

### VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

**Chapter 6**  
**THE STRANGE BOMBELLI**

THE Section had endured life at Post One for but a brief space, when the personality of a hitherto unnoticed comrade began to impinge upon Otho's consciousness—a man whom the four Englishmen and their friends had noticed only as one of the party whom they generally termed "Vittorelli's pots." He had arrived, one day, with a mule-convey, and had remained at the post.

Undoubtedly, Sergeant-Major Vittorelli was guilty of gross favoritism, and undoubtedly this man was a prime favorite—ranking with the Corsicans themselves in Vittorelli's esteem, and, with them, basking in the warmth of his approval—an ap-

proval that had numerous significant and practical manifestations. Very probably the fact that the fellow had lived in Corsica, knew Ajaccio and spoke Italian, had a great deal to do with his success with Sergeant-Major Vittorelli. And not only with Sergeant-Major Vittorelli, for that invaluable and powerful patron had introduced him to the favorable notice of Major Riccio himself.

In this exalted quarter also, the fellow had found favor, and had so far ingratiated himself that Major Riccio had appointed him his orderly for duty whenever Major Riccio sojourned at Post One.

Here again, doubtless, the man's knowledge of Corsica, Ajaccio, and the Italian tongue, was of immense service to him in the attainment of his ambitions.

But why he, rather than the genuine Corsicans themselves, Corsicans bred and born?

And then, with a smile at his growing tendency to cynicism, Otho remembered that the man had money—for a legionnaire, quite a lot of money.

And if, in the Kingdom of the Blind, the one-eyed is King, in the Legion's Purgatory of Poverty, the man with a private income is Croesus.



Otho yawned cavernously, stretched himself mightily, and sat up on his cot.

"Lead us that rag, mate. Yes, yes, all right, I'll give it to you back. What's your name, by the way?"

"Bombelli."

Joe Mummy and that queer chap the "scrooper," Major Riccio's orderly, who had lately been cultivating the four Englishmen and their friends.

"What did you say?"

"Bombelli."

"Love us! Bit explosive, ain't it? You should take something for that."

Why was Bombelli now cultivating him, Otho, so assiduously and unmistakably? Also Joe, William Dossum, and Sallor Harris, as well as Tent de Soli, Père Poussin and Fetrolitch, their friends?

What could he hope to get out of them? What was his game?

"Sure, Bo," replied Bombelli in Italianate English-American. "Damn awful coward. I make the runaway, I vamousa. From a girl! From Hercules! She beats me. I skiddalia. I sure get-to-hell-out-tha, pronto."

"But you didn't run straight from Otho to Sidibel-Abba, Bomb?"

"Nopa. runs to the Yards and beats da Overland to N'Yorka. Soon I feels U. S. A. is too small leetle country for me while Hercules movin' round. It, so I beats da Overwater too—what-you-call a stow-it away on salt—and comes to Yurpp. . . Then I come to Napoli and sing Funiculi funicular bank to da tourista eatin' spaghetti and drinkin' lachryma Christi at da hotel by Pompili. . . And there I sits in da sun an' grow fat on good eats, wit da good oil an' da good garlic, an' praise da good God."

"And then lika dam-fool I must shake da loose foot again, and I go all over Yurpp some more, and sometimes I sing Pagliacci in big Kursaal Concert and in Opera House; and sometimes I juggle brass ball in Big Top tent."

"An' one day I am in Marsellies, to do turn at da Music Hall, an' am walking up Cannabiere feeling good—and run straight into Hercules. . ."

"Den I run straight into da Fort. 'Fort's strong enough,' thinks I. 'Surely I'll be safe in there.'"

"Sentry oawls me out."

"'Hil! Where in Hell you t'ink you goin'!" he shouts.

"'Anywhere there ain't no women at all, I says—and the Sergeant comes out an' says."

"'That's all right, Wop. Join right now. . . There ain't no women here."

"'Worse luck,' he adds.

"'Don't you blaspheme, Bo,' I begs, an' joins da Foreign Legtos pronto."

Yes, an extremely amusing and extraordinarily interesting man. But did he quite realize how interesting he was becoming—ic Otho, at least?

Did he realize that once or twice when talking to Otho he had talked English without a trace of Italian accent?

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Bombelli makes an astonishing proposition to Otho, Monday.

### JAPAN TO SPEND HEAVY FOR ARMS

TOKYO, Feb. 14.—(AP)—The Japanese imperial diet, or parliament, approved by a standing vote today the largest budget in the history of the nation, totaling 2,239,000,000 yen (about \$480,300,000).

### CONDEMNATION OF JAPANESE DRAWN

PORTLAND, Ore., Feb. 15.—(AP)—A gunman walked into the Oregon Woolen Mills store here last night, confronted A. Mackaben, proprietor, with an automatic pistol, and forced him to turn over the money from the cash register. Mackaben reported to police.

### KINDLELL HOME BURNS IN PROVOLT DISTRICT

WILLIAMS CREEK, Feb. 15.—(Sp.)—The home of Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Kindell, near Provolt, was destroyed by fire of unknown origin about 8 a. m. Thursday. The blaze started in the woodshed. Most of the household goods were saved except in the kitchen. All groceries and canned fruits were lost. The house was the white house near Fred Lichen's, known as the Louie Smith place, and was owned by Mrs. Martha Forgy of Medford. The house was covered by insurance.

### GLADYS NUTRICK SHELBY, MODIATE

GLADYS NUTRICK SHELBY, modiate Gowns remodeled. Attractive prices. 15 Cargill Court.

### SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

### 'SMATTER POP—



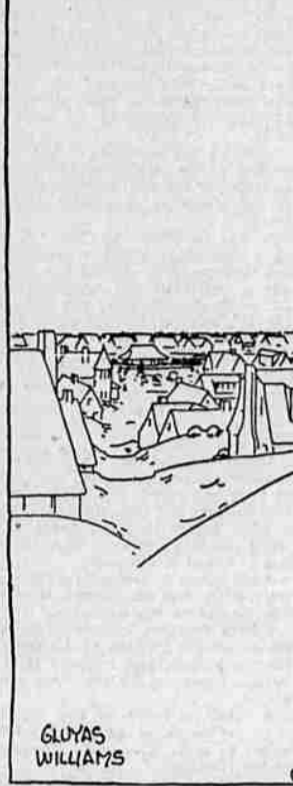
### TAILSPIN TOMMY—Isabella Speaks Their Language



### BOUND TO WIN—While In The City



### THE NEBBS—The Secret?



### BRINGING UP FATHER



### Intangibles Tax For Washington

OLYMPIA, Wash., Feb. 14.—(AP)—By a vote of 23 to 18, with two absent, the senate of the Washington legislature today approved a bill by Senator Pearce (D., Spokane), providing for the taxation of intangibles, such as money and credits.

### Relief Measures Given Approval

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14.—(AP)—Two gigantic relief bills—one for destitute unemployed, and the other for mortgage burdened farmers and small urban home owners—were approved today by the senate banking committee.

Wrigley's Spearmint Gum

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