleep. Gentlemen, allow me to introduce our new

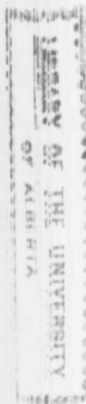
## JUST THEN

member, Packlepoose, the Promoter of Peanuts." Each boy in the auto bowed profoundly to Mr. Packlepoose and said:—

“ Never, never, never,  
Did we ever, ever  
Meet a man who had a plan  
Which seemed to us so clever,  
Clever! clever! clever! ”

Then they all sat bolt upright and stared straight ahead, as the car (a powerful and expensive machine) moved away. As it did so, Mr. Packlepoose noticed a roly-poly little man, with a high silk hat and side whiskers making motions in his direction from the sidewalk. It did not occur to Mr. Packlepoose that the roly-poly man was motioning to him, until he saw the silk hat and the side whiskers pursuing the car, which, however, soon lost him.

The motor-car turned into a fashionable street and stopped before a fine mansion. A footman ran down to open the door, a boy in buttons met them at the steps of the house,



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

another servant took their hats and a third led Mr. Packlepoose to a bedroom with a bath all ready, and dinner clothes laid out on the bed for him. Dinner was announced a little later and it was an excellent meal and served in the best of taste. When dessert was served, the boy who had acted as chauffeur arose and said, "Self-Supporting Sons of Society, you have all met Comrade Packlepoose, the distinguished Promoter of Peanuts and he is now to meet you. Comrade Horace, you will testify." Horace, the Comrade-Secretary of the Society, was a mild-eyed youth with red eyelashes and blue eyes. He arose and remarked, "Mr. Comrade-President, my occupation is that of a Sharpener of Lead Pencils for Ladies. I conceived the idea that very few ladies are successful pencil sharpeners and that, as so many of them are now business women, authors and presidents of suffragette societies, there would be a great demand for an expert lead-pencil sharpener."

## JUST THEN

At these words the other members arose and bowed and said solemnly:—

“Never, never, never  
Did we ever, ever  
Meet a man who had a plan  
Which seemed to us so clever,  
Clever! clever! clever!”

“Unfortunately,” continued the Pencil Sharpener, “I found it difficult to meet the lead-pencil ladies, at the proper moment. Some of them had husbands, sons or brothers who sharpened their pencils, some had mechanical sharpeners, and some had even learned to sharpen pencils themselves. My earnings for the day were, therefore, not much in excess of eleven dollars.”

“Eleven dollars! Excellent!” cried Mr. Packlepoose.

Horace was embarrassed. “I didn’t exactly say eleven dollars,” he stammered. “I said ‘not much in excess of eleven dollars.’ As a matter of fact, I only earned eleven

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

cents, but that, you will admit, is really *not* more than eleven dollars, is it?"

Mr. Packlepoose laughed, but the others took this very seriously. A second boy, the Comrade-Treasurer, gave his occupation as a Needle-Threader for Near-Sighted Bachelors, but complained that the bachelors who should have employed him sent their clothes to the tailor's. The third boy said he had sought employment as Heroic Rescuer of Cramp-Catchers, but although he had stood upon the banks of the river all day, no one had employed him as a Hero. The fourth boy was a Cranker-Up of Millionaires' Motor Cars, but he had been crowded out of employment by the chauffeurs whom the millionaires employed to run their self-starting cars. Every time one of them told of an idea, the rest would arise and bow and repeat the rhyme of "Never, never, never," etc.

"But," said Mr. Packlepoose, when they were all through, "will you please explain

## JUST THEN

to me how you live in such magnificence upon such small earnings?"

"Oh," said the Comrade-President, "our Comrade-Secretary is the son of a Minneapolis miller, our Comrade-Treasurer of a Milwaukee brewer, Our Comrade-High-Private of a Cleveland oil producer and I am the son of a Chicago pork packer. We admit that as yet we are not quite self-supporting, but it is our ideal to be so and we have heard that it is well to have the proper ideal. We are always trying new plans to be self-supporting and when we saw you do your fine work as a Promoter of Peanuts we knew you would be in sympathy with us and so we have elected you Honorary Member and to-morrow we want you to teach us how to become Self-Supporting Sons. But now our day's work is done, our reports are in and at night we always enjoy ourselves. Do you know any stories?"

So Mr. Packlepoose told them stories and it was surprising, as well as amusing, to see

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the change in the boys. From solemn little manikins they turned to laughing, shouting, natural youngsters. "Boys," said Mr. Packlepoose, "when you asked me to be your instructor, you were all so solemn and unnatural, I couldn't think of any way to help you in your work. But now that you are just boys, I have a plan."

The next morning they arose bright and early and went down to the Twin Cities Book Yard.

## XXVIII

THE SELF-SUPPORTING SONS OF SOCIETY TAKE A  
LESSON, BUT LOSE THEIR INSTRUCTOR. THE  
ROLY-POLY ROPE-WALKER TAKES A FEW  
STEPS TO THE TRANSOM AND THE SAILORS'  
CIRCUS HIRES A NEW MAN

**T**HE Book Yard was really a Book Shop, but it was large and the books were piled up like bricks in a yard. The owner was a little old gentleman with white hair which shone like new silver and his pink skull shone along the part in the middle like a line of coral.

He came forward rubbing his long, thin hands, as Mr. Packlepoose and the Self-Supporting Sons entered. "Which are your Six Slowest Sellers?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"Er—uh—, what's that?" asked the bookseller.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Is there any book of which you have a large number and which doesn't sell?"

"Bless me! yes," said the old book-seller, "several of them, but you are a new kind of a book-collector, if you're looking for that kind."

"Suppose that the books sell for a dollar and a half and cost you ninety cents, you could easily afford to pay fifteen cents each for selling them, couldn't you?"

"Oh, y-e-e-es, yes, if enough of them were sold."

"Very well. Bring on your books and put five chairs in the window."

"But, my dear sir," protested the astonished book-seller, "I—I——"

"What's the worst selling book you have?" interrupted Mr. Packlepoose.

"Oh, this humorous one. It almost makes me weep. Look at the pile! It's really a good book, too, but the last one the author wrote was a serious 'History of the Multiplication Table,' and so many people bought it

## JUST THEN

for a funny book that they won't buy this one at all."

Mr. Packlepoose took up a copy and read a paragraph. He chuckled. Then he read it aloud to the boys and they laughed four hearty boyish laughs, just as they had the night before. Mr. Packlepoose led the way to the window, still reading, and the boys still laughing. They sat down in the window and soon all the people in the store gathered around and there was a crowd outside pressing against the glass, but Mr. Packlepoose and the boys paid absolutely no attention to them.

Everybody likes to laugh and laughter is as catching as measles. Two or three customers who were in a hurry bought books and took them away. Buying is also catching. Very soon the pile of books was coming down like a brick wall at a fire. The old book-seller was rubbing his thin, white hands in great glee.

Just then something happened.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

A roly-poly little man with a tall silk hat and side whiskers sidled along the outskirts of the crowd. He was too short to see over the heads of the people, so he climbed onto the seat of a wagon which stood at the curb and this is what he saw: A man in evening clothes sat reading to four boys who sat with their mouths open, swallowing every word. Every minute or so all of them would burst into laughter, holding their sides, throwing back their heads and rocking to and fro. Not a sound could be heard, but every time the boys laughed the crowd on the sidewalk ha-ha'd in sympathy.

"Fine! fine!" said the man on the wagon; "and it's the same fellow." The door-way was jammed with people trying to get in to hear what it was all about. Then a tall, sinewy policeman, with a long, thin club crowded into the store and tapped Mr. Packlepoose on the shoulder. Mr. Packlepoose buried his nose in the book and read on and the boys laughed harder than ever.

## JUST THEN

"That's the best touch yet," breathed the man on the wagon.

Now the long, lank policeman grabbed Mr. Packlepoose and yelled something in his ear. Mr. Packlepoose laughed in his face and turned back to the book. The boys laughed, too.

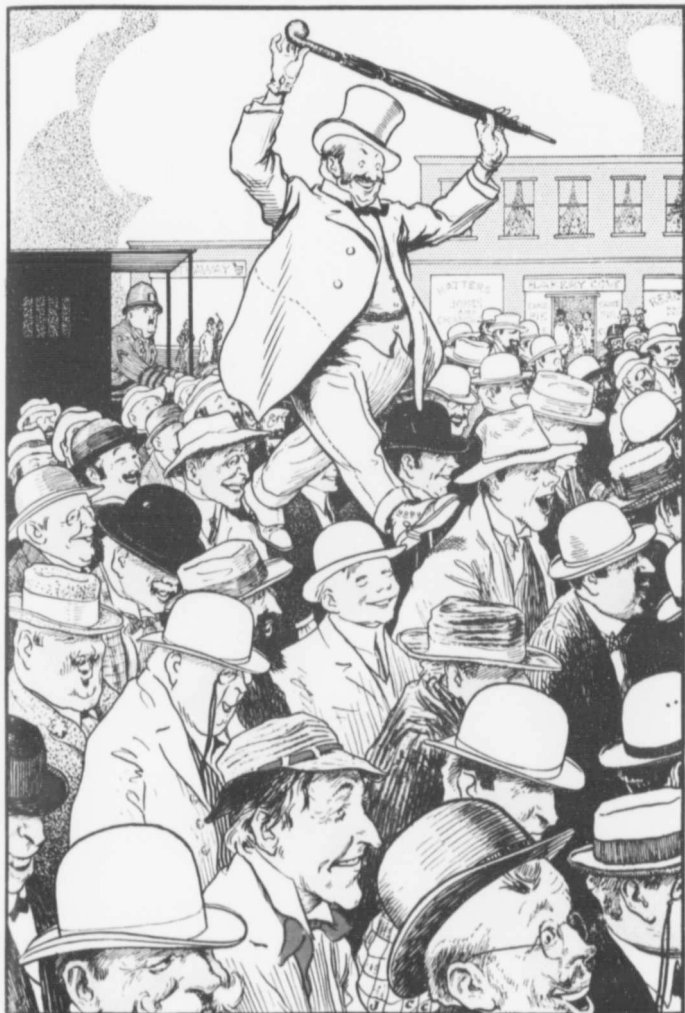
"Excellent!" cried the dumpy little man on the wagon.

But now the policeman dragged Mr. Packlepoose from his chair. "Why, he's in earnest!" cried the roly-poly man to himself.

"Well, why else do you t'ink this hurry-up wagon is here?" cried the wagon's driver, and the roly-poly one noticed for the first time that he was a policeman also. "Git offen this wagon," said the driver. "You is certingly got yer gall with you. I just been watchin' yous to see how far yous would go. Git off, I say."

"Certainly, my dear fellow," cried the little man, giving a swift glance at the crowd which was jammed between the wagon and





He ran from shoulder to shoulder across the crowd.

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OF ALABAMA

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

the door of the Book Yard. Suddenly he balanced his umbrella on his hands, stepped swiftly off the wagon onto the shoulder of a man in the crowd and, in a jiffy, ran from shoulder to shoulder across the crowd to the door. He caught the ledge of the open transom above the door and swung himself across so that his head was in the store and his feet kicked the air outside. He was just in time to hear the policeman say, "I warned you last night to quit this blockadin' the side-walk and now you go with me."

"But I'm not on the side-walk," said Mr. Packlepoose. "I'm in this gentleman's store."

"Really you must not appeal to me," said the timid, old book-man. "I really didn't engage you, you know, and on the whole I cannot say that I quite approve of you."

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried the boys. "Didn't you seat us here. Haven't we been selling your rotten old books for you? Never you fear, Papa Packlepoose, we'll stand by you."

## JUST THEN

"You are good, game boys," said Mr. Packlepoose quietly, "but you'll oblige me by getting into your car and keeping out of this."

"But who'll go your bail?" asked the boys.

"I will," roared a voice above their heads. "You, Papa Packlepoose, if that's your name, I engage you as advertising manager for the Sailors' Supreme Supererogatory Circus at a stupendous salary."

"What's the route of your circus?" asked Mr. Packlepoose.

"Opens in delirious Duluth to-morrow, and pompously proceeds down the larger Lakes to the omnipotent ocean, stupendously showing at all magnificent metropolises, such as peerless Petoskey, proud Port Huron, dauntless Detroit, clarified Cleveland, beneficent——"

"I accept," said Mr. Packlepoose, "if this fellow——" But the circus-man was shaking his head vigorously, by which Mr. Packle-



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

poose understood that he was to allow himself to be arrested.

So off to the station in the patrol-wagon rode Mr. Packlepoose and the dumpy little man climbed on the step behind and advertised the Sailors' Circus all the way to the station. There, the sergeant in charge dismissed Mr. Packlepoose, after a few words with the circus-man and the officer who made the arrest.

A few hours after Mr. Packlepoose was in Duluth busily at work for the Sailors' Supreme and Supererogatory Circus.

## XXIX

ZACHARY ZENO TELLS HIS STORY AND SEVERAL THINGS HAPPEN TO WHICH NO ATTENTION IS PAID. BEEF-AND-MUTTON-CHOPS DEMANDS DUTY AND THE PETREL CHASES THE CIRCUS-SHIP

**T**HE Sailors' Circus is a little idea of my own," said the dumpy little man, whose name was Zachary Zeno. "The cities are getting so crowded that there is hardly room to pitch a circus tent any more and it is a tremendous trouble loading and unloading from the trains, erecting tents and seats. We are overcharged for licenses and for ground rent, so by having our own ship and giving the circus right on the boat, we save a lot of trouble and expense. Besides we get the patronage of the sailors, who are good spenders. Now your salary will be a thousand dollars a week and

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

twenty-seven dollars of it will be in real money."

"Anything suits me," said Mr. Packlepoose, "as long as you're going toward Lake Erie."

"Speaking of Lake Erie," said Zachary Zeno, "reminds me that it was there I got my idea of the Sailors' Circus. I was on the *Northwest* one day cleared from Buffalo and bound for Duluth. A few hours out and along toward evening we were caught in a hard gale and blown close in to shore. It was nasty while it lasted, but didn't last long. Just as it was over and we were getting on our course again, the lookout spied two strange looking things swimming near the boat. It was nearly dark and they were all but drowned, but we managed to get them aboard and into a state-room and what do you think they were? Lions! Yes, sir, real lions. Not sea lions, nor yet lake lions, but real land lions. Being an old circus-man, I was completely flabbergasted, for I never had

## JUST THEN

known that there were lions in Lake Erie, but I nursed those lions back to life and I've got 'em yet."

"I'd like to see them!" cried Mr. Packlepoose.

"So you shall, so you shall," said Zachary Zeno, "and all the rest of our magnificent menagerie, filled with the greatest aggregation of animated animals ever continuously concatenated since ambitious Adam escaped from elementary Eden. Oh, excuse me, I forgot. I get so used to talking that way in the advertisements, you know."

The Sailors' Circus proved to be quite a success and Mr. Packlepoose sailed down the Lakes with it, along the route Zachary Zeno had said, and hardly anything happened. To be sure, in Lake Superior, one day, the snakes got out and Mr. Packlepoose had a fight with a poisonous pilot-snake on the top rigging of the mainmast and only escaped by diving into the lake. He went down so deep and the water was so cold that he

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

thought he never would come up, but he got aboard again all right.

In Lake Huron the rogue elephant broke away from the stanchion where he was chained and chased the entire crowd of riders, trainers and workers into the cabin. He was so strong and so wicked that none of the animal men wanted to tackle him and there wasn't an elephant gun aboard with which to shoot him. Mr. Packlepoose had heard that elephants are absurdly afraid of mice and seized a cage of white mice which the bareback rider had for pets. Stepping out of the cabin, he tossed them under the feet of the big beast which trumpeted and shrieked in terror; and when one of the mice ran into the elephant's trunk, the big animal broke through the rail and went into the lake. I would tell you of all this and more, if I had the time.

Then in the St. Clair flats when they lost the channel and at Windsor where they—but I guess I'll have to tell you about that.

You see Windsor is in Canada and when

## JUST THEN

the Circus-ship steamed up to the wharf, a beefy-faced customs official, with mutton-chop whiskers, came aboard and asked them if they had anything dutiable.

"Oh, no," said Zachary Zeno, "we're not going to land this stupendous solidification of——"

"Circuses are dutiable," interrupted Beef-and-Mutton-Chops.

"But we're not going ashore," protested Mr. Packlepoose.

"Can't help it, me dear man. You're in British waters and you'll 'ave to pay duty. You hintend to give a hexhibition, I 'ave no doubt, and you'll take haway hour good British money, so really you know, you might as well be in the bloomin' country as long as you're in far enough to take things out of it."

"Oh, very well," said Zeno, "we'll leave without giving a show."

"Too late now, me dear man. I shall 'ave to hattach 'is mawjesty's seal, you know."

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Bosh and buncombe," said Zachary Zeno angrily.

"No violence, me dear man, no violence. Consider yourself under arrest, me dear fellow. Blawst me, don't you know you are hoppersing 'is mawjesty's officer, sir, and thereby hoppersing 'is mawjesty's self, sir."

For answer the exasperated Zeno jumped upon the beefy body with the mutton-chop whiskers and bore him to the deck. "Mutiny! rebellion! assault of 'is mawjesty!" cried the officer.

Mr. Packlepoose saw that Zeno's action would get them all into trouble. Doubtless Beef-and-Mutton-Chops was a new official who didn't know the proper rulings and who was drunk with "a little brief authority" (as Shakespeare calls it), but wrong as he was, Zeno's action was more so. No one but Mr. Packlepoose knew how he had counted the hours till they should reach Lake Erie and now that they were almost in sight of its waters, he was impatient of anything

## JUST THEN

which should delay them. He had no notion to spend the day and night in a Canadian jail.

"Cast off those lines!" he shouted to the deck hands. "Steam up," he signaled to the engine-room. "Man the wheel!" he called to a sailor.

In a few minutes the Circus-ship was steaming down the strait toward Lake Erie, with Beef-and-Mutton-Chops aboard. Mr. Packlepoose was happy, for Lake Erie was in sight.

An hour or two later he sought out Zachary and said, "Mr. Zeno, here we are in Lake Erie, which is, in a way, my native home. I made a vow that as soon as I reached these waters, I was going straight home if I had to swim for it. Please accept my resignation and let me have what money is coming to me, for I'm through."

"Oh, come now," pleaded Zeno, "you can't desert me in that way. You're responsible for our running away from British



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

authority and we're still in Canadian waters, you know."

"No use talking," said Mr. Packlepoose. "No matter where we touch the shores of Erie, I'm going home."

"Maybe so, me man," said Beef-and-Mutton-Chops, who was near, "maybe so, but first I fawncy you'll 'ave to reckon with 'is mawjesty. Look yonder, me good man, look yonder."

They looked and saw a black streak of smoke on the horizon. "What's that?" asked Zeno.

"I fawncy it's 'is mawjesty's cutter, *Petrel*. Not such a large addition to the glory of 'is mawjesty's navy, but quite sufficient, I fawncy, for present purposes."

"Bosh and buncombe," said Zeno. "We've really not done anything. You had no business detaining us and if you had kept off our boat, you wouldn't have been carried away."

"Hinsulting 'is mawjesty!" said Beef-

## JUST THEN

and-Mutton, drawing himself up. "Haye, me good man, and hassaulting 'im, too. I quite fawncy you'll 'ave to pay for that, you know."

Another hour or two passed and *The Petrel* showed her hull and gradually drew nearer and nearer. The Circus-ship held to her course. A little nearer and *The Petrel* ran up her flag and a puff of white smoke came from her bow, like a whiff of white from the mouth of a smoker. "What's that?" exclaimed Zeno.

"Just a signal, me good man, a signal from 'is mawjesty. "You'd better lie to, you know, or the next time she spits, there'll be a sting in it."

"Well, of all the impudence," cried Mr. Packlepoose reddening.

"Pay no attention to 'em!" roared Zeno.

*The Petrel* drew nearer. Again her small gun spoke and this time a shot whistled in front of the Circus-ship.

"Just to show you're in range, you know,"

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

said Beef-and-Mutton, "not really trying to 'it you, me good man. Not yet."

"To be fired upon on Lake Erie!" raged Mr. Packlepoose. "I've been buffeted clear around the world and thought I had suffered every outrage, but this is too much."

"There's a pretty storm coming out of the northwest," said Zeno, "and it's my opinion we're pretty nearly into American waters. If we could only stave her off for a few minutes more!"

On the other side of the Lake was a little girl, still wishing and hoping, and having no idea that her father was but a few miles away, but in danger every minute of being captured and turned back.

## XXX

NEVER SET FIRE TO A SHIP TO WARM YOURSELF.  
IT IS A HOT TIME AND THE ANIMALS ARE  
LOOSE. WHY, CERTAINLY THERE ARE LIONS  
IN LAKE ERIE. AND WHAT DO YOU THINK  
HAPPENED THEN?

**M**R. PACKLEPOOSE suddenly seized Beef-and-Mutton and pointed to a small boat swinging at the davits. A half dozen of the crew rushed forward at his summons. "Put this man in that boat! Throw in life preservers. Lower away!"

The boat was lowered till it was close to the water. "Cut the ropes!"

Splash! The boat struck the water and spun around a time or two, then righted and the Circus-ship hadn't lost a minute. "Another hinsult to 'is mawjesty!" screamed Beef-and-Mutton-Chops, shaking both fists from the small boat.



An-other hinsult! screamed "Beef-and-Mutton-Chops" shaking both fists.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Mr. Packlepoose and Zeno only laughed, and *The Petrel* had to stop to pick up her customs official, by which the Circus-ship gained several minutes. Meanwhile the skies grew darker, the wind rose and Erie quickly lashed herself into an angry mood. The men on *The Petrel* were evidently angry, too, and now determined to run down the Circus-ship, if they had to chase her clear to the south shores of the lake.

A couple of hours passed before *The Petrel* regained her position and by this time the storm began to rage so furiously that she lost sight of her prey. The heavens were almost as black as night, the wind shrieked in wild glee, and *The Petrel* bobbed about like a toy boat. Nevertheless she held to her course, her captain hoping that the Circus-ship might be driven back into Canadian waters and that, when the weather lifted, *The Petrel* might be between the American shore and the American boat.

Thunder raged and lightning flashed. A

## JUST THEN

terrific bolt appeared to split the heavens and lighted up the waves for miles. Pursuer and pursued caught sight of each other in the glare.

As if that mighty stroke of lightning were the last effort of the storm king, the wind gradually grew less, the sky cleared and when *The Petrel* again caught sight of the Circus-ship, late in the afternoon, the small anger of the Britishers changed in an instant to a great pity. From the after-deck of the Circus-ship arose a column of black smoke, with an occasional red tongue cutting through it. The great bolt had struck the Circus-ship. She was on fire!

*The Petrel* still followed, but intent now only to help, not to capture. She saw, too, that the northwestern gale had blown both vessels far along under cover of its blackness. The American shore was in sight.

On board the Circus-ship there was a terrible time. The poor, terrified animals roared and shrieked and screamed in their quarters.



## SOMETHING HAPPENED

The crew had worked hard, but the fire had got into the hay and now gained so rapidly there seemed no doubt that the ship was doomed. "Take to the boats!" cried Zachary Zeno.

The man at the wheel lashed it fast. The engineer and firemen tumbled out of the hold. The momentum of the boat still blew the smoke and flames aft, and left the forward part of the boat free of them. Under quick and rapid orders the boats were lowered and as the steam died down in the boilers the Circus-ship slowed down. The first boat in charge of Zeno got away handily. Another and another, and Mr. Packlepoose had been left in charge of the last boat. It was all ready to shove off with the last man safe and the shore in easy reach.

Just then something happened.

I think I have told you enough of Mr. Packlepoose so that you know he was rather tender-hearted. He never hurt anything or anybody, if he could help it. And now the

## JUST THEN

cries of the poor animals locked in their cages, with the smell of fire in their nostrils, were too much for him. In the few days he had been with them, many of them had become like pets in his eyes. "I can't leave them without giving them a chance for their lives!" he exclaimed.

Jumping out of the boat, he ran back into the burning ship. The sailors shouted to him, but as he paid no attention, they thought he was crazy.

Mr. Packlepoose began at the cage nearest the fire and slipped the bolt of every door. Then he went around again and slipped each door open just a little. He did this so it would give each animal a few moments to work the door open and he would have a start to escape. He ran to the forward davits where he had left the boat, but it was gone. The panic-stricken sailors had pulled away and left him on a burning boat filled with wild animals which he, himself, had just released. Dusk was coming on.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

"Well," said Mr. Packlepoose, half aloud, "this looks like my last chance. I can either burn up, be eaten, or drown."

The fire got hotter and hotter. The animals screamed and roared and crowded forward, snapping and snarling among themselves. Mr. Packlepoose ran out on the bow-sprit and was safe for a minute. Then a black-maned lion and his mate began to crawl out on the bowsprit.

Mr. Packlepoose gave a last look and dropped into the water. The shore seemed a long way off, but the one thing Mr. Packlepoose could do best was to swim. The lions dropped in, too, and followed Mr. Packlepoose. It was a close race, but Mr. Packlepoose touched bottom first and scrambled pantingly through the shallow water toward the beach. On his right, the black-maned lion scrambled out. On his left, the lioness was only a few seconds behind.

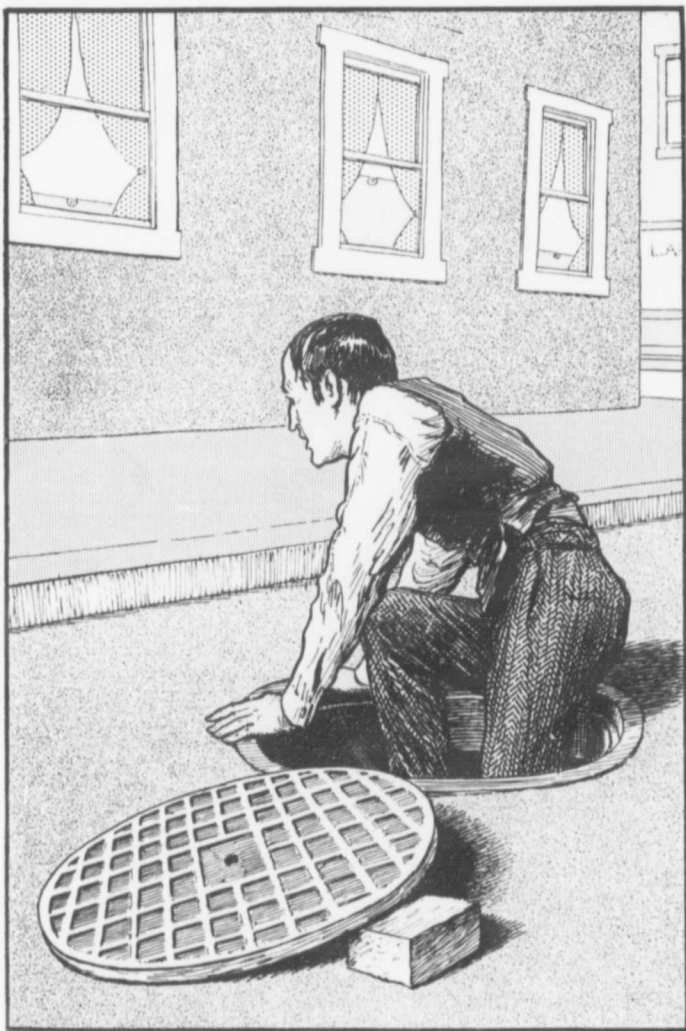
Out on the lake the burning boat had attracted the life-saving service, the fire-boat

## JUST THEN

and several tugs. *The Petrel* had come up, more than willing to do anything to help. But the Sailors' Circus people had escaped in the boats and no one had seen Mr. Packlepoose in the evening dusk; so, to the amazed life-savers and the rest, the burning boat seemed manned entirely by wild animals.

The beach on which Mr. Packlepoose landed was very short. Ahead of him was a bluff, behind him the water, on each side a lion. In the gathering gloom he saw a dark spot in the dark bank, right ahead of him. It looked like the entrance to a cave, a very well-formed cave, lined with brick. Mr. Packlepoose dodged in, not because he wanted to, but because there was no place else to go. It was a very deep cave, if it were a cave, and he thought to hide there till the lions went away. Presently he saw four shining yellow eyes peering in. Mr. Packlepoose did not hesitate, but ran farther in. A moment later the four eyes followed.

And now a peculiar sensation came to Mr.



He clambered out, replaced the lid and looked about.

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## SOMETHING HAPPENED

Packlepoose. It was as if he were unraveling a spool he had wound some time before. The spool was a portion of his life, for it flashed upon him that he was in the same sewer he had been through a year before. But then he was running out. This time he was going in, and the farther he went the less chance to escape the four glaring eyes behind him.

Strange to say, the great drain was almost dry. Mr. Packlepoose remembered that it had been building when he went away and evidently the upper part was still unfinished; so that it had not yet been put to actual use, and only the excess of the storm-water flowed through it.

Farther and farther he went, groping on in the darkness. Behind him came the lions, and came faster, for they could see in the dark and he couldn't. It looked like a matter of minutes till they would get him.

Running with his hands out, he struck something. He felt again. It was a ladder.

## SOMETHING HAPPENED

In a moment he had clambered up. His head came bump against a piece of flat iron. Getting his shoulders under it, he lifted and it gave way. Pushing it aside he looked up into the sky where the first faint stars were glowing.

He clambered out, replaced the iron lid and looked about him. With a start he recognized his own corner. A few doors away he heard someone tap on a window, a sash was thrown up and a childish scream came to his ears. Mr. Packlepoose ran toward it. Then a porch-light flashed on and off and on again. Mr. Packlepoose ran up the steps and opened the door.

Just then something happened.

I'll leave you to imagine what it was.

THE END.

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