

the dark ships

BY HULBERT FOOTNER

SYNOPSIS: A lover, his wife, a young federal agent, and Janet in Baltimore. She won't break a date with wealthy, flashy Prescott Fanning whom Neil distrusts. Next day a mysterious phone call tells Neil Janet is in trouble on Fanning's yacht at Abasco's Harbor. Rushing there, he finds, in a locked cabin, Fanning shot dead and Janet in a faint, a gun beside her. Neil rouses her to the dazed liners kept up the river. They climb aboard, dodge a watchman and find the best suite. Neil makes a rope ladder, then leaves Janet hidden on the ship and gets back to the village hotel before dawn.

Chapter 13

Two Campers Arrive

NEILL slept for an hour. His anxieties would not permit him to rest any longer, and he was up and sitting on the porch of the store next door before any other person in the village was stirring. The Nadj lay out in the harbor, clean-cut in the pure light of morning. White paint, mahogany and brass all spick and span. Nothing to suggest that a dead man lay aboard. Her dinghy was tied to a boom amidships, so the crew must have returned. Neill waited for developments.

At 7 o'clock Virgil Longcope came down the little hill back of the store, whistling out of tune and swinging a big key. He was a leathery, middle-sized man wear-

ing a wrinkled store suit of no particular color and a derby placed just so. This outfit made him stand out among the boots and jumpers of the other villagers. Virgil had a cracked voice, a bright eye and an expression of sly, good humor.

"Hello, Stranger! You're up early."

"Well, I came down here to get a little sea air," said Neill, "and this is the best time of day to smell it."

"I reckon," said Virgil, "though I don't notice it myself no more. You ought to be here when the fish-fertilizer factory across the harbor was working. Gosh! we had strong air then!"

Neill laughed to humor him. He thought: The killing is not yet known or he would speak of it.

Having opened up his store, Virgil sat down beside Neill and chewed his cigar.

The principal wharf of the place extended out in front of the store, and the whole panorama of village life unrolled before them—men on their way to work in the shipyard; professional fishermen chugging in from the bay with the night's catch and amateurs starting out with lunch baskets and tackle. No sign of movement aboard the yacht Nadj as yet. One of Virgil's first customers was a mild old man who drove up in a faded sedan.

"Morning, Captain Bickell," said Virgil. They went into the store together.

Neill remembered that this was the name of the caretaker of the big ships, and kept his eye on the door so that he could put himself in Captain Bickell's way when he came out. He wanted information.

Quizzing The Caretaker

MEANWHILE the lanky fisherman named Jake had taken a seat on Neill's bench.

"Mr. Longcope is quite a character," Neill said.

"Deed I doggone swear is he," said Jake. "He's a character, Virgil is. He loves a dicker. He'll take half a day to overreach you a dollar's worth, and hand you five. Everybody curses Virgil out, but he gets their vote when he wants to run for anything. He owns pret' near ev' thing hereabouts, the best farms, the best timber, but he don't never grow rich because he's too soft-hearted. Come a hard

winter when the river freezes over and there's no oystering nor fishing, this village would starve if it wasn't for Virgil. He carries them all."

When Captain Bickell came out of the store, he found Neill standing beside his car.

"Morning, Captain. I saw your ship when I came down the road yesterday. Is a person allowed to go aboard?"

"You have to get a permit from the department of commerce, young man. I ain't authorized to let anybody aboard."

"Do you have many visitors?"

"No, sir. Them ships has been forgotten. Nobody asks to go aboard and the department ain't over-anxious to issue permits."

"Why is that?"

"We're afraid of fire. Don't want folks moseying around on board and dropping cigarette butts."

"I suppose they send down inspectors from time to time."

"Sure, the first of every month."

"Two weeks! thought Neill. He said: "The cabins must be fixed up pretty fine."

"Sure. But we don't trouble the cabins. We keep 'em locked. Our job is to keep the hulls free of rust and the engines greased."

"How many men have you?"

"Four of us sleep aboard. Me, my foreman and a couple watchmen. I hire wipers, painters and oilers I need by the day."

"Must be pretty lonely at night, just the four of you on those big ships."

"We sticks pretty close together." The old man smiled.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



Industrial "Castle in the Air"
Strange as it seems, air can be sold or leased as real estate. This was done by the Chicago and Northwestern railway when the Merchandise Mart, the building with more floor space than any other in the world, was built over the company's yard in Chicago, according to E. J. Kaindl, Cook county recorder of deeds.

Regularly surveyed and subdivided into "air lots," all air 23 feet above the level of the earth and extending upward into space, was sold as the site for the Merchandise Mart. A number of small ground lots within the railroad yard were also sold on

which pillars supporting the building were erected.

COAST LEAGUE ENJOYS BEST TAKE IN YEARS

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 18.—(UP)—The Pacific Coast league during the past four months has enjoyed the

most lucrative baseball season in nine years. President W. C. Tuttle estimated today on the basis of incomplete 1937 attendance figures.

In all, 1,664,234 persons witnessed Coast league games through the week ended September 12, or 309,292 more than attended during the similar period last year, when gatemen recorded figures which totaled 1,355,942.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Another Clue!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Proposition?



THE NEBBS—Watch Your Step



X-RAY RECOMMENDED FOR LINGERING COLD; EXPERIMENTS CITED

CHICAGO, Sept. 18.—(UP)—The common cold that does not clear up within a "reasonable time" probably is some form of sinus infection which might be cured or benefitted by x-ray, radiologists at their fifth international congress were told today.

"Sinus disease is a far more common, complicated and serious condition than is realized by the general medical profession," Dr. Fred M. Hodges, Richmond, Va., said.

Hodges said that results obtained on "experimental" animals as well as

clinical observation of more than 2000 treatments justified the plea for more general use of Roentgen ray therapy on selected cases.

His finds were supported by Drs. Fred E. Butler and Ivan M. Woolley, Portland, Ore., who reported that in 2000 cases of chronic sinusitis they had found a "large majority" responded to x-ray treatment.

St. Mary's College Bought By Prelate
SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 18.—(UP)—Archbishop John J. Mitty of San Francisco today purchased the property of St. Mary's college, famed for its football teams, from a bondholders committee that foreclosed a mortgage on the institution.

Announcement of the purchase, released by the bondholders committee, said the property would continue to be operated by the Christian Brothers.

Archbishop Mitty said the purchase was made by the Christian Brothers, a religious order, for \$1,000,000.

The college, founded in 1863, is one of the largest in the West. It has a enrollment of about 1,000 students and 100 faculty members.

CHECKING MILEAGE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



AT START OF TRIP HOME, BACK SEAT URGES HIM TO TRY THE OTHER ROUTE WHICH THEY CLAIM IS SHORTER THAN THE REGULAR WAY

ARGUMENT GETTING NOWHERE, DECIDES ONLY WAY TO SETTLE IT IS TO GO BY OTHER ROUTE AND CHECK THE MILEAGE. SETS THE TRIP MILEAGE ON SPEEDOMETER TO 0



SETS OUT, ARGUMENT PRESENTLY ARISING WHETHER THE WAY THEY HAVE USUALLY GONE IS 56 OR 58 MILES, COMPROMISE BEING EVENTUALLY REACHED AT 57

NO ONE CAN PAY ANY ATTENTION TO SCENERY ON ACCOUNT OF FIGURING DEDUCTIONS FROM MILEAGE WHEN THEY LOSE THEIR WAY



SIDE ISSUE IS RAISED, HAVING TO DO WITH COMFORT RATHER THAN MILEAGE, WHEN 10 MILES OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION IS MET

HOME IS REACHED AT LAST, EVERY ONE BEING MUCH TOO TIRED AND GLAD TO GET THERE TO REMEMBER TO LOOK AT THE MILEAGE

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GLUYAS WILLIAMS

SMATTER POF

By C M PAYNE



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By HAL FORREST

By EDWIN ALGER



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS

