

THE BIG CHUNK OF ICE

The Last Known Adventure of
The Mad Scientists' Club

BY BERTRAND R. BRINLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES GEER

THE BIG CHUNK OF ICE:

Another Adventure of The Mad Scientists
of Mammoth Falls

Bertrand R. Brinley

Illustrated by Charles Geer

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Geography Stinks!

“Austria!” Dinky Poore gasped. “Sounds great! But I can’t quite remember where it is.”

“Anybody knows that,” Homer Snodgrass sneered. “It’s right next to Liechtenstein.”

“Oh! I forgot,” said Dinky, wrinkling his freckled nose in that way he has when he’s been corrected.

“Where’s Liechtenstein?” asked Freddy Muldoon from his perch on the apple crate.

“I know that one,” said Dinky, raising his hand. “It’s right next to Austria.”

“Oh, you’re funny!” snorted Freddy, slapping his chubby thigh with a great show of amusement. “You’ll probably flunk geography, but you’ll take all the prizes on Stunt Night.”

“I already had some geography, and it stinks!” said Dinky.

“Alright, shut up, you guys! Shut up!” Jeff Crocker ordered, pounding the big crate in front of him with his favorite rusty stirrup. “If we’re gonna’ listen to what Henry has to tell us, we’ve got to have some order in this meeting.” Since Jeff is the president of The Mad Scientists’ Club, we all shut up.

And Henry Mulligan did have something to tell us that was worth listening to. He had come running into our clubhouse in the old tack room in Jeff Crocker’s barn, and all he had said was, “How’d you guys like to go to Austria?” And then he’d pulled the old piano stool into the dark corner where he always sat, and leaned back against the wall with a sort of Cheshire cat grin on his face. The way he’d asked the question, you’d think he wanted to know if any-body wanted to go fishing. Homer Snodgrass had just kept on whittling on the stick

he was carving into a chain, and Mortimer Dalrymple didn't even pull his head out of the back of our short wave receiver he was repairing. Dinky was the only one who had opened his mouth.

"Okay, Henry," said Jeff. "What's this Austria bit?—Some new joke you've heard?"

"No!" said Henry, with the cat grin still on his face. "As Vice President In Charge Of Science, I always leave the jokes to Mortimer and Freddy. I'm dead serious."

"You may be serious, but you don't look very dead to me, oh, Great High Mogul," said Freddy Muldoon.

Then Henry told us about how he'd gone over to the State University to see his fantastic friend, Professor Igor Stratavarious, the world-famous geologist. He thought the professor might have a good suggestion for a science project we could work on during the summer, and he sure did. He came up with a corker! He told Henry he was planning to go to Austria for the summer, and he was forming a geological expedition to study some big glacier in the Alps. But he was having trouble finding people who were willing to join the expedition.

"Why don't you take some of your students along?" Henry asked him.

"I am!" said the professor. "I am taking both of them. But, zat is not a very big expedition, 'Enry. It will make me look ridiculous:—You don't know how zese sings are, 'Enry. My colleagues are very jealous of me. Zey will laugh, and laugh, if I try an expedition wiz only two young ladies to help me."

"Oh! That's too bad," said Henry.

Then the professor had a brilliant idea. He invited Henry to go along on the expedition. But Henry had an even better idea. He suggested that the whole Mad Scientists' Club go along, and that would add seven members to the expedition.

"Oh, zat is a marvelous idea, 'Enry!" the professor exclaimed. "Zat will make a really big expedition.—Zat will make zere eyes pop out!"

So there it was! That was what Henry had to tell us, and we all just sat there with our jaws popped open, wondering whether Henry

had lost some of his marbles.

“Is this for real, Henry?”. Jeff finally asked him. “You aren’t just setting us up for some wisecrack, are you?”

Henry looked a little offended. “No! It’s for real!” he said. “AU we have to do is get our parents’ permission, and we can go. This is one of the professor’s official expeditions, and the university pays all the expenses.”

We all still sat there sort of dumbfounded, and nobody said anything. Henry kept looking from one to the other of us, and gradually the grin faded from his face and he began to look a little annoyed.

“Well, come on, you guys.—Do you want to go, or don’t you?”

Nobody spoke.

“There’s got to be a gag in this somewhere,” Mortimer Dalrymple said, finally. I’m not going to be the first one to bite.”

“Me, neither!” said Homer Snodgrass. “My old man says you got to be suspicious of anything that doesn’t cost money.”

Then Dinky Poore raised his hand. “I still don’t know where Austria is, exactly, but I ‘U go, Henry.”

“Thank you, Dinky,” said Henry. “What about the rest of you guys?”

“Let’s put it to a vote,” suggested Homer. “I’ll hand out the ballots.”

When Homer says this, there’s no use arguing with him, because we always end up voting anyway. So Homer tore up some pieces of paper and handed them out. In our club you vote according to how well you did on the science test Henry Mulligan makes up every few months. Henry always gets five votes, because he knows all the answers, and Dinky and Freddy get one vote apiece. The rest of us fall somewhere in between. This time, Homer handed out twenty-one ballots, and when he counted them it was twenty-. to one in favor of going to Austria with the professor.

“Okay! Who voted against it?” cried Mortimer Dalrymple, glaring around the room in mock anger.

“I did!” said Dinky Poore, raising his hand again.

“What did you do that for, you nut?” sneered Freddy Muldoon.

“Because I thought all you fellows were against it.”

“You just don’t understand human psychology,” said Homer Snodgrass, with his nose up in the air.

“Well, how come we even had -to take a stupid vote, if everybody was in favor of it?” Dinky whimpered.

“You just don’t understand democracy,” said Mortimer, with one of his sly grins. “People like Homer are always trying to get you to vote, if they know *how* you’re gonna’ vote.—You fooled him good.”

Nobody had any trouble getting permission to -go. Everybody knows kids are just a pack of trouble when school’s out, and our parents just figured this was like winning a free trip to summer camp. Mayor Scragg was so happy to hear we were leaving town that he got the Town Council to pass a resolution offering to pay the expenses of the expedition for an additional two weeks, if Professor Stratavarious would keep us over there longer than the month he planned for studying the glacier. Everybody thought this was very nice of the mayor.

The next morning Zeke Boniface, the junk dealer, drove us over to the State University in his ancient, sputtering and wheezing old truck that we call Richard the Deep Breather, and we had a meeting with the professor so he could tell us all about the expedition and give us our instructions. The first thing the professor did was to introduce us to his class, who were the other two members of the expedition. He pointed to two girls sitting in the front row of seats. They were both skinny, and had long, straight black hair, and were wearing jeans and sweaters.

“First, I would like you to meet Angela Angelino. I call her ‘Number One’,” and he pointed to the girl on the right.

I’m not Angela, Professor! I’m Angelina!” said the girl on the right.

The professor’s jowls puffed out, and he stroked the left side of his waxed moustache with his fingers. “Well.....stand up, whatever your name is, while I introduce you,” he said, a little testily. “Excuse me, gentlemen. Sometimes I get zere names mixed up. Zis one is Angelina Angelo. She is a vairy good student, and I call her ‘Number Two’. It is ze ozer one zat I call ‘Number One’, and if you will take my advice, you will do ze same. Stand up, Number One!”

The other girl stood up, also, and she was a little taller than Angelina Angelo. "Hi!" she said. "I'm Angela Angelino, and I'm very pleased to meet you all."

I noticed Homer Snodgrass's eyes bugging out, because he's always looking at girls and talking about them, and you could see he thought Angela was pretty good-looking.....and she was, too, but much too old for Homer to worry about, 'cause he's just finished the seventh grade. Mortimer Dalrymple noticed him, too, and he reached over and mussed his hair down over his eyes. This always makes Homer raging mad, especially if there are girls around, and he uncorked a rabbit punch that raised a real welt on Mortimer's arm.

Then Number Two spoke. "I'm Angelina Angelo," she said, "and what Angela said goes double in spades, man. I mean, like.....you know.....like WOW, man!"

"What did she say?" asked Dinky Poore, leaning over to Freddy Muldoon. "Beats me!" said Freddy. "She talks like a nut."

Anyway, we all had to stand up and introduce ourselves, and when Dinky Poore did, Angelina Angelo took a shine to him right away. "Hey, man. You're somethin' else," she said, running her fingers through Dinky's tousled blond hair. "I really dig you...like...you know...WOW!"

Dinky turned bright red and pushed her hand away. "What do you call me 'ran' for? I ain't a man yet!"

"Hey! You're real relevant!" cried Angelina, her eyes lighting up. "I call everybody 'man', man...even my sister and my mother.—If it's somebody you can relate to...you know...well...you just call 'em 'man', that's all. If you can't identify with 'em, you just call 'em a 'pig', or a 'chauvinist'...or maybe, like...you know...a reactionary."

"How come you two got the same name?" said Freddy Muldoon.

"We don't have, really," laughed Angela. "They just sound a lot alike. No relation, though."

"If you think that's kooky, man, you should meet the two girls that live next to us in the dorm," said Angelina. "One of them's named Iona Ford, and she does."

"The other one's Iona Chrysler, but she drives a Volkswagen," said Angela.

I looked at Mortimer, and he looked at me. “Boy! Have we got a pair 6£ dips to live with for a month,” he said.

“As if the professor, isn’t enough,” I agreed. “But these two are gonna’ be too much!”

Just then, Professor Stratavarious rapped his pointer on the lectern in front of him, stuck his monocle into his left eye socket, and dinned the lights in the classroom. The professor is a good showman, and he proceeded to give us an exciting show. It wasn’t like being in school at all.

“You may take notes, if you wish,” he said. “But I warn you, I shall go vairy fast.—If you have questions as we go along, ask zem right away, because later on I may forget ze answer.”

Then he flicked a switch and a large map of Europe appeared on the screen behind him,

“Zis is ze continent of Europe. It is where we are going. It doesn’t look like much, but wait until you see it. It is beautiful!—Mapmakers are so crazy...zey really don’t show you nossing on a map...nossing but a bunch of words and a lot of crazy lines. You fly over Europe some day, and I guarantee you, you won’t see a single word anywhere on ze continent. You won’t see zese crazy lines, eezer.—I don’t know why mapmakers are so crazy!”

The professor paused to blow his nose, and then wipe his monocle off, Then he touched his pointer to the map.

“Zis country here...zis red one...is Austria, It is also where we are going. But, when we get zere, you are in for a big surprize. Zis country isn’t red at all,’ It is a bunch of brown and green, like most ozzer countries are, Zese crazy mapmakers: I don’t know why...but zey always show it red.”

By now, the professor was really warmed up, and he slapped the map so hard with his pointer that I thought he’d put a hole through the screen,

“Anyway, zis is Austria. Now, somesing else funny!....Ze Austrians do not call it Austria. Zey call it O-s-t-e-r-r-e-i-c-h and the professor wrote the letters out on the blackboard, “Zat is because zey do not know how to spell. Zey are very nice people, ze Austrians, but you will notice zey are very bad spellers.”

Dinky put his hand up. "Please, Professor! Where is Liechtenstein?"

"Liechtenstein?...Zat is a vairy good question, Dinky,—It has nossing to do wiz what we are talking about...but, still, it is a vairy good question. -It so happens you cannot see Liechtenstein on zis map. I don't know *why* zese mapmakers are so crazy! But I assure you, Dinky, zat Liechtenstein is right where it has always been, It is right under ze "D" in Switzerland," And the professor smote the map another mighty wallop with his pointer, and we all cringed.

Then the professor flashed a beautiful relief map of the Alps on the screen to show us exactly where we would be going, and the glacier we would be helping him study. He pointed out the Gross Glockner, Austria's highest mountain, and the Pasterzen Glacier that runs between two of its peaks and extends Six miles down the slopes toward the Alpine village of Heiligenblut.

"Zat is a stupid place for a village," said the professor. "If we had no village zere, we could just push ze whole glacier down into ze valley and forget about it."

"Why would you want to do that, Professor?" asked Homer Snodgrass.

"Zat is a good question," said the professor. "We do it for ze obvious reason zat glaciers are no good to *anybody*. Zey are just a big chunk of ice!"

But Homer raised his hand again. "But isn't a glacier a big tourist attraction?"

"Tourists!...Who wants tourists?" the professor snorted, with his eyebrows popping up and down. "Zey take up all ze best hotel rooms in town, and zey just sit around all day drinking up all ze beer! Tourists is crazy!—"Nevertheless, zat is a vairy good question, Mr. Snodgrass. It shows you are sinking hard."

"I wonder if anybody ever asks a bad question?" Mortimer whispered in my ear. Then he raised his own hand. "Excuse me, Professor. But how would you be able to push a big six-mile glacier down into the valley?"

"Zat is a stupid question:" said the professor. "I am ze world's recognized ausority on pushing glaciers. All fly colleagues would like to know how I do it. But I will *never* tell zem!—So! Does zat

answer your question?”

Mortimer had to admit he had the answer to both his questions.

“Besides,” the professor continued, “we are not going to Austria to push any glaciers. We are just going *zere* to *study* ze Pasterzen Glacier. All ze previous calculations on zis glacier have been made by my colleagues, and zey are all crazy! Zat is why we are going *zere*.”

Then the professor started showing us movies of the huge glacier, and of the village of Heiligenblut where we would stay most of the time.

“If you were an Austrian you’d sink zat is a crazy name for a village,” he said. “It sounds like an American cussword, maybe...Heiligenblut...it means Holy Blood in German. Can you imagine a town in America named zat?”

Then he showed us a lot of slides to illustrate how we would go about the job of making all the measurements of the glacier’s behavior, and it all looked pretty exciting. With the equipment the professor had already shipped over there, we would be measuring the depth of the huge mass of ice at various places, calculating its rate of movement at different points, determining the age of each layer of ice laid down by snowstorms, and even making plaster casts of unusual rock formations scooped out by the glacier so the professor could bring them back to exhibit in his museum. It all sounded very exciting, and even dangerous. -\

“You got to watch zose crevasses,” the professor kept saying. “Zey are terrible! Some of zem could swallow a whole building...except it is very difficult to get a building up *zere* in ze first place.—But everybody will be wearing hobnailed boots, and everybody will be tied togezzer wiz ropes when we are working on ze glacier. So we don’t have to worry too much.—Now if Dinky should fall into a crevasse, it is not so much of a problem. He is so small, we could easily pull him out. But, if Freddy Muldoon is stupid enough to fall into one, he might get stuck halfway down, and zen we would have a *real* problem! We might have to wait for ze ice to melt, and zat might take a long time...maybe several years.—Und dzo, Freddy!...You watch it!...Hokay?”

Finally, the professor showed us a short, time-lapse movie

illustrating how a glacier moves just like a river—faster in the middle and slower at the sides, where friction and rock outcroppings slow it down.

“Zis is time-lapse photography,” he said. “I sink maybe you know what zat is.—You shoot one picture each month, maybe, and zen you string zem all together and you have a movie. If ze audience is stupid enough, zey sink zey are seeing a tree grow in two minutes.—Here we have a super-colossal spectacular zat shows you in just sree minutes how far a glacier can move in one hundred years. I filmed zis one myself.”

This time, Henry raised his hand. “Excuse me, Professor, but did you say *one hundred* years?”

“I sink I did,” said the professor. “What did it sound like?”

“Well, sir,” said Henry, “it sounded like ‘one hundred’ to me. But I don’t understand, sir. We haven’t had movie cameras that long...and besides, you said you filmed it yourself...and if it really shows.....”

“I cheated a little bit,” said the professor. “Now pay attention, and don’t ask any more stupid questions.”

Even if the professor did cheat, the film was very interesting. You could actually see the huge mass of ice flowing downhill, and if it did nothing else it gave you an impression of the tremendous power of the forces at work in a living, moving glacier. In fact, it was downright scary, and all of a sudden I wasn’t so sure I wanted to go along on the trip. We saw huge rocks tossed up to the surface of the glacier, only to be wallowed up again as the sun melted the ice beneath them, or as they tumbled into chasms created by the glacier’s movement. A sound track had been added to the film, and there was a continual rumbling sound like thunder; and every once in awhile there would be a loud crack as the glacier moved over a steep slope and a huge crevasse a hundred feet deep would split open right before us as the surface of the glacier bent downward. A couple of times, when this happened, Dinky Poore jumped right out of his seat, and I could see that his face had turned a little white. And at the end of the film, when they showed the tongue of the glacier melting rapidly and breaking up as it tumbled over a high cliff, it looked like the biggest waterfall you ever saw, and the roar was deafening.

“Wasn’t zat a Lulu!” said the professor, as he shut off the projector

and turned the classroom lights on again. “Holy Mackerel! I get all excited every time I see zat film.—Now...are zere any questions?”

Freddy Muldoon raised his hand, and his eyes were as big as silver dollars. “Please, Mr. Professor! I have a question.”

“Yes, Freddy! What is it?”

“What’s the most dangerous thing you can run into in them mountains?”

“Oh, zat is easy!” said the professor. “Ze Abominable Snowman! —Oh, he is a terrible creature. Believe me, he can make you lose some sleep.—But I don’t sink we will have to worry about him. I heard he took a vacation in Tibet before ze war, and he got stuck zere.—You see, he doesn’t like to fly, and zere are no steamships anymore zat will carry an Abominable Snowman. So he is just stuck zere in Tibet. It is too bad, because I hear he doesn’t get much to eat zese days.—You know, zere are not very many mountain climbers in ze Himalayas, like zere are in ze Alps...mostly just ze natives, and zey don’t count.—Next question!”

“Professor, you haven’t told us what we should take with us,” said Jeff, flipping over a leaf in his notebook.

“Is zat so?” said the professor. “Well, let me see.—I guess you should take along a toosbrush if you have one. Personally, I never take one, because I always send my teess out to be cleaned.—Zen...let me see...I don’t know, I guess you can take anysing you want...Except for *one* sing! *no* Seltzer water! Seltzer water is very bad in ze Alps. It makes such a big bunch of gas in ze stomach zat it makes you burp. And zat can be very dangerous. A good burp in ze right place, and you could cause a big avalanche!—So, *no* Seltzer water! Hokay?”

We all nodded heads, and I noticed Homer Snodgrass scribbling in his notebook ‘Seltzer water-NIX!’ Then Dinky Poore raised his hand again, and his face was still pretty white.

“Are we really goin’ out on that glacier when it’s movin’ that fast?” he asked.

Professor Stratavarious smiled. “Dinky,” he said, “you did not listen to me. said zat was time-lapse photography. Ze glacier does not move zat fast at all.”

“Well, how fast does it move?” asked Dinky, unconvinced.

“Ze Pasterzen Glacier, zat we’re going to study, only moves about three or four inches a day...according to zose smart alecks I was telling you about. But zat is one of ze sings we are going to check out. But we will do it very scientifically.—You see, Dinky, zere are two Scientific Messods...ze one all ze ozzer people use, and ze one I use. In ze first messod, you look at all ze facts, and you try to figure out what zey mean...and you get all confused. In ze ozzer messod, you make up your mind what ze situation is right away.. Zen you look around for a few facts zat will prove you are right!—Zis makes it much simpler, because you don’t have to mess around wiz all ze facts zat confuse everybody. You just pick out ze ones you want, and srow all ze rest in ze ashcan, where zey belong.—When we get to Austria, I will show you what I

There were no more questions, so the professor told us we could all go home and start packing. He said we should just take our regular clothing along, because all the equipment we would need for mountain climbing and working on the glacier would be supplied by the Austrian Alpine Club.

“We will all meet at my office at nine o’clock Friday morning,” he said. “And remember...*no* Seltzer water!” Then he dismissed the class, put on his black homburg, and strode out of the room with his walking stick crooked under his arm.

No sooner had the professor left than the two girls started jabbering a blue streak, asking us all kinds of stupid questions like: how old were we, and who’ was our favorite movie actress, and did we like girls with straight hair or curly hair, and what were we studying in school, and did we want to go to college, and junk like that.

“Hey, man.! That was a real cool question you popped the professor with about that Liechtenstein,” said Angelina, giving Dinky a clout on the shoulder. “Like...I never heard of the place. Is it for real?”

“I guess it is,” said Dinky. “I’ve heard of it, but I didn’t know where it was.—I’m not very good at geography.”

“Geography! Hey, man! Do you play geography? Hey, that’s a real cool game.”

“Game?” said Dinky. “It sure ain’t no game in school. It stinks!”

“School, shmool!” said Angelina. “I mean...like...you know...when you’re just rappin’ with some friends, and suddenly somebody pops one real cool like...And then you gotta’ try and pop him right back before he gets off another one. And...I mean...you know...it’s real cool like...And you get a point for each one, unless it’s a real good two-pointer...and if you’re limber enough to get off two in a row you get five points.—It’s a real cool game, man...I mean, it’s right next to the most...You dig me?”

Dinky was just standing there slowly shaking his head. “I don’t know what you mean,” he said. “The way you babble on, : can’t make out what you’re talkin’ about.”

“E-e-e-e-k!” screamed Angelina, doubling over with laughter. “Did you hear that one, Ange?. ‘The way you Babylon...!’ That’s good enough for a two-pointer.”

“Hey, man! That was great!” said Angela. “And you sayin’ you didn’t like Geography!—You were just puttin’ us on, man.”

“I didn’t do nothin’,” said Dinky. “I don’t even know what : said that’s so funny.—What’s it got to do with geography, anyway?”

“Freddy, you sure pulled a beaut’,” said Dinky. “I wish I could think up a good one.”

“Will you dig the little one!” shrieked Angela. “He’s done it again!

You ever been out to Butte, Dinky?”

“What are you talkin’ about now?” asked Dinky, wrinkling his nose again.

“Butte, Montana, man. I’ll bet maybe you come from there.”

“I ain’t never heard of the place, so how could I come from there,” said Dinky. Then he grabbed Freddy Muldoon by the arm and said: “Let’s get outa’ here! Are we gonna’ have to spend a whole month with these nutty dames?”

It was time to go, anyway, because everybody had a million things to do to get ready for the trip. So we all shook hands with the girls and told them how pleased we were to meet them, and how we all looked forward to the expedition, and all that stuff; and then we cut

on out of there and piled into Richard The Deep Breather, and woke up Zeke Boniface so he could drive us home.

“See you Brighton early Friday morning, ladies!” Mortimer shouted out, as Zeke got the old truck popping and snorting fast enough to pull away from the curb.

Angela cupped her hands to her mouth and shouted back, “We could Ankara less!” Then they both clapped their hands, and laughed, and waved to us as Richard The Deep Breather pulled away in a cloud of smoke. We all waved back except Dinky, who sat on the bed of the truck with his hands propped under his chin, wondering what it was he didn’t like about women.

When It's Sleepy Time, Go South!

The next two-and-a-half days were pretty hectic. You know how it is when you're planning to go somewhere...like summer camp, or the seashore, or any place else. There doesn't seem to be enough time to get everything ready, yet you find yourself kicking around the house, waiting for this thing or that thing, and the time just seems to drag by. I must have packed and unpacked stuff a dozen times, because I kept thinking of something else I wanted to take along, and this meant I had to rearrange everything in my suitcase and duffel bag, and it wasn't long before both of them were bulging out and almost splitting at the seams. Dinky Poore had a special problem, because he insisted on taking along an ice pick. for some reason, and his mother couldn't find any place that had them for sale. Mr. Peevey, the Presbyterian minister finally solved the problem when he found an old rusty one in a storeroom in the basement of the church.

And we all had the problem of worrying about whether our passports would arrive in time. But we didn't really have to worry, because Mayor Scragg took care of that. He telephoned Congressman Seth Hawkins in Washington and told him he'd better put the arm on the State Department to rush them through, or there'd be a whole bunch of people in Mammoth Falls who wouldn't vote for him next year. The mayor just couldn't seem to do enough for us, to make sure we got to Austria for the summer. As it was, the passports just barely

made it, and we picked them up at the Post Office on Friday morning, on our way to the State University.

When Zeke Boniface pulled up in front of my house with Richard The Deep Breather that morning, he already had half the gang and their baggage loaded, and he was wearing a shirt and a black bow tie. I didn't know Zeke even owned a shirt, let alone a tie, because he always wore long-sleeved winter underwear with white suspenders to hold his pants up. I figured he must have borrowed the shirt and tie from someone, because of the importance of the occasion; and with some of the dents smoothed out of his black derby, and his moustache neatly clipped, old Zeke looked pretty dapper. He even had a fresh cigar in his mouth, instead of the juicy stub he usually chews on.

Zeke is as strong as an ox, of course; but he must have figured on us having a lot of baggage, because he'd brought Bo McSweeney along with him. Bo is a real favorite in Mammoth Falls, and one of the town's few athletic heroes. He weighs over three hundred pounds, and I guess that's why everybody likes him. He was a good enough weight-lifter in high school to win the state championship, and he even made the U. S. Olympic squad in 1960. He didn't do too well in the weight-lifting events in Rome, but he did win the bronze medal in the needlepoint competition and placed fifth in dishwashing.—Bo hasn't done much since then, but he's a nice guy, and most everybody in town is proud to call him their friend.

When we stopped to pick up Henry Mulligan I could understand why Zeke had brought Bo along. Henry is one of those people who bring along two of everything and another one for a spare. He had four duffel bags packed full of junk, and that didn't include his clothes—which is something Henry doesn't worry about too much, anyway. But we all knew that you could hardly name an electronic or scientific gadget that Henry wouldn't have stashed away somewhere in one of those four duffel bags. He'd even brought along a stethoscope and a blood-pressure gauge, we discovered later, so he could make some observations on the physiological effects of working at high altitudes while we were on the glacier.

Just before nine o'clock we pulled up in front of the building on the university campus where Professor Stratavarious has his office,

and there were Angela Angelino and Angelina Angelo flopped out on the grass under a tree with their rucksacks propped under their heads.

“Nuts!” said Dinky Poore. “I was hopin’ then creeps wouldn’t show up.”

“Hi, gentle people!” Angelina called out. “Cheers, and all that!”

“Here’s a cheer for you,” said Freddy Muldoon, and he cut loose one of his raucous raspberries.

“Cut that out, Freddy!” said Jeff Crocker, knocking Freddy’s hand away from his mouth. “At least *try* to be a gentleman, even if you aren’t one.”

“What for?”

“Jeff’s right,” Homer chimed in. “My mother always says you catch more flies with sugar than with vinegar.”

“Who wants flies?” said Freddy, as he slid off the end of the truck bed on his belly.

“Wow! Who’s your big friend?” Angelina asked, looking at Bo McSweeney.

“This is Bo McSweeney, ladies,” said Jeff, and he introduced Bo and Zeke to the girls.

“Wow! is he coming along on the expedition?”

“Naw, I ain’t goin’,” said Bo, looking down at the grass and digging the toe of one shoe into the dirt. “I jes’ come along to see the kids off and hep Zeke with the baggage and stuff.” Bo is awfully bashful around girls.

“Where do you want all this baggage, Henry?” Zeke Boniface asked.

Henry wrinkled his brow. “I don’t know, Zeke. I don’t even know where we’re leaving from.” He looked at the girls. “The professor never mentioned *how* we’d go to Austria.—Do you know?”

The girls shrugged their shoulders. “I suppose we’ll fly,” said Angela, “but I don’t really know.”

“If you’re gonna’ fly, we shoulda’ gone right out to Clinton Airport,” said Zeke.

“You ain’t gonna’ fly with all that stuff, are you Henry?” said Bo McSweeney, with his eyes popped out.

“Well, we sure don’t plan to take a train,” said Mortimer

Dalrymple.

“Holy Moses, will you look at that!” said Zeke, suddenly, tilting his black bowler over his forehead and facing the entrance of the building with his fists clenched on his hips.

Down the front steps of the building came something out of a Hollywood movie. It looked like what they used to call an “aviator”, according to articles I’ve seen in flying magazines and picture books. It was wearing white, whipcord riding britches, and shiny, knee-length leather riding boots, a beautiful brown, short leather coat, belted tightly at the waist, a tight-fitting leather helmet like you see in pictures of Charles Lindbergh, and a white silk scarf with one long end dangling over the shoulder.—Just above the white scarf was the face of Professor Stratavarious; and he came striding jauntily toward us, with his walking stick tucked under his left armpit while he pulled on a pair of thin leather gloves.

“Holy Mackerel! Don’t he look neat!” said Homer Snodgrass.

“Not an ear out of place!” said Mortimer Dalrymple.

“Vell! I see everyone is here just in time,” said the professor as he approached us.

“Something tells me they’re gonna’ fly, Bo!” said Zeke Boniface, out of the side of his mouth.

“That sure ain’t no swim suit he’s wearin’,” said Bo McSweeney.

“Good morning, students,” said the professor, beaming at everyone. “I see you have brought ze old truck. Zat is very good, Mr. Bonyface (stet). It will simplify matters.” Then he took the monocle out of his left eye, dropped it in his pocket, and stuck a dark green monocle in its place. “Zere! I sink we are all ready, now. If you will just drive ze truck around to ze soccer field behind ze building, I sink we are all ready to take off.”

Nobody even thought about what the professor meant by “take off”. We all just scrambled back into the truck and pulled the girls on board, and the professor jumped onto the running board beside Zeke and waved his walking stick in the air to show him how to take two right turns around the building. Behind the building there was a huge athletic field, alright; but you’ll never guess what was sitting in the middle of it.—A blimp! And not just an ordinary blimp. It was an antiquated-looking old gas bag that must have escaped from World

War I, and it looked as though it belonged in the Smithsonian Institution.

“You ain’t goin’ all the way to Europe in that thing, Perfessor?” Zeke exclaimed.

“Ho, ho, ho! Don’t you worry, Mr. Bonyface,” said the professor. “Zis is ze safest and most dependable way to travel. I used zis old skinny balloon to get out of Rumania after ze great war. It was ze only sing in ze whole Rumanian Air Force zat would still fly. And I have flown it all over ze world, ever since zen.—I even flew it to Podunk, Massachusetts once, and nossing happened.—Some day I will take it back to Rumania...after sings settle down. But it is absolutely safe, believe me. It positively *eats* bullets, and you cannot sink it...it is too fat!—Arid you know, Mr. Bonyface?...wiz a blimp you don’t have to stop for traffic lights!”

Zeke spit out through the window of the truck, just missing the professor’s white riding britches, and shook his head. “You have it your own way, Perfessor, but that thing looks to me like a pollywog with a bad stomach-ache, and I wouldn’t drive it to my own funeral.”

“Ho, ho, ho! You are so funny, Mr. Bonyface! But you don’t understand machines. Zey are so wonderful when you take care of zem and treat zem right.”

“This old monster ain’t done so bad!” said Zeke, patting Richard The Deep Breather on the dashboard with real affection.

While Zeke and Bo were unloading all our baggage, the professor started explaining all the remarkable features of his flying cigar, and I’ll have to admit the thing looked a lot better close up than it did from a distance. The gondola was something you wouldn’t believe. It was really a huge catamaran-type hull with thermo-pane windows and air-conditioning, and an open-air observation deck at the rear, And part of the floor was made of glass so you could see the ground directly beneath you. The professor pointed out how he could drop a keel and a propeller into the water, in case he came down at sea, and after cutting the gas bag loose he’d have a seaworthy boat. He had everything on board for survival at sea, including fancy fishing gear, flares and weather balloons for distress signals, and both short-wave radio equipment and a low-frequency system for round-the-world communications. The professor pointed proudly to a special harpoon

with retractable prongs, hanging on a wall in the front cabin.

“You see zat harpoon? Zat is my invention. One time over ze Souse Atlantic I ran out of gas. So, I just harpooned a big whale and he towed me for two hundred miles. Zen I just let him go.—Zat saves a lot of gas, believe me!”

“Boy! This is somethin’ right out of Jules Verne...only better, maybe,” said Homer

“You are right, Mr. Snodgrass,” said the professor. “It is ze only way to travel. You don’t go so fast...but it beats swimming! Yes?—And we have everysing for safety and comfort at sea, if we have to come down. Ze only sing we have to worry about is piranhas. Oh, zey are terrible! Zey will eat everysing in sight!”

“Piranhas?” Homer gasped. “I thought they were only found in South American rivers?”

“Oh?” said the professor. “Do ze piranhas know zat, Mr. Snodgrass?”

By this time, quite a crowd of summer students arid faculty members had gathered on the athletic field to watch the take—off, and after Zeke and Bo had finished putting all our stuff in the gondola, the professor gave a short speech about the great things he hoped the expedition would accomplish for the university’s geology department. Then he posed for some pictures for the campus newspaper, and bowed grandly to the crowd, flourishing his walking stick in the air. We said good—bye to Zeke and Bo, and thanked them for all their help, and everybody piled into the gondola.—All except Dinky Poore, who stood at the door, gazing up at the huge gas bag with a tear trickling down his cheek.

“What is ze matter, little Dinky?” the professor asked. “Aren’t you happy to be going on ze great adventure?”

“Right now I’d a whole lot rather stay home,” said Dinky. And Angela and Angelina shrieked and cackled with delight.

“Dinky, you’re positively fantastic!” cried Angela. “Write that one down, Angie.—’Idaho lot rather stay home.’—Oh, Dinky, that’s good enough for a two pointer!—How *do* you think them up?”

“I didn’t think up nothin’,” said Dinky. “I don’t even know what I said.”

“Maybe so,” said Mortimer, “but we find it hard to Bolivia!”

“Wow, man!” screamed Angelina. “What a way to start the trip! Let’s play Geography all the way over, and all the way back.”

“Okay by me,” said Homer. “But you’ll have to be nice to Dinky, Orient gonna’ play.”

“Score one for Homer, “ said Mortimer, swinging a rabbit punch at him. “Lay off!” cried Homer, warding off the blow. “I didn’t mean to say it.—It was strictly an Occident.”

This time Mortimer didn’t miss.

“Oh, brother!” Jeff moaned. “Could we take off, Professor, so we can get some fresh air in here?”

“Ho, boy! You said it, Jeff!” said the professor. “We will go.—Ready, Number One?”

“Ready!” cried Angela.

“Ready, Number Two?”

“Ready!” cried Angelina.

“And away we go!” and the professor gave the signal for the mooring lines to be cut loose.

The professor’s blimp had two engines, mounted on either side of the gondola, and two pusher-type propellers mounted aft of them. They were powerful. As we started rising slowly upward, he revved up both engines as he glanced anxiously from side-to-side to gauge the direction of the winds. When we started to drift a little to the left, toward his own office building, he cut in the left propeller and gave the ship a little “right” rudder and some “up” elevator, and we soared gracefully up and to the right in a beautiful, wide arc. The professor held the ancient crate in that attitude until we had made a complete circle, high above the field. The students and faculty down below were growing rapidly smaller, but we could still see that they were waving at us, and we all waved back through the sliding windows of the cabins in the gondola. I could see Bo McSweeney for sure, because he was the easiest one to pick out, and he cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted something out to us. It was a little hard to hear above the engine noise, but I’d swear he said: “Sure hope you get there!”—Bo McSweeney is a very honest guy.

Then the professor cut in the other propeller and we headed due

east.

“That was just great, Professor! Just great!” Henry Mulligan exclaimed. “It’s much more exciting than an airplane.” And we all nodded our heads in agreement, as our apprehensions about the decrepit-looking old gas bag faded rapidly.

“Ho, ho, ho!” laughed the professor. “If you sink *zat* was exciting, Henry, just you wait till we come back. Whenever I come back from a flight I always pass over *ze* field once, flying upside down.—It drives *zem* daffy on *ze* ground!”

“*Upside down?*” Freddy Muldoon sputtered. “Well, wouldn’t all this baggage and junk drop off the floor and onto the ceiling?”

“Is *zat* why *zat*’s always happening?” said the professor. “Sank you very much, Freddy. I shall have to make a note of *zat*!”

We gained altitude steadily as we flew eastward, and the gondola started swaying from side-to-side a little...sort of the opposite of the way a ship rolls. I noticed that Dinky’s face was already getting a little green, and he was looking down at the floor with his head held in his hands.

“Do we really have to fly over that old ocean, Professor?” he sighed.

The professor laughed. “I told you, Dinky, *zere* is absolutely nossing to be scared of.”

“I ain’t scared!” said Dinky, vehemently. “I just don’t want to be airsick and seasick at the same time, that’s all!”

A few hours later we all had our noses pressed against the windows of the front cabin, eating up the view of the skyline of Manhattan as we cruised over the New Jersey salt marshes. Except for Angela, none of us had ever seen it before...aside from Professor Stratavarious, who has seen practically everything there is to see in the world, as far as I know. Angela was pointing out all the tall buildings—the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the old Woolworth Building, and the new World Trade Center. Meanwhile, the professor was trying to get us to look at the Palisades, the reddish cliffs rising straight up from the west bank of the Hudson River, and the George Washington Bridge, and the piers along the river where the great trans-Atlantic liners dock. Then we flew right over the Statue of Liberty, and the professor circled the blimp around it so we

could see the “Old Lady” from all four sides.

“How come it’s all green?” said Freddy Muldoon. “I thought it was white.”

“You would be a little green, too, Freddy, if you were nearly ninety years old and made of copper,” said the professor.

“Hey! Look at that bridge out there!” shouted Dinky, who had lost a little of his own greenness. He was pointing at a beautiful suspension bridge, dead ahead of us, that spanned the narrow strip of water where New York Harbor meets the Atlantic Ocean.

“That’s the Verrazano Bridge,” said Homer. “It’s the longest suspension bridge in the world.”

“Zat is a *stupid* name for a bridge!” said the professor.

“It was named after Giovanni da Verrazano,” said Homer. “He discovered New York Harbor in 1524.”

“Zat’s what you sink, Mr. Snodgrass,” said the professor. “Ze great Rumanian explorer, Count Vladislav Vascula, was here long before zat!”

“Count Vascula? How come I never heard of him?” said Mortimer Dalrymple.

“He came by submarine,” said the professor. “So nobody saw him.—He was a great Rumanian, and he was one of ze first people to invent ze submarine. He was also a great explorer, and he was here long before zat Columbus fellow.”

“What about the Vikings?” said Dinky Poore. “I heard they were here first.”

“Ze Vikings were *barbarians*, Dinky! Zey don’t count!—How many times do I have to tell you? Great inventions and discoveries are for gentlemen! You don’t build a civilization wiz barbarians, you know.”

The professor was wound up, and there was no stopping him.

“Now, you take Count Vascula. He was a. real gentleman, and a great inventor. He also was ze first man to fly. He invented zose bat wings zat are still so popular among ze natives up zere in ze Transylvanian mountains!”

“I never heard of that, either,” said Mortimer.

“Oh, he was brilliant, zat Count Vascula. He even invented ze

vascular system.”

“I think I *have* hear of that,” said Mortimer. “I guess he must have been pretty good.”

“Good? He was positively *brilliant*, Mortimer. He came from a long line of inventors...a very old Rumanian family you know.—Ze greatest of zem was ze old Count Gore Galore. Oh, he was something else! But he lived many centuries ago.”

“I never heard of him, either,” said Homer Snodgrass.

“Naturally, Mr. Snodgrass...because you do not read Rumanian history. But every schoolchild in Rumania knows about Count Galore. He was probably ze greatest of all Rumanian inventors.”

“What did he invent?” asked Jeff Crocker, as Angela shot him a dark glance and slapped her hand to her forehead.

“Most everything,” said the professor. “Oh, zey tell a funny story about *him*.—You know, he did not believe in ze gods of ze Rumanian people, and one day he got in a big fight with zem. To make zem mad, he invented darkness: so ze gods had to invent ze sun to chase ze darkness away. Zen he got really smart and invented fire: and ze gods had to invent to rain to put ze fire out. Zen ze Count invented ants, which were crawling all over ze Rumanian people and tickling zem like blazes: zis made ze gods very mad, and zey had to invent an anteater to eat all the ants. Zen ze Count get very mad...and you know what he did? He invented a dandelion!—And do you know...to zis very day, nobody has ever invented anysing to kill ze dandelion! Oh, he was a great inventor, zat Count Galore.”

I noticed that Dinky Poore and Freddy Muldoon were staring at the professor with their jaws dropped open and their eyes bugged out; but Jeff and Mortimer were suddenly busy looking out the windows and trying to keep from laughing, and Number One and Number Two were just sitting there with heads in their hands, biting their lips.

By the time the professor stopped talking about Count Galore and Count Vascula, we were far out over the Atlantic and dusk was coming on fast. Dinky and Freddy had both fallen asleep on the benches in the rear cabin, and the rest of us were lolling around in the front cabin, when the professor suddenly smote his hand to his forehead.

“Oh, my gracious! I forgot somesing!”

Everybody groaned.

“Don’t tell me we have to turn back, Professor!” said Henry, with real concern.

“Oh, it is much worse zan zat,” said the professor. “In fact, it is even worse zan zat, because it is already too late to turn back.—I wouldn’t get any sleep!”

All of a sudden I had a strange feeling that something was wrong. “Well, what did you forget, Professor?” I asked him.

“Hoh, boy! What I forgot, you wouldn’t believe, Chollie!” said the professor, mopping his brow with one end of the magnificent white scarf. “Hoh, boy! What a dumb bun!—Hoh, boy! I will lose a lot of sleep over zis!...Believe me!” And the professor got up from the controls, leaving the blimp to fly by its nose, and started pacing up and down the cabin.

“WELL, WHAT DID YOU FORGET?” practically everybody asked at once.

“I forgot it will take us about sree days to get to Austria! *Zat’s what I forgot!*” said the professor. “Hoh, boy! Will I lose a lot of sleep!”

“I don’t dig you, Professor,” said Angelina. “You’re slippin’ off my screen.”

“Hoh, boy!” said the professor. “Sometimes you are so slow, Number Two, zat I sink I should call you Number Ten!—Do you know what a sleepwalker is?”

“Yeah, man! That’s a cat that walks in his sleep.”

“Very good, Number Two.—Now, have you ever heard of a sleepflyer?”

“Can’t say that I have, dad.”

“Exactly! Because zere is no such sing as a sleepflyer. So?”

“So?”

“So, I cannot fly zis stupid blimp in my sleep. And I cannot fly it *wizout* any sleep.—It is just zat kind of a blimp. You got to be awake!”

“I dig you now, daddy-oh!”

“Gosh! I guess we should have figured this out before we took

off,” said Homer.

“Hoh, boy!” said the professor. “You are somesing else, Mr. Snodgrass. Zat is ze obvious problem!—If we turn around and go back, I will fall asleep before we get zere. If we keep on going, I will also fall asleep.—It is just a question of wezzer you want to be buried somewhere in Pennsylvania, or somewhere on ze Mid-Atlantic Ridge under all zat water.”

“Could we make it back as far as Altoona?” Mortimer asked. “I know there’s a beautiful cemetery there, because my folks drove me over there for my grandmother’s funeral.”

“This is no time to be joking!” said Jeff Crocker, giving Mortimer a solid elbow in the ribs. “What time do you usually go to bed, Professor?”

“Zat is a very good question, Jeff. I usually go to bed at ten o’clock Eastern Standard Time, nine Central, eight Mountain, or seven o’clock Pacific Time. Zat would mean about twelve o’clock Mid-Atlantic Time; which is about when I would dump us in ze water.”

“This is getting pretty confusing,” said Homer

“Shut up, Homer!” said Jeff.

Just then the gondola began rocking rather violently, as some cross-winds hit us, and the professor dashed back to his seat at the controls. Dinky and Freddy came stumbling in from the rear cabin, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes and wondering what was going on.

Jeff grabbed Henry by the elbow and held a whispered consultation with him. “We’ve got to do something to settle the professor down, Henry! Is there any reason we couldn’t fly this old gas bag while he gets some sleep? We could always wake him up if anything went wrong.”

“I’m sure we could,” said Henry. “But there’s just one weak point in your plan.”

“What’s that?”

“I’ve never tried to wake the professor up!” said Henry, seriously. “That could be a problem.” Henry has a very analytical mind.

“That’s a gamble we’ll have to take,” said Jeff. “I don’t see any other solution.”

“I don’t either.”

“Let’s put it to him, then.—Only, you do the talking. You know he thinks a lot of you, Henry.

When the professor had managed to calm the bucking blimp, and had us on an even keel again, Henry tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

“Professor Stratavarious, sir! Maybe we could help you out. Jeff has flown a lot in his father’s Cessna, and sometimes he gets to handle the controls. Maybe you could teach him enough about flying the blimp to let you get some sleep for awhile.”

“Oh, zat is a very good idea, ‘Enry,” said the professor. “I hadn’t sought of zat.—Zere is only one problem, zough!”

“What is that?”

“It takes years of training to learn how to handle one of zese monsters, and I don’t sink I could stay awake long enough to teach Jeff all zere is to know.—You know, it is very complicated. You have to fly...and you also have to navigate...and, oh, it is a terrible mess!”

“I could do the navigating, Professor. That’s really no problem.—And maybe you could compress the training program a bit...You know...like you did with the time-lapse film on the glacier.”

“Zat is a *vairy* good idea, ‘Enry! Why didn’t I sink of zat?—Let me see now...ze movie on ze glacier was about sree minutes long, and it showed one hundred years...” The professor did some calculating. “Oh, my gracious! Zat means I could teach Jeff to fly zis stupid blimp in about four seconds.—But zere is one problem, ‘Enry.”

“What’s that?”

“You remember I cheated a little bit on ze film.”

“Well, cheat a little bit on this,” said Mortimer, and got another elbow in the ribs from Jeff. “Who wants to be buried in Altoona!”

“Excellent!” said the professor. “We will try it.” Then he got out of the pilot’s seat and put one hand on Jeff’s shoulder. “You see zat seat zere wiz ze big wheel on ze right-hand side?”

“Yes, Professor.”

“It looks like a wheel chair for a one-armed man, doesn’t it?...But it is not. It is ze pilot’s seat, and from zere you can make ze blimp do

anyising you want.”

“I understand,” said Jeff.

“ “You want to put ze nose down, you push ze wheel forward a little bit.—Hokay?”

“Hokay!”

“You want to put ze nose up and climb a little, you pull ze wheel back.—Hokay?”

“Hokay!”

“Down zere on ze floor are ze rudder pedals. You push ze right one down, you turn right. You push ze left one down, you turn left.—Make a special note of zat! It is not easy to remember.”

“Got it!” said Jeff.

“Let me see, now...zere is one more sing. Oh, yes! I almost forgot. Zis lever here by ze window is ze srottle. You push it forward, you go fast. You pull it back, you go slow. Hokay?—You see...it is all very simple, really!—Come to sink of it...I don’t know why it took me so long to learn how to fly zis sing!”

By this time the two girls had gone into the rear cabin to fix supper, and pretty soon Angelina came up front again with a little cow bell in her hand.

“Hey, you cats: We’ll put on the bag in shifts of four, “cause we’re a little cramped in this pad. When you hear this bell, I want four of you to split for the rear before the food gets cold.”

Then she disappeared again. But it wasn’t two minutes before we heard the bell tinkling, and Dinky, Homer, and I dashed for the rear cabin, only to find Freddy already at the table stuffing his mouth.

“Boy, you sure did ring that Belfast,” he said to Angelina.

“No Geography while we’re eating, Muldoon!” she snapped, flicking him on the ear with a dishtowel. “You might upset somebody’s stomach.”

“Okay, Number Two, okay!”

“And that reminds me,” said Angela. “Don’t taste anything till you’ve salted it.”

“Why?” Dinky asked.

“I don’t know why, Dinkle. (stet) That’s just something my mother used to say.—Or, did she say, “Don’t salt anything till you’ve tasted

it”?”—I don’t know...Anyway, the point is we’re not born cooks, so watch it!”

After supper the professor announced he was going to bed early, and he turned the controls over to Jeff and divided the rest of us into watches. Two of us had to be on watch at all times, he said—so somebody could keep the guy awake who was supposed to keep the pilot awake.

“Und don’t fly too low, Jeff,” he cautioned. “Zere are some big chunks of ice floating around here zis time of year...und we don’t need some. We got enough for ze trip!”

“You mean icebergs, Professor?”

“You call ‘em what you like, Jeff. But don’t get too friendly wiz zem.—Boy! Do zey pack a wallop!”

Just then we could see the lights of a ship below us, and the radio crackled.

“It’s the weather ship Delta,” said Jeff. “They want to know who we are, Professor.”

“Well, tell zem it’s none of zere business who we are.”

“I can’t tell them that, Professor. Don’t you have a name for the blimp?—What do you call it?”

“I call it *Blimp!*” said the professor. “I like zat name.—Besides, ze name is painted on ze nose in gold letters. Can’t zose idiots read?”

Despite the professor, Jeff managed to convince the weather ship of who we were and where we were going, and they advised us to fly south to get around a storm front up ahead of us. Henry turned to ask the professor his advice on what we should do; but he had already stretched out on one of the bunks, pulled the curtain around him, and was snoring peacefully. Henry shook him three or four times—but there was no waking him.

“We’ll go south!” said Henry.

And we flew on, into the darkness.

When You Get To Rome, Turn Left

With the professor sound asleep, and a storm up ahead of us, things looked great.

“I hope we don’t have to go too far out of our way,” said Henry. “If the professor’s fuel plan is anything like his flight plan, we may still end up trying to harpoon a whale.”

“How do you ask a whale where he’s going?” said Mortimer. “The professor never explained that.”

“Let’s not worry about the whales until we know we’re out of the storm,”

Jeff said, a little nervously. “I don’t know how to handle this thing in a high wind.—Maybe we better have everybody get a little sleep while they can, Henry.”

One thing the professor’s plan did include was plenty of sleeping accommodations. Every bench in the gondola could be converted into a double bunk by just raising the seat-back, and there were curtains that could be pulled around each set of bunks to make a private stateroom...if you didn’t snore too loudly, or sneeze at the wrong time. Everybody was pretty tired from the long day of continuing excitement, and they just stretched out on the bunks with all their clothes on while Henry and I stood the first watch.

Maybe we should have flown farther south, and maybe we should have flown north, and maybe the weather ship just gave us a bum steer—but the fact is we flew right into the teeth of a seething gale that tossed us up and down and sideways all at the same time. Henry and I stumbled around, strapping everyone into their bunks; but it was a waste of time, because nobody could sleep, anyway. Literally tons of hail started lashing the old gas bag, and we suddenly knew what life was like for a flea trapped inside a snare drum. Bolts of lightning stabbed into the sea on all sides of us, illuminating the gondola so brightly that you could see Dinky Poore's face had turned green again, and Freddy Muldoon's wasn't far behind. And when the claps of thunder came, you could actually feel them moving the ship from side-to-side. Jeff was working furiously at the controls, trying to keep Blimp on an even keel, and too busy to be sick; and the compass in front of him was spinning back-and-forth so rapidly we had no idea what direction we were going, or where we were.

"If we're just being sucked along by this storm, we'll be in it forever!" said Henry. "The only thing to do is go upstairs!"

"I'll try it," Jeff shouted to him, "but right now I can't seem to make headway in any direction."

"Give her full throttle, Jeff! That's the only way to get steerage way. And tilt her upward! If we can get to five thousand feet we might break out of this.—Not too much elevator, though! A strong headwind might just flip us over backwards."

"Altoona, here I come!" groaned Mortimer, beginning to look a little green around the gills himself.

With Henry's expert coaching, and Jeff's good judgement at the controls, Blimp struggled slowly upward and we could begin to feel the change of altitude on our ears. Suddenly the cannonading of the hail on the blimp's skin ceased, and we seemed to pick up speed. My ear drums were just about bursting when we finally shot out into a starry sky, and Jeff throttled back and leveled off. Everything was suddenly still, and aside from Blimp's engines, the only thing you could hear was the steady snoring of Professor Stratavarious. Even the mighty cheer we all cut loose with didn't wake him up.

Jeff was limp as a dishrag from his exertions, and Henry had just collapsed from nervous exhaustion in a corner seat. Mortimer

volunteered to take a crack at handling the controls, and Jeff was only too glad to give him the accelerated training course the professor had come up with. And Angela offered to stand watch with me in Henry's place.

"That's just fine," said Henry. "But first we've got to figure out where we are...so we know what direction to fly. For all we know right now, we may be heading back to New York."

"Don't worry, Maestro!" Mortimer chirped from the pilot's seat. "I know how to get to Austria. I figured it all out on the map.—All you do is head due east, and when you get to Rome you turn left!"

"I know a better way," Homer volunteered. "All you do is fly to Berlin, and turn right.—I think it's shorter."

"I guess the storm didn't bother anybody too much," said Angela.

"I appreciate all the jokes," Henry muttered. "But the fact is, we don't know how far south we are now—or how far north, maybe—and we've got to figure that out before we can get our bearing straight."

"Hey, Angelina! Wake up!" Angela shouted. "Henry just pulled a goody. I think it's his first.—He says we're gonna' get the Bering Strait!"

"Oh, bosh!" said Henry. "Will you please knock it off, till I get this figured out."

Then Henry got out the professor's navigation charts and started shooting readings to the stars to figure our position. Then he gave Mortimer a heading to fly on, and told me to wake him up in two hours so he could make corrections.

It was about ten o'clock the next morning before the professor stirred from his bunk, and he came into the front cabin rubbing his stomach.

"Ho, you are a lousy cook, Number One!" he said. "My supper was jumping up and down in my stomach all night, and making ze funniest noises. It almost kept me awake!"

"That's too bad, Professor," said Angela. "But you're the only one that's complained."

"Zat's because I have a bigger stomach." Then he peered down at the sea from one of the windows. "Oh, my goodness! How come we

are so high up?—Or did ze ocean drop down during ze night? Maybe it's low tide, huh?"

"We had a little trouble during the night," Jeff explained. "So we thought it better to go upstairs for awhile."

"Well, supposing we go down ze stairs again, Mr. Smarty. I got to get some water for shaving."

Jeff did as he was told, and when we were close enough to the water, the professor lowered a bucket over the side of the observation deck, and pulled a bucket of sea water aboard.

"Zis saves carrying extra water," he explained. "Look at zose varmints!" And he started scooping gobs of fish out of the bucket with a strainer. "What on earse is zis?" he said, as he held a funny-looking green bottle up to the light. "My gracious! Zere is somesing in zis."

The professor pulled the cork from the bottle, tapped its bottom, and a small wad of paper fell out. Sticking his monocle in his eye, he carefully unfolded the wad and read: 6-18-28. STRANDED AT 4°E., 75°N. FOOD LOW. SEND HELP!—AMUNDSEN.

"Pfhooney!" said the professor. "We don't have ze time to go looking for zat fool!" And he threw the note and the bottle both back into the sea.

On and on we sailed, with a good easterly breeze helping to push us toward the continent of Europe. Everybody was in good spirits again, with no more threats of storm, and at some times we logged better than seventy miles-an-hour. For about ten minutes in the afternoon a school of porpoises followed us, darting in and out of the blimp's shadow, and the professor slowed down so we could enjoy the show for a little while. He also had Jeff hover low over the water once: again, while he showed Freddy and Dinky how to fish from the observation deck, and they pulled in enough mackerel for dinner in about two minutes.

"Zat is anozzer wonderful sing about a blimp," said the professor. "You don't have to take too much food along. You can always sit down over a lake for a few minutes and catch some fish.—And you can even swipe vegetables from somebody's garden if you got ze right equipment."

The next morning when we awoke, we were already making our

way across the south of France, and by noontime we had reached the Swiss border. Professor Stratavarious had been positively exuberant all morning, pointing out the beauties of the French countryside, and naming all the rivers, lakes and mountains for us along the way. But he did jump on Angela once, when she tried to persuade him to make a detour so we could see Paris.

“What on earse for?” he asked.

“They say that everybody should see Paris!—At least, so I’ve heard,” she answered.

“Oh, zat is an absolutely stupid statement, Number One!—Do you know how many people zere are in ze world?—Over sree-and-a-half billion! Can you imagine what Paris would look like wiz all zose people?—Even if you make everybody take turns, and you let in just one million people a week—zat would take sirty-five hundred weeks! Boy! Zat is about seventy years! You better believe it...most of zem would be dead before zey got zere.—That a mess zat would be! Besides zat, ze plumbing is not so good in Paris.—Oh, what a mess zat would be! Zat is a stupid idea!”

As we crossed the border of Switzerland the professor started taking the to blimp upstairs rapidly. “You got watch it in zis place,” he said. “By golly, zey got some big mountains here. You got to be careful you don’t hit some.”

We could see what he meant. Shortly after we passed over Bern, the magnificent, lofty peaks of the Alps hit us full in the face. And as we threaded our way through a narrow valley and passed over Interlaken, the professor pointed out the imposing, snow-capped peaks of the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn directly south of us. It was so beautiful it just took your breath away.

“Is the sky always as blue as this?” asked Dinky, in a soft, awestruck voice. “It’s just beautiful.”

“Oh, yes!” said the professor. “It is a beautiful place, alright. But don’t ever land here, Dinky.”

“Why not?”

“Oh! Zem Switsters is terrible. Zey will charge you an arm and a leg, just to shine your shoes.—And zen zey only shine one shoe, because zey claim you don’t need ze ozzer one anymore.—Oh, zey is terrible!”

"I always heard they were very nice people," said Dinky.

"Oh, zey are...Zey are very nice!" the professor agreed. "But zey are terrible, just ze same. Zey like money, you know! And zey don't let you forget it!"

We just kept on "Oohing" and "Aahing" at the breathtaking scenery unfolding beneath us for a few minutes. Then Angela asked:

"Is it really that expensive in Switzerland, Professor?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!" he replied. "Switzerland is like a high-class restaurant. Zey like to charge you for ze surroundings."

"Yeah! I always heard they had money to Bern," said Mortimer.

"Ho, ho , ho! Zat is vairy good, Mortimer. Remind me to write zat down some time."

About an hour later the professor called out to Dinky. "Look closely now, Dinky. We will soon be over Liechtenstein.—Zat was it! Look, quick! Right back zere!"

Dinky ran back to the observation deck and leaned over the railing.

"Do you see anysing like a big letter "D" zere, Dinky," the professor hollered back to him, "like zere is on zat stupid map?"

"I don't see nothin' but some mountains," said Dinky.

"Ah, so! You see, Dinky...I told you all zose mapmakers was crazy!—Now, you all look out ze front! Zis piece of stuff here is a part of Austria. You see...it is not red at all. It is all brown and green, like a St. Patrick's Day marble cake...except zey forgot to scrape some of ze icing off zose mountains over zere."

On we flew, following a roadway that wound through steep valleys and then just disappeared as it zigzagged its way up a high mountain dead ahead of us.

"You see zat big mountain up zere?" said the professor. "It has a big hole in it, like a hunk of Swiss cheese."

"How did the hole get there?" Dinky asked.

"Some busy-bodies dug it, Dinky...so zey could get ze Orient Express all ze way to ze Orient, where it belongs. Believe me, it is some big tunnel...six miles long...but ze people here don't like it."

"Why not?" asked Freddy.

"Well, you see, Freddy...On zis side of ze mountain is ze

Vorarlberg, and on ze ozzer side is ze Tirol. And ze Arlbergians don't like ze Tirolians, and vice-versa.—Ze only sing zey ever agreed on, was zat it was a bad idea to dig ze tunnel. Everybody said: 'What a pity to join wiz a tunnel, what God had separated by a mountain!'—You got to admit zey got a good point zere!"

"Those cats must have been history's first environmentalists," said Angelina.

"What's a 'violentalist'?" said Freddy. "Some kind of a musician?"

"*Environmentalist*, Muldoon! Those are the good cats. Everybody else is bad."

Freddy's face puckered. "Are you a 'virementalist'?" he asked Dinky.

"I don't think so," said Dinky, with a wistful expression. "My folks are Presbyterians."

And we flew on. Beyond the Arlberg tunnel, the broad Inn Valley soon stretched out before us like a lovely patchwork carpet, glistening green and yellow in the sun, with snow-capped peaks lining either side of it. We all gasped in astonishment at the sheer beauty of it.

"Oh, zis is a lovely place!" exclaimed the professor. "And ze people are so nice here. Zey ain't out to get you all ze time.—Zey like simple sings...like cows, and manure, and stuff like zat...and zey are *some* jokers, too!—You see zat big cut over zere, where somebody broke a piece out of ze mountains? Zat is ze Brenner Pass, and on ze ozzer side of it is all zose Italians. Zey're pretty nice, too. But you wouldn't believe what a hot wind zey send over here every spring!—Zey call it ze foehn—you know, like zose green sings in ze forest—and, by golly, what a powerful wind. It don't smell, maybe, but it drives all ze women crazy! So all ze men in ze Tirol spend ze whole spring in ze beer gardens and don't go home at night.—I tell you, it is somesing!"

We passed over Innsbruck, and something bright flashed in the sun from the center of the city. "What's that?" Mortimer asked, pointing down.

"You mean zat sing zat stabs you in ze eye? You wouldn't believe it, Mortimer. Zat is *der goldne dachl*.—You know what zat is? Zat is a roof of solid gold, over ze front porch on zat building! Hoh, boy! I

bet you would like to nail zat down. Huh?”

“Wow!” said Mortimer. “I’ll bet every time the price of gold goes up, they raise the roof, huh, Professor?”

“Hoh, Mortimer! You got a quick tongue,” said the professor. “You should be in the funny shows!”

“I could laugh if I’d had something to eat”, said Freddy. “When we gonna’ eat?”

“Cool it , man! We’re drinkin’ in the scene,” said Angelina.

“I ain’t had nothin’ since breakfast!” said Freddy.

“You better feed him or Illinois ya’ to death,” Homer advised.

“Hey, hey! You’re catching up to Mortimer! Mark up one for Homer, Angie.”

“Sometimes I wish I’d never even mentioned that game,” Angelina groaned. “Freddy, we’ll feed your fat face as soon as it’s lunchtime.”

“Lunchtime! It’s already three o’clock!”

“Oh, my gracious!” said the professor. “You are right, Freddy. You better feed zis crowd, Number Two. We will soon be in Heiligenblut, and zere will be so much excitement I don’t know when zey might feed us.”

So we ate on-the-hoof, so to speak, running to the windows every time somebody screamed that they’d seen another castle, or another beautiful green mountain lake, or another fascinating pattern of sunlight and shadow on the craggy slopes of the mountains. Suddenly the professor turned south, and we threaded another narrow, twisting valley; and as we came out over Kitzbuhel, where the railroad we’d been following takes a sweeping, horseshoe bend around the town, the professor pointed dead ahead to where two towering white peaks rose against the deep blue sky over the ridge to the south of us.

“Ze one on ze right is ze Gross Venediger,” he said, “ and ze slightly higher one on ze left is ze Gross Glockner. You notice it has two peaks, and ze Pasterzen Glacier is right in between zem.—Ain’t zat somesing?”

We kept flying south to the Salzach River, and followed it to the town of Bruck, where again the professor turned up a narrow, steeply

rising valley.

“Boy! Here we got to really climb!—Everybody breeze deep, so you get lots of oxygen. Zere may not be much up zere!”

And climb we did. Besides feeling it on our ears, we could also notice a shortness of breath as we wound our way ever—higher up the gorge, and the professor told us to just sit still, or lie down until we got used to the rarefied atmosphere. The road running up the gorge was swallowed by the mouth of a tunnel about two-thirds of the way up, but we had to keep on climbing.

“Too bad zose stupids didn’t dig zose tunnels fatter,” said the professor. “We maybe could save some time if we could fly srough it.”

Blimp’s engines were throbbing a bit as we reached the crest of the ridge, and the old gas bag shuddered from stem to stern as it met the wind coming over the rise. But we made it, and the professor started circling as we lost altitude on the other side. Far below us, clinging to the craggy slopes, were the white, pink, green, and brown stucco houses of an alpine village—and at one end of it a tall and graceful white church thrust a needle-like spire toward the sky. Nearly every roof in the village was weighted down with huge stones, lined mostly along the edges.

“Zat is Heiligenblut,” said the professor. “Now, you watch zis!” And he started descending more rapidly, in tighter circles.

“How come they got all them rocks on the roofs?” Freddy asked.

“By golly, you need zem!” said the professor. “Sometimes ze wind blows so hard here it blows ze whiskers right off your face, and you don’t have to shave for a week!—It smarts a little bit, zough.”

“I don’t believe it,” said Dinky. “It couldn’t blow that hard.”

“You don’t believe it! You ask Frau Keller who runs ze bakery here.—She sneezed out ze window one windy night, and it was two weeks before somebody found her upper teess in a haystack down in ze next village!”

By this time the professor had crept in low over the village and was hovering the blimp expertly right over the village square. From under the seat next to him, he pulled a huge megaphone, and stuck it out the window.

“Hallo—o—o, down zere! Is anybody awake?”

He really didn't have to say it, because people had been scurrying into the square ever since we had come in sight. And out of a building right beside the square, with the word RATHAUS painted on its front in elegant letters, came an important-looking man in a dark blue uniform, followed by an even more important-looking, be-whiskered old gentleman wearing knee-length stockings, leather shorts, and a green felt jacket. Everybody waved and shouted up to us, but you couldn't hear what they were saying: and it wouldn't have mattered, anyway, because we wouldn't have understood what they were saying even if we'd heard it. But the man in the uniform pointed up the street to where a long line of cars and two buses were standing. The professor nodded his head and everybody ran for the cars and busses and started piling into them.

“Aha!” said the professor. “Zey are going to escort us up ze Glockner Strasse! Zat is ze famous road built by ze Austrian Alpine Club, and it leads right up to ze glacier.—Zey know zat I always land zere, because zere is no room in zis dinky little village for a big, fat sausage like Blimp.”

The procession of cars and buses started off, up the narrow, winding road toward the twin Glockner peaks. The professor circled Blimp upward again and we all clung at the windows, watching the motorcade wend its way up the Glockner Strasse. Some of the hairpin turns in the tortuous ascent were so sharp that the buses had to take two or three cuts at making the turn. The drivers would back off to the very edge of the precipice, turn their wheels again until they locked, then move slowly forward until they came up against the side of the mountain, then back off again. It was a scary thing to watch, but I guess the drivers knew what they were doing, because both buses made it to the top.

We momentarily lost sight of the cars as we rose through a puffy, white cloud. And when we burst out into the sunlight again, there lay the Pasterzen Glacier—sparkling in the sun so brightly that it hurt your eyes to look directly at it. It looked like a broad river of molten glass with patches of frosting on it. And from where we looked at it—high above the tongue—it seemed to hang very precariously to the upper slopes of the mountain, ready to plunge at a moment's notice

down into the gorge below us. It was an awe-inspiring sight—but a frightening one, too!

“Hoh, boy! Isn’t zat a big chunk of ice!” the professor exulted as he jumped up and down in his seat. “You know, it is about six miles long and about a hundred and fifty feet deep in some places! Nobody ever says how wide it is, so zat is one of ze sings we will measure.—Oh, such a sight! Zat is almost as beautiful as Anita Ekberg!”

“It’s a little bit bigger, though, isn’t it?” Homer observed.

“Hoh, Mr. Snodgrass, you are somesing else! You got to be from hungry, like Number Two says all ze time!”

“Score one for the professor,” Angela whispered to Angelina.

“Why do you always call me ‘Mr. Snodgrass’, Professor? You call everybody else by their first names.”

“I like ze name ‘Snodgrass’! Zat is why! It is a very beautiful name.—But zat name ‘Homer’...Pfhooy!...Zat is a stupid name!”

By this time we were well over the glacier and the professor was homing in on two Alpine *huttes* built on rock outcroppings at the edge of the glacier. Before them stretched a broad field of powdery white snow. Stamped out in it in large letters was the message: WILLKOMMEN HERR PROFESSOR DOKTOR STRATAVARIC.

“Look at zat!” cried the professor. “Oh, zat is beautiful! Oh, zey are so nice here! My, zey must have had hundreds of peasants up here to stamp out all zose letters.”

“Boy, that is nice!” said Mortimer. “They even misspelled your name.”

“Oh, no zey didn’t!”

“Yes they did;—Your name doesn’t end in a “C”, does it?”

“Zat is *not* a “C”, Mr. Smarty! If you will look closely, zat is half an “O”.—If you want to see ze rest of it, you can just go climb down zat great big crevasse zere, at ze end of ze snow field, and you will find ze rest of ze “O”, and ze “U” and ze “S”.—I told you zese people were bad spellers, but zey are not *zat* bad...especially wiz zere feet!”

“Oh, c’mon, Whiskers. Is that for real?” asked Angelina.

“Stop calling me ‘Whiskers’, Number Two, or I will start calling you Number Ten, again!—You cut zat out!—If you sink zis is funny,

you should have bee wiz me ze last time I came here. Zere was a great big crevasse opened up right in ze middle of ze snow field, and all you could read from ze air was ‘PROFESSOR SOUS’.”

There was no more time for chit-chat, because we could see the motorcade pulling up in front of the hut named Glocknerhaus. But Dinky had one more question:

“What does that sign that says ‘GLOCKNERHAUS’ mean, Professor?”

“Zat just means ‘Glockner house’,” said the professor. “I told you, Dinky, zese people are very bad spellers. But if you forget ze spelling, and just listen very closely, you can learn to speak German very quick.—Ah! Zere is ze reception committee coming out now!”

The professor settled the blimp down carefully, at the very edge of the snow field, and a dozen men dressed in leather shorts and green felt hats with a feather stuck in the hatband rushed out and grabbed the mooring lines. They drove iron stakes into the ice and tied Blimp down securely. Meanwhile, the professor was rummaging in a beautifully-carved wooden chest he had pulled out from under a seat, and from it he drew a magnificent red sash with all kinds of medals and ribbons dangling from it. He threw it across his right shoulder and tied the ends over his left hip. Then he brushed us all back with his walking stick, opened the door of the gondola, and stepped out. Immediately, he went out of our sight, and when we looked out the door he was wallowing in soft, slushy snow, right up to his hips.

Angelina was laughing so hard she just doubled up on the gondola floor, and Angela couldn’t get her to stop. Mortimer was having a hard time, too. But Jeff and I jumped out, clear of the slush pit that had trapped the professor, and helped the other men pull him toward harder-packed snow. But before we could get him out, a brass band that had lined up in front of the Glocknerhaus struck up the Rumanian national anthem; and the professor snatched the leather helmet off his head, beat our hands away with it, and stood waist-deep in the slush with the helmet clasped to his heart. The distinguished-looking old gentleman in the green felt jacket tried to stop them, but the bandmaster just shook his head at him and nodded smilingly in the professor’s direction.—When he noticed that only half the professor was there, he did pick up the tempo a bit, though.

When the anthem was over, the professor reached out toward us again, and we pulled him out.

“To sink I had to come four souzand miles for zis!” he muttered, as we stood him up on the firmer snow.

Then he introduced us to the two distinguished-looking gentlemen: Herr Franz Weixelbaumer, who was the Burgermeister of Heiligenblut; and the man in the smart, blue uniform who was Herr Ernst Gruber, Chief of the Polizei.

“Ze ‘polizei’ is ze same sing as ze police,” the professor whispered to Dinky, “only zey have trouble spelling zat one, too.” Then he waved his walking stick toward the rest of us. “And zis is my crew! I can’t remember zere names right now, but you will get to know zem. —Now! Shall we begin?” and he stuck the dark green monocle in his left eye, and the ceremonies began.

The band struck up The Stars And Stripes Forever, and the professor accompanied Herr Weixelbaumer and Herr Gruber on a formal review of the “troops”—three men in dark blue uniforms who were the Heiligenblut police force, six men in fire helmets, a mountain rescue squad complete with ropes, pulleys and ice axes, and a group of twelve women yodelers, wearing flat-brimmed black hats tied to their heads with beautifully-embroidered white scarves. After the review, the Burgermeister gave a short but flowery speech of welcome; and the professor responded with expressions of gratitude for the wonderful reception he had been accorded, and blew kisses to the crowd with both hands. Then they loaded us, bag and baggage, into one of the buses and we started the perilous descent down the Glockner Strasse to the village.

The professor stood up all the way, because his beautiful white riding britches were still soaking wet. But he took advantage of the occasion to give us a lecture on the glacial history of the gorge we were descending, all-the-while performing utterly amazing feats of anti-inertial acrobatics around the upright pole at the front of the bus as the driver negotiated the dizzying hairpin turns at a speed fast enough to turn Dinky Poore and Freddy Muldoon all green again.

Freeze A Jolly Good Fellow

That evening the Burgermeister staged a great banquet in honor of the renowned Herr Professor Doktor Stratavarious in the Jager Halle of the Heiligenblutner Hof, where we were staying. The Heiligenblutner Hof is a pretty ancient inn with two modern wings added to it to accommodate tourists, and the Jager Halle, or “hunter’s room”, is in the oldest part of the building and is quite a sight to see. It has huge vaulted beams like the ones you’d see below decks in a sailing ship, and everywhere on them, and on the plaster walls are mounted trophies of the hunt for the chamois and the elusive rehbuk...the little mountain deer that clamber among the rocks on the highest peaks. Any jager who brings one home is considered a hero, because he has usually risked his life to get it. And forever after, he is entitled to wear the brush-like tail of the rehbuk in the band of his hat as a symbol of his prowess as a hunter, and a mountain climber. We noticed several old codgers hang such hats on the pegs in the wall as they entered the banquet hall; and Father Johann Schafer, the pastor from the beautiful little white church we had seen from the air, told us the story of the legendary hunt for the rehbuk in the Austrian Alps.

On all four sides of the room, the walls are painted with a continuous mural depicting the most prominent features of the mountains and gorges surrounding Heiligenblut, and some of the events of the area’s history. You can sit there and imagine you’re sitting right on top of the world, looking down on the area we saw when Blimp had carried us over the ridge of the Hohe Tauern that

afternoon, and reading some of its history. The peaks of the Gross Glockner, and the great Pasterzen Glacier itself, were painted in great detail on the wall at the end of the room behind the head table.

Most of the villagers attending the banquet came in their native costumes; but a few dignitaries like Burgermeister Weixelbaumer, and Sepp Holtzmeister who is head of the local Alpine Club, were wearing formal dinner clothes with long-tailed black coats and white vests, and they hung their tall silk hats on a special row of pegs near the door when they came in. Anyone who owned any, was wearing all his medals and ribbons, of course; and Herr Gruber, the Chief of the Polizei, just about knocked everybody's eye out with his most resplendent uniform, featuring a dark blue cutaway coat loaded with gold braid and epaulettes, skin-tight white trousers, and a sabre dangling from his hip.

We all had to wait for the professor, of course, because it was only proper that he be the last one to enter the hall. And when he appeared there was a ripple of applause all around the room, and the burgermeister hastened to the arched doorway to greet him. He stood there, under the arch, with his monocle clenched in his left eye, and brushed both sides of his moustache with the edge of his forefinger and fluffed out his goatee a bit. The magnificent red sash with all its medals was draped neatly over his formal dinner coat, and cradled in his left arm was a tall silk hat...even though he didn't have to go outside to get from his room to the banquet hall.

"Guten abend, Herr Professor Doktor," the burgermeister exclaimed as he rushed up to usher him into the room.

"Gruss Gott! Mein herr!" said the professor, snapping his heels together with a loud *clack*, and bowing from the waist as he extended his hand. It was like watching a movie: only there we were, right in the middle of it.

The burgermeister hung the professor's hat on a peg next to his own and led him to the table where most of the guests were munching appetizers and sip-ping white wine...unless they preferred the lemon phosphate that we were drinking. As soon as the professor had been introduced to the few people who hadn't already met him, the burgermeister signaled the waiters and everybody moved to the banquet tables. And by this time, the smell of mothballs in the room

was overpowering.

“Whew! What’s that stink?” said Freddy Muldoon, and I dug him in the ribs.

“Shut up, Freddy!” I said. Then I whispered in his ear. “That’s mothballs, and it isn’t polite to notice them.—After all...these people don’t get a chance to wear these clothes every day, you know.”

“Well, I didn’t notice it before the professor showed up.”

“Well, he hasn’t had a chance to air his out.—Besides, maybe you got too close to him.”

“I sure hope I don’t have to sit by him,” said Freddy.

As it happened, he didn’t. We were all scattered among the other guests so that each of us would have somebody different to talk to...which didn’t seem to make much sense, because none of us, except Angela, could speak any German, and she only knew a few words. I sat beside Father Schafer, though, and he explained that most of the people in the village could speak some English.

“You see, we get a great many tourists here, and we have to learn to converse in a great many languages,” he told me. “And, during Hitler’s time, every schoolchild had to study English, because he realized it was becoming the international language. So, you will find that it is only the older people that don’t understand you.”

“It’s the same way in America,” said Mortimer, who was sitting across from us.

Father Schafer laughed. “Oh, to be young again! You know, when I was a young boy I couldn’t wait to grow up and become a real man. Now, I spend half my time wishing I hadn’t.—Stay young, if you can, Herr Dalrymple. Youth is a treasure we never value until we have lost it.”

“I know,” said Mortimer, “My father always says: the older he gets, the poorer he is.—But I think it’s money that bothers him.”

Meanwhile, the waiters were loading platter after platter of sauerbraten, knockwurst, bratwurst, fresh mountain trout, sauerkraut, potato pancakes, heavy black bread and ice-cold white butter on the table; and over on a side table I could see huge pans of *apfel strudel* smothered in thick whipped cream, waiting to be served. Dinky Poore, who was still a little green around the gills, didn’t think too

much of the sauerbraten and pushed it aside.

“That tastes funny to me,” he said.

“Don’t knock it,” said Mortimer. “The wurst is yet to come.” I’ve seen a few disappearing acts in my time, but I’ve never seen anything like what happened to that food. It just plain evaporated, as everybody at the tables sort of wrapped themselves around it. Henry Mulligan is always trying to pound scientific principles into our heads...like: You can’t destroy matter!—or: No two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time! That’s a lot of bosh! When you see two hundred pounds of food vanish into thin air, and nobody at the table is any bigger than he was when he sat down, then you know science still has a long way to go.

While all this food was on its way to being recycled, there were plenty of other things to worry about, too. The twelve women yodelers we had met up on the glacier came in and started making the walls ring with a steady barrage of high-pitched bellows that sounded a lot like a Tennessee hog-calling contest...except it was beautiful. And then eight men came in, dressed in leather shorts that Father Schafer explained were called “lederhosen”, and they proceeded to really rattle the rafters with a lively, fast-stepping dance while they slapped at their thighs, legs and feet as though they were being stung by a swarm of bees. Then two men came in with two long poles, which they set down parallel on the floor, and another man started doing a dance in and out of the space between the poles while the other two men tried to break his ankles by clapping the poles together. It was pretty exciting.

While the *apfel strudel* and whipped cream were doing their best to contribute to the weigh of all flesh, we were serenaded by a group with guitars and accordions that really made the walls bulge in and out, and I began to wonder about the professor’s warnings about drinking Seltzer water in the Alps. I looked in his direction, but he seemed totally unconcerned and was busy exchanging toasts with the burgermeister, the chief of the polizei, and the president of the Alpine Club. Then coffee was served, the entertainers left, and during the momentary silence the waiters passed around boxes of large, fragrant cigars for the male guests. The burgermeister insisted the professor should take a handful of them, and he held a match while the

professor lighted one.

“You like cigars, mein herr, yah?”

“Oh, yes!” said the professor. “I have been a cigar smoker all my life.—You know...my fazzer—ze old Baron Stratavarious—he was a chain smoker.”

“Is that so?”

“Oh, yes! He wanted me to be one, too.—And I tried my best...but I could never keep ze stupid sings lit! So I switched to cigars.”

Then it was time for speeches and conversation, and the burgermeister called upon Father Schafer to tell us the story of how Heiligenblut came to get its odd name. It seems there was this old character named Briccius, and nobody seemed to know whether that was his first name or his last name, but anyway he was from Denmark, and somehow-or-other he ended up in Constantinople where he spent many years serving in the army of the Emperor Leo. (Nobody seemed to know which Leo, but, anyhow, that doesn't necessarily spoil the story.) After many years of faithful and heroic service to the emperor, Mr. Briccius finally decided it was time to go home to Denmark. The old emperor was pretty upset about this, but he was so grateful to Briccius for all of his loyal service that he offered him his choice of anything in his empire he would like to have. Mr. Briccius had apparently been waiting for just such an offer, because he immediately told the emperor, “Give me, then, the greatest treasure of this land—the flask from the high altar of St. Sophia containing the Sacred Blood which flowed from a picture of Christ when it was stabbed by an insolent infidel!” (You have to remember, in all these stories, that infidels always carried long knives.) Anyway, for some reason, the emperor decided to give Briccius the vial of Sacred Blood as a reward for his services, and the faithful warrior set out for his homeland. Instead of taking the direct route, right up the Danube valley, he decided to detour through the mountains, and this turned out to be a big mistake. When he came to the Gross Glockner he got caught in a big snowstorm, and since he couldn't walk as fast as the snow was piling up, he ended up about ten feet under it. Naturally, he froze to death, and it was several days later that some peasants discovered three blades of wheat sprouting through the snow where Briccius had fallen.

The peasants dug through the snow to discover the source of this mystery, and they found the body of Briccius...and the vial of Sacred Blood. But when they tried to move the body down to the valley on a sled, the oxen they had brought with them refused to move—and this may be the origin of the expression “stubborn as an ox”—At any rate, they decided to bury the body right where it was, and later a small shrine was built there to commemorate the event. This later became the church that is now the seat of Father Schafer’s parish, and the vial of Sacred Blood is still preserved there.

We all “oohed” and “aahed” over this story and started asking Father Schafer questions. But Homer Snodgrass raised his hand and said: “I know a better one than that!”

Everybody looked at Homer as though he had just swiped a quarter from the collection plate in church, but he went right on talking.

“I saw this movie once, where a man on his honeymoon fell off the Matterhorn and disappeared in a big, deep crevasse and nobody could find him. But the girl he had married never gave up. She went to a famous glaciologist in England, and he figured out how long it would take for the man’s body to be carried down to the mouth of the glacier so she could get it back and give it a decent burial.”

“Hey! I saw that picture!” said Mortimer. “It was real neat!”

“Yeah!” said Homer. “It sure was!—Anyway, this woman came back to the Matterhorn about forty years later, and she was real old then...you know...more’n thirty, maybe. And, sure enough, her husband’s body showed up at the end of the glacier and they dug it out of the ice.—There was only one thing wrong, though!”

“What was that?” asked Freddy Muldoon, who was still working his way through all the *apfel strudel* left on the table.

“She found a locket around his neck with a picture of her most-hated rival in it!” said Homer.

“Yeah!” said Mortimer. “Some old lover.”

“Boy, I sure felt sorry for that woman,” said Homer. “...after all those years...boy!”

“I felt sorrier for the man,” said Mortimer. “How’d you like to spend forty years in a deep freeze, and then have your wife find out

what you'd been doin' all the time?"

"What did they do with the body?" Angela asked.

"I don't know," said Homer. "The picture ended right there."

"Somebody wrote a song about the guy, though," Mortimer added.

"Okay, Dalrymple! What was it?" Angelina asked, sticking her fingers in her ears.

"Freeze A Jolly-Good Fellow!" said Mortimer, and the whole room broke up.

After the laughter had died down, the burgermeister took over and told us that there were many tales about travelers being rescued, or perishing, on the treacherous slopes of the Alps, and that the great Pasterzen Glacier had more than its share of grisly tales to tell, if only it could speak. And he offered to tell us the most intriguing one of all, to top off the evening.

It was then that Jeff Crocker caught my eye and jabbed his finger toward the arched doorway, where I could see a dark-haired man, who did not appear to be an Austrian, half-hiding behind the drapes. He seemed to be listening intently to everything that was being said in the Jager Halle. Jeff and I exchanged glances, and we both seemed to be asking each other: "If this character wasn't invited to the banquet, how come he's snooping around?"

Meanwhile, Burgermeister Weixelbaumer had launched himself into the story about some mysterious "travelers" who had disappeared on the glacier about a hundred years ago. They had been caught in a severe winter snowstorm, and it was not until two days after the storm had ended that one of them was discovered, half dead, by some mountain guides from Heiligenblut. He said his name was Adolf Heist, and before he died he blurted out a strange story that nobody, to this day, knows whether to believe or disbelieve.

Adolf Heist claimed that he was the sole survivor of a group of four men trapped in the storm while trying to cross the glacier. One of them had fallen into a deep crevasse. The other two had collapsed from exhaustion, and been buried by the heavy snowfall. They had been on their way to Holland, and had with them a huge diamond—the size of an apple, according to Heist. They had smuggled the diamond out of South Africa, where the fabulous Kimberley mines had recently been discovered, and had carefully made their way to

the north coast of Africa, where they had hired a small fishing smack to land them at a remote Italian fishing village. From there they had planned to travel overland to Amsterdam, in order to avoid customs officials at border crossing points.

When the storm had struck, midway across the glacier, a violent argument had developed over who should be carrying the diamond. In the midst of the argument, one of the four men lost his balance, and fell into the crevasse. If you could believe Adolf Heist...the man who fell into the crevasse was clutching the diamond in his hand.

Heist died before he could be brought down from the mountain. But a small shrine was erected at the edge of the glacier, near where he was found, and still stands there to mark the area where the four lost their lives. And to this day, according to the burgermeister, people who have heard of the legend venture out onto the glacier from that spot, hoping to find the fabulous “diamond the size of an apple”.

When the burgermeister had finished his tale, Henry Mulligan was all excited, and he usually doesn't get that way. He kept pumping the burgermeister with questions, and the burgermeister kept telling him that—as old as he looked—he really hadn't been born yet when the diamond was supposedly lost. But he did go up to the mural on the wall behind him and point out the location of the little shrine that marks the spot where Adolf Heist's body was found.

“How far is that from the tongue of the glacier?” Henry asked. And most of us knew what Henry was driving at. Was the diamond—and the body of the man whom the legend said was clutching it in his hand—still in the glacier? Or had they long ago been given up to the uncertain currents of the mountain stream that plunged from the mouth of the glacier down the steep gorge to where it became the Moll River in the valley below?

“Ach, so! I would say it is...maybe five kilometers. Ja?” said the burgermeister, looking about the room for confirmation. Several of the whiskered old characters sitting about the tables smoking their long U-shaped Tirolean pipes, nodded in assent.

“Let's see,” said Henry. “That would be about three miles.” Then he turned to the professor. “How fast did you say the glacier moves, Professor? We could easily figure out when that....”

“Oh, ‘Enry, zat is silly,” said the professor. “To begin wiz...zere are too many imponderables.—Do you know what an imponderable is , ‘Enry? Zat is somesing you don’t know what it is! And you got a lot of zem in a glacier. You better believe me!—You got giant’s kettles, you got all kinda’ moraines, you got catchments, you got drumlins and serpentine kames, you got sub-glacial streams, and lakes, and puddles,...believe me, you got a big mess!...You even got a lot of old bodies.—No, ‘Enry! Zat fancy—dancer wiz ze diamond...he could be anywhere in zat mess. He could even be in Transylvania by now! You cannot calculate zat, ‘Enry. No, no, no!”

But, despite the professor’s lack of enthusiasm, Henry took a rough cut at a calculation, based on the mainstream of the glacier moving about five inches a day. And he came up with an answer of one hundred years.,

“Why that would be right about now!” cried Angela. “What year did you say this happened, Herr Weixelbaumer?”

“The date on the little shrine is 1873,” said the burgermeister, and the pipesmokers all nodded their heads.

“Hey! WOW, man!” said Angelina Angelo. “Maybe you really stuck your finger in the pudding, Henry.—Man, let’s go dig that rock! A girl can really relate to diamonds, you know.”

“You mean, ‘Diamonds are a girl’s best friend’?” Homer asked.

“You say it your way, I’ll say it mine,” said Angelina.

“I’m with Angelina,” said Mortimer. “My old man found a diamond in the rough one time, while he was playing golf.—It sort of runs in our family.”

“Like your mouth, maybe?” said Homer Snodgrass.

Just then a wad of paper hit me in the left eye and I spun my head around to see Jeff waving at me and pumping his thumb over his left shoulder. The man we had seen, half hidden behind the drapery, had left, and was scurrying up the lobby stairway. I wondered, at the time, why he had suddenly lost interest in eavesdropping on us; but I figured maybe he had to go to the bathroom.

Anyway, the conversation in the Jager Halle went on for quite some time and at a lively pace, because everyone suddenly became interested in how much a diamond the size of an apple might be

worth, and whether it might be the largest diamond in the world.

“What kind of an apple was this guy talking about?” Dinky Poore asked, at one point. “A crab apple isn’t very big, but I’ve seen some Macintosh’s that were bigger than a baseball.”

“Maybe he meant a pineapple,” said Freddy Muldoon. “I hope he did.”

But nobody paid any attention to either of them.

That night we slept in featherbeds. If you’ve never slept in one, I can tell you it’s a little bit like sleeping in a jar of jelly...but I guess, maybe, you’ve never slept in a jar of jelly, either. The point is, the thing sort of folds up around you, and no matter what way you roll, there’s always something over you as well as under you. This is great in the wintertime, when you’ve kicked the covers off. But in the summertime it can get a little hot, and you wake up sometimes in a steamy sweat. The Austrians know this, so as soon as you’re out of bed in the morning the maid comes in, pulls the feather mattresses off the beds, and flops them over the windowsills so they can air out during the day. This means there can’t be any more beds in a room than there are windows to hang mattresses out of, and the professor claims you can always tell how good business is in a resort town by just counting the feather beds dangling from the sides of the hotels. He also claims it’s not a good idea to sleep late, or you might find yourself clinging to a bedsheet several floors above the street, with your pajamas flapping in the morning breeze.

But none of us slept late. We were so eager to pop out of bed in the morning and look at the beautiful scenery, and breathe in the invigorating air of the mountains, that most of us were up before sunrise. The professor had declared our first day in Austria as a day of rest and relaxation; and we needed it, after being cramped in Blimp’s gondola for most of three days. We planned to spend the morning sight-seeing in the village, and the afternoon drinking in the wonderful air and sunning ourselves on one of the hotel’s broad terraces, while the professor gave us a series of lectures. Father Schafer had invited us to see the church, and would be waiting there for us right after breakfast,

What a breakfast! There were huge strawberries floating in thick

cream, a hot wheat cereal with thick cream and melted butter on it, eggs addled in thick cream and butter, wonderful hard wheat rolls with ice cold butter, pork sausages, and hot chocolate with a gob of thick whipped cream floating in the cup.

“Ze cows like it here, so zey give lots of good thick cream and butter, and no backtalk,” the professor explained.

We had hardly unfolded our napkins when four men came from the hotel lobby and insisted on taking a table right next to the long table that had been assigned to us during our stay. Jeff jabbed me in the ribs and rolled his eye in their direction. I nodded back to him, because I, too, recognized one of them as the dark-haired man who had been hiding behind the drapery during the banquet the night before. We didn’t pay any attention to them; but they spoke to each other in very low tones, and it seemed to me they were trying to listen to whatever was said at our table. Jeff isn’t much of a joker, but he must have had the same impression, because he started singing: “I saw you last night and got that odd feeling,” and I couldn’t help laughing.

“It isn’t polite to sing at the table,” said Freddy Muldoon. “You might curdle the cream.”

Right after breakfast we started out for the church, and Father Schafer met us in the churchyard. What a surprise awaited us! What we thought was a simple little village church, turned out to be practically a cathedral. I know it’s the biggest church *I’ve* ever been in. From the air it had looked so tiny; but when Father Schafer pushed open the huge twenty-foot doors—each of which formed half of a pointed Gothic archway—we all just stood on the threshold and gasped. The vaulted ceiling looked as though it were five stories high, and the sun pouring through the four tall, stained-glass windows back of the altar seemed to form a golden stairway, leading from the center of the aisle, right up to the heavens. It was so beautiful you didn’t want to move or breathe, for fear it might go away.

Father Schafer looked at our faces and smiled. “That is why I asked you to come early,” he said, gently. “It is so beautiful at this time in the morning. I sometimes come here and just stand in the doorway for a whole hour...just looking at it. Somehow, it makes my

own troubles seem so small that they don't bother me anymore."

"What kind of troubles could you have in a place like this?" Dinky Poore asked, gazing about him in wonderment. "This must be what Heaven is like."

"We *are* a little closer to Heaven, you know," said Father Schafer, with a wink to the rest of us. "We are the highest church in Austria, I guess. We are above thirteen hundred meters here.—That would be how high in your country?"

All eyes turned toward Henry Mulligan, and without even knitting his eyebrows he said: "That would be more than four thousand feet."

We then walked through the church with Father Schafer. It was cool, and still, and peaceful; and we just automatically spoke in hushed tones. Even Angelina seemed overwhelmed by it all, and when she said "WOW", she said it very softly. Father Schafer was particularly proud of the beautifully-carved wooden screen directly behind the altar, which he said was more than five hundred years old. And beside it, resting in a little glass shrine on a jeweled base, was the holy relic...the tiny flask of sacred blood that Briccius had brought with him from Constantinople. We all stood there, looking at it, and nobody seemed to know what to say...except Freddy Muldoon.

"That sure ain't enough for a blood bank, is it?" he whispered to Dinky.

Dinky just sniffled and shook his head, and Father Schafer led us out into the churchyard again, where we wandered among the many, many headstones marking the graves of people who had lost their lives on the glacier, or on the slopes of the Gross Glockner.

"The glacier can be very, very dangerous," said Father Schafer. "You have to be very careful! Ten or twelve people a year lose their lives there...Mostly in snowstorms, when they lose their way, or fall into a crevasse. Even in summertime, a snowstorm can come up very suddenly, and you can find yourself trapped on the glacier for many hours...maybe even all day and night."

On this pleasant note, we said good-bye to Father Schafer and went back to the hotel, where one of the guides took us on a tour of the rest of the village.

Early in the afternoon we stretched out in lounge chairs on one of the open verandah's of the hotel, and let the sun bake us while the

professor explained the schedule we would be following and pointed out most of the areas we would be working in. The view from the verandah was magnificent. You could see the peaks of the Gross Glockner, the mouth of the glacier, and a good part of the gorge...all the way down to the valley to the south where the Moll River looked like a thin ribbon of silver lying on a green carpet. Nearly all of the area we would be working in was stretched out before us, except for the surface of the great glacier itself.

“Zis makes ze ideal classroom,” said the professor, “You don’t need no stupid maps or charts, and you don’t got to push no buttons to put ze next picture on ze screen.—Now, you look down zere.....”

And the professor began telling us about how the glacier had once extended all the way down the gorge and far out into the valley below us, farther than our eyes could see. He told us we would be examining many parts of the gorge for evidence of glacial action, and making photographs and even plaster casts of unusual rock formations, and gathering rock samples for dating. He hoped to gather enough data to make a complete history of the movements of the glacier from the beginnings of the Ice Age, right up to the present. But we would spend at least the first two weeks just studying and measuring the glacier’s movements at its present location up on the slopes of the mountain.

While he was jabbering away, and waving his pointer all over the place, a man came out onto the porch and flopped into one of the lounge chairs near us with a magazine. It was the dark-haired man, again, and Jeff and I exchanged glances. As the professor droned on, we noticed the man becoming drowsy, and finally he put the magazine over his face and folded his hands over his stomach. Jeff kept looking at him from time-to-time, and finally his curiosity got the better of him. In a very soft voice he said:

“Look out, professor! There’s a big snake coming up over the railing, there!”

The man in the lounge chair came up out of it in a flash, with the rolled-up magazine clutched in one hand. Everyone looked startled, and the girls jumped up on their chairs, but nobody could see any snake. Jeff and I were just sitting there, looking as straight-faced as we could.

“What snake? Where?” said the professor, holding his pointer poised in the air...about ten feet from where he had been standing.

“I’m sorry, professor,” said Jeff. “I guess it was just the shadow of your pointer.—But it sure looked like a snake for a minute.”

“Well, you just get your eyes examined, Mr. Smarty Crocker. For your private information, zere are no snakes zis high up in ze mountains!”

“How come you jumped, then?” asked Freddy Muldoon, rubbing his chubby nose.

“Well, Mr. Freddy,” said the professor. “You ask a smart question: you get a smart answer.—Zere just might be an extra long one zat somehow got his head up here from ‘way down ze valley!...So, zere!”

Meanwhile, the dark-haired man was all red in the face, and looked a little annoyed. He started punching the padding of the lounge chair while he mumbled to himself and Jeff and I winked at each other.

“Zat is enough for today,” said the professor, rapping his pointer on the railing. “You are all excused...including zat snake.” Then he looked at the man in the lounge chair and fitted his monocle to his eye. “And who is zis? We have a new student?—Excuse me, but I do not remember your name!”

The man got up out of the chair, looking a little flustered, and extended his hand.

“Excuse me, Professor. I didn’t mean to intrude.—I’m not a student. I’m just a guest at the hotel, here,” he said, with a sort of Cockney accent. “Name’s Stunkard! Rollo Stunkard! Pleased to make your acquaintance.”

“And what are you doing here, Mr. Stunkard?” the professor asked, looking downward at him through his monocle, as though he didn’t belong in the same country.

“Just relaxing, Professor. Just relaxing.” Then he fumbled in his wallet and drew out a business card. “I’m a senior partner in Smellow, Stunkard, Rank and Pugh.—We’re solicitors in London, you know.”

“No, I didn’t know it,” said the professor.

The man smiled. "Believe we saw you at breakfast this morning. They've given us tables right next to each other, you know."

"Is zat so?" said the professor.

"Yes! I'm here with my three partners.—We're on a sort of Executive Retreat, you know."

The professor drew back a step, and the monocle dropped from his eye.

"Are sings really zat bad in ze law business?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" Mr. Stunkard laughed openly. "No! That's just a term we use in the business world, you know. When we want to get away from all the hurly-burly, and think things over quietly...and maybe make important decisions...we just go to some quiet, out-of-the-way place...and we call it a Retreat."

"Just what do you do on a retreat, Mr. Stunkard?" Dinky asked, gazing wide-eyed at him.

"Oh...it's really quite informal, you know...there are no set rules. We usually have long discussions with a consultant, who's supposed to know everything, and everybody brings out their complaints about the business. It's really quite stimulating, you know...because everybody gets a chance to be perfectly candid and honest.—And then each man meets. privately with the consultant, too...and he gets a chance to tell him exactly what he thinks about the business and about the other executives, you know. And it's really quite good. You get a chance to get a lot off your chest, you know. And, as I say, it's quite informal.—The only rule is that everyone must tell the absolute truth!"

"Well, why don't you just tell the truth all the time...then you wouldn't have to retreat," said Dinky.

"Ho, ho, ho! That is very good, young man!" laughed Mr. Stunkard. "That is very good, indeed. You are a funny boy!—But, I'm afraid that wouldn't work out very well in the business world...Especially not in the legal profession, you know."

Freddy was staring at the card Mr. Stunkard had handed the professor.

"If all four of you guys are here, who's running the store?" he asked.

Mr. Stunkard laughed again. “Oh, we have a good many junior clerks, you know...and also several young steno’s...and they see that things run smoothly while we’re away.”

“Where’s your consultant?” Homer Snodgrass asked him. “I only saw four of you at breakfast.”

“Oh, him?...Well...you see.....” Mr. Stunkard coughed twice, and had a little trouble clearing his throat. “He’ll be along a little later. We usually rest up some before these Retreats, you know.—As a matter of fact, we’re not certain he’ll be here, at all...We don’t always have him, you know...Actually, we’re waiting to hear from him now.”

Then Mr. Stunkard shook hands with us all, and said he’d been very pleased to meet us, and he disappeared into the hotel.

“How do you spell ‘solicitor’?” asked Freddy.

“That’s easy!” said Homer. “S-o-l-i-c-i-t-o-r.”

“Well, it can’t be all that easy,” said Freddy. “These dummies have it spelled with an ‘e’ on this card.” And he held the card under Homer’s nose.

“I smell something funny!” Jeff said to me, very quietly.

“It couldn’t be Mr. Stunkard, could it?” I half whispered.

Jeff shrugged. “Maybe it’s Mr. Smellow!”

And we all went into the hotel, because somebody was ringing a cow bell, and we’d already been told that meant afternoon tea and snacks.

Yankee Go Home?

The next morning, when we came down to breakfast, Mr. Stunkard and his partners were already at their table. Mr. Stunkard gave us a cheery greeting and introduced the others to us. Mr. Smellow was a rather ponderous fat man with a bald head and big, baggy pouches under his light blue eyes. His hands were extraordinarily small for such a big man, and when he shook hands with you it was like sticking your ringers into a pudding.

Mr. Rank turned out to be the smallest one of the group. He had a very slender build and a dark complexion, and his black hair was slicked down flat on his head. But he had a big, bushy, black moustache and wore heavy horn-rimmed glasses, which made him look a little top-heavy. By contrast, Mr. Pugh had an almost deathly-white pallor and very thin, gray hair, and he wore very small glasses with almost-invisible metal frames. He was so polite he reminded me of Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield* and when he shook hands with everyone he looked down at the floor and scraped his feet backwards as he bent from the waist. You got the feeling that he was ashamed to be wherever he was.

During breakfast, Mr. Stunkard kept pumping the professor with questions about the expedition; wanting to know all about what kind of measurements we were going to make, and how we would make them, and what areas we would be working in. You'd have thought he wanted to join the expedition, but he explained that he always tried to talk about what the other fellow was interested in when he first met people. He figured it was more polite.

"That means we should be talking about what *you're* interested in," Henry Mulligan observed. "Just what are you interested in, Mr.

Stunkard?”

Mr. Stunkard laughed. “Oh, I’m interested in a great many things,” he said. “But the only thing I really know anything about is the law.—Oh, by the way, Professor...I once saw an interesting movie about a woman who lost her husband on a glacier...I think it was on the Matterhorn...and she got some bloke in England to predict how long it would take for his body to be pushed down to the mouth of the glacier, where she could recover it.—Is that really possible? Can you really calculate how long it takes a glacier to push something downhill like that?”

“Who says ze glacier moves downhill?” said the professor.

“Well...I don’t know, Professor...I thought they *always* moved downhill...You know...Gravity, and all that sort of thing, you know.....”

“Zat is stupid!” said the professor. “If ze glacier always moves downhill, how come it used to be down in ze valley and now it’s way up on ze top of ze mountain?—How about zat, Mr. Smarty Stunkard?”

“I hadn’t thought about that,” said Mr. Stunkard, looking genuinely puzzled.

“You don’t got to believe everyting you hear, you know,” said the professor. “Just because some jellybrain says somesing is so...Zat don’t never mean it *is* so!...Maybe it *ain’t* so...Maybe ze jellybrain is a real lunkhead—like some of my stupid colleagues! You got to use your own brains, you know...if you got some.”

“I see what you mean,” said Mr. Stunkard.

“I’m afraid he’s got you there,” said Mr. Smellow.

“Hear! Hear!” said Mr. Rank.

“Amen!” said Pugh.

After breakfast we all loaded into the little bus that was to take us up to the glacier for our first day of work. Already seated in it, and waiting for us, were two Austrian mountain guides with hundreds of yards of rope, and ice axes, and pulleys, and snowshoes, and all sorts of other paraphernalia we would need. The professor introduced them. Sepp Holtzmueller was a wiry little man with a huge handlebar moustache and deeply-tanned skin that looked a bit like wrinkled

leather. He was one of those people who could smile with his eyes, and for this reason he never had to move his lips, which remained clenched around the stum of the long, crooked Tirolean pipe that was always in his mouth. He had been taking mountain climbing parties up the Glockner peaks for forty years, the professor explained, and was the acknowledged leader of all the mountain guides in the area.

“Sepp has never lost a customer,” said the professor. “Zat is why I have engaged him.”

“I wish he hadn’t said that,” Mortimer whispered in my ear. “The law of averages is bound to catch up with him.”

His partner, Siegfried Heinz, was a stocky young man with kinky blond hair, ruddy red cheeks, and light blue eyes that danced around and twinkled all the time. He was still serving his apprenticeship, but would soon become a fully-accredited mountain guide, he told us proudly. I noticed that both he and Sepp wore the brush of the rehbuk in their hatbands, which meant they were also accomplished hunters.

Up the Glockner Strasse we went again, talking the dizzying curves more slowly this time while the professor told us what each of us would be doing for the next few days.

“The first thing I wanna’ do is look for that big diamond,” said Dinky.

“That’s silly,” said Homer. “That glacier is six miles long! How you gonna’ find a diamond on it. It’s like looking for a needle in a haystack.”

“Zat is a stupid statement, Mr. Snodgrass,” said the professor. “Who would be stupid enough to look in a haystack for a needle?—In ze first place, who would be so stupid to put one zere? Needles belong in ze sewing room, not in ze barnyard.”

“I never thought of it like that,” said Homer. “It’s just something my mother always says.”

“Now, if you want to look in a haystack for a sow’s ear, zat would make more sense. Zat is somesing zat belongs in a barnyard.”

“I thought a sow’s ear was something you couldn’t make a silk purse out of?” said Angela.

“Zat is exactly ze point, Number One,” said the professor. “You make a silk purse wiz a needle, naturally.—I don’t know why people

can't keep zese sings straight!"

"I'd just as soon forget it," said Homer.

Needle in a haystack, or not, I think most of us secretly agreed with Dinky. We couldn't get the burgermeister's story out of our minds; and the idea of finding what might possibly be the world's largest diamond was certainly in everybody's thoughts, to some degree. And I think the only reason Homer threw cold water on Dinky's enthusiasm was because—like the rest of us—he was hoping everyone else would forget the story, and he would be the one to find the diamond.

This time we climbed right to the end of the Glockner Strasse, where a beautiful little Alpine inn called the Franz Josef's Hutte sat perched at the very edge of the glacier. From there, at an altitude of more than eight thousand feet, you could walk right out onto the glistening sheet of ice. And straight across the glacier, but many miles from us, rose the two peaks of the Gross Glockner and the Klein Glockner...more than twelve thousand feet high, and looking as though you could reach right out and touch them, they stood out so clearly against the frosty deep-blue sky.

"Man! Look at that!" gasped Mortimer. "Just like a picture postcard.—Hey, maybe the professor would let us run over and climb those peaks before we get started."

"I'm with you," said Homer. "I'll bet the view's great from up there.—I bet you could see Hoboken, New Jersey."

"Nein! Nein!" Sepp Holtzmueller chuckled, without even opening his teeth. "Zat is a good six-hour climb. It looks close, I know, but you muss get up very early in ze morning to do it. And when you get zere, you haf to turn right around and come back before it gets too dark."

"Maybe we can do it on our day off," said Freddy.

"Who said anysing about a day off," the professor interrupted. "Come! We get to work now."

The professor explained that we would probably work in this area for about a week, eating lunch at the Franz Josef's Hutte and returning to the hotel in Heiligenblut at night...unless it was too foggy to get back down the Glockner Strasse. The first thing we would do was to set out iron stakes at various points on the upper

half of the glacier, with little red, yellow, and blue numbered flags on them. The precise location of each stake would be established with a surveyor's transit; and then we would come back every few days during the month, set the transits up in the same location, and measure how far each part of the glacier had moved by sighting on the iron stakes. The professor had brought two transits along, and he divided us up into two teams, each with about a mile-and-a-half of the glacier to cover. Each team had a map of the glacier with the points marked where the stakes were to be located; and we also had walkie-talkie radios to communicate with each other, so we wouldn't have to shout and give arm signals the way most surveyors do.

"You got to be careful about shouting up here in ze mountains," said the professor. "You might start an avalanche, or crack open a great big crevasse right where you don't want it!"

There were some other things to worry about, too. Everybody had to put on hobnailed boots, and wear dark goggles to avoid snow-blindness, and carry a long alpenstock with a spike in the end of it to help get across slippery places. Those who were to go out on the glacier itself, with the surveyor rods and the iron stakes, also had to carry along a pair of snowshoes because the glacier wasn't all ice, by any means. There were large patches of freshly-fallen snow at many places, and at others there were pools of water where ice or snow had melted in the heat of the sun.

Henry and the professor set up one of the transits at a good vantage point near the Franz Josef's Hutte, and Angelina and Homer prepared to go out on the surface of the glacier with Siegfried to guide them. Mortimer had the job of photographer for that group, to take pictures of how all the stakes were initially placed and precisely how the transit was placed at each location along the rim of the glacier. The rest of us had to hike up a rocky, precipitous trail to the northern end of the glacier with Sepp Holtzmueller.

Jeff and I had the job of setting up the transit and determining by survey the actual points on the surface of the ice where the professor wanted the stakes placed. Sepp led Dinky, Freddy and Angela out onto the surface of the great river of ice in single file. They were all roped together, and each carried a few of the stakes lashed to the snowshoes they carried on their backs. We noticed how carefully

Sepp moved, probing each patch of snow he came to with his long alpenstock before leading the group over it. He had explained to us how a heavy snowfall could form a roof right over a crevasse; and sometimes it would hold your weight, and sometimes it wouldn't

Jeff and I set up the transit and drove steel pegs into the rock to mark the point where each foot of the tripod rested, so we would know exactly where to set it up for taking future readings. Jeff leveled the platform carefully and took readings to two reference points marked on our map, so we could calculate our exact position and elevation.

"I noticed the professor didn't really know how to work one of these things, he said. "I saw him fumbling around with it and messing up everything Henry was doing."

"Yeah! I heard him tell Henry he always left that kind of work to the natives," I snickered. "He's a great character."

"Speaking of characters, do you think Mr. Stunkard really saw that movie about the man whose wife waited forty-two years for his body to come out of the glacier?"

"No!" I said. "I betcha' he just heard Homer and Mortimer talking about it that night at the banquet."

"Yeah! And I don't think he knows we saw him standing behind that drapery."

"He's sure curious. I wonder why he's so interested?"

"I don't know," said Jeff. "But I had the feeling he was trying to pump something out of the professor."

We went on working, directing the group out on the ice to different points on the glacier, where Freddy would hold up the surveying rod and move it around until it was just where Jeff wanted it. Sometimes this wasn't possible, because there would be a crevasse, or a moulin, or something else unpleasant, right where Jeff wanted the rod placed; and old Sepp would jump up and down and wave his arms and shout "Bergschrund! Bergschrund!" and a string of other German words over the radio. Then we'd have to compromise on another location and mark it on the map the professor had given us. Once we got the rod placed properly, Freddy would move the red marker up the rod to the point Jeff wanted it, and give us the reading in feet. Then Jeff would measure the angle to the base

of the rod; and I'd calculate the distance from us to the rod, and also note down the elevation of each place a stake was driven into the ice, and the azimuth to it.

It was pretty absorbing work, and we held our breath every time the group out on the glacier had to move around, for fear they might just suddenly drop out of sight in some yawning chasm. Sometimes they got into depressions in the ice, where Freddy couldn't push the red marker far enough up the rod, and Angela would have to take over and move it up to where Jeff could see it through the scope. But she always had to give the rod back to Freddy, because he'd been appointed rod man, and he meant to hold onto the job. It was while we were waiting for one of these arguments to be settled that we became aware of somebody standing behind us.

"Vat are zose fools doing out zere?" said a voice with a thick Austrian accent. "Don't zey know zat is extremely dangerous?"

Jeff and I both jumped and spun around, and there, standing on the trail slightly above us was a grizzled old character with a lot stringy gray hair and a floppy hat that was half-way down over his ears. He had a big, bushy moustache and beard, and both of them were stained brown in places where the stem of his Tirolean pipe jutted from his mouth and drooped down over his chin.

"Oh, you don't have to worry, sir!" Jeff assured him, after he had caught his breath. "They have a good mountain guide with them. They'll be alright."

The old character snorted in contempt. "Ach! Bergsteiger? Zere are no good ones here! Zey are always losing people. Zey tell you zey are very good, but zey are not. Zey take foolish chances."

"But we have Mr. Holtzmueller with us," I said.

The old character snorted again. "Ach, Herr Holtzmueller? He is ze worst of ze lot. He is too old for mountain climbing, but he won't stop...what you say?...call it kvits?—No, no! He is...what you say?...too soft in ze noodle. He is very dangerous. Just last month four people lost zere lives wiz him....right over zere!" And the old man waved his stick toward some distant point across the glacier. Then he staggered on down the path we had come by, shaking his head and muttering, "You take my advice! Get zose people off ze glacier. Zat is no place for auslanders."

Jeff and I looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders.

"I wonder who he is?" I said.

"Probably some local maniac who doesn't like tourists," said Jeff. "Boy! He was wild, wasn't he?"

"Yeah! I hope we don't meet any more like him."

For the next three days we worked our way on down the length of the glacier, setting out the stakes and recording their locations. In the evenings, Mortimer and I would develop and print all the pictures he and Angela had taken, and everybody else would sit around a big table in the hotel lobby sorting and classifying the photographs and recording the data on the locations of the iron stakes in the professor's notebooks. And Messrs. Smellow, Stunkard, Rank and Pugh were always sitting at a nearby table, playing bridge.

One evening, after all the cataloguing had been done, we fell to discussing the big diamond again, and the professor got so bored he went to bed. But to the rest of us, there was nothing boring about the legend of the fabulous *rock* from the Kimberley mines, and we were all speculating about whether it could be found, and whether the person who found it would really own it, and how much it might be worth, and stuff like that.

"What'll *you* do if you find it, Angie?" said Freddy Muldoon.

"I haven't the Vegas notion, Freddy!—And see if you can top that!" said Angelina, slapping him on the back.

But Freddy just cut loose with one of his louder burps.

"What was that?"

"I think he's Belgian," said Mortimer. And even the bridge players folded their cards and looked at him as if he smelled bad.

"Knock it off," said Angela. "I didn't bring my notebook down with me, so I can't keep score."

"If I find it, I'm gonna' buy a yacht, and my own private airplane, and maybe a catcher's mitt, too," said Homer. "I betcha' I might even be rich enough to become president."

"Don't be silly," sneered Mortimer. "Can you imagine anybody saying, 'Good morning, President Snodgrass', without laughing right in your face?"

"Yeah!" said Freddy Muldoon, jumping right up on the table and

holding himself stiffly at attention. "Ladies and Gentlemen...the President of the United States...HOMER SNODGRASS!" And everybody broke up in gales of laughter.

"Huh-huh-ha-ha-ha-ho-ho-ho-ho-ha-ha!" roared Mr. Smellow from the other table. "I'll have to admit that's pretty funny! Almost as funny as *President Stunkard*!...Yuk-yuk-yuk-yuk!" And he threw his head back and rolled in his chair, with the laughter shaking his great frame up and down.

"What's so funny about that?" Mr. Stunkard inquired, looking a little annoyed. "It's not near so funny as *President Smellow*, you fat bloke!"

"Eeh-yeek-eeh-yeek-eeh-yeek-yeek-yeek!" laughed Mr. Rank.

"Tee-hee! Tee-hee-hee!" laughed Pugh.

Homer looked pretty glum. "I guess it *is* pretty funny," he admitted. "But it's my name, and I'm stuck with it."

"You don't have to be ashamed, young fellow," said Mr. Smellow. "Snodgrass is a perfectly good Scottish name. A lot of people around Glasgow are named Snodgrass. It just means you come from a smooth, grassy place, according to the experts."

"You mean, like a cemetery, maybe?" said Mortimer.

"No, no!" Mr. Smellow laughed. "It's a name that was given to a lot of people who came from the Scottish moors, that's all."

"You seem to know a lot about names," said Angela.

"You might say they're a hobby of mine," said Mr. Smellow with a chuckle, and a wink at Mr. Stunkard.

"I was hoping the diamond might be named after me if I found it," Homer mused. "But, I guess the Snodgrass Diamond wouldn't sound so good, either. Would it?"

And everybody burst out laughing again.

"What about the Muldoon Diamond?" cried Freddy, popping up again with his chest stuck out and his thumbs under his armpits.

"No, no!" said Angela. "Diamonds have romantic names, like The Great Mogul, or The Star Of The East, or The Hope Diamond! You know! Something with a lot of class, and a lot of pizzaz."

"What about the *Poore* Diamond?" Dinky inquired.

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed Mr. Smellow again. "The Poore Diamond!

Oh, that's rich, I say!" And his great belly jumped up and down again as he laughed.

"What on earth are you young people talking about?" said Mr. Stunkard. "Don't tell me you believe that silly legend about a big diamond being lost up on the glacier?—You don't seriously believe there is such a thing, do you?"

"Everybody around here seems to believe it," said Jeff. "Besides, Charlie and I saw that little shrine up there this afternoon, with Adolf Heist's name on it, and the year 1873."

"Oh, the shrine is there, alright," said Mr. Stunkard. "But who knows *why* it's there, or who Adolf Heist was?—There isn't anybody around here who was alive in 1873. I tell you, it's just a legend somebody invented to attract tourists. That's what these people live on, you know."

We all glanced at each other, and everybody in our group looked a little crestfallen.

"What a wet blanket that guy is!" Freddy Muldoon whispered to Dinky Poore.

Then Henry Mulligan cleared his throat and everybody looked at him, as everybody always does whenever Henry is about to say something.

"Were you alive in 1873, Mr. Stunkard?" he asked very politely.

"Of course I wasn't," said Mr. Stunkard, a little testily. "How old do you think I am?"

"Don't answer that!" bellowed Mr. Smellow, with another one of his belly-rumbler laughs. "That's privileged information."

But Henry just smiled and nodded. "Then, if you weren't alive in 1873, you couldn't have been here in Heiligenblut that year, could you, Mr. Stunkard?"

"Of course, I wasn't. But I don't see what you're getting at."

"And, if you weren't here that year, you couldn't possibly know that the legend *isn't* true, could you?"

Mr. Stunkard got a little red in the face and stammered a bit. "Well...obviously I *don't* know that it isn't true. I just don't believe it, that's all."

"Well, that's a little different," said Henry. "You see...on the basis

of pure logic...if you can argue that the legend is *not* true because there is nobody alive who knows for certain about it, then you can also argue that the legend *is* true because there is nobody alive who can prove that it isn't.—Isn't that right?"

"You know, I believe he's got you there," said Mr. Smellow. "I seem to remember something about that from my college days."

"So, that means the odds are fifty-fifty," Henry continued, "and that" s good enough odds to gamble on."

Mr. Stunkard got even redder in the face, but the rest of us clapped our hands and slapped Henry on the back, and shouted "Hear! Hear!" and all of that. not just because we thought Henry was right—as he usually is—but because we really *wanted* to believe the story was true, and that somehow we might find the diamond.

"Well, have it your own way!" Mr. Stunkard grunted, with a shrug of his shoulders. "But I'd advise you not to go running around on that glacier, looking for something you don't know is there. That's a dangerous place, you know. Many people lose their lives on that fool piece of ice every year.—It's no place for a treasure hunt."

"Not even for the biggest diamond in the world?" asked Freddy, with his eyes the size of overcoat buttons.

"Oh, pooh!" said Mr. Stunkard. "It's not likely the biggest diamond in the world."

"You just said there was no diamond up there, " said Freddy. "How come you know how big it is?"

Everybody laughed a gain, and Mr. Smellow's belly jumped up and down.

"Well, I'm just going on what I've been told," said Mr. Stunkard. "The legend says it was the size of an apple. But who knows how big an apple? —The biggest diamond ever found was the Cullinan Diamond. It weighed nearly a pound-and-a-half. And that makes a fair-sized apple!"

"So what?" said Freddy.

"So it's bloody unlikely anyone will ever find one any bigger," said Mr. Stunkard, "because that diamond was three times as big as any that had ever been found in all the thousands of years people have been looking for diamonds!"

“You seem to know a lot about diamonds,” said Angela.

“You might say they’re a hobby of mine,” said Mr. Stunkard, with a wink at Mr. Smellow.

Mr. Stunkard’s pessimism didn’t bother us too much, because we soon got all wrapped up in the next phase of the professor’s research into the geological history of the glacier, and forgot all about the diamond. Now that all the stakes had been put in place, we would spend our time determining the depth of the glacier at various points, by making deep borings in the ice, and calculating the ages of the many layers of ice laid down over the years, by making studies of the stratification exposed by the deeper crevasses. The idea of going down into these frigid chasms to take color photographs and chip ice samples from the walls sounded a bit exciting, to say the least.

“I don’t remember the professor mentioning this when he signed us up,” said Mortimer, when the professor started explaining how we would explore two or three prominent crevasses.

“Now, wiz zese crevasses you got to be careful,” the professor was saying, as we sat out on the verandah again for one of his chalk talks. “Zey can swallow you up like an ant, and zey can pop right open in a minute like a ripe watermelon!” Then he explained how crevasses crack open with a loud sound like a cannon shot if the surface of the glacier bends downward as it passes over any sudden drop in the rock bed beneath it. “If you fall into one wizout a rope, you got a small problem,” he said. “Of course, if you are an ant, and you fall into a crack in a watermelon, you don’t got to worry.

You can eat your way out.—But if you fall into a crevasse...by golly you got to like chewing cracked ice or you gonna’ freeze down zere! I should hope to tell you!’

Dinky Poore’s eyes had popped open, too. “Can a crevasse close up again and trap you while you’re down in it, Professor?”

“Zat is a good question, Dinky. It shows you are sinking,” said the professor. “You are sinking bad soughts, but at least you are sinking.—Ze fact is, many crevasses do close up again. But it is a slow process, so we got plenty of time to get you out. You see, for a crevasse to close up, ze glacier has to be moving uphill, so ze surface bends in ze ozer direction. Zat takes a long time. You understand,

Dinky?”

Dinky nodded his head anyway, and so did the rest of us.

The next few days were full of excitement, and a lot of hard work. The professor may not have known how to operate a surveyor's transit, but he had a lot of ingenious ideas about how to get the information he wanted about the physical character of the glacier. To do the boring through the ice, which he figured might be a hundred and fifty feet thick in some places, he had a drilling rig mounted on a huge sled that would distribute its weight over a wide area. And to get it out on the glacier, the professor had dreamed up a winching system that was as much fun to operate as anything you'll find in an amusement park. The sled had two winches on it that operated off the diesel engine for the drill rig. One winch was for moving the sled itself, and the other was for moving supplies and tools back and forth across the ice...including us.

The professor sent Sepp and Siegfried across the glacier to drive large iron stakes into the bedrock for securing the winching cables. They took a block and pulley with them and a line for winching the cables across the ice. One cable was made fast to a stake and run through the larger winch on the sled to another stake on the near side of the glacier. This made it possible for the sled to winch itself out onto the ice, or back again, with just one man on it to operate the engine. The other cable was smaller and was a continuous loop that ran through pulleys lashed to stakes on either side of the glacier, and was operated by the second winch. If we wanted to go out to wherever the sled was, we just grabbed hold of this cable and rode out on skis. And all the sections of drill pipe, and other things we needed, were sent out on a small sled hooked onto the cable with a clamp. We called the contraption Igor's Icemobile and it worked magnificently...except for one drawback. We found so many excuses for riding back and forth on the tow cable that we didn't get much work done the first day.

For several days we worked the drill rig back and forth across the width of the glacier at various places along its course, making at least one boring right in the center each time, and others between the center and the edges. We got to be pretty expert at operating the drill rig, and pretty fast at coupling on new sections of drill pipe as the bit

chewed its way deeper and deeper through the many layers of ice. Sometimes, when we'd hit what we thought was bedrock, and relayed the depth reading back to the professor, he'd scream and holler and kick the canvas chair around that he sat in all day, and shake his fist in the direction of the drill rig.

"You are fools! You are fools! You don't know nossing!" we would hear him hollering at Angela on the radio. Then Angela would call us and say that we must have hit a big boulder embedded in the glacier. "The professor says you're not deep enough," she'd say. "He says to move the sled about twenty feet and start a new boring. He says you're not deep enough."

One time when this happened we had already gone down more than a hundred feet, and it took us more than an hour to bring all the drill pipe back up the shaft and start a new hole. Mortimer Dalrymple just kept shaking his head all the time we were uncoupling pipe.

"There's something I don't understand about this operation," he finally said. "If.. the professor already knows how deep it should be right here, how come we have to drill all the way down there just to prove he's right."

"You just don't understand science," Jeff kidded him. "And you forgot what the professor told Dinky back at the university. With the Stratavarious Method, you make up your mind right away what the situation is, and then you look around for some facts to prove it. Remember?"

And it turned out the professor was right, after all. Because the new boring we made, just twenty feet away, took us down a hundred and fifty feet before we hit the real bedrock.

"You see, the professor wasn't so dumb after all," said Jeff. "Now we've hit some really solid rock."

Mortimer nodded his head. "It just goes to show you," he said. "In this geology business you just can't take too much for granite."

It was so hot out on the glacier in the middle of the day that we took our shirts off half the time and got a first class sunburn that soon turned to a deep tan. It seemed funny to be riding around on skis, naked to the waist. But it seemed even funnier when we'd take our dark glasses off at the end of the day and everybody looked like a hoot owl, with big white circles around the eyes. And scarcely a day

went by that Jeff didn't nudge me and point to some distant spot along the trail paralleling the glacier. There I'd see a lone figure, usually, peering at us through binoculars. Sometimes there would be two of them.

"Do you have the feeling we're being constantly watched?" said Mortimer one day, when Jeff had just called my attention to two characters perched on a rock high above us.

"I've had that feeling since the first night we got here," said Jeff.

Mortimer pointed to the two figures on the rock. "Maybe we should stare right back at them," he said. And he whipped out his own field glasses and focused in on the two.

"Mortimer, cut that out! It's not polite to stare at people," Jeff complained.

"Well, they're staring at us!"

"I know! But maybe they're just fascinated by the drill rig...You know how people will just sit and watch a construction job all day long."

"Hey! I think I've seen one of those characters before!"

"Let me see," I said. And I grabbed the binoculars from Mortimer. "Hey, Jeff! That guy on the left looks just like that old fuzzy-head that gave us the lecture the first day we were up here. You know...the one that said all the mountain guides were no good and called us *auslanders*, or something like that."

"That's him, alright," Jeff agreed, taking the glasses. "I wonder why he's so interested in what we're doing."

"Maybe he was just born nosy," I ventured.

"Yeah ! And that goes for his big-nosed friend, too," said Mortimer. But we really didn't have time to worry about it. That afternoon we were scheduled to make the first descent into a crevasse, and the professor had chosen a whopper for us. It looked like the Grand Canyon when you peeked down into it from the edge. It was probably forty feet across at its widest point, and easily a hundred feet deep. It was a scary thing to look at as we clung precariously to its edge, tied by ropes to the drill sled, but at the same time it was a breathtakingly beautiful sight. The deeper you looked, the deeper blue the ice became; and the variations in color and

composition of the many layers of the glacier, piled one on top of the other, gave not only a visual history of the formation of this part of the glacier, but also many clues as to weather conditions prevailing over the past hundred years or so. Our job would be to chip samples of ice from each of these layers, so that Professor Stratavarious could analyze them, and also to take color photographs at various depths.

“Now you’ll find out what a chicken feels like when you stick him in a deep freeze, Charlie,” said Mortimer, as we gazed into the icy blue depths. He wasn’t exactly joking, because he and I had been unanimously elected to be the guinea pigs in Operation Crevasse, after Jeff and Henry had figured out the best way to allocate the human resources we had available for the job. They did it very scientifically, too.

First, Henry drew up what he called a “matrix”. Actually, it was just a piece of graph paper with grid squares on it. Down the left hand margin he listed all the tasks that had to be performed in getting ice samples out of the crevasse by lowering two people down into it in sling seats. And across the top he listed all the skills needed to perform those tasks. You know...things like climbing ability, running ability, steady hand, cool head, and stuff like that.

“Schucks, Henry! Anybody’d have a cool head down in a place like that,” Mortimer had told him.

“Shut up!” Henry had answered—which isn’t like Henry—and went right on writing things like good eyesight, reasoning ability, emotional control, manual dexterity, and you name it.

Then, opposite each job in the left column he placed X’s in all the squares under the skills he figured were needed for that job, until he had the graph paper just peppered with X’s. Then he took another piece of graph paper and did the same blooming thing, except this time he had all our names listed in the left margin, and opposite them he put X’s under all the things he figured we were good at.

“Hey, Henry,” Freddy had complained. “I can climb just as good as Dinky. How come you ain’t got no X for me there?”

“Shut up!” Henry had said. “This is a confidential evaluation and you shouldn’t even be looking at it.”

“Oh, beans in your ears!” Freddy spouted. “Give me two X’s for good eyesight, then.”

Then Henry had superimposed the two pieces of graph paper and held them up to the light. He kept sliding the front piece up and down until he got a lot of X's to coincide in one row, and then he'd call off a name and a job and Jeff would write them down. He had a little trouble at first, because Jeff's name kept coming up and so did his own, so he finally crossed them both out. Anyway, the way it worked out, Freddy and Dinky would do all the errand running and coil up all the ropes after the operation was over, Homer would take all the notes on the operation and keep track of the tools and equipment, Angela and Angelina would maintain the radio contact with the professor at the edge of the glacier and Angela would make his tea so he wouldn't have to get up out of his deck chair, and Jeff and Henry would supervise the whole operation from the sled with Sepp and Siegfried operating the winches and the climbing tackle.

"That leaves Charlie and Mortimer to go down in the crevasse and get the ice samples," said Henry, scratching his hair with the nub end of his pencil.

"I had a feeling that would be the "scientific" answer to the problem," said Mortimer.

"Cripes, Henry! I could have figured all that out without all that mishmash of a matrix you dreamed up," I told him. "Anybody knows that Dinky and Freddy always run the errands, and Mortimer and I do the worst part of the job."

"Of course you could," Henry replied. "But that wouldn't be scientific. This way we know that everybody is doing the job he's best suited for."

"Seems to me it works out the same way," Mortimer sneered. "Okay, Charlie, let's go."

So, down in the crevasse we went. They lowered us over the side in sling seats, with cameras and ice axes and a bucket on a rope to put the samples in.

"Remind me to go to the library when we get home and find out what a matrix is supposed to be," said Mortimer, as we spun and dangled at the end of the ropes, trying to dig our hobnailed boots into the face of the wall of ice in order to get a toehold.

"Okay!" I said. "But what if we don't make it?"

"Well, I'd sure hate to end up at the mouth of this glacier a

hundred years from now and find out Henry didn't know what he was talking about."

Just then Henry's voice came over the walkie-talkie strapped to my shoulder. "We're going to lower you right to the bottom," he said. "Start taking samples at the lowest layer of ice, and work your way up. And don't forget to mark the depth of the layer on each sample."

"Roger!" I said.

"And give our regards to the Abominable Snowman while you're down there," Jeff chimed in.

"Roger!" I said. "If you think of any more jokes don't hesitate to send them down. We could use a last laugh."

"And stay away from that edge!" Mortimer shouted. "You might make a great big piece of Iceland on us, if you kick one loose."

"Oh, Brother! Wait'll I tell Angela what you just said," came the reply.

Knowing what depth we were at was automatic, due to Henry's foresight.

The ropes that let us down ran through pulley blocks that our seats were hooked to, and Jeff and Henry had marked every five feet of the ropes with numbered pieces of tape. When we hit the bottom of the crevasse, the pieces of tape nearest us read one hundred and ten feet. As we worked our way up, the ropes fed back through the pulleys, and all we had to do was look for the nearest piece of tape to make a pretty accurate calculation of the depth of the layer we were working on.

We also had a long pole with us so we could push away from the face of the icewall to get good pictures of the stratification of the ice at each level; and Mortimer's camera had a special microscopic lens attached to it that enabled him to get detailed pictures of the granular structure of the ice in every layer. When we chipped out samples with our ice axes, we put them in little plastic bags and marked the depth of the layer on the bag with a grease pencil. When Jeff and Henry pulled the sample bucket up to the surface, either Freddy or Dinky would dump the bags into another bucket and ski back on the tow cable to where the professor was sitting in his canvas chair. The professor would examine each sample briefly, under his microscope, measure and weigh it, and then stick it back in its bag and store it in

an ice chest beside his chair. The whole operation worked so smoothly that we wondered why Henry had to make up his fancy matrix to figure out who should do what. But, then maybe that was the reason everything worked.

When we wanted to move a little farther up the face of the crevasse, we would just call on the radio and Sepp and Siegfried would cut in the winch and ease us up a few feet until we hollered “Stop!”. Everything was going so well that Mortimer and I found plenty of time to joke back and forth as we worked, and Mortimer even started singing a few songs that popped into his mind—like *Walking In A Winter Wonderland*, and *I’m Dreaming Of A White Crevasse*, and his old favorite *Freeze A Jolly Good Fellow*. We both knew that the guys up on the surface were stripped to the waist and enjoying the sun, but down where we were it was colder than a snowman’s grave and we had to keep mittens on as we worked to keep our hands from freezing. Still, our spirits were soaring because we were succeeding in doing something that took a little courage, and we knew the others would envy us for it when we got back up.

It was while Mortimer was singing one of his songs at the top of his voice that Jeff shouted to us over the radio; “Hey, you guys! Watch out for that *Rapture Of The Deep*! Don’t get overconfident down there.”

“Oh, rapture, blapture!” Mortimer shouted back. “Somebody must have rapture skull with a blunt instrument! We’re doing fine down here.”

It was then that we heard the sound. It was like the snap of a dead branch breaking as somebody stepped on it. Only it was louder.

“What was that?” I cried. “Did the ice crack somewhere?”

“I don’t know,” Mortimer answered. “I heard it, too.”

Then we heard a faint rumbling sound that seemed to be coming closer and getting louder all the time. Pretty soon we could almost feel the glacier trembling, and the ropes we were suspended from bounced up and down a little.

“What’s going on up there?” I hollered into the radio. “What’s that noise?”

For a moment there was no answer. Then Sepp Holtzmueller’s voice came booming over the walkie-talkie: “*Schneesturz*!

Schneesturz! Stay close to ze wall! Stick your axe in ze wall! Stay close!”

“What’s he saying? What’s he saying?” I shouted at Mortimer. But Mortimer stared blankly back at me.

Then I could hear Jeff’s voice: “It’s an avalanche! An avalanche! Cling to the wall, Charlie! Cling to the wall! It may miss you!”

And that was the last we heard...Except that the rumbling sound grew louder and louder, and seemed to come closer, and the glacier seemed to be throbbing up and down as though an earthquake had hit it...and suddenly the sunlight disappeared and it was almost dark and snow came cascading down all around us. And a rush of air like a shock wave pushed us to the wall.

We both swung our ice axes at the wall of the crevasse and pulled ourselves close up against it. The glare ice was cold against my face as I clung to it, and out of the corner of my eye I seemed to see a huge, dark object plummet past me and disappear into the snow that had already piled up beneath our feet.

Then everything was quiet, and the rumbling and trembling had stopped. And I pulled my face away from the ice and looked for Mortimer, but it was too dark to see.

“Are you okay, Mortimer?” I called out.

“Yeah! I’m alright!” he said. “I’m right over here.”

And I could feel fingers plucking at the sleeve of my parka.

“I guess we’re lucky,” he said. “We’ve got air to breathe.”

“Yeah! I wonder how long it’ll last.—I thought I saw something big fall down between us. Did you see it?”

“Naw! You got a match, or a flashlight?”

“Heck, no! That’s the last thing I thought we’d need.”

“Wait a minute. Let me pop off a flash bulb.”

Mortimer fumbled around for a few seconds, and then said: “Get ready to take a good look. I put a flash cube in the camera. I’ll flash it twice, as fast as I can.”

“Aim it up, so it doesn’t blind us.”

I held my eyes wide open and two bright flashes suddenly illuminated the area around us. We were in a small cavern formed by an overhang in the ice wall above us. And just a few feet beneath us

was fluffy white snow that seemed to be moving.

“Hey! I think I saw a rope!” I cried. And I groped blindly for it in the darkness.

“I saw it, too!” said Mortimer. “Try and pull it up! There may be somebody at the end of it.”

I felt Mortimer’s hands meet with mine as we found the rope. With all our might we tugged upward on it...and we made some progress, but whatever was at the end of it was buried deep in the snow beneath us and was heavy.

“Grab hold of my legs and hold me down in the seat so I can get some leverage,” Mortimer gasped.

I dug the spikes of my shoes into the icewall and locked my arms around Mortimer’s legs while he leaned over as far as he could and gave a mighty pull on the rope. Something broke loose and Mortimer did a half-gainer over my back, but our ropes held fast. Below us, in the darkness, we could hear somebody sputtering and gasping for breath.

“Holy Mackerel! What’s that?” Mortimer cried. And he fumbled around for his camera. “Take a good look, Charlie! I’ll pop off two more flashes.”

I peered down into the darkness as Mortimer aimed the camera upward and snapped the shutter release twice. I could see the head and shoulders of somebody floundering around in the snow bank beneath us.

“It’s one of the girls! It must be Angelina!”

We called to her, and pulled up on the rope again, and by stretching as far as I could I was able to get a hand under her armpit. Mortimer leaned over and felt his way down my arm and grabbed her other armpit. With a mighty heave, we pulled her loose from the snow and raised her to where we could hold her close between us. She sputtered and spit and coughed, and then said:

“Where am I?”

“You’ re under about fifty feet of snow, as far as we know, and right now I don’t know how we’re gonna’ get out of here!” said Mortimer. “I think we all better pray.”

“You got any other good news, Dad?” she coughed. And the

Angelina began to cry, as we rubbed her arms and legs to help her revive. “You know,” she sobbed, “sometimes I get the feeling that somebody up there doesn’t like us.”

“Yeah!” Mortimer shivered. “If they’re tryin’ to tell us it’s Yankee, Go Home Week around here...they got one believer!”

The Big Punch In The Nose

Have you ever been in a place where there wasn't a sound to be heard?

Not even the movement of the wind...or a dripping faucet? I mean, absolutely no sound at all?—It was like that in the dark, cold pocket we were trapped in, and it gave you the eerie feeling of being suspended in, another world. And when somebody spoke, it sounded like a voice coming out of a deep void. But about the time our eyes started to get used to the darkness, I realized that I *could* hear my own breathing. And then I slowly became aware of another sound...one that I hadn't noticed, because it had been there all the time. It was the almost inaudible crackling hum of the radio strapped to my back.

"Hey, the radio, the radio!" I gasped. "I forgot about it.—It's still working!"

"Give it a try," said Mortimer. "I hope there's somebody still alive up there.!"

I pressed the transmit button and hollered, "Hey! Hey! Can anybody hear me up there?—Jeff!—Henry! Come in, please. Come in!"

There was nothing but silence...except for the hum of the receiver.

I tried again, every ten seconds or so. And every time I stopped—and there was no answer—Angelina would sob.

“What’ll we do? What’ll we do?” she wailed.

Mortimer patted her soothingly on the shoulder. “Take it easy,” he said. “They’ll probably come through in a while, and figure some way to get us out of here.”

“What if they don’t?”

“Then we’ve only got one chance...the way I figure it,” I said. “But it’s risky.”

“What’s that?” she blubbered.

“One of us will have to try going hand-over-hand up one of the ropes. If there’s too much snow on top of us, it probably won’t be possible.—But even if it worked, we might collapse all the snow on us and smother to death.”

“You got any other good news, Dad?”

“Yes,” said Mortimer. “Try to keep your mouth shut so we don’t use up all the oxygen.—And that means, don’t cry, either.—It’s best we wait here for help...as long as we can hold out.”

Angelina nodded her head, and I guess she figured Mortimer was right, because she didn’t cry any more.

It seemed like five hours, but it probably wasn’t even five minutes, before I could hear a feeble transmission coming over the radio, and I turned the volume full up.

“Hello! Hello! Can you read me?” I practically hollered.

“I read you! I read you! This is Angela. Come in! Come in!”

“This is Charlie!” I shouted back. “We’re trapped here, but we’re okay! Angelina’s with us, too!”

“Oh, thank God! Thank God!” Angela gasped. “Sepp is taking the rest of them back out there now. They had to run from the avalanche. It buried half the drill rig.—Where are you?”

I had to think that one over for a minute. “I guess all I can tell you is...we’re at the end of our ropes.”

“Oh, I know you are! I know you are!—You poor things!” Angela sobbed. But, if you can just tell me where you are...maybe they can dig you out.”

I scratched my head, trying to think of something brilliant to tell her, and Mortimer chimed in. “Tell her we’re about eight miles northwest of Heiligenblut. Maybe that’ll help.”

Angelina started to laugh...then stopped herself...and started to sob again. Mortimer patted her on the back.

“All I can tell you is...we’re at the end of the ropes,” I repeated. “If they just follow the ropes, they’ll find us.”

“Oh, good! Oh, good!” Angela cried. “We’ve sent for the Alpine Rescue Squad. They’ll be here in about twenty minutes...we think.”

Again, what seemed like hours crawled by.—But, thanks to Henry Mulligan, we didn’t have to wait for the rescue squad to show up. Jeff’s calm voice came over the radio in a few minutes.

“Charlie! Mortimer! This is Jeff.—Sit tight, now. And listen carefully.—Henry’s figured a way to get you out of there! He’ll tell you what to do.”

“Charlie? Charlie?” came Henry’s quavering voice. “Listen! Do you still have the sample bucket down there?”

“Yes! It’s right here in front of me.”

“Good! Good! Now, listen carefully! We’re going to tie a steel cable to the bucket rope and feed it down to you.—When I give you the signal...start pulling down on the bucket rope, till you can grab the end of the cable. Okay?”

“Okay!” I said.

“Now, listen carefully!”

“I am! I am!”

“We’re taping a hammer and a steel punch to the cable.—I want you to turn the bucket upside down, and punch a hole in the bottom of it.—Then feed the cable down through that hole.—Clear?”

“Clear!”

“Okay!—Then wrap the cable around the hammer...or one of your shoes...or whatever you’ve got...and put a couple of half-hitches in it...so the cable can’t pull back through the hole.—Okay?”

“Okay!”

“Now, here’s what we’re gonna’ do!—When you say you’re ready...we’re gonna’ pull that bucket up through the snow...upside down.—Get it?”

“I think so.”

“Okay! We’ll use the winch to do it...because it may take a lot of force. That’s why we’re using the cable.—Now, listen carefully! This

is important.”

“Cripes, Henry, will you stop saying that?”

“Okay!—*Make sure* the rope is still attached to the bucket.—You’re gonna’ need it to pull the cable back down.”

“Okay! Okay! I got you.”

“We’re hoping the bucket will make a big enough hole through the snow...so we can pull you all up through it...one at a time.—Understand?”

“What if all the snow just collapses on top of us?”

There was a pause. Then Jeff’s voice came over the radio.

“Charlie, I wish you hadn’t asked that question.—We’re doing the best we can up here.”

“Okay, Jeff,” I said. “Let me see if I’ve got all this straight.” And I repeated all the instructions to him.

“Tell Henry we wouldn’t do this for anyone else,” said Mortimer, just as I signed off.

When Henry gave me the signal, I started pulling cautiously on the rope, while Mortimer held Angelina on his lap. All of us were holding our breath. Finally, the looped end of the rope appeared just beyond the overhanging ice shelf that protected us, and clamped to it was the end of a thin woven-steel cable. A little more snow fell into our dark cavern as I pulled down on the cable and found the package containing the hammer and punch...but not much. We all let out the trapped air we’d been holding in our lungs, very slowly. The first part was over.

I followed Henry’s instruction carefully; and when I had the cable cinched around the hammer and pulled taut inside the bucket, I placed my feet on the bottom of it and pulled up on the cable with all my strength to make sure it was secure. Then I called Henry on the radio to tell him we were ready, and we pulled ourselves tight against the wall of ice to hold our breath again.

“What about the rope?” Mortimer whispered.

“It’s okay,” I said. “I tied one end to the bucket handle, and the other end’s tied to my wrist.—We won’t lose it.”

Up the bucket went...very slowly. They were apparently taking in the slack by hand before cutting in the winch. It dangled momentarily

just below the roof of snow over our heads, and then slowly disappeared. The rope paid out from my lap, where I had coiled it, and I realized that every muscle in my body had suddenly gone tense. I figured Mortimer and Angelina were all tied up in knots, too, because there wasn't a sound from either of them.—The only sound was a faint, squeaky swishing noise...as the sample bucket carved out a foot-wide chimney through the bank of powdered snow above us.

Suddenly...unbelievably...a shaft of light shot through the darkness of the icy crypt we were trapped in, and a gush of fresh, warmer air enveloped us.

"Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" shouted Angelina. "Thank God! They've done it!"

"Shut up!" I said tersely, digging my fingers into her arm. "Don't shout, and don't move! We're not out of here, yet!"

The radio squawked.

"Are you alright, down there?—We've got the bucket up here!" It was Jeff.

"We're okay, Maestro," I said. "Let's go! What do we do now?"

"The first thing to do is keep calm!" Jeff said, in that no-nonsense way he has when he takes over. "Sepp is fixing two loops in the cable with clamps. When you pull it back down there...this is what you do:—Put one foot in the lower loop, and hold onto the upper loop with both hands.—Keep your body *absolutely stiff*!—Don't relax and don't bend!—This will take the strain off your arm sockets.—Sepp says to take a deep breath and hold it until we get you up here...but no matter what happens...keep your spine and knees stiff!—Send Mortimer up first...that'll be the tough pull. After that, the hole should be larger, and you can send Angelina up."

"What about me?"

"Don't worry!—If the hole is still there, we'll bring you up next."

"Thanks a lot!.....It's sure been nice knowing all you guys."

"Look...this is your chance to be a hero! You're the captain of the ship. You don't leave till all hands are safe.—Do you want to leave Angelina down there?"

"Who ever heard of a woman captain?" I said. "Besides...I think she has to go to the bathroom."

“Okay!—Now, remember one thing: *Don’t let go of the end of that rope!* If you do...you can’t pull the cable back down.”

“I’m sticking it in my mouth right now,” I said.

Somehow or other, the whole thing worked. Mortimer went up the pipe, grunting and screaming as the ice-cold snow crammed right down the neck of his parka and packed in around his kidneys...where it really feels cold. Then Angelina slid up with no trouble at all...sort of like a goldfish being coughed up by a college student. Then it was my turn. Somehow—after being trapped in it for nearly an hour—I had a nostalgic feeling about leaving the place. But I gritted my teeth and braced my back, like Jeff said; and the next thing I knew, I was floundering around in knee-deep snow right next to the drill rig, while everybody danced around me, slapping me on the back and wiping the tears from their eyes.

Angelina came over and threw her arms around my neck and kissed me on both cheeks.

“I’m sorry I pinched your arm, Angie,” I said. “I really didn’t mean to.”

“That’s okay, Charlie. You’re the greatest!” she said. And she kissed me again.

Suddenly I felt warm all over, and awfully glad to be alive, and I figured Angelina was “the greatest”, too...for some funny reason.

“I really didn’t do anything,” I stammered. “Henry Mulligan figured everything out.” So, she went over and kissed Henry, too. And he got all flustered, and his ears turned red, and he drooped his horn-rimmed glasses in the snow, and everybody had to crawl around on their hands and knees trying to find them.

By then, the Alpine Rescue Squad had arrived, with stacks of warm, woolly blankets and flasks of hot tea, and they just insisted on bundling us onto sleds and pulling us to safety near the Franz Josef’s Hutte at the edge of the glacier...where the professor was waiting.

“Ach, mien libertines...Chollie!...Mortimer!...Number Two!” he said. “How nize to see you safe and sound again!—Did you bring any more samples wiz you?”

Mortimer and I looked at each other and gulped.

“I’m sorry, Professor,” said Mortimer. “I’m afraid it slipped our

minds.”

“Oh!...Zat is too bad! We were getting such nize samples.” The professor shrugged. “So?...We forget it! We go back to ze hotel, now.”

It was warm and cozy at the Heiligenblutner Hof that evening, with a great fire burning in the huge fireplace in the Bierstube, where we sat sipping hot chocolate while droves of villagers dropped by to bless us, and wish us well, and to hear from our own lips the harrowing details of our terrible experience. A reporter and a photographer from the Lienzner Tagblatt had driven all the way up from the city of Lienz to interview us, and we had to pose for pictures. The photographer insisted on posing one real corny shot with Angelina kissing Henry on the cheek to thank him for saving our lives...and Henry got so nervous and embarrassed he threw up some of his hot chocolate right when the flash bulb went off. What they published in the paper the next day looked like a large—mouthed bass being bitten by a vampire.

Mr. Stunkard and his partners were also hanging around, as usual, playing bridge at a corner table and swapping comments with many of the villagers who dropped in. All four of them were very commiserative, of course, but they couldn’t resist sticking the “I told you so” knife in once in a while, and twisting it around a bit.

“You simply never should have gone down into that crevasse,” Mr. Stunkard said, with an air of great concern for our welfare. “Heaven knows, I tried to warn you. As the Austrians say: That is no place for *auslanders*!”

Jeff and I looked at each other, and I know the same question was in both our minds.

“What is an *auslander*, Mr. Stunkard?” Jeff asked him.

“Technically, an *auslander* is a foreigner...or an outsider. But when the Austrians use the word...they mean anybody and everybody from the other side of the mountain, so to speak.—You see, the Austrian peoples are very sectionalized. They all have a lot of regional pride. The Tirolese like to think they are Tiroleans first, and Austrians second. And the same thing goes for the Viennese.”

“You mean...sort of like Texans?” I asked.

“Precisely!” Mr. Smellow bellowed, with one of his great

rumbling laughs. “You hit it right on the head, young man.”

“Yes,” Mr. Stunkard agreed. “You see...the people here feel they know these mountains a good deal better than anyone else, and they sort of resent strangers coming in and doing things they wouldn’t do themselves.—In other words, if you want to be popular...and stay alive...it’s a good idea to stay off that glacier.”

“You seem to know a lot about the Austrian character, Mr. Stunkard,” I said.

“You might say it’s a hobby of mine,” he smiled.

And Mr. Smellow smiled in agreement, and nodded his head.

After most of the visitors and well-wishers had left, Jeff pulled Mortimer and me into a corner, where he had already been talking with Homer and Henry. Jeff looked very troubled.

“Look,” he said. “I’ve been thinking about this afternoon...and this may sound crazy...but I’d swear on a stack of bibles that I heard two shots from a high-powered rifle just before that avalanche hit us...and I think that’s what caused it.”

He looked around at the rest of us for confirmation, and we were just sitting there, sort of goggle-eyed.

“I definitely heard two shots,” Jeff repeated. “And they seemed to come from. way up in that steep ravine where all the snow came from.”

“I guess we heard something, too,” I volunteered. “It was just after you were making that joke about Rapture of the Deep. But we thought it was the ice cracking.—We just heard it once...but it sure scared us good.”

Henry was scratching the thick black hair over his right ear. “I can’t say, Jeff. I was standing right by the winch engine at the time, and it makes a lot of noise.—I don’t know. I seem to remember something...but I can’t be sure.”

Then Homer scratched his head. “Now that you mention it,” he said, “I heard those shots, too. But I thought it was just some local yokel hunting rehbuk...or mountain goats. I never thought about the avalanche, at the time.—But you’re right, Jeff...it was a high-powered hunting rifle, alright. I know the sound!—You see, my old man takes me out....”

"Please spare us the details, Mr. Snodgrass," said Jeff. We know all about your father's hardware store...and how he's an expert on guns, and all that.—The point is...those two shots came from the same place the avalanche did.—Now, I've been talking to Sepp Holtzmueller, and he says that no Austrian jager would fire a rifle in a place like that...even if he saw a rehbuk right in his sights. They just know too much about avalanches, and. what can happen."

"Maybe it was somebody who doesn't like auslanders," I ventured.

"You just said it, Charlie!" Jeff observed. And he pulled his chair a little closer to us and bent over. "Now listen! I didn't want to say it myself...because I thought maybe I was crazy. But, ever since we came here, I've had the feeling that *somebody wants us to leave*.—Or, at least, they want us to stay off that glacier."

"You can say that again!" I said. "People keep telling us how dangerous it is. Sometimes I think they're trying to give us a message."

"You think?" Mortimer snorted. "Boy! I got all the message I need this afternoon. I don't want anybody chipping my lily-white body out of that ice a hundred years from now!"

Just then, Henry cleared his throat, and we all turned to look at him. He had tilted his chair back into the corner and locked his feet around the front legs, and he was gazing up into the beamed ceiling of the Bierstube just like he does in our clubhouse in Jeff Crocker's barn.

"Maybe you just put your dirty finger on it, Mortimer Dalrymple," he said. "Maybe that body in the ice is just what this is all about."

We all just stared at Henry and waited for him to continue. Henry usually lets us know when he wants somebody to say something. In a few seconds he brought his chair back down to the floor with a thump, and leaned forward.

"You know," he said. "Ever since the first night we were here, we've been talking about that big diamond the Burgermeister told us about. I don't think any of us really thinks we might find the thing...but maybe there's somebody here who does. Maybe there's somebody who takes the whole story very seriously.—Before you all start laughing, let me explain. I've been thinking a lot about it

lately...and it seems to me.....”

“I think I know what you’re thinking,” Mortimer interrupted.

“T think you ought to shut up!” said Jeff, digging him in the ribs. “Let Henry talk.”

We did.

“It seems to me,” Henry went on, “that nobody’s going to find that diamond by just scrambling around on six miles of ice.”

“Right!” I said. And Jeff dug *me* in the ribs.

“Ask yourself this question,” Henry continued. “If you were a big diamond, smuggled out of South Africa by four men...where would you most likely be?”

We all looked stupid and dumbfounded...which was just what Henry expected. “You’d be in the pocket of one of the four men...or at least in their luggage...wouldn’t you?”

We all nodded our heads.

“Now, Adolf Heist was found, just before he died, and he didn’t have the diamond.—But, he said one of the other three men did have it. Ergo!.....”

“What’s ‘Ergo’ mean?” I said, out of the side of my mouth.

“I think it’s some kind of a laxative,” Mortimer whispered. “Shut up!”

“Ergo!” Henry repeated. “The diamond *has* to be in the possession of one of the other three men!—So, what do you do? You don’t look for a diamond. You look for a body!”

We all looked at each other.

“Wait a minute, Henry,” said Homer. “As I remember the story, Adolf Heist said they were arguing over the diamond when the man holding it in his hand fell into a crevasse. He could have dropped it, you know. It could be anywhere.”

Henry leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest, and we all knew Homer was about to get a lecture.

“There are only three or four things wrong with that,” he said. “To begin with...I’m not trying to prove where the diamond *is*. I’m just trying to determine *where* the average, reasoning person would look for it. We don’t even know whether the diamond exists.....But we *do* know that the legend exists.—Secondly...legends have a way of

growing with the years...people add things to them sometimes, to make them more interesting. We don't really know that Adolf Heist said one of the men had the diamond *in his hand*. That little detail might have been added to the story fifty years later by some old codger trying to impress his grandchildren."

"So?" I asked.

"So...anybody hoping to find the diamond today would reason that the best chance of finding it would be to find the other three bodies...and search them."

"You're right, Henry! That makes sense."

"Now," Henry continued. "Homer and Mortimer aren't the only two people in the world who saw that movie about the man who fell off the Matterhorn. And *we* aren't the only people in the world who might figure out that it would take about a hundred years for the bodies to be moved down to the mouth of the glacier!"

"Right again!" said Jeff.

"Ergo....." said Henry, "there could be any number of people here in Heiligenblut today, watching that glacier...to see if a body pops out of it."

"And they'd most likely be keeping a watch at the mouth of the glacier," Homer observed.

"Or.....at any deep crevasse...like the one we were exploring today," said Henry. "And....."

"You don't have to say it," Mortimer gulped. "They'd naturally want to scare anybody away who was looking at the same place.—Why, those dirty...."

"Easy! Easy!" said Jeff, clapping a hand on Mortimer's shoulder. "We don't want anybody to overhear us. Besides, we don't *know* that anybody actually tried to kill any of us. It's just that the whole thing looks a little suspicious.—Henry...you sure figured this thing out, and I've got an ugly feeling you may be correct."

"Maybe that's why we keep seeing those guys with binoculars," I suggested. "We always thought they were looking at *us*."

"They probably are...whoever they are...and they'll probably keep on watching us," said Henry. "We're going to have to be very careful, and stay on the alert."

“Zowie!” Homer cried, suddenly standing up. “You know what? I betcha’ my best aggie against any one of your migs...I betcha’...I just betcha’.....”

“Sit down and shut up!” Jeff told him, pulling him hack into his seat. “Those waiters over there are watching us now.—Now, what do you bet?”

“I betcha’ those guys saw a body in the wall of that crevasse...and that’s why they dumped the snow on us!”

Again we all looked at each other, while we absorbed that one.

“That’s just possible,” Henry said quietly. “But if they did, they’re gonna have an awful time getting it out of there.”

“Serves ‘em right!” said Mortimer. And we all had a good laugh. Then Jeff motioned us to lean closer to him. “Look,” he said. “I think we better keep this to ourselves, and not tell the others about it...especially the girls. No sense getting them all worried.”

“What about Freddy and Dinky?” I asked. “They’re members of the club.”

“Yeah! that’s right,” Jeff agreed. Then he looked around. “Where are they? How come they’re not here?”

“I think they went to bed early,” said Mortimer. “They were pretty tired after running all those errands today.”

Anyway, we all clasped hands in the club grip and swore not to tell anyone about what we suspected.

The next morning, Professor Stratavarious was in a bright and cheerful mood, and whistling a gay tune as he unfolded his napkin and sat down at the breakfast table. “I have great news for all of you!” he said, beaming at us over the rims of his glasses. “My good friend Count Sigismund has offered to let us stay at his castle. It is a marvelous place! It overlooks ze mouse of ze glacier, and it will be much more convenient for us while we are examining ze gorge.”

There was a clatter of forks being dropped as we all looked at the professor.

“You mean...a real castle?” said Dinky Poore, with his eyes looking like two fried eggs.

“Yes, Dinky! A real castle...built on ze site of an old Roman

watchtower.”

“You mean with towers, and secret passages, and turrets and all that stuff?”

“Oh, yes, Dinky. Zis castle has all zat stuff. It even has a moat and a drawbridge.—In fact, it has everyting except bassrooms.”

“What’s a bassroom?” asked Freddy Muldoon.

“Zat’s a place where you take a bass, Mr. Dumbkopf! You know zat!”

“He means a *bathroom*, dummy!” Mortimer whispered in Freddy’s ear.

“Zat is one of ze problems,” the professor continued. “Zere is only one bassroom in ze whole castle. Zat means we will have to get up early in ze morning and take turns.—Ze ozzer problem is zat Number One and Number Two will have to do ze cooking.”

A lot of forks and spoons hit the table again.

“Yoiks!” said Freddy. “Doesn’t the count have any servants?”

“Oh, Freddy! You are such a dumbkopf zis morning!—Count Sigismund doesn’t even live in ze castle. Nobody can afford to live in a castle zese days!. You better believe me...it would break up your bank account, if you got one!”

“Well, where *does* he live?”

“He has a very nice room in a boarding house here in ze village.”

“You me an the castle is deserted?” I asked.

“Oh, no! No! Not at all,” said the professor. “Axel lives zere. He is ze caretaker.—Oh, you will like Axel. He is a very nice man. He is so cute!”

“What’s his last name?”

“He doesn’t have any last name. He was just born zere in ze castle one day, and nobody knew who his parents were.”

“Oh, that’s a hot one!” said Angelina. “I’ll bet *somebody* knew.”

“You mind you’re own business, Number Two,” said the professor, shaking his fork in her direction.

“Can Axel cook?” Freddy inquired.

“Oh, no! My gracious, no!” said the professor. “Axel doesn’t do *any*ting. He just takes care of ze castle. Zat is what a caretaker is

for.”

“You mean we gotta’ eat what the girls cook...and make our own beds...and everything?”

“You got any better ideas, Mr. Dumbkopf?”

“That’s stercoraceous!” said Mortimer.

“Zat may be, Mr. Smarty Dalrymple,” the professor observed, as he stuffed scrambled eggs into his mouth. “But how many young people, zese days, get a chance to live in a real medieval castle?...Huh?...Answer me zat one.”

“I’m all for it,” Dinky Poore cried. “I betcha that castle has a hundred secret passages...and secret rooms...and ghosts, and everything.”

“You better believe it, Mr. Dinky,” said the professor. “Zat castle has so many rooms, nobody can count zem. Even Axel doesn’t know where zey all are.”

“I hope there’s no ghost in the bathroom,” sighed Angela. “I like to soak in the tub.”

“Don’t worry,” said Mortimer. “You’d scare *him* more than he’d scare you.”

And all Mortimer got for that was a hot, wet pancake wrapped right around his nose.

Anyway, it was agreed we’d pack up and move to Count Sigismund’s ancient castle that very morning. As usual, Homer wanted to put it to a vote, but it wasn’t necessary. Everybody agreed with Dinky. Why miss out on a chance to live in a castle that you’d give your right ear just to walk through on a visit? And the professor was right. We’d finished most of our work on the glacier itself—except for checking the movement of the iron stakes occasionally—and now we’d be spending our time studying the evidences of past glaciation in the rock formations of the gorge below the glacier, and doing some experiments at the glacier’s mouth. Count Sigismund’s castle, perched high on a rocky crag across the gorge from the Glockner Strasse, would be an ideal place to stay.

After Freddy Muldoon had eaten the last stack of pancakes in sight, we all got up to go pack. As we were leaving the dining room, Jeff buttonholed one of the waiters. “I didn’t see Mr. Stunkard and

our other friends at their table this morning,” he said. “Have they left?”

“Oh, no, sir,” the waiter replied. “They had breakfast very early, and went off for one of their walks.”

“One of their walks?—What do they do all day?”

“We never see them during the day,” the waiter replied. I think they take very long walks in the mountains. Maybe they are...what you call it?...bird watchers? Or, maybe they collect the mountain wildflowers...you know, a great many people do. They are never here for lunch, but sometimes the kitchen packs a lunch for them.”

“That’s very interesting,” said Jeff. “I’ll have to compare notes with them on some of the odd birds we’ve run into.”

“Oh, I’m sure they would have seen them, too,” said the waiter. “They spend a great deal of time in the mountains.” And he bowed several times as he backed off, saying, “Thank you very much, sir! Thank you very much!”

Getting to Count Sigismund’s castle was a bit much...but it was interesting. To get across the gorge from the Glockner Strasse we had to walk over an ancient, swinging chain bridge, suspended about a hundred feet above the foaming white torrent of water that swept down from the melting mouth of the glacier. It was creepy, to say the least, and Angelina and Angela weren’t sure they wanted to bother with it...and neither was Freddy Muldoon. But Dinky Poore raced across it as though it wasn’t even there, and then came running back to urge the rest of us to hurry. The bridge bounced up and down as he ran, and some of the footboards creaked and groaned as if they were about to crack. It didn’t bother Dinky, but Angelina’s face had gone completely white, and Homer was looking a little green around the gills.

After we all got across, the professor pointed out the rusty old cable that had been used in years past to ferry supplies across the gorge in a large wooden box that looked like a coffin. “Zat was one of ze first cable cars ever built,” he explained. “It took twelve men, or two horses, to turn ze capstan zat wound ze cable up to ze top of ze bluff zere.—But who can afford twelve men, or even two horses, nowadays?”

“Hey! Maybe we could get it working again!” cried Freddy Muldoon.

The professor smiled. “As zey say in Rumania...You haff a big mouse, but a little brain, Freddy! You gotta’ haff a great big engine to do zat. And how you gonna’ get a great big engine up zere?”

“Isn’t there any road up to the castle?” Jeff asked.

“Zere is,” said the professor, “but it is an old carriage road zat comes up from ze ozzer side of ze mountain.—I don’t guess nobody has used it for more zan a hundred years.”

“I don’t suppose there’s any electricity, or a telephone in the castle?” Homer mused.

“Hoh, boy! You gotta’ twentieth century brain, Mr. Snodgrass!” the professor snorted. “You got to get with history a little bit, you know.”

From where we were, it was a tortuous climb up a twisting, zigzag trail to the top of the bluff on which the castle was perched. The professor took it slowly, and we plodded along behind him, even though Dinky kept running ahead and then back again to tell us all about what a wonderful view there was farther up the trail. Every once in a while the professor would stop and point out some feature in the gorge below us that had just become visible, and give us a short lecture on it. At one point, where the trail came out onto a broad, flat ledge, he paused for breath and pointed off into the distance.

“Ze natives say zat you get ze longest echo in ze world from here,” he exclaimed. “We will try it out. Zey say it takes one full minute for ze echo to come back from zat mountain over zere.—How far away would zat mountain be, ‘Enry?”

Henry scratched the hair above his right temple. “Let’s see,” and he muttered some figures to himself as he worked out the problem. “I figure it would be about twelve miles round-trip...at the speed of sound. That would mean the mountain is about six miles from here.”

“Zat is about right,” said the professor. “We will try it.—Now...everybody count seconds.” And he cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted, “Board of Health!”

We all counted...one-thousand-and-one, one thousand-and-two, one-thousand-and-three...and when we got to one thousand-and-sixty, the echo came back as clear as could be: “Go to hell!”

“Boy! I couldn’t believe it,” said Freddy, as the laughter died down. “It took a whole minute. You sure there isn’t some joker over there?”

“That’s pretty good, Professor,” said Homer. “But I betcha’ it’s not the world’s longest echo.—Up on the glacier the other day I swear I heard a voice with an Austrian accent say: ‘Napoleon’s a bum! Long live Austria!’”

“Oh, zat is very funny, Mr. Snodgrass,” said the professor. “Zat is very funny!”

“That’s nothing!” Mortimer sneered. “Just after we crossed the bridge down there I heard a guy with an Italian accent shouting ‘Veni, vidi, vici!’”

“Hoh, boy! *Zat would be* a long echo!” said the professor. “How many miles would zat one travel, ‘Enry? See if you can figure it out.”

“That’ll take some figuring,” Henry answered. “Right after supper I’ll take a crack at it.”

“Don’t mention supper,” groaned Freddy. “I can taste it already.”

Finally, the massive walls of the castle loomed before us as we reached the crest of the bluff. We had caught glimpses of its turrets through the trees many times on our way up to the glacier. But when you walk right up beside a castle, it is something else. How on earth did anyone ever build this place?—is the first question that comes to your mind as you gaze at the mass of cut stones, piled one on top of the other to form the walls that look as though they’re twenty feet thick and reach right up to the sky. It really overwhelms you.

“Holy mackerel!” Homer gasped. “This place makes you feel like an ant.” We followed Dinky as he scampered across the drawbridge, which was suspended on two of the biggest chains you ever saw, that disappeared through two openings in the walls on either side of the huge gateway. Two massive doors, studded with iron boltheads, formed an arch that towered a good twenty feet over our heads. And in the door on the right was a much smaller door—about the size of

the door to a bank vault. The professor walked up to it and pulled down on a long iron rod that dangled beside it. A bell clanged so loudly that it almost split our eardrums, and the sound of it echoed back and forth across what must have been an open courtyard behind the huge doors.

“We will sit down now, and wait for Axel,” the professor said, while the tone of the bell still rang in our ears. And he plumped himself down on an outcropping of stone and started fanning himself with his black homburg. The rest of us lounged about, wherever we could, or wandered about, gazing up at the overhanging battlements that rimmed the huge walls of the castle.

After five minutes had gone by, Freddy Muldoon started to complain. “Maybe we oughta’ go back to the hotel. It’ll soon be time for lunch.”

“Be patient, Freddy,” the professor told him. “Axel has a long way to come.”

Finally, we heard a clattering behind the door, and a little panel covered by an iron grill popped open about seven feet above the ground. We all stared up at it, and a big, hairy face with a huge, bulbous nose stared back down at us.

“Ah, guten morgen, Axel,” the professor exclaimed, in a most ingratiating tone of voice. “Hier ist Professor Stratavarious.”

“Eine moment, bitte!” came a squeaky voice from the huge head. And the panel slammed shut...but not before the hairy face had spit a veritable rain of sputum out through the grill...and we all jumped aside, just in time.

“Jumpin’ Jehoshaphat!” cried Homer Snodgrass. “That character must be eight feet tall!”

“Maybe we *should* split outta’ here, Professor,” said Angelina. “I don’t think he likes us.”

“Don’t be silly, Number No,” the professor assured her. “You will like Axel. He is *so* cute!”

“It’s sure cute, the way he spits,” said Jeff, wiping his hair off with his handkerchief.

Then, from behind the door came a series of mysterious sounds...like bolts being thrown open and chains rattling...and finally

there was the grating sound of a key being turned in a rusty lock. The huge door creaked slowly open to admit a shaft of sunlight from the open courtyard beyond. And silhouetted against the light stood the figure of a dwarf, about two-and-a-half feet tall, but with a head big enough to wear a size ten hat. In his left hand he held a three-legged stool. From his belt dangled a bunch of huge keys that almost scraped the ground.

“Gruss Gott, meine freund!” the professor exclaimed, bending way over to shake the dwarf’s hand.

But Axel just ducked under the outstretched hand and kicked the professor a good one in the shins. “Come in, if you must!” he said, and laughed fiendishly as the professor rubbed one shin in obvious pain.

We all looked at each other and waited for somebody else to go through the door first. But after Dinky Poore scampered through, we all filed inside and found ourselves in a large flagstoned courtyard that was pleasantly warm in the morning sunshine. Axel jabbed his finger at all of us, as though he was counting noses, and then took a running leap at the huge door and hit it with both feet at a point about six inches above his head. The door slammed shut. Then he clambered like a monkey up a series of wooden pegs imbedded in the planks of

the door, and started throwing home the huge bolts and fastening the chains that made it secure.

“That explains why he looked eight feet tall when he looked at us through that panel,” Homer whispered in my ear.

“Follow me, if you dare!” cried Axel. And he scampered across the courtyard toward a towering stone staircase with a peculiar bow-legged rolling stride that made him look like a bowling ball someone had just flung out ahead of us. We all hurried along behind him with our hearts up in our throats.

The next thing we knew, we were in the great hall of the castle. It was a little bit dirty, but you could see that it had once been a magnificent and imposing room...that is, if you consider something more than a hundred feet long a room. Tarnished old suits of armor with spears clasped in the left gauntlet stood in niches lining the walls, and also at the foot of the grand staircase.

Three gothic-arched stained glass windows at one end cast an eerie glow on the flagged floor and on the musty old tapestries that hung almost from the beamed ceiling to the floor at various places along the sides of the room. And here and there, little balconies protruded from the walls, giving glimpses of corridors two and three stories above the floor of the great hall. We stood there and drank it in for a moment.

“How come this Axel character speaks such good English?” Angela whispered to the professor.

“I am told he speaks sixteen languages,” the professor whispered back. “But nobody knows how he learned zem. Ze count claims he cannot read.”

“I heard that!” Axel screamed from where he stood at the foot of the grand staircase. “Axel hears *everything* in this castle.—Haven’t you noticed how big my ears are?—Come...I will show you to your rooms.”

We all walked sheepishly toward him with our bags and knapsacks, but he suddenly halted us in midstride and fastened his gleaming, twinkling eyes on Jeff.

“Young sir,” he said. “You are tall, and obviously agile. I wonder if you would do me a great favor?”

“Why...sure! Anything you’d like, sir,” Jeff stammered. And we all nodded our heads to back him up.

“What time do you make it, young sir?” Axel asked.

Jeff glanced at his watch. “Why...it’s twenty past ten, I believe.”

“Thank you! Thank you, so much!” Axel said with an awkward attempt at a bow. Then he pointed to a tremendous pendulum clock that stood against the wall near the foot of the stairs. The face of it was easily eight feet above the floor. “That clock has been showing the wrong time for thirteen years,” he explained. “I can reach the crank to wind it, with my stool, but I cannot reach the hands to reset them.—I wonder if you would be so kind as to set them for me.—I have been waiting all these years for a young man such as yourself to visit the castle.” And he plunked his stool down in front of the clock.

“Why...sure,” said Jeff. “I think I can reach them.”

We all smiled indulgently at Axel, as though we would willingly

do anything to help him, as Jeff mounted the stool. Standing on his tiptoes, he could just reach the hands of the clock. But as he moved the minute hand to the left, a little door just below the clockface sprung open and what looked like a boxing glove on the end of a coiled spring flew out and smacked him right in the end of the old katootie.

Jeff fell backwards and hit the floor with blood streaming from his nose, while “cute” little Axel screamed with laughter and did a standing broad jump, two steps at a time, up the grand staircase. When he reached the first landing, he rolled on his back, kicking his legs in the air, as spasm after spasm of laughter shook his tiny frame.

“I don’t think that’s funny at all...you...you hateful little man!” Angela shouted at him, as she cradled Jeff’s head in her lap and helped him wipe the blood from his face.

Axel chinned himself on the banister and glared at her. “After you’ve lived in this castle awhile, you may change your mind about what’s funny!” he screamed. Then he scampered up the next flight of steps, laughing all the way.

“Come, now! I will show you to your rooms.”

“Whew! That pint-sized character gives me the creeps,” Angelina shuddered.

“I wonder if his parents were proud of him...whoever they were.” Mortimer shrugged. “They probably figured half an oaf was better than none.”

“I betcha’ he drinks blood,” Homer muttered. “My old man always said, ‘Never trust anybody with a four-letter name.’”

“Thanks a lot,” said Jeff, still holding the handkerchief to his nose.

“Jeff’s a nickname,” Homer added quickly. “It doesn’t count.”

We trooped up the grand staircase after Axel and followed him down a wide, gloomy hallway lined with huge, dusty candelabras and more suits of armor and tapestries. He ran from one huge paneled door to another with his funny rolling gait, plumping his stool down at each one and then clambering up on it to insert one of his huge keys in the lock. Then he would bow with exaggerated politeness, holding his stool in his left hand, and indicate that two of us should enter. The rooms were so large you could have put enough beds for

all of us into just one of them, but there was a dank stillness to the air inside them that told us they had been closed up for years and years. The first thing we all did was to open the narrow casement windows to let in some fresh air. Then we all gathered in the great hall with the professor to plan the day's activities.

"Und so, what do you sink of ze castle, now?" he asked us.

"Splendiferous!" said Mortimer.

"Und zat little Axel?...I told you he was cute."

"Stercoriculous!" said Mortimer.

"Zat may be so," the professor agreed. "But he cannot take a bass so often."

"No wonder," said Angelina. "Can you see that character trying to get out of a slippery tub?"

"Oh, Axel is alright," the professor assured her. "He just doesn't like tall people...zat's all, Zat is why he kicked me in ze shins."

"I wish I was three feet shorter," said Jeff. "I'd punch him right in the nose."

It isn't often that Jeff says anything mean like that. But I guess you couldn't blame him. Because, just before we left the castle for a tour of the gorge, Angela and Angelina ran up to their rooms to get their sweaters. And when they came back down to join us in the courtyard, they found Axel at the foot of the grand staircase, standing on his stool before the huge clock. He had just pushed the boxing glove and its spring back behind the little hinged panel, and with a long pole he was resetting the hands of the clock so the mechanism could be tripped again.

"Ooooh!" said Angela as they came out the door. "With a little help I could learn to hate that little character."

"He gives me the creeps!" said Angelina.

Mighty Midget Meets Frankenstein's Grandmother

Professor Stratavarious practically walked our legs off, that afternoon. He took us along a rocky trail on one side of the gorge that would have made a good roller coaster track. One minute we'd be skirting the rim of the gorge with a fantastic view spread out before us, and then the trail would plunge down almost to the water's edge, then halfway up the wall of the gorge again...winding in and out around boulders and behind tree trunks. All the time, he was talking a blue streak and gesturing at rock features that he wanted us to photograph, or measure, or make plaster casts of that he could take back for his museum. And a stream of technical terms kept coming out of his mouth that didn't mean beans to us: but we all kept nodding our heads and making notes in our notebooks.

He pointed out old catchment areas, traces of serpentine kames, drumlins, giant's kettles, striated erratics, perched blocks, truncated spurs, aretes, eskers, and you name it...practically everything but goony birds and gall bladders. And when he saw an unusually fine specimen he wanted to mark for photographing, he would whip out an air rifle he'd brought with him and fire a pellet that would break open when it hit its mark and leave a bright, yellow stain.

"That sure makes it a lot easier," said Jeff, between gasps for breath. "We oughta' be able to finish this job in three or four months!"

The professor just never stopped talking. You had to admire his concentration on the job of describing everything that came into

view, so we wouldn't have to go over the same ground again. When we came to a place where we had to tiptoe across a slippery log that bridged a small tributary stream, Professor Stratavarious gave a performance that was downright miraculous.

"When ze glacier moved down sis gorge, it was scraping deep, horizontal grooves in ze walls of ze gorge. But when it receded....." he gulped, as his foot slipped and he went right out of sight with a horrendous splash, "it left big chunks of boulder clay like sat deposit you see right over sere," he continued, as he clambered up the opposite bank of the stream, coughing up water and gesturing with his air rifle in the direction we were supposed to look. And he went right on with his lecture as though walking under water wasn't any trick at all.

When we finally got back to the chain bridge, we caught a glimpse of Sepp and Siegfried, high on the twisting trail above us, packing our groceries and other supplies up to the castle in huge rucksacks strapped to their backs. We waved to them, and they waved back.

"How does Axel get his groceries?" Angela asked. "He certainly doesn't walk all the way into the village for them, does he?"

"Oh, he doesn't need groceries," the professor explained. "He has a little garden in se inner courtyard."

"Well, he doesn't raise meat there, does he?"

"Oh, sat is simple," said the professor. "Axel has a wonderful falcon. It is ze biggest one you ever saw. He calls him Flugelpferd!—Such a marvelous bird! He is so intelligent! If Axel wants rabbit for supper, Flugelpferd brings back a rabbit. If he wants chicken, he goes and gets a chicken. Or he will bring back a pheasant or a quail.—Oh, he is a marvelous bird!"

"What about mice?" said Mortimer.

"I don't know about zat," said the professor. "You will have to ask Axel."

"I wonder if people in the village ever complain about missing babies?" Angelina whispered, out of the side of her mouth.

"I heard zat, Number Two!" the professor exclaimed. "Just for zat, you will write, 'Glaciers are big chunks of ice sat move like rivers, only slower', five hundred times, or you won't get a mark for sis

course!”

Just then I was looking up at Sepp and Siegfried, and above them, on one of the parapets of the castle, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a human figure apparently training a pair of field glasses on the mouth of the glacier. I turned to nudge Jeff, and found that he and Henry were staring at something high on a ledge across the gorge. There, in a patch of sunlight, was the crouched figure of another man. And I could swear he was looking through binoculars at the man on the parapet.—We all three looked at each other with the same question in our minds.

As we started up the trail, Jeff asked the professor: “Is there anybody else living in the castle?”

“Zat depends on what you mean,” the professor replied. “You mean real people...like us?”

“Well I don’t mean Axel,” said Jeff. “He’s something else.”

“You mean real, live people?”

“I think so,” said Jeff.

“Oh, no...no!” the professor scoffed. “My good friend Count Sigismund would be very upset. Zat is why Axel is zere. He is supposed to keep people out.”

“Well, we thought we saw somebody up on the battlements just now.”

“You got to be careful about what you *sink* you see in Schloss Sigismund,” said the professor.

“Let’s ‘splore the castle, soon as we get up there!” cried Dinky Poore, running ahead.

“I’m with *you*,” said Freddy Muldoon, puffing along behind him.

And ‘*splore* the castle they did, while the rest of us washed up and then gathered in the kitchen to swap jokes with Angela and Angelina while they tried to make supper. Fortunately, Sepp and Siegfried agreed to stay and eat with us, and Sepp turned out to be a pretty good cook. So things didn’t turn out too bad for the first night.

Meanwhile, Freddy and Dinky were roaming the dark hallways of the castle, pushing open every door they could find unlocked, clambering over parapet walls on the battlements, trying to get into observation towers, and generally being as nosy as they could. They

had just come back down a stairway leading to one of the towers that overlooked the gorge, when they heard a sound like water splashing into a basin. Then there was a very faint sound of footsteps on creaky floorboards.

“Hey! There must be somebody in there,” said Freddy, pointing to an elaborately paneled door.

“Hey, yeah!” Dinky said, in a hoarse whisper. “Let’s take a look.”

“Don’t open the door! It might be a ghost!”

“Phooey! Ghosts don’t make noises like that.”

“They do if they want to,” said Freddy. “Take a look through the keyhole.”

Dinky pressed his eye to the keyhole and felt a blast of cool air against his eyeball. “I can’t see anything, ‘cept a big window,” he whispered. “It looks right out on the glacier.—Here! You take a look.”

“Naw, I’d rather not. You got better eyes.—Hey, there’s one a’ them peek-a-boo panels up there. See if you can push it open.”

“Give me a leg up!”

Freddy got down on all fours, and Dinky jumped onto his back. By standing on his tiptoes he could bring his eyes even with the panel.

“What are you nosy little scoundrels doing there?” came a squeaky voice from behind them. There, in the dim light of an embrasure in the opposite wall, stood the stunted figure of Axel...Grand Caretaker of the Castle and Keeper of the Keys.—But beside him, stood something that struck immediate terror into the hearts of Freddy and Dinky...a Great Dane dog whose huge head towered a full foot above Axel’s. Its eyes shone faintly red in the half-darkness.

“We was just playin’ leap frog,” Freddy sputtered, scrambling out from under Dinky and dumping him to the floor.

“We wasn’t doin’ nothin’,” Dinky gulped, when he got his breath. “We thought we heard somebody in that room...that’s all.” And he stood braced against the wall with his fists clenched at his sides and his eyes rolling from side-to-side. “Besides...I gotta’ go to the bathroom right now.”

"There couldn't be anybody in that room," Axel half-snarled. "That's where the Margarine of Corinthian was killed by a bolt fired from a crossbow from the other side of the gorge...while he was shaving at the window one morning.—That room has been sealed ever since. No one has been in it for four hundred years!"

"That's a long time to wait for room service," Freddy muttered under his breath.

"Well...the *margrape* must have forgotten to close the window... 'cause it's open," Dinky persisted, trembling visibly now.

"Besides...we heard some footsteps in there," Freddy maintained, with a faint show of truculence.

"If your brain was half as big as your nose, you'd know that you hear a lot of strange sounds in this castle," Axel said, menacingly. "Now, I'll give you fifteen seconds to make it to the bathroom!" And he gave a slight tug on the dog's leash, and the animal sprang into a full alert.

Freddy and Dinky took off like two scared rabbits, and as they rounded a corner of the hall, Freddy glanced back just long enough to see Axel spring onto the back of the huge Great Dane and trot it down the hall after them.

Back in the kitchen, they spilled the story out to us in such a pell-mell, scrambled fashion that we didn't know whether to laugh at them or believe them.

"Did you ever make it to the bathroom?" Mortimer snickered. "I forgot!" said Dinky.

"We didn't have time! We were in too much of a hurry!" said Freddy Muldoon.

"What kind of a character is this Axel?" Angela mused. "He's got a falcon so big he names it after a horse! And now it turns out he has a horse that looks like a Great Dane!"

"I have a slight suspicion that Count Sigismund doesn't know everything about what goes on in his castle," said Jeff Crocker.

"I dig you, Daddy-oh," said Angelina. "When I went up to our room a while ago, I'd swear one of those suits of armor was standing in the middle of the hall."

"What did you do?"

“What would *you* do?—I panicked! And when I looked again...it was back in one of those vertical coffins they have along the walls.”

“Hey! Maybe they’ve got real vampires down in the cellars,” Homer chuckled.

“Let’s go down there tomorrow.”

“How about tonight?” Mortimer suggested.

“Nuts on that!” said Homer. “Ain’t you got no respect for the undead? At night is when they straighten up and fly right. You gotta’ leave them alone.”

“But they might be hungry,” said Mortimer, giving Homer a real knuckler on the bicep. “Did you ever think of that?”

“Oh, stop it, stop it, stop it!” cried Angela. “Maybe you kids think that’s funny!.....But I don’t know whether I’ll get any sleep tonight.”

“After you’ve lived in this castle awhile, you may change your mind about what’s funny,” said Freddy Muldoon, with tomato soup running down both sides of his mouth.

“You shut up! Angela warned, giving him a clout on the right ear as she picked up his plate. “Don’t remind me of that pint-sized Boris Karloff!”

“Ow-w-w-w!” Freddy bellowed. “That’s the trouble with women! They wanna’ run everything...but they gotta’ be dead serious about it. —Can’t you take a joke?”

Angela turned away from the sink and delivered Freddy one of his own favorite raspberries.

The last thing I heard that night was Dinky and Freddy, perched on a turret outside our windows, playing watch and ward. They had a gong with them they’d snatched off a wall in the great hall. Dinky would beat it four times and then shout: “Eleven o’clock! And all’s well!” Then Freddy would holler:

“It’s eleven o’clock! Do you know where your parents are?”

I guess I was finally lulled to sleep by the sound of Henry’s radio, playing softly in the room next to mine.

I don’t know what time it was I awoke again, bearing music. I kept dozing off, then waking up again. Finally, I sat up in bed and listened. It was a haunting melody, being played on a violin, and it was beautiful. I knew what it was, but I couldn’t think of the name.

“Henry must have fallen asleep and left his radio on,” I said to myself. And I got up and walked out into the hall and rapped on the door of the room Henry and Jeff occupied. It was then I realized the music wasn’t coming from that room at all. It was coming from somewhere else, and it seemed to float in the air as though a breeze were carrying it from somewhere else in the castle.

Just then, another door down the hall opened softly and Angelina peered out. She was startled to see me in the dim light and jumped back. “It’s okay, Angie! It’s me!” I said in a half whisper. “I was wondering where that music is coming from.”

“It’s beautiful,” she said. “But, who on earth.....?”

“What is it? I know it, but I can’t.....”

“It’s Schubert’s *Serenade*,” she said. “And...and...it’s beautiful!”

I heard another door creak, and Henry came out rubbing his eyes. “What’s going on?”

“Somebody’s playing a violin. I thought you’d left your radio on.”

“No!” said Henry. “As a matter of fact, I got so much interference I had to shut it off.—Where’s it coming from?”

“I think it’s coming from downstairs,” Angelina whispered.

We tiptoed down the hall toward a faint glow of light that came from one of the balconies overlooking the great hall. Except for the haunting strains of the melody that drew us onward, the castle was still, and quiet. Cautiously, we crept out onto the balcony, then clung to the marble balustrade surrounding it, and peered down.—The floor of the great hall was bathed in a faint eerie glow of moonlight that shone through the three great, arched windows at its south end. At first we could see nothing...but under the vaulted ceiling of the great hall, the music swelled much louder, and more hauntingly. It came from somewhere below us.

Suddenly I felt Angelina’s fingernails dig into my forearm, and she pointed downward. There at the center of the ell, where the great hall jogged at right angles toward the grand staircase, a shaft of moonlight picked out the figure of Axel...perched cross-legged on his stool. His dwarfed torso swayed from side-to-side as he drew the bow back and forth over the strings of a violin that seemed much too large for him to play. Straddle-legged on the floor beneath him,

sprawled the form of the huge Great Dane.

We held our breath. Despite the weirdness of the scene, the clear tonal beauty of the romantic melody held us enthralled. Vindictive fiend or not; Axel could play a violin in a way I had never heard one played before. I could feel a tingle all the way down to the arches of my feet, as we stood there.

Then I heard Angelina draw her breath in sharply, and I clapped my hand over her mouth just in time to stifle a scream. She was gesturing wildly toward the top of the grand staircase. Henry's fingers dug into my shoulder, and he, too, was pointing to the stairs. "Look there! There!" he whispered hoarsely. I turned to look, and it took a moment for my eyes to focus clearly.—Silhouetted against an oriel window at the top of the stairs, was the figure of a woman...tall, with long, flowing hair. A loose-fitting, robe-like garment fell in folds from her shoulders...and it glowed faintly white, with a light of its own. For there was no moonlight at the top of the stairs.—Then my heart leaped right up to my throat as I realized I could see the lattices of the window behind her.—I could see right through her!

Suddenly the music changed. It was softer...quieter...but even more beautiful.

"What's that? What's that he's playing?" I whispered in Angelina's ear.

"It's Afternoon of a Faun," she sighed. "It's...it's beautiful! And so is she. She's beautiful!—I wonder who she is?"

And as the music changed, so did the figure at the window. It almost went out of sight as it glided toward the stairs...then it gradually came into sharper focus as it slowly descended, with a cadence timed precisely to the music. It was almost as though Axel was coaxing her down with the seductive tones of his violin. I could feel Angelina shaking violently beside me as she started sobbing, and her fingernails dug into my arm again.

Then bright moonlight caught the figure as it reached the top landing. And it turned slowly to face us for the first time...and to fix dark, burning eyes on Axel.—Protruding from the breast of the woman was what appeared to be the jeweled hilt of a dagger, glinting in the moonlight. And down the front of her softly flowing robe ran dark stains that could only have been blood!

Angelina screamed like a madwoman and broke from me to run sobbing down the hall toward her room. The music broke off as Axel jumped from his stool, and the Great Dane bounded to its feet and lunged, snarling, toward the stairway. The figure of the woman just plain disappeared.

“There’s got to be a scientific explanation for all this,” said Henry, scratching the hair over his right ear.

“Maybe there is,” I said. “But let’s get out of here!”

And we both ran down the hall to our rooms and bolted the doors behind us.

The next morning none of us was quite so sure about what we had seen, and we took a lot of kidding at the breakfast table. The rest of them claimed they hadn’t heard any music, and Mortimer said that when people wandered around at night in their pajamas they always dreamed up some phony excuse for it.

“Maybe she’s the lady that cleans the bathroom,” said Dinky Poore.

“Don’t be silly!” said Angela. “Nobody cleans the bathroom unless I do.”

“Somebody does,” said Freddy Muldoon. “I left my bar of soap in there, and somebody swiped it.”

“Oh, zat would have been Axel,” the professor explained. “Me doesn’t have any soap. Zat is one of ze sings he can’t get Flugelpferd to bring back to him.”

“I have an idea one bar of soap would last Axel a whole year,” said Angela.

That day we had our work cut out for us as we proceeded to examine and catalogue all the evidences of past glaciation in the gorge that the professor had pointed out the day before. Angelina went with Homer and Mortimer to get photographs of some of the rock formations the professor had marked with his yellow stain, and Jeff and Henry and I clambered up and down the sides of the gorge, surveying and measuring some of the larger glacial markings. Freddy and Dinky had the fun job. Angela stayed with them to show them how to make plaster casts of good specimens of giant’s kettles and other small rock features that demonstrated water action during

periods of melting. They worked at the head of the gorge immediately below the castle.

The professor, as usual, set up his canvas chair on a promontory overlooking a long stretch of the gorge, with a walkie-talkie, a pair of binoculars, and a box of cigars beside him. Sepp and Siegfried went along with the photography and surveying teams to make sure nobody fell off a rock and got washed down into the valley.

"I betcha' I find a dinosaur's footprint!" said Freddy, as he and Dinky watched Angela mix a batch of plaster in a hollowed-out rock beside the stream.

"Phooey!" said Dinky. "No dinosaur could climb way up here."

"Some of 'em had wings," said Freddy. "They coulda' flied up."

"Baloney! Who ever heard of a flying dinosaur?"

"Freddy's right," said Angela, as she poured more water into the mix. "That was the pterodactyl. Only they weren't very big...as dinosaurs go."

"Ya' see! That's just what I told ya'."

"You didn't tell me no such thing," said Dinky. "You didn't even know the name."

"I betcha' I did! I just forgot!—That there thing was one of the terpsichoreans...wasn't it Ange!"

"I just don't know about that," said Angela, trying to keep a straight face.

"Baloney!" said Dinky. "I bet you don't even know the biggest dinosaur ever lived!"

"That's easy," Freddy blustered. "It was the...It was the...the bronchiothorax! See!—That was a real monster, more'n...more'n...bigger than a house."

Angela choked and sputtered. "That was the *brontosaurus*, Freddy. And it was pretty big, alright."

"Ya' see! I told ya' so!"

"Pf-f-f-r-r-r-t-t!" Dinky razzed him. "You're such a big brain!—You wouldn't even know a stereopticon...if you saw one...anyway!"

"I betcha' I would! I betcha' I would!"

"Okay, boys! Okay!" said Angela. "That's enough arguing. Let's get to work now."

But they were interrupted by the voice of a grizzled old Austrian who suddenly appeared from behind an outcropping of rock on the trail above them. "What on earse are you young people doing down zere?" he asked, in a thick accent. "Don't you know zat is dangerous?"

They gaped up at him.

"Don't you know zat tons of water can come down sis gorge wizzout warning, if a chunk of ice breaks loose in ze wrong place up zere?" And he waved his gnarled alpenstock toward the mouth of the glacier.

"What are *you* doin' here then, mister?" Freddy asked him.

"Don't get fresh wiz me, young man. I came down to warn you."

"Freddy! That wasn't very nice," Angela remonstrated.

"Fishfeathers!" said Freddy. "I heard about this old geezer. Jeff and Charlie told us about him."

"That still isn't very nice."

"What are you doing zere, anyway?" the old character demanded.

"We're makin' Alaskan mud pies for the Abdominal (sic) Snowman.—See! We're even usin' white mud." And Freddy gestured toward the mixed plaster.

"Freddy!!" Angela screamed, stamping her foot. "Now you keep your mouth shut and get back to work."

The gray-haired old character ambled off up the path, shaking his head. But Dinky stood there entranced, watching him until he disappeared from view.

"Did you notice that funny little mole on his left ear, with the hair growing out of it?" he asked.

"I didn't notice nothin' but his big mouth," Freddy grunted. "Why are people always trying to scare us, around here?"

"I don't know," said Angela. "But we've got to get to work.—Now! I'll show you how to make a casting of a section of that grooved pinnacle over there."

"Hey, look!" Dinky cried.

"What is it now?" Angela demanded.

"That window, up there in the castle."

“Which one?” Freddy asked. “There’s a million of ‘em.”

“The one right by that tower facing the glacier.—Isn’t that the room we were peekin’ in yesterday?”

“Yeah! I guess it is.—What about it?”

“It’s closed!”

“Hey! It is!”

“Somebody *musta* been in that room. ‘Cause it was open yesterday.—Axel said nobody’s been in that room for four hundred years.”

“Maybe that lady ghost opens the window once in a while to air the place out,” said Freddy.

“We gotta’ tell Jeff about this,” said Dinky.

“Look! Will you kids knock it off and get to work? The professor’s watching us through his binoculars.” And Angela grabbed Dinky by the ear and led him over to the mess of plaster she’d mixed.

When we’d finished our work that afternoon, there were gathering clouds obscuring the sun and rumblings of thunder in the distance. Now and then we could see flashes of lightning beyond the craggy ridges surrounding us as we made our way up the trail to the castle.

“Looks like we’re in for a lollapalooza!” said Mortimer. “We better make time.”

But in the mountains, weather has a way of closing in on you faster than you can change clothes. If somebody asks you what the temperature is, you have to look at a thermometer, and then try and guess what it’ll be by the time you answer him. Things can happen that fast.—And they did that afternoon! We were only half way up the trail when a deluge hit us that you wouldn’t believe. It was like trying to swim upstream in a fast-flowing gusher.

We clustered together under some overhanging rocks to try and keep dry, but Sepp made us move out of there and up the trail to where there was some scrub growth that would give us a little shelter. Then he tried to explain to us what a steinschlag was, and how it happened; but a thunderous rumbling noise drowned him out...and we all suddenly knew what a steinschlag looked like. The entire shelf of rock we had been huddling under, broke loose from the mountain and thundered into the chasm below us.

“Wow!” said Homer, his teeth chattering. “There, but for the grace of God, go I!”

“Like...WOW, man!” Angelina gasped. “But what about giving the S&H boys some of the credit?”

“Who are they?”

“Sepp Holtzmueller and Siegfried Heinz! You don’t dig in a hurry, do you, Homer?—If it weren’t for them we’d be makin’ like a bunch of flat fossils down there in the gorge.”

“When they built this place they shoulda’ dug a tunnel to it,” said Mortimer. “I don’t know whether I can swim all the way up there, or not.”

“Oh, zere *is* a tunnel,” said the professor. “But nobody knows where it is.”

“There *is* a tunnel?” everybody asked.

“Oh, yes! Way back in ze fourteense century ze castle was under siege for two years. Zey couldn’t get anybody out; and zey couldn’t get anybody in; and ze enemy was all around ze place.—So, ze old baron...I sink his name was Arnulf...Arnulf von Sigismund...soy called him Arnulf ze Stupid sometimes...well, he got very mad because he couldn’t get any fresh eggs...oh, he dearly loved fresh eggs, and he couldn’t get some...so, he got very mad and he ordered all ze peasants, and ze lackeys, and even ze knights, to dig a big tunnel to somewheres so zey could get some fresh eggs.—Oh, zat was a terrible time! Zere was a big plague inside ze castle...and everybody died from it...and zey blamed it on ze stale eggs...and zey didn’t have any place to bury everybody, so zey srew most of ze bodies down a big well in ze courtyard. You can still see it zere today...but it has been closed up, of course.”

“If they filled up the well, how did they get any water?” Homer asked.

“Oh, zey just prayed for a big rain...like we got right now...and all ze knights would line up in ze courtyard and hold zere helmets upside-down...and zat is how zey got zere water. Oh, it was a terrible time!”

“What about the tunnel?” Dinky asked, with his eyes popping.

“Nobody knows where it is. Zere is a legend zat it came out

somewhere down in ze gorge. But nobody knows where. And zere is anosser legend sat zey finally had to fill ze tunnel up wiz bodies, too...before ze enemy got tired and went home.”

“Boy! What a story!” Homer exclaimed. “I’d sure like to see that one in the *pitchers*!”

“Hey! Maybe that lady ghost with the dagger in her breast was the only one left over when the enemy went away!” said Freddy Muldoon.

“Zat is quite possible,” said the professor.

When we finally made it up to the castle there was no holding Freddy and Dinky. They were going to *‘splore* for the secret tunnel, ghosts or no ghosts, bodies or no bodies. But first, they wanted Jeff to call a secret meeting of the Mad Scientists’ Club, so they could tell us what they had learned. We held it in Jeff and Henry’s room.

Jeff hadn’t even rapped for order with his gavel, yet, when there was a knock on the door. It was Angelina, and she wanted to join the meeting.

“You can’t come in. This is for members only,” Freddy told her. As sergeant-at-arms for the club, he was holding the door open just a crack, and looking at Angelina with one eye.

“Okay! I want to become a member, then,” said Angelina.

“You can’t! You’re a woman!”

“What’s that got to do with it?”

“Wait a minute! I’ll have to check on that.”

Freddy shut the door and held a whispered consultation with Jeff. —I should say a half-whispered consultation, because Freddy whispered and Jeff talked out loud.

“I don’t know,” said Jeff, looking at the rest of us. “I don’t think there’s anything in the by-laws about women.”

“We just didn’t think of it at the time,” Henry observed.

“What’s the difference?” said Mortimer. “She’s wearing pants!”

“Shucks! They all wear pants nowadays,” said Freddy, finally speaking out loud. “Some of ‘em even wear long hair!”

Then Homer rose to his feet. He likes to think he’s the real parliamentarian of the group, and sometimes he is.

“Your Honor,” he said. “Excuse me...I mean, Mr. President!”

“Hear! Hear!” said Dinky Poore.

“Mr. President! In view of the extenuating circumstances we find ourselves in...and in view of the very special situation we are confronted with...”

“Get to the point!” Jeff ordered, finally rapping his gavel on Henry’s radio.

“Hear! Hear!” cried Dinky Poore.

“Well, sir,” Homer stammered. “I move...I...I...I should like to recommend for consideration...a...a sort of *pro tempore*...”

“Get to the point!” Jeff snapped.

“I move we make a *pro tempore* amendment to the by-laws permitting participation by members of the female sex in certain activities of the Mad Scientists’ Club of Mammoth Falls...to be specified by the President...under certain limitations...to be specified by the President...until we can take this matter under full consideration in a plenary session.” And Homer sat down.

“Does that mean you want to let Angelina in?” Jeff asked him.

“Yes!” said Homer.

“Hear! Hear!” cried Dinky.

“Pf-f-f-r-r-r-t-t!” came the response from Freddy Muldoon.

The other three of us stood up to second the motion and Jeff rapped his gavel again and ordered the motion passed, because there wasn’t anybody left to vote. Angelina squeezed through the six-inch opening Freddy allowed for her entrance and plopped down Swami-fashion on Henry’s bed.

After Dinky and Freddy had told us about the mysterious circumstance of the window in the mysterious room, and about the latest visit of the grizzled old Austrian, Jeff said: “I’m convinced that *somebody* is trying to scare us away from here. And I’m convinced there are some other people in this castle besides us.—The question is: *Who* are they?...What do they want?...And what do we do about it?”

There followed a long discussion, in which Dinky suggested we write a letter to the president, as he always does, and Homer suggested we appoint a committee to study the matter, and Freddy Muldoon suggested we knock it off and get down to supper because

he was getting hungry.

"I bet that Axel character. is renting out rooms without the count knowing about it," said Mortimer, at one point.

"Yeah, man!" said Angelina. "It would be easy. A bar of soap and a couple of dog bones would probably rent you a room for a month."

"But how would they get in and out?" Henry asked. "And how would they get their food? The only way into the castle is the drawbridge...where you have to ring the bell for Axel.—We never hear that bell ring. And we never see anybody on the trail."

"Hey!" Dinky cried. "What about that secret passage...the secret tunnel?"

"That's a distinct possibility," said Henry. "At least, we can't discount it.—Since we never see anyone enter the castle...it could explain how they get in."

"What about that Dagger Lady?...that ghost you claim you saw last night?" Homer asked. "Maybe that was just part of a plot to scare us out of here."

"That's a distinct possibility," said Henry.

"What about supper?" Freddy fumed. "Is that a distinct possibility?"

"Supper can wait!" Dinky said, excitedly. "Let's go 'splore for that secret tunnel!"

"Wait a minute!" Henry cautioned. "Finding the tunnel won't solve anything immediately.—What we need to know first, is whether there's anyone in that room you were peeking into yesterday."

"I betcha' there is," Dinky stated. "But all I could see was the open window. I could only look through the keyhole."

"Yes," said Henry. "But I've noticed these doors have pretty big keyholes. They're almost an inch wide and nearly three inches long. I think I could put together a sort of periscope that would give us a really good look inside that room." And Henry gestured toward two duffel bags, stacked in a corner. We all knew that those two bags had everything from a can opener to a plumber's friend in them.

"Sounds like a good idea," said Jeff. "When do we do it?"

"The light would be bad right now," Henry observed. "Let me put

my gadget together tonight...and we'll try it out early tomorrow morning."

The wild storm that had caught us half way up from the gorge continued to rage throughout the entire night. It was so dark by six o'clock that Dinky and Freddy decided not to explore for the tunnel after all; and after we had completed our notes on the day's work, and developed all the film, most of us turned in early. There was lightning flashing all over the sky. Sheets of rain beat against the windows so hard we had to close the shutters in our rooms, for fear the windows would break. And there were claps of thunder so heavy, and so close, that the ceiling beams shook throughout the castle and bits of plaster and dried paint sprinkled onto the floors. Mortimer and I were locked in a titanic gin rummy duel in our room when a knock came on the door. It was Freddy and Dinky.

"Hey! You guys wanna' see somethin' wild?" Freddy exploded, with his eyes flashing like two star sapphires.

"It's pretty wild right here," said Mortimer. "What you got in mind?"

"Follow us!" Freddy exclaimed. And he and Dinky took off down the hall waving their flashlights in front of them.

We followed them down the hall, up a stone staircase, down another cold and drafty hallway, then part way up the spiral staircase of one of the huge watchtowers that formed the corners of the main enclosure of the castle. At a landing high in the tower, where a narrow slit in the stonework looked out on a section of the main battlements, Freddy stopped, puffing hard, and gestured wildly through the slit.

There, perched on top of the outer battlement wall, was the figure of Axel...jumping, whirling, and tumbling in a wild, awkward, fiendishly ecstatic sort of dance. It was like watching an old-time "flicker", with the jerky movements and sudden changes in illumination vividly accentuating the weirdness of the scene. When a bolt of lightning streaked across the sky, Axel would jump high in the air, clapping his hands and feet together five or six times before he landed on the wall again. And when the thunder rumbled and roared, he would turn handsprings, cartwheels, and somersaults along the top of the wall...a hundred feet above the castle moat. He was alternately

brilliantly-illuminated—then almost invisible—as bright flashes of lightning spotlighted him, or driving sheets of rain almost totally obscured him from view.

He had evidently done this many times in the past. For he expertly avoided falling into the deep embrasures for bowmen that punctuated every twenty feet of the battlement.

The Great Dane dog dashed back and forth along the footwalk behind the wall, following Axel's every movement, yelping and barking at the top of his lungs. And clinging to a sort of saddle, strapped to the dog's back, was a huge, black, horn-beaked bird that we knew could only be Flugelpferd.

"Let's get out of here before that dog changes into a dragon...or maybe a field mouse!" I said to Mortimer.

"Aren't you going to wait until Frankenstein's grandmother shows up?" he asked me. "I wouldn't miss this for all the world."

"It's kinda' creepy," Dinky said, with a shiver. "I wouldn't of believed it...except I saw it!"

"I'm gonna' get in bed and put the covers over my head," said Freddy. "C'mon, you guys!" And he started down the stairs, two at a time.

When we got back to our rooms, Angela and Angelina had just come up from the kitchen with a tray of tea, hot milk, and cookies. We all gathered in their room for a bedtime snack, and Freddy and Dinky bent their ears double with a wild, running account of what we had just seen.

"Honest to Pete! That Axel's just gotta' be right out of this world!" Angelina exclaimed, shaking her head from side to side.

"I don't know about that," said Mortimer. "I heard they named a town in Greece after him.—He's pretty famous."

"What town...?" Angelina started. But Angela clapped a hand over her mouth.

"Don't ask him that, you ninny!" she cried. "Just for that, Mr. Dalrymple, you can clean up the mess." And she crumbled a cookie in Mortimer's hair.

Axel Breaks The Ice

The next morning, just at daybreak, we were tiptoeing through the dark corridors of the castle, heading for Freddy and Dinky's "sterious" room...where Axel had surprised them "playing leapfrog". Henry was carrying with him a diabolical gadget he'd put together out of some plastic tubing and rubber laboratory hose, a small camera lens, and two of those little mirrors dentists use to find out whether you've been telling your parents the truth about how many cavities you have. He'd fitted the eyepiece from one of his microscopes to it, and rigged the contraption with a series of stiff wires and pieces of fish line that ran through rings around the tubing, so he could bend and twist the lens end of it to point any direction he wanted, after he'd stuffed it through the keyhole. It was a typical piece of "Henry hardware", and like everything else Henry made, we knew it would work.

When we got to the room near the tower, Jeff and Homer stationed themselves at the far end of the corridor, and Mortimer and I took positions at the top of the stairs leading to the tower that overlooked the gorge...just in case Axel showed up with any of his menagerie. Henry went to work, with Freddy and Dinky standing by to give him any advice he might need. It took him but a minute to thread his Rube Goldberg periscope through the keyhole, and then as it grew lighter we could hear him whispering a description of what he could see, to Freddy and Dinky.

"The window's closed now. You sure it was open when you looked in here?"

“Scout’s honor!” said Dinky.

“Looks like a water pitcher and a washbasin on a little table by the window.—Hey!...Wait’ll it gets a little lighter. I’d swear that’s a new cake of Lifebuoy soap sitting beside the washbasin.”

“How long they been makin’ Lifebuoy soap?” Dinky asked.

“They weren’t making it four hundred years ago...that’s for sure!”

“What else do ya’ see?”

“Hey! Wait a minute!—There’s a big telescope on a pedestal mount...over there against the wall! And there’s a table with a loaf of bread on it...and some cheese!”

“Must be pretty stale,” said Freddy. “See any bodies?”

“Naw! But I can’t see too well. I think there’s a lot of cobwebs on my lens. I noticed this keyhole was full of them.—Woops! Wait a minute!” And Henry jerked his periscope out of the keyhole. “Let’s get out of here. Sh-h-h!”

Henry started running down the hall on the balls of his feet, and we all took off after him.

“What’s the matter? What’d ya’ see, Henry? What’d ya’ see?” Dinky kept asking in a hoarse whisper, as we hurried back toward our rooms.

“There was somebody in that big bed I was looking at!” Henry said. And his voice was shaking a bit. “It had a big, high footboard, and I couldn’t see him until he rolled over and almost sat up.—He mighta’ heard us!”

“Was he dead?” Freddy Muldoon almost shouted, and Mortimer clapped him one in the back of the neck.

“I don’t know!” Henry was saying, “I don’t know!”, as we clattered down a dark stairway and found ourselves in our own hall.

That day we ate a picnic lunch down in the gorge, stretched out in the warm sun on a big, flat piece of black basalt that jutted far out into the tumbling, swirling waters of the stream.

“Ah, zis is ze life!” exclaimed Professor Stratavarious, as he popped the top off a bottle of the local brew he had been cooling in the stream. And he smacked his lips and wiped the foam from his chin after downing a healthy draught. “Ah, zat is good...even zo it is not cold enough.—You know, for a really cold glass of beer, zere is

no better place zan ze bar down at ze hotel. Zey keep it on ice all za time.”

“Score one for the professor,” said Angelina.

“For what?” asked Angela.

“Zanzibar! Zanzibar!...stupid. He nearly slipped it past you, didn’t he!”

“Hey! What do you know? Welcome to the club, Professor.”

“What club? What club?—I don’t join clubs.”

“The Geography Club! You just scored a one-pointer.”

“What kind of a stupid club is zat?—You better keep your mind on geology, Number One! You know I don’t like geographers. Zey make stupid maps!”

“I figure that was a two-pointer,” Homer interrupted. “It ain’t easy to do anything with Zanzibar.”

“It is if you’ve got the right accent,” said Mortimer. “I vote for one point.”

“Hey! I been savin’ up one for you guys. I wrote a poem last night,” Homer went on.

“Oh, do let’s hear it!” said Freddy, sticking his fingers in his ears.

“Okay..... An orange is orange,
Grapes are blue;
But Annapolis red,
And an Indianapolis, too!”

“I knew something was gonna’ spoil my lunch,” Mortimer groaned. “The next thing you know, Axel will show up.”

“Speaking of Axel,” Jeff mused, “what are we gonna’ do about that room?”

“I’ve been thinking about it,” said Henry. “Now, we’ve proved that there *is* somebody in there.....”

“How do you know zat?” the professor demanded.

“I saw him!”

“Zat doesn’t mean anysing!” the professor snorted. “I told you, ‘Enry, you got to be careful about what you sink you see in zat castle.”

“What about a cake of Lifebuoy soap?”

“Zat is somesing different. Zat is somesing you can *smell*.”

“Well?”

“Well.....*did* you smell it?”

“Well...not exactly.”

“You see what I tell you?—You got to be very careful.”

“I still think there’s somebody in there,” Henry persisted. “The question is...*how* did he get in there?...And how does he get out?...And how does he get food?”

“Why, he would go in and out ze door, ‘Enry. Zat is very elementary.” the professor scoffed.

“But that keyhole was clogged up with cobwebs! Nobody’s turned a key in that lock for a long time.”

“Maybe the door isn’t even locked,” Jeff suggested. “Maybe you can just push it open.”

“No!” said Henry. “There were cobwebs on the door handle, too. I’m sure nobody’s opened that door for years.”

“Hey, maybe that guy’s been in there ever since the margrape got kilted,” Dinky spouted. “Maybe he just got locked in there.”

“Hoh, boy!” Freddy snorted. “You gotta’ get re-examined. You need help.—Boy...that would mean he was more’n four hundred years old!”

“How do you know he isn’t?” Dinky jibed back at him.

“Cause if he was, he would smell...and we didn’t smell nothin’. Ain’t that right, Professor?”

“I sink you got somesing zere!” said the professor.

“You make me sick,” said Dinky. “Here we got a perfectly good mystery, and you gotta’ go louse it up all the time.”

“I can’t help it if I got a good sense of smell!” And Freddy ducked as Dinky flung a hard boiled egg at him that caught him right above the ear. “Hey, Angie! This one ain’t hard boiled!” Freddy complained, as yellow yolk ran down over his ear.

“I’m sorry, Freddy,” Angelina apologized. “Mistakes will happen. But you shouldn’t crack it on your head, anyway. Crack it on the rock.”

“I didn’t have any choice,” Freddy sputtered.

“Let’s knock off the nonsense,” Jeff said quietly. “We’ve got more important things to worry about than raw eggs.”

“You wouldn’t say that if you were a chicken,” Freddy mumbled.

“Anyway...we have a mystery on our hands,” Henry continued. “I just have a feeling that the castle, and the weird things that have been happening to us, and the person in that room...are all connected, somehow.”

“Hey, maybe there’s a secret passage to that room!” Dinky spouted.

“That’s a distinct possibility,” said Henry. “In fact, it’s about the only possibility.”

“Maybe Axel changes himself into a rat and goes in there to sleep at night,” said Angelina.

“Oh, no! Zat is not possible,” said the professor, shaking his head. “Axel sleeps in ze wine cellar. He is not permitted to sleep upstairs.”

“Well, that settles that!” said Mortimer, trying to shield his mouth with his hand.

“Hey, look!” Dinky cried. “That window’s open again!”

We all looked up at the castle...and sure enough...the window right next to the corner tower was open again.

“Well?” said Henry, looking at the professor.

The professor shrugged. “Maybe ze smell got so bad he *had* to open ze window.”—But you don’t gotta’ be a real person to open a window. Windows fly open lots of times. ‘Specially in places like Schloss Sigismund.”

“Hey, look!” shouted Mortimer, who had focused his binoculars on the window. “That’s a telescope!.....Hey, that’s that telescope you saw, Henry!”

Sure enough, there was the blunt end of a telescope protruding partially from the window casement, and the sun glinted momentarily on its lens.

Henry looked at the professor again. “What about that?”

“I gotta’ admit you got somesing zere, ‘Enry.”

“Some of this is beginning to fit together,” said Henry, thinking out loud, “...the men we see with field glasses, the castle overlooking the mouth of the glacier, the telescope.....I wonder if Axel...I just

wonder?”

“Don’t mention Axel!” Angela pleaded. “I’m already losing sleep, worrying about what kind of a scary thing he’ll haunt us with tonight.”

“Don’t be too hard on Axel, Number One,” said the professor. “When you get to know him better, you will decide he is really very interesting.”

“He’s interesting, alright!—Did he have a bad accident once?...I mean, did his mother drop him...or something?”

“Why do you ask, Number One?”

“Because I noticed that when he brushes his hair back, there’s a big row of stitches right across his forehead...right at the roots of the hair.”

“Oh, zat is nossing! Zat is an old hairline fracture. Zat is all!”

“You know,” said Henry. “I just remembered something I saw in that room this morning. But in all the excitement I forgot it.”

“What was that?” I asked. “A coffin, maybe?”

“No,” said Henry. “It was when I was looking at the bed. There was something hanging from a peg on the wall...and I’d swear, now, it was a wig.”

“A wig? What color was it?”

“Sort of grizzly-gray. You know...like the color of steel wool, maybe.”

“So what?”

“So, it’s odd...that’s all!—And another thing...”

“What?”

“Last night I got that same interference on my radio...about the same time...about quarter-past-twelve.—It was like the jamming effect you get when somebody’s operating a Ham transmitter right next door.”

“You mean...you think maybe somebody’s transmitting from the castle?” Jeff asked.

“It would have to be from the castle,” said Henry. “There isn’t any other place close enough, where a Ham operator could be transmitting, that would cause that effect.”

"Maybe Axel has an electric razor and shaves at midnight," said Mortimer.

"Where would he plug it in?"

"Where do you plug in your radio?" "It operates on batteries."

"So?"

"Well....." Henry rubbed his chin. "I just don't think a razor could cause it. This wasn't just static! This was a complete jamming...like a power override.—I couldn't get anything...on any frequency."

"That's a Ham, alright!" said Jeff. "Whatta' we do?"

"I think...if Sepp will drive us up to the Glocknerhaus later on...maybe you and I could bunk in the blimp tonight. With all the professor's commo gear, maybe we could sweep the bands about midnight and see if we can pick up anything."

"Good idea!" said Jeff. "Let's do it!"

"Could I go with you?" Angelina pleaded. "I don't wanna' see another ghost tonight."

"You' d need a chaperone, " said Mortimer. "And I'm not available tonight."

"Why not?"

"I have a date with Axel.—He promised to introduce me to that lady ghost you claim you saw."

"Listen, daddy-oh! If I needed a chaperone, it would only be because *you* were around."

"Is that a compliment; or an insult?" Mortimer chided her. "Oh, by the way...is that a new jersey you're wearing?"

"Let's get him!" cried Angela. "No points for that one!" And Mortimer had to scamper off the rock before he got pushed into the water.

Freddy watched the chase, and then turned to Dinky. "Hey!" he said. "Soon as we get back to the castle, let's go up on the battlements and play Cowboys and Indians!"

"Are you nuts?" Dinky sneered at him. "There weren't never no Indians around here!—Besides...my mother says it ain't nice to shoot Indians."

Freddy rubbed his nose. "What about shootin' cowboys?"

“She didn’t say nothin’ about that,” said Dinky.

“Hey! I got a better idea.”

“What?”

“Let’s ‘splore for that secret passage!”

“Good idea!” said Dinky. Then he turned to me. “Would you go with us, Charlie?—Just in case that big dog shows up?”

“Well, I didn’t bring my dog net with me...but I’ll go along,” I said.

“Hey! That’s a good idea!” Freddy exclaimed. “We got a net we could throw over that dog? I betcha’ that would stop him!”

“Hey! I betcha’ it would. Hey! We could even throw a net over Axel,” said Dinky. “Even a butterfly net would do it.”

“Hey! Maybe we could throw a net over that lady ghost, if she shows up!”

“That wouldn’t do any good, Freddy,” I said. “Ghosts can walk right through anything. That’s why nobody’s ever gotten hold of one.—But I’ll go with you.”

“Okay!” said Freddy. “But I don’t believe all that stuff about ghosts. Boy! I’d sure like to tackle one! I betcha’ I could find out who it is.”

“Maybe so,” I said. “Maybe you’ll have your chance.”

And Freddy started demolishing sandwiches and hard boiled eggs and pickles and hot knockwurst and apfel strudel to build up his strength for the coming encounter.

A few hours later, Dinky had his eye screwed up to the keyhole in the door to the mysterious room. “I can’t see nothin’...’cept the window’s closed again.”

“What do we do now?” I asked him.

“We gotta’ investigate,” he said. And he led us to the adjacent tower, where he and Freddy started probing the walls—pushing at the corners of stones, and running their fingers down crevices between them, hoping that something magical would happen. “I seen this in the movies lots of times,” Dinky insisted. “There’s always one of these rocks that moves, and...blooey!...you got a secret passage.—I figure it’s gotta’ come out into this tower somewheres.”

“What if it goes down through the floor, or in between the walls?”

“That depends on what movies you been seein’.”

By the time Freddy and Dinky got tired of pressing their fingers against stones in the wall, we had worked our way down the tower staircase far below the level of the room. Suddenly we heard a grating and creaking sound, and looked up to see a section of the stone wall above us slowly opening outward. At the same time, a tread of the stairway a few steps above it pivoted upward as though it were hinged at the end nearest the wall.

“That’s how it works!” Dinky exclaimed in a hoarse whisper. “You gotta’ lift that step.”

“Somebody’s comin’ outa’ there!” Freddy warned. “Let’s beat it!”

There was no way to get back up to the hall. The only way to go was down. And down the spiral staircase of the tower we went, clinging close to the wall to avoid being seen. Above us we could hear plodding footsteps, coming slowly after us. Down and down we went, in a breathless, running plunge, trying to keep from making any noise...and hoping that somewhere there would be another hallway, or at least a niche we could hide in.

Have you ever had a nightmare where you’re running away from something, and there just isn’t any place to hide? That’s the spot we were in. Only it wasn’t a nightmare...it was for real! That stairway just kept curving downward and getting darker all the time, till we thought we must be almost down to the dungeons of the castle.— Then, suddenly, a flagstone floor rose up to almost hit us in the face, and we knew we had come to the bottom of the stairs.

“Where are we? Where are we?” Dinky kept croaking. “We gotta’ get outa’ here!”

We groped around in the semi-darkness and found a stout wooden door with an iron grille at head height. But it was locked.

“Hey, what’s this?” Freddy whispered. And he swung open the door of a huge wood cabinet that stood against the wall. It was easily eight feet high and just as wide.

“Let’s get in here! Maybe he won’t see us!”

We all three crammed inside and tried to hold our breath. We could still hear the plodding footsteps coining down the stairs. A cold draft of air hit the backs of our necks, and I turned to see where it

was coming from.

“Hey! This thing has doors on both sides,” I said. “Look! This one slides sideways!” And I pushed aside a large section of the back panel of the cabinet. Behind it was nothing but darkness and cold air. Dinky snapped on his flashlight for a brief instant. What we saw looked like the interior of a huge dumbwaiter, large enough for three or four men to stand in.

“Hey! I betcha’ that’s what they brought all them fresh eggs up in!” Dinky said. “Maybe we could pull ourselves up to the kitchen, and get around this guy.” The footsteps were coming closer, and we could hear what sounded like the tapping of a stick.

“What have we got to lose?” I said. And we stepped into the wooden box.

I grabbed one of the ropes and pulled on it, but the thing didn’t budge. I pulled on the other one...but instead of going up, the car started downward.

“Here we go again!” I said. “I thought we’d already reached bottom!”

“How far down does this stupid castle go?” Freddy wailed.

Down and down we went. I didn’t want to pull us down too fast, because I didn’t know where we were going. But I didn’t want to pull too slowly, either, because whoever was behind us would soon be at the bottom of the stairs and might hear the ropes and pulleys of the dumbwaiter. It just seemed we’d never get to the bottom of the shaft.

“Maybe we’ll end up at the bottom of a well,” Freddy moaned.

And then there was the faintest glimmer of light on the wall of the shaft, and pretty soon we could see the stone work. A moment later, the car came to a stop as the rope went taut in my hands. We were looking through a stone archway into a large, circular room with a vaulted ceiling and a low stone wall forming a second circle in the center of it.

“This is the end of the line. Get out!” I said, giving the other two a shove.

We tumbled out into the odd-looking room and looked about us. A very dim shaft of light faintly illuminated a patch of the stone floor. It came from an aperture half way up the curved ceiling, and

when you looked up at it you could see that a shaft had been cut through many yards of the mountainside to provide the only “window” for the room. We didn’t know where we were; but we had the feeling, somehow, that we were deep, deep beneath the castle...somewhere in the bowels of the mountain it was built on. We started cautiously toward the odd. circle of low wall in the center of the room. But just then we heard the ropes of the dumbwaiter slap back and forth...and the car started moving upward.

“Hey! Hey! That guy’s pulling the car back up! He’s gonna’ trap us down here!” cried Freddy.

“Worse than that...I think he’s coming down,” I said.

“Hey, we gotta’ get outa’ here,” Dinky wailed. “C’mon, let’s go!”

“Where would you suggest we go?” I asked him.

We looked frantically about us for some means of escape...or at least a place to hide. I shone Dinky’s flashlight into the shaft of the dumbwaiter.

There was a shallow pit below the rock ledge the car had rested on, but deep enough for one of us to lie down in.

“Get in there, Freddy!” I said. “And lie flat. You’ll be okay if you don’t panic.”

Freddy jumped into the pit, and I looked around for some place to hide Dinky. There was a crusty old suit of armor standing in a shadowy niche, with a halberd clutched in its left hand. I knew that suits of armor opened up in the back, because that’s how knights climbed into them in the old days. I hustled Dinky over there, grabbed him by the armpits, and stuffed him in through the back of the breastplate.

“Ouch!” Dinky cried. “This guy had long legs! I feel like I’m riding a horse.”

“You’ll just have to hold your breath and bear it,” I said, tersely, And I dove for the shadow of one of the short columns that supported the vaulted roof.

Just then, Freddy catapulted out of the dumbwaiter shaft screaming: “There’s two rats in there, bigger’n cats! I ain’t stayin’ in there!”

“Get down behind that wall in the middle of the room, and pray

for the best!” I hissed at him.

Freddy plopped onto his belly like a bloated jellyfish, and then curled himself up close to the wall on the opposite side from the dumbwaiter. We had just a few seconds to catch our breath. The dumbwaiter car came creaking and rattling down the shaft, and when it came to rest in the archway, the grizzled old Austrian we had all seen before stepped out and looked cautiously about him. He seemed to be listening very carefully. I held my breath till I thought my lungs would burst, and prayed like I’ve never prayed before, that Freddy wouldn’t burp.

He didn’t. The old Austrian finally swung his alpenstock over his shoulder and thrust it down through the belt in the back of his jacket. Then he strode to the near side of the circular wall in the center of the room, threw a leg over it, and just dropped out of sight.

My heart was pounding so loudly, and the pulses in my wrists were beating so hard, that I could easily count the seconds. I waited a full minute. Then I stepped out of the shadow of the column and tiptoed over to the wall. Cautiously, I peered over the rim of the wall and looked down into what was apparently a deep well...so deep that I couldn’t see the bottom, except that there was a faint glimmer of light far below. There I could barely make out the figure of the old man, as he made his way, rung by rung, down an iron ladder fastened to the stonework of the well.—Then he disappeared again.

I tapped Freddy on the shoulder and he unclutched himself from the wall and popped to his feet. “What gives, Charlie?” he asked me. “Where is the guy? Who is he?”

“Be quiet!” I said. “We’ve got to get Dinky out of that pair of iron pants before he passes out!”

Together, we carefully lowered the suit of armor to the floor and pulled Dinky out of it. He was pretty blue in the face, but he was still breathing and ready to fight any ghost that might show up.

“Boy!” he said. “What did those guys do when they had to go to the bathroom?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “But people keep telling me they didn’t have any bathrooms in those days.”

“Yeah!” said Freddy. “They was just like astronauts.”

"I guess you're right," said Dinky. "Them astronauts ain't any better off than them knights was."

"Dinky," I said, "I think we may have found your secret passage. This is it! Either that, or that old Austrian just committed suicide." And I led them to the circular wall. "You see that ladder? He just climbed down it. And he disappeared.—If it isn't a well...it's got to lead to something. And my guess is; it leads to a tunnel.—The question is: do we follow him?...or do we go back up and tell the others?"

Dinky peered down into the darkness of the well. "I say we toss a penny down there; and if it comes up heads we follow him, and if it comes up tails we go back and get the other guys." And Dinky fished in his pocket and came up with a penny that he tossed into the blackness below us. "It's heads," he said, peering over the wall. "Let's follow him!"

"You're a real nut!" said Freddy, as he followed Dinky down the ladder. "When we get back home, remind me to turn you in to a museum."

It must have been a good hundred feet down that ladder. But if that decrepit old Austrian could make it, we figured we could. When we finally got to the bottom, there wasn't any question about what we had discovered. We had unlocked the secret of how Arnulf the Stupid got his fresh eggs...and how the old Austrian who had been haunting us, made his way to the room with the Lifebuoy soap and the telescope.

The well was not a well, of course. It was simply a dry shaft that had been dug straight down through the mountain and lined with stonework. At the bottom of it we found another wooden dumbwaiter car like the one we'd ridden down to the circular room. It had a big hook and pulley on top of it, and there was a lot of rotten old rope lying about.

"Hey, that's how they got supplies up to the castle during the siege," said Dinky. "That's when they musta' dug this hole."

"Yeah," said Freddy. "I saw a big pulley hanging from the ceiling up there, right over this hole. Pretty clever...huh?"

"Yeah! I bet that fooled the enemy alright. I wonder if they ever got wise to it?"

“But how’d they get the stuff in here?—Hey! Where’d that old geezer go to, Charlie?”

“He went that way!” I said, pointing Dinky’s flashlight toward a pair of narrow iron rails embedded in the stone floor. The rails led to the mouth of a dark tunnel, and all we had to do was follow them.

“Boy! They even had their own underground railroad,” Dinky whispered, as we made our way into the tunnel. “That was real neat.”

We went slowly, letting our eyes get accustomed to the greater darkness of the tunnel so we wouldn’t have to risk using the flashlight. Then suddenly, as we groped our way around a broad curve in the track, a small pinprick of light appeared in the distance. It kept appearing, then disappearing, and I figured Freddy’s “old geezer” was still plodding toward the exit. I motioned to Freddy and Dinky to be quiet, and we moved ahead very cautiously. Soon the light became suddenly stronger, and we could see our way clearly for a moment. Then it almost disappeared again.

“C’mon,” I said. “He’s left the tunnel. He must have opened a door, or something.”

“Boy! I betcha’ this is the biggest secret passage in the whole world!” said Dinky, as we hurried along.

“I betcha’ it is!” said Freddy.

At the end of the tunnel we found a small door made of heavy timbers. It canted outward slightly at the top, and it had a peephole in it that admitted a thin beam of daylight. When I squinted through the peephole I could see rushing water whipped into white foam, a section of the opposite bank of the gorge, and part of a footpath running on the near side of the stream. Cautiously, I pressed down on the door handle. The door swung open...slowly and silently....and a counterweight right beside it slid silently up an iron rod.

The door was a magnificent piece of workmanship. Irregularly shaped, it had been built to fit the contour of a shelf of rock protected from view by an overhanging ledge. The original rock face, through which the door had been cut, was fastened to the timbers of the door with huge bolts, drilled into it and set with mortar. It took but a gentle push to close the door, with the help of the counterweight. And to open it from the outside, you had only to step lightly on a jagged piece of rock that released the catch. When we stepped through it, the

door hung open in perfect balance, and we found ourselves behind a screen of bushes that hid us from the footpath.

Far up the path, we could see the plodding figure of the old Austrian, heading for the chain bridge about two hundred yards upstream.

“Well, that solves part of the mystery,” I said. “At least we know how that guy gets in and out of the castle.”

“Yeah! And he’s probably the cause of most of the trouble we’ve been having,” Dinky added.

“We gotta’ get back and tell the others,” said Freddy. “Hey! Why don’t we go back up the trail and ring the bell at the gate.—Old Axel would never figure out how we got out of the place.”

“I don’t know about that,” I said. “I’m sure Axel knows all about that secret passage.—We’d just be tipping our hand.”

Back we went...through the tunnel, up the iron ladder to the circular room, up the dumbwaiter to the cabinet at the foot of the tower stairs, and up the stairs to the hallway outside the “mysterious” room.

“Now we know how to get in that room,” said Freddy, “let’s go in there and see what there is?”

“No,” I said. “We gotta’ wash up for supper.—Besides, we oughta’ have Jeff and Henry with us, and they’ve gone up to the blimp for the night. When they get back tomorrow, we’ll take a look in there.”

“Yeah,” Dinky agreed. “We had enough scary stuff for today. I don’t want no more.”

Angelina was really mad at us for showing up late for supper. “You characters think we got nothing to do but cook for you all day?” she asked us.

“Whadda’ ya’ mean, *cook*?” said Freddy.

“That’ll be enough out of you, Muldoon!” she said, flicking him one on the ear with a dishrag. “How’d you like to get nothing but beans for the rest of the week?”

“That’d be an improvement!” said Freddy, and this time he really got it with the dishrag. “Ow-w-w! Whadda’ ya’ plan to do when you grow up?”

“I don’t know! But I don’t want to end up being a cook.”

“Don’t you wanna’ get married?”

“Not if it means I have to cook!”

“Boy! That means you don’t have any choice, Angie,” said Dinky.

“What do you mean, daddy-oh?”

“You either gotta’ marry a chef or a short order cook, or you ain’t gonna’ eat.”

“Could I have a banana?” said Freddy.

“A banana? Are you nuts, Muldoon? Have you flipped your lid? I haven’t seen a banana since we left the States,” said Angelina.

“Freddy always asks for a banana,” Homer explained. “The way he eats them, you’d think they grew on trees.”

“Don’t they?” said Angela.

“Do they?” said Homer.

After supper we told the others about what we’d discovered. We would have called an executive session of The Mad Scientists’ Club, but since Jeff and Henry were missing, we decided to just spill it all out.

“You mean you really found the secret passage?” Homer exclaimed.

“Shucks, we found three of ‘em,” said Dinky. “there’s the one from the room to the tower stairs...then there’s that dumbwaiter in back of that old cabinet...and then there’s that long tunnel to the gorge.—It’s the biggest secret passage in the whole world!”

“Hoh! I told you zat Arnulf ze Stupid was very clever,” the professor snorted. “Oh, he dearly loved his fresh eggs.”

“I don’t understand about the eggs,” Angela inquired. “Couldn’t they raise chickens in the castle yards? I’ve always read that they had pigs, and goats, and chickens, and horses, and even cows inside big castles like this...just in case they got besieged.”

“Oh, yes!” said the professor. “Zey had plenty of chickens to begin wiz. But zey had to eat zem all during ze siege.—In fact, Arnulf ate ze last two, himself...including ze rooster. Zat is why zey called him Arnulf ze Stupid.”

“And what about this Margrave of Carinthia that Axel claims was shot in that room four hundred years ago? Is that a true story?”

“Oh, yes! He was a wonderful man, ze Margrave.”

“Did you know him?” Angelina asked, hiding a smirk.

“I don’t sink so! At least I don’t remember him.—But he was a wonderful man, just ze same.”

“How come he got shot?”

“He got too nosy!—You see...he had an idea he might want to take over all of ze Tirol some day. But first, he wanted to find out how ze Tiroleans made zose wonderful cheeses wiz all ze holes in zem.”

“Well?”

The professor shrugged. “So, one day a Tirolean peasant decided to show him...and he made a big hole in ze Margrave.—Zat is all!”

“I heard different!.....Down in the village,” said Mortimer.

“How’s zat?”

“I heard he got exposed to a rare Germany died...of a grave illness.”

“Zat may be so,” said the professor.

Then Mortimer really got it with the dishrag.

“You had to sit up all night thinking that one up!” Angela cried, lunging at him.

“You keep that up, and we’ll throw you out of the club!” Angelina taunted him, snapping the dishrag right under his nose.

Mortimer beat a hasty retreat and I joined him, fighting the women off all the way up to the safety of our room.

There wasn’t any storm to keep us awake that night, but there might just as well have been. About midnight I found myself out in the hall, with Mortimer pushing his way through the door behind me. The whole castle seemed to be trembling as the throbbing, pulsating tones of an organ being played with all the stops out echoed through the halls and corridors. One-by-one, doors popped open up and down the hall, and heads peered out into the darkness. The music faded and swelled, alternately, sending huge waves of sound through the castle as the volume reached a crescendo. Again, there were bits of plaster and paint sprinkling down from the walls and ceilings.

“What is it? What is it?” I could hear the frantic whisper of Angelina.

“I don’t know,” Angela answered. “It’s surely an organ.....But I

never heard that tune before. What is it?"

"Oh, zat is Axel's tune," came the voice of the professor from farther down the hallway. "He is playing ze organ."

"What organ?" I asked. "I haven't seen any organ in the castle."

"Oh, zere is a huge organ," said the professor. "It is in ze chapel. And when zey slide ze roof back, you can hear it way down in ze village.—You haven't seen ze chapel yet."

"Who are *"they"*?" Mortimer asked.

"Axel and his helpers," said the professor. "He has lots of zem.—Come, we will go see zem."

"There's a full moon tonight," said Angela. "I just *knew* something would happen.—Let's go back to bed!"

"We might as well go with the professor," Homer moaned. "There'll be no sleep tonight."

The professor led us down the grand staircase and across the great hail to an arched doorway, deep in a recess. "Oh, it is too bad ze count is not here tonight," he said. "He does enjoy it so, when Axel plays ze organ."

"Maybe he can hear it down in the village," said Freddy Muldoon.

"Oh, no!" said the professor. "When zey hear ze organ down in ze village, zey close all ze doors and windows, and everybody goes down in ze cellar...if zey got one."

"How come?"

"Because zey know somesing bad is going to happen, Mr. Stupid! When Axel plays ze organ wiz zee roof open, somesing bad always happens."

"Then why are we going to watch him?" Dinky asked, with a quaver in his voice.

"Because you don't always get a chance to watch Axel play ze organ, Mr. Dinky. He doesn't play it every year, you know."

Through the door we went and followed the professor down an arcade lined with fluted columns that connected the main residence building we lived in with a smaller building that looked like a church. In fact, it *was* a church. Despite the full moon, there was a brisk, cool wind flapping our pajamas against our legs. Clouds scudded past the face of the moon, and somewhere off in the distance

we could hear something like the howling of wolves. We had never been in this part of the castle grounds before.

“Now, be quiet!” said the professor, as he led us to a small door at the side of the chapel building. “We must sneak up into ze choir loft, and pretend we are not zere.”

We groped our way up a dark stairway as the music of the organ literally thundered in our ears. It was like being at the bottom of an ocean of sound, and you could feel tremors running through the floor of the choir loft when the bass pipes opened up. The professor had been right. A huge section of the chapel roof had been rolled back, and we could see the stars, and the moon, and the wind-blown clouds.

But that was nothing! Beyond and above the altar, opposite us, gleamed the huge brass pipes of an organ that was bigger than any I’d ever seen. And below them, flanked by two huge candles that must have been four feet tall, was the organ console. In the flickering candlelight, we could see the figure of Axel...dressed resplendently in a tunic of rich brocade...his hair powdered white and tied back from his forehead with a gold band...his right hand clutching a conductor’s baton...but his stubby feet completely bare.—He was hopping back and forth over the console’s banks of keys, depressing them with his toes, and pulling and pushing stops with his fingers. Off to one side, on a treadmill, ran the Great Dane dog...pumping air into the organ, while Flugelpferd, the black falcon, flitted back and forth among the pipe mouths, getting a free ride up to the ceiling, then dropping down again to find another blast of air.

“I can’t believe it! I can’t believe it!” Angela gasped. “I’m still in bed. I’m having a nightmare.”

“Oh, you gotta’ believe it,” said the professor. “Zat is ze only way Axel can play ze organ.—He don’t got such long arms, you know.”

Though Axel gave no indication that he knew we were watching him, I’m sure that he did. For we had no sooner crouched behind the balustrade of the choir loft, than the music suddenly changed in tone and volume. It became muted, and plaintive...and soon there was a subtle motif in the melody that suggested the strains of the violin music we had heard two nights before. I heard Angelina catch her breath in her throat, and I knew what to look for.—From the shadows

of the columns flanking the nave of the chapel there emerged the ghostly figure of the woman we had seen at the top of the grand staircase!

Slowly, her steps measured to the music, she moved toward the aisle. And as the flickering candlelight fell upon her, you could faintly see the dagger protruding from her breast. With her arms thrust downward and clenched tightly to her sides, she turned her back to us and knelt at the base of the altar. As she did so, the moon broke from behind a cover of clouds; and through the opening in the chapel roof it cast a rectangle of silver light upon the floor about her.

“She’s beautiful!” Angela sighed. “Who is she?”

“I don’t know,” said the professor. “You gotta’ ask Axel zat!”

“I told you,” Angelina whispered to her. “I told you she was beautiful.”

“This is a pretty good show,” said Freddy Muldoon. “That Axel oughta’ charge admission.”

“He musta’ got that costume from some a’ Liberace’s leftovers,” said Dinky Poore.

Then the music changed again. It was a like a death dirge, only set to the tempo of a slow march. Rather than hopping over the keys, Axel was just stepping on them. From a dark corner of the chapel we caught the glint of light on steel. Then, slowly, a dark figure emerged. It was a huge figure...a man all in black. A skin-tight black suit covered his entire body. Black gloves covered his hands. A black mask hid his face.

“That’s a...a headsman!” Mortimer gasped.

Clutched in the hands of the towering figure was a giant halberd—its sharp blade now fully reflecting the light of the candles. The figure moved in a stiff-legged, deliberate walk toward the kneeling woman. Then it paused menacingly above her...the blade of the halberd flashing high over her head.

The woman’s arms shot upward, stretching to their utmost length. And as her head tilted backward, the beautiful, long black hair brushed the floor behind her.

“Oh, no! No! He’s not....” cried Angela. But the crashing crescendo that poured from the organ drowned out her voice as Axel

literally jumped up and down on the keys and pulled out all the stops.

The music swelled in volume and intensity. until I thought my eardrums would break. And the walls of the chapel seemed almost to bellow in and out as the sheer force of the sound waves reverberating from them echoed back and forth. A blast of air that must have come from the organ itself virtually extinguished the two giant candles, and their flames sputtered and flickered feebly in the almost complete darkness that had suddenly engulfed us. Then, just as the ever-rising crescendo of the music became almost intolerable to the human ear, there was a horrendous, rending, crashing sound that seemed to shake the whole castle and the mountain beneath us. It echoed and re-echoed from the ridges around us, then slowly faded into a deep, rumbling sound that finally subsided. We were all standing on our feet, holding onto each other. The chapel was in complete darkness. Even the moon had retreated behind the clouds.

“Holy Mackerel!” cried Freddy Muldoon. “Who uncorked that one?” Then Dinky Poore—who never goes anywhere without it—whipped his flashlight out and shone it toward the altar.—There was no lady ghost. There was no headsman. There was no Axel. There was no dog. Even Flugelpferd had disappeared!

“Get me out of here!” Angela screamed. “I won’t stay in this place another night!” And she groped frantically for the head of the stairway.

“Double in spades, oh, daddy-oh!” cried Angelina. And she tumbled after her.

“Number One! Number Two! Wait a minute, darlings!” the professor sputtered. “I sink I can explain everyising!”

“Explain it to your grandmother, Whiskers!” Angelina shot back at him.

“You know...ze girls are very upset,” the professor was saying, as we stumbled down the stairs after the two fleeing females. “But zere is a very logical explanation. I know what has happened.—A big chunk of ice has split off ze mouse of ze glacier and has crashed down into ze gorge.—It happens every once in a while. But especially it happens when Axel plays ze organ!”

“It couldn’t have happened at a better time,” said Freddy. “Maybe we can move back to the hotel now, and get some real food.”

“That may explain the big earthquake, professor,” said Mortimer. “But what about all the rest of that hocus pocus?”

“I don’t know nossing about all zat pocus stuff,” the professor panted, as we ran after the girls. “You got to ask Axel about zat!”

We caught up with the girls as they were struggling to the top of the grand staircase and tried our best to calm them down. But Freddy Muldoon had to open his big mouth.

“Boy! That Axel character sure works some neat magic,” he said. “I gotta’ find out how he does it.”

“Oh, shut up!!!! You miserable little brat!” Angela screamed at him. And she ran, sobbing, to her room.

**You
Gotta
Believe
It
To
See
It!**

The next morning the professor roused us early. He had already been to the north battlements to view the results of the icefall of the night before. And at breakfast he was ecstatic.

“Hoh, it is somesing!” he exclaimed. “I sink maybe ze biggest icefall zis glacier has had in many years.—We got to get to work now!”

“What really happened, Professor?” Dinky asked him. “I don’t understand.”

“Hoh, Dinky! Zat tongue was way over-extended! I should have been able to predict it, but we didn’t have time to make all ze right measurements.—You see...you get too much ice sticking out ze mouse of ze glacier...and it got to go somewhere. Ze best way is down.—Hoh, boy! Did it come down!”

“I thought it was just supposed to melt, Professor?” said Angelina.

“Hoh, boy, Number Two!...You gonna’ flunk zis course! You sink too much about ghosts and simple stuff like zat. You gotta’ sink more about ice.—Ze tongue only melts in ze summer, mostly. You get a couple cool summers and you got trouble....Hoh, boy!...Do you got trouble!”

“I’m sorry, Professor. I didn’t know that.”

“Hoh, boy, Number Two! You make me sick! You gonna’ flunk zis course.—Hey! I got a good idea for you, Number Two! You wanna’ pass zis course...you go right up on ze battlements now...and you take a good look. If you smart, you get a good idea what can happen if you stick your tongue out too much.”

“Okay-y-y,” said Angelina, putting down her napkin with a weary shake of her head. “But I’m not goin’ up there alone, daddy-oh! I’m too scared.”

“Dinky and Freddy will go wiz you,” said the professor. “Zey sink all zat ghost stuff is fun.—And stop calling me ‘daddy-hoh’!”

“Okay, Whiskers!”

“Zat’s better.”

Angelina was obviously still shaken from the events of the night before, but Freddy and Dinky made her feel better as they scampered up to the battlements with her.

“Hoh, boy!” said the professor, as they left. “Sometimes I sink zat Number Two got a striated pinnacle for a head.”

The rest of us felt a little embarrassed by the whole thing, because none of us except Henry knew all that much about glaciers, either. We sat there, looking down at our plates, trying to finish breakfast.

“I feel sorry for Angie,” I whispered to Mortimer. “I didn’t know all that stuff, either.”

“Yeah!” he whispered back. “But *you* didn’t stick your tongue out too far!”

“I guess it’s a good thing Axel played that organ last night...or that stuff would still be sittin’ there...hanging over our heads,” said Homer.

“Zat is right!” said the professor. “It could have been much worse. We should sank Axel for all zat noise.”

“Boy! He sure tromped on those keys,” said Homer. “I never heard anything so loud in all my life.”

“You got to remember, Mr. Snodgrass,” said the professor, “zat people who play ze organ are people who like to make noise.”

“I guess that’s right,” said Homer...even though he almost never says anything like that about anybody.

“What do we do now?” I asked the professor.

“We got to make more measurements,” he said. “And we got to make zem fast.—We go up to ze glacier today and make sightings on all zose stakes for ze last time. We got to do zat before ze whole glacier slips down into ze valley!—Zat could happen, you know. All kinds of sings can happen on a glacier when you lose a big chunk of ice like zat. But mostly, ze glacier just moves a little faster for awhile.—Zat is what we got to find out.”

“I see what you mean,” I said, not taking any chances.

“If that glacier’s going to slide down into the valley, hadn’t we better get out of here?” Angela asked. Then she gulped, and you could see she was already sorry she’d asked the question.

“Number One,” the professor glowered at her, waving his fork with a piece of bacon on it right under her nose, “sometimes I sink you got a head like Number Two!—I am ze world’s expert on pushing glaciers down into valleys! I will decide when we should get out of here.—And when I do, you better. run, Number One!” Then he popped the slab of bacon into his mouth.

“I will! Oh, I will!” Angela assured him. And she started hastily clearing dishes off the table.

“We got to hurry now, and get down to ze road,” said the professor, lighting up a cigar. “We got to catch Sepp and Siegfried before zey go up to get Jeff and ‘Enry...so’s we can get a ride.”

“Are we ever gonna’ see that Abdominal (sic) Snowman before we leave here?” Dinky asked, as we made our way down the trail to the chain bridge.

“Oh, Dinky! I told you he was marooned in ze Himalayas.—Besides...you wouldn’t see him in ze summertime, anyway.”

“Why not?”

“He cannot go out in zat hot sun! He would get water on ze brain!”

We made it to the road in time to flag down Sepp on his way to pick up Jeff and Henry with the bus. When we got to the Glocknerhaus, the two of them were eating breakfast in the little dining room that looked out on the glacier, where Blimp was moored, and they were full of bacon and eggs and questions.

“Did you guys feel that earthquake last night?” Jeff asked us,

excitedly. “Boy, we’d just sacked out in the blimp, when it rattled our teeth something fierce. We thought we were taking off.”

“What are you all doing up here?” Henry wanted to know. “I thought we were working in the gorge today.”

The professor explained about the icefall and the change in our work schedule. “We got to make our measurements on all zose stakes right away,” he said. “Zen tomorrow, we will get a whole bunch of ice samples from zat big mess down at ze mouse of ze glacier, and we will do some experiments to calculate melting rates.”

“You mean we’re gonna’ work right down below the mouth of the glacier?” Jeff gasped.

“Of course!” said the professor. “Zis is ze safest time to do it!—It will be a long time before anozzer ice shelf breaks off zis old girl,” and he gestured lovingly toward the broad expanse of ice visible through the windows. “You know...you got to take advantage of every break...excuse ze expression...in zis business.—Believe me...you got to use your noodle in zis business, Mr. Crocker, or maybe you find out you ain’t got one!”

Jeff started to open his mouth, but Angela interrupted him. “Don’t argue with the professor. Just do what he says,” she warned him.

Then Henry broke in, to tell us their news. “We got a fix on those transmissions last night,” he- said. “We’re pretty sure they’re coming from the castle, alright.—Whoever it is...they’re talking to Amsterdam!”

Dinky Poore’s eyes popped open. “Amsterdam?” he said. “You mean where they cut up all them diamonds?”

“Yeah,” said Jeff. “We’re sure it was Amsterdam.”

“What’d they say?”

“We don’t know. They spoke in two or three languages. We could only pick up a few words in English.”

“One guy kept saying ‘Alfred here’, when he came on the air,” said Henry. “And there was another one that called himself Henrik.—We know that those two were talking from the castle, because they were on that frequency. You know...a Ham has to talk on one frequency and receive on another. And we made a fix with the professor’s direction finders on the frequency that was being

transmitted from the castle.”

“Boy, you guys musta’ been busy,” said Dinky.

“It wasn’t easy,” said Jeff.

“Hey!” said Freddy. “While you guys were spinnin’ them knobs and flippin’ switches, you missed a good show down at the castle. Axel was great!” And he told them all about the reappearance of the lady ghost, and the headsman, and the organ.

“That all fits in!” Henry exclaimed. “That all fits in!—That’s the second time they tried to scare us out of the castle with a ghost. And Axel was in on the act both times.”

“I think you’ve got something, Henry,” said Mortimer. “They figured the ghost would scare Homer and the girls out of the place...and the big ice crash would scare the pants off the rest of us.”

“Hey! Watch what you’re sayin’,” Homer complained. “I ain’t scared of ghosts.—‘Specially lady ghosts.”

“Did you ever try to kiss one?” Mortimer asked him. “All you get is a mouthful of cobwebs.”

“We got to get moving, now,” the professor interrupted. “We got lot’s to do.—And we going to quit early. Tonight I got a special surprise for you. We will have dinner down at ze hotel.”

“Hooray!” shouted Freddy.

“You watch zat, Freddy!” the professor admonished him, cracking him one on the shins with his walking stick. “You keep zat up, and I’ll have Number Two pack a box lunch for you to eat while ze rest of us are dining wiz ze burgermeister.”

Freddy shut up.

Then the professor explained that he had invited Burgermeister Weixelbaumer and Hauptmann Gruber, Chief of the Polizei, to have dinner with us, along with some of the other notables of Heiligenblut. Since our work was nearly finished, and we would soon be leaving, he figured it was time to repay their kindness and generosity. So he had invited almost everyone who had attended the banquet in his honor the evening we arrived.

“Even Kaminkehrermeister Praxmire will be zere,” he announced proudly.

“Kamin who?” several of us asked at once.

“Ze kaminkehrermeister of Heiligenblut!...naturally,” he said, fixing his monocle in his eye and looking a little offended. “Zat is ze chimney sweeper, Toni Praxmire. He is a very important man!—Only, almost nobody ever invites him to a party.”

Looking forward to getting off early and having a pleasant evening in the village, we worked like beavers along the entire length of the south edge of the glacier. Our transit sightings showed that a good number of the stakes had moved a considerable distance since we had last measured them, and there were several new crevasses that had opened up. We made notes on their size and position as we moved along.

“Don’t you want us to bring in the stakes and the flags, Professor?” Angela asked. “Isn’t this the last time we’re making movement measurements?”

“Oh, no! Zat is not necessary,” said the professor. “Zey are not worse zat much.—But zey will be some day. Every one of zem has my name stamped on ze side, and ze date we set zem out. Two hundred years from now, some lucky people may find zem buried in ze ice, and zey will have very valuable souvenirs to sell to some geological museum.”

During the morning I filled in Jeff and Henry on the fantastic complex of secret passages we had discovered, and the tunnel leading to the gorge. They both agreed we should take a look at the room at the earliest opportunity.

“Maybe we’ll have time before we go down to the village...if we get dressed in a hurry,” said Henry. “I’ll just bet the Ham outfit we’re looking for is in that room.”

Later, while we were setting up our transit on a steep, rocky slope, Jeff scratched his head and looked about us. “You know...something funny!” he said. “This is the first day I can remember that we haven’t seen somebody watching us.”

“Yeah,” said Mortimer. “Maybe Axel scared all the evil spirits away last night, with that great act he put on.”

Just then he slipped off the edge of a rock and stepped right on a mean-looking thistle. “Ouch!” he screamed. “I’ve been stabbed!”

“That’s what you get for wearing sneakers,” Homer chided him. “I told you to wear heavy shoes!”

“Oh, zat is too bad! Zat stuff smarts somesing fierce,” said Sepp as he pulled the thorn out of Mortimer’s shoe and got out his first aid kit to dress the wound. “Zat is one of our mountain herbs. We call it prickly thyme. It is terrible!”

“I heard of that stuff,” said Homer. “That’s one of the thymes that try men’s soles.”

“Ouch!” screamed Mortimer again, as Sepp squeezed the wound and poured iodine on it. “I’ll get you for that, Homer, if it’s the last thing I do!”

“You better hurry,” Homer jeered. “I heard that stuff is real poison.”

“We’d better get to work and finish up,” Jeff said to Henry. “I think the altitude is going to Homer’s head.”

We did get finished by early afternoon, and the professor declared a holiday for the rest of the day. He was in high spirits. “I sink you will enjoy ze evening in ze village,” he told us. “Confidentially...I heard zey might hold anozzer parade in my honor.” Then he told us that since we had finished early and done such a good job, he would treat us all to an ice cream soda, or whatever we wanted, at the Bierstube in the Heiligenblutner Hof. “Zere will be plenty of time before ze guests arrive for dinner,” he said.

“I’ll take two of them sodas,” said Freddy Muldoon.

The professor looked at him over the flame of the match he was lighting his cigar with. “You ever sink of using zat mouse of yours for somesing besides a garbage dispose-all, Mr. Muldoon?”

“I’ll give it some thought...right after supper,” said Freddy, in that mock-serious tone he uses when he has somebody on the string.

“You gonna’ get so fat you gonna’ have to go barefoot,” said the professor.

“How come?”

“You won’t be able to see your shoes...so you can tie zem.”

“Okay!...So I’ll save money on shoes and buy food with it,” said Freddy.

“Hoh, boy!” the professor snorted, slapping his forehead. “Some day you gonna’ set civilization back two sousand years, Freddy Muldoon!”

Back at the castle, we persuaded Angela and Angelina to entertain Axel, while we planned and executed an assault on the secret room. They didn't like the assignment, but when Henry suggested they persuade him to get out his violin and show them the steps of some of the old court dances, like the pavanne and the minuet, they figured it might be fun. It turned out that even Axel was not immune to the beguiling charms of young ladies, and he felt so flattered by the whole thing that he even had the Great Dane dog dancing on his hind legs for them.

Outside the room by the tower, we set up our security—just in case Axel got bored or suspicious—and Henry cased the room first, with his diabolical periscope. When he was satisfied there was nobody in the room, we all agreed that Dinky should have the honor of opening the secret door in the wall of the tower staircase. Dinky grabbed the stone stair tread and tugged upward with all his might. Nothing happened.

"I betcha' ya' got the wrong one," Freddy scoffed. "Here let me try."

"You keep outa' this, fatso!" Dinky spat at him, really mad.

Dinky tried two more before he found the tread that opened the sesame. It was obviously counterweighted, and it flew upward under the impulse of Dinky's mighty pull and almost hit him in the chin. At the same time, the big section of stone wall flew outward and knocked Freddy down three or four steps.

"Ya see, stupid!" he fumed at Dinky. "I told ya', ya' gotta' be careful in this spy stuff!"

We stepped inside the dark cubicle exposed by the opening and groped around. "This is a cinch," said Henry, as he ran his fingers over a wooden panel on the inside wall. "Look! It just slides open."

Two springs, mounted at the top and bottom of the panel, automatically closed it as soon as Henry pulled his hands away.

"Jeepers!" said Dinky. "In all the movies I seen, you gotta' find a button somewheres, and push it."

"Well, this was made before those movies were," said Henry. "And it's beautifully simple. The more fancy stuff you have...like pushbuttons...the more there is to go wrong. This thing'll work forever."

“I betcha’ Arnulf the Stupid didn’t make this one,” said Freddy.

Henry pressed on the panel and slid it aside again. We stepped into a large, airy room, with a beautiful parquette floor made of small blocks of wood of contrasting colors, laid out in a diamond pattern. The huge casemented window, overlooking the glacier, was a masterpiece of the glazier’s art. Tiny diamond-shaped panes of glass—some clear, some stained with beautiful, rich colors—were set in a delicate latticework of natural finish, light-colored wood. Overhead, huge beams made of the same light-colored wood, ran the full length of the ceiling.

“No wonder that margrape slept here,” Dinky gasped. “This is the Ritz!”

“Sure beats that dump I sleep in at home,” said Freddy.

On a pedestal near the window we saw the telescope, and on the other side of the window, the stand with the wash basin and the Lifebuoy soap. Henry picked up the cake of soap and smelled it.

“Phew!” he said. “Smell that! We’ll just take that along to show the professor.” And he put it in his pocket.

The wall panel through which we had entered stood to the left of a magnificent fireplace. But on the right of the fireplace was what we were looking for. Set in an alcove, not visible from the door, was a high-powered Ham set resting on two tables. Beneath the tables was a row of dry cell batteries, hooked in series. Mortimer had brought his camera along, and he snapped pictures of everything in the room he thought we might want to check on later.

“That” s their antenna,” said Jeff, pointing to the fireplace where a pair of wires disappeared up the chimney.

Henry stuck his head in the fireplace and peered up the chimney. “Yes,” he said. “There’s a retractable antenna up there. It’s a good one, too.”

“Well, I guess we’ve found what we wanted,” said Jeff. “Is there anything else?”

“Just this,” said Henry. And from a peg on the wall beside the bed, he plucked the steel-gray wig that we all associated with the grizzled old Austrian who had been pestering us. “If a bald-headed Austrian comes around to bother us tomorrow, maybe we can ask him some

questions.”

We left the room the way we entered and rushed back downstairs to get dressed for our evening in the village.

“That room didn’t smell too bad,” said Freddy. “I was thinkin’ we might find an old corpse...or at least a skeleton in there.”

“Ceptin for that soap, I couldn’t smell nothin’,” said Dinky.

Half-an-hour later we all met in the great hall, decked out in our Sunday best. Axel, flattered beyond belief by the attention the girls had bestowed on him, was bowing and scraping all over the place with a big smile on his face and his huge bunch of keys clattering against the stone floor as he moved about. All he had to do was let us out through the great door at the drawbridge; but seeming to sense the importance of the occasion, he had dressed himself up in a beautiful tunic and set of pantaloons made of a rich burgundy velvet.

“Maybe you should have invited Axel to the dinner,” Angela whispered to Professor Stratavarious.

The professor’s eyebrows rose more than an inch, and the monocle dropped from his left eye. “Oh, no, Number One! Axel is not allowed in ze village! Many years ago, ze Archbishop of Salzburg put a curse on him, and he is not allowed to cross over ze chain bridge.”

“A curse! What for?”

“Just for being small!” the professor replied. “But zey also sought he was a little bit mean, you know. Zey don’t like his playing zat organ, sometimes!”

Freddy was the last one to come downstairs, and the reason was soon apparent. Tucked under his arm was a crudely-lettered cardboard sign that said:

LADY GHOST!

(More’n six hundred
years old, maybe.)

MUST BE APPRECIATED
TO BE SEEN!

“What on earth is that you have there?” Angela demanded.

“What does it look like?” said Freddy.

“It looks like some kind of a crazy sign.”

“Good! That proves you can read,” said Freddy.

“Freddy Muldoon!.....You aren’t thinking of.....”

“I figure on drummin’ up some business down in the village,” said Freddy. “That is...if I can get Axel to make a deal.—It depends on how much of a cut he wants.”

“Freddy Muldoon! You take that sign right back up to your room, or you won’t go to the dinner!” Angela said, imperiously. And she pointed an elegant, long finger at the grand staircase.

Freddy knew she meant business. “Shucks! You women are always messin’ up things, and spoilin’ all the fun,” he grumbled as he trudged back up the stairs. “I don’t know why they let ya’ outa’ that garden, in the first place. You oughta’ get yourself re-examined. You need it real bad!.....” And his voice trailed off as he disappeared at the head of the stairs.

When we got down to the village, it was much warmer than it had been up at the castle, and the professor was fanning himself with his black homburg.

“Phew! Zis bus is stinkin’ hot!” he exclaimed, as Sepp pulled up in front of the Heiligenblutner Hof. “I gotta’ get me a nice, cool glass of acidophilus before I faint.”

“Like you said, Professor: ‘Zere’ s no better place for zat Zanzibar!” said Homer, with a snicker.

“You got a funny accent, Mr. Snodgrass. Can’t you speak ze English language no better zan zat?”

Homer looked nonplussed for a moment. “I guess it all depends on what you’re used to hearing,” he said.

As we piled out of the bus, a totally black apparition came wheeling up the street on a bicycle and stopped beside us. The man’s face was almost entirely covered with black, ingrained soot. He wore a tight-fitting black suit, black gloves, and a black derby. Over his

shoulder was coiled a stiff, steel cable with a large steel brush on the end of it. And an assortment of other steel brushes was clutched in his left hand. On his right shoulder, he expertly balanced a long wooden ladder. It was also black with ingrained soot. Everything about the man was black...totally black.

When he doffed his black derby to acknowledge the professor's greeting, he exposed a black stocking cap that he wore beneath it.

"Herr Praxmire! Guten abend! Wie geht es innen?" the professor exclaimed, hastily pulling off his white glove before extending his hand. Then he introduced the apparition to us. "Hier ist Herr Toni Praxmire, der Kaminkehrermeister von Heiligenblut."

The way the professor put it, it sounded pretty important, so we all shook the man's grimy hand, also, and it gave us an eerie feeling. Because, close up, you could see a pair of light blue eyes—almost as blue as Siegfried's—gleaming at you from behind the sooty lashes; and when the man smiled, a set of alabaster—white teeth—the whitest you ever saw—flashed out at you from behind the blackened lips.

"Und so!" said the professor, backing off and tipping his homburg politely. "Wir sehen sie spater, zu abend essen, ja?"

"Ja, ja! Danke, Herr Professor Doktor!" said Herr Praxmire, bobbing his head and flashing the white teeth at us again.

"What was that last thing you said to him, professor?" Dinky asked.

"You mean zat 'sehen sie spater'?—Zat is like 'See you later, Alligator' in English.—Like I told you, Dinky. Zese Austrians don't spell so good...but it all means ze same sing."

"If that was the chimney sweeper he was telling us about, I hope he gets cleaned up before supper," Homer muttered, as we climbed the steps to the hotel.

"For all I know, he coulda' been that headsman we saw last night," said Mortimer.

"Hey! I wonder....." Henry mused, as we entered the lobby of the hotel.

It was so cool and comfortable in the Bierstube that the professor had three glasses of acidophilus, and he had the last one served to

him out on the verandah, so we could watch the parade. Only it wasn't *quite* a parade. One of the waiters explained to Angela and me that this was the day of the year when the villagers held their annual procession to bless the crops and the livestock so there would be a bountiful harvest. "It is like what you call sose fertility rites down in zose African countries," the waiter explained. Father Schafer led the procession every year, and it was his job to bless every doorway in the village that had a piece of greenery tacked to it, and to bless all the animals in the procession.

"But the professor thinks they're having a parade in *his* honor!" Angela gasped. "This could be awfully embarrassing!"

"It won't do any harm to let him sink so," the waiter suggested, with a smile. "And it won't hurt him to be blessed, eezer!" he added.

Before the procession started, we were joined by Burgermeister Weixelbaumer and Chief Gruber of the Polizei...and of all people, Count Gerhard von Sigismund, whom we had never met. They had come early they explained, so they could watch the procession with us before the dinner. Count Sigismund was a little bit of a let-down. He didn't look any more important than anyone else in the village, and he was wearing a sort of tacky tweed "shooting jacket" that had seen better days, and a pair of corduroy knickers that were buttoned tightly just below his knees. But the deference he was accorded by the burgermeister, and Chief Gruber, and the hotel staff, was simply amazing. You could see, when you looked closely at him, that he was really a different kind of person. Thin and wizened as he was, his head sparsely covered with soft white hair, there was something about him that told you he came from a blood line that dated back thousands of years.

The "parade" was another one where everybody in town was in the procession, and there was nobody to watch it...like the one we had back in Mammoth Falls the day the Air Force finally pulled the atom bomb out of Strawberry Lake. As far as we could see, those of us on the hotel verandah were the only spectators. Father Schafer led the entourage, seated astride a beautiful hafflinger pony with a dusky, dun-colored coat and a proud white mane. His low-crowned, flat-brimmed hat shaded him from the sun as he waved a small tree branch at each doorway he passed, making the sign of the cross.

When he came abreast of the hotel verandah, he glanced in our direction, and the professor rose from his chair and bowed several times, waving his homburg in a broad, sweeping gesture toward all the animals and villagers in the procession. Father Schafer looked a little surprised at this, but he smiled back at the professor and waved the branch at him in the sign of the cross. Count Sigismund and the burgermeister sat stiffly in their chairs, looking at the professor in astonishment. I suppose they were wondering what kind of a problem he had that he hadn't told them about.

There followed seemingly endless groups of goats, pigs, cows, chickens, horses and mountain ponies, being herded along by their owners. The professor kept rotating his head back and forth, looking up and down the line of marching animals. I guess he was wondering where the brass band, and the rescue squads, and the yodelers were.

"Zis is ze first time any pigs ever came out to say good-bye to me," he observed softly.

"Now I know what Noah felt like when he stood on the Arkansas all those critters comin' on board," said Mortimer. There was a short silence.

"Hey, man. Do you smell anything?" said Angelina.

"Yeah!" Angela sighed. "After it goes away, remind me to give Mortimer two points."

When the procession had finally passed, Burgermeister Weixelbaumer stepped over to the professor. "Have you heard ze news about ze two bodies, Herr Professor?"

"What bodies?" said the professor. "You got some extra bodies around here?"

"Two bodies in ze ice!" Chief Gruber explained. "Two bodies have been sighted in ze glacier....Zey were exposed when ze ice shelf broke off last night."

"Are you sure zey are real bodies?" the professor asked.

"Zey look like bodies," said the burgermeister. "We have looked at zem srew a telescope from ze rim of ze gorge.—Zey have clothes on."

"Zat don't mean nossing, nowadays!" said the professor.

"We are sending two Alpine Rescue Squads up zere in ze

morning,” said Chief Gruber. “If zey can get up to zem, zey will try to dig zem out.”

“Oh, my gracious!” said the professor. “I hope zey don’t spoil my samples. We are planning some very delicate experiments at ze mouse of ze glacier in ze morning.—I can’t have no clumsy oafs tramping around zere!”

“But we got to get zose bodies out of zere, Herr Professor Doktor! Zey might be important people.” Chief Gruber persisted.

“Hrrrmph!” the professor snorted. “I should sink zey’d be willing to wait a couple more days.—After all!...How long zey been in zere?”

“I sink you got somesing zere!” said the burgermeister.

The argument was still going on when we went inside to sit down for dinner. The professor wanted to know if they knew *whose* bodies they were, and whether anybody had asked them if they *wanted* to be chipped out of the ice. And Chief Gruber kept insisting that the Alpine Rescue Squads had a sacred tradition to uphold. They took an oath, he said, to recover any body that they could possibly reach.

“No matter how old it is?” the professor asked, with his eyebrows arched toward the ceiling.

“Zat makes no difference,” said the chief. “Zey got gas masks.”

Herr Gruber eventually won the argument, because he had the power of the Polizei on his side, and the professor had nothing going for him but the prestige of science. Naturally, there was a lot of discussion about *who* the two bodies were—or had been, and how long they had been in the glacier. The burgermeister kept speculating about Henry’s estimate of how long it would take for the bodies of the South African diamond smugglers to reach the mouth of the glacier. But the professor pointed out that if Henry’s estimate of one hundred years was correct, the bodies should have popped out of there the year before.

“Well, I’d only be wrong by one year,” Henry complained.

“Zat makes no difference,” said the professor. “Ze point is, you’d be wrong!—You got to be careful in zis science business, ‘Enry.”

“Hey!” said Homer. “If that ice had melted like you said it should, professor...those bodies *might* have shown up last year, instead of

now!”

“You keep outa’ zis, Mr. Smarty Snodgrass!” said the professor. “Zis is a discussion between scientists.”

“Well, I....Well, it just seems like common sense to me.....” Homer floundered.

“Common sense ain’t got no place in science, Mr. Snodgrass.—You got to have *uncommon* sense to be a scientist! Remember zat!”

Homer subsided and devoted his attention to the turnip soup and the salad that had been served.

Angela and Angelina had been seated on either side of Count Sigismund, and you just knew that they couldn’t resist plying him with questions about the castle, and about all the legends surrounding it. The old count spoke impeccable English, which added to our impression that he was a different kind of person.

“I don’t know about your lady ghost,” he said at one point. “I have never seen her.—But then, I have never seen *any* kind of a ghost. You know, there is a theory that you have to *believe* in ghosts, in order to see them. I don’t, frankly!”

“But...it was so real, like...like, you know, man...WOW!” Angelina persisted.

“I don’t know what that means,; said the count. “When you say ‘WOW’, what do you mean?”

“Well...I mean, like WOW!...I mean...it looked like it was really all comin’ out at last...You know, like they was lettin’ it all hang out.”

“I’m not sure I do know,” said the count. “But I can tell you this; your story about what went on in the chapel last night reminds me about an old legend.—This all took place long before my family came on the scene, incidentally. We don’t know who built the castle, originally. But there was an old baron. His name was Rudolf. And he built a good deal of what you find at the castle today.”

“When did he live?” Angela asked.

“Oh, hundreds of years ago. Rudolf the Lecherous, they called him...for some reason. At any rate, he had a beautiful young wife that he had tired of. He wanted to get rid of her, so he charged her with being unfaithful to him.—That was standard practice in those days, incidentally.”

“Was that before they invented alimony?” asked Freddy.

“Quite so! Quite so, young man!” said the count, with a sardonic smile. “At any rate, they held a formal trial—as they always did in those days, to make a great show for the peasants. But the baron, of course, was the judge. This was also usual in those days. And, of course, he found her guilty and condemned her to death.”

“On what evidence?” Angelina bristled.

The count laughed. “You *are* precious, my dear,” he said. “When you get a little older, you will realize that you don’t need evidence, if you have power. And the baron *had* power. In fact, he had *all* the power in his little corner of the world. So, he condemned her to death.—But a curious thing happened. When the execution was scheduled to take place...in the courtyard of the castle...a violent storm came up out of nowhere.”

“We know all about that!” said Freddy.

“I expect you do,” said the count, laughing again. “At any rate...when the headsman raised his axe to sever the head from the body...a bolt of lightning struck the blade. It shattered the axe completely, and killed the headsman.—The baron was infuriated!”

“I betcha’ he was mad, too!” said Freddy.

“Shut up, you little goon!” Angela spat at him. “I want to hear the rest of the story.”

“Well,” the count continued, “according to the legend, the baron could not find anyone else willing to execute his wife...so, he eventually stabbed her to death.”

“How?” Angelina asked.

There was a long pause, while everyone hung on the count’s next words.

“Well...I hate to tell you this...but the legend says he stabbed her with a jeweled dagger that she had presented to him on their wedding day.”

There was another pause, while those of us who were listening stared down at our plates.

“I don’t want any supper,” said Angela. “I think I’m going to be sick.”

“Good!” said Freddy Muldoon. “That’ll mean less competition.”

“Oh, my dear, I *am* sorry,” the count apologized. “I had no idea the story would upset you.—But...as I said...I don’t believe in ghosts myself, so.....”

“You say you gotta’ believe in ghosts in order to see them...right, Count?” Angelina asked him.

“That is *one* theory,” he said, with a smile.

“I guess that’s what this crazy Muldoon character had in mind with that stupid sign he made up.—You should believe it to see it...huh?” Then she told the count about Freddy’s cardboard sign.

“That’s not such a bad idea,” said the count. “You should have let him bring it along.—Come to think of it...that might solve my tax problems. Maybe he has a good idea there.—How much is twenty-five cents worth, these days?”

“You own a castle...and you got tax problems?” said Dinky Poore.

The count chuckled softly and shook his head. “Young man,” he said. “I don’t really *own* a castle...I’m just stuck with one.”

“Why don’t you sell it?”

“Well...for two reasons. One is, that Axel loves the place. He has a real affinity for it.”

“You can say that again!” said Freddy. “What’s the other reason?”

“Nobody will buy it,” said the count.

“That’s a good enough reason,” said Freddy.

“What about them taxes?” Dinky still wanted to know.

“Oh, taxes!” the count sighed. “I have tax bills kicking around the place...I don’t know...some of them must be thirty-five years old.”

“You mean you ain’t paid the town no taxes for thirty-five years and they still let you keep the place?”

“*Let* me keep it?” the count chuckled inwardly...sadly. “They *insist* that I keep it.—If I didn’t, they wouldn’t have anyone to send the tax bills to.”

“If you’re not paying taxes, how come the village doesn’t just take over the place?” Homer asked, as he joined the conversation. “That’s what they do back in the States.”

“I just told you,” said the count. “If the village takes over the castle, they wouldn’t get any taxes from it, but they’d have to take care of the upkeep. They don’t get any taxes from me, but they

always hope I'll be able to pay, someday.—I've *given* the castle to them three times...and three times they've just given it back to me. Nobody wants it."

"That's real funny," said Freddy.

"Well, the fact is...nobody in the village would be stupid enough to go up there. They all think it's alive with ghosts.—But tourists?...That's another matter."

"They'd be stupid...like us, huh?"

"No offense intended!" the count laughed. "But, the fact is, your little sign has given me an idea, Freddy.—Yes! Maybe I could just make enough to cover the taxes...by opening the place to tourists."

"But what about Axel?" Angela wondered. "Wouldn't he be kicking them in the shins and punching them in the nose all the time?"

The count smiled. "We'd just have to charge a little extra for that."

"Hey! That act Axel does with the violin and the lady ghost oughta' be worth a buck-and-a-half at least, oh, daddy-oh!" said Angelina

"Yeah!" Freddy cried. "But what about that act where he tromps all over the organ? Man! You could charge five bucks a head for that! —You'd fill the place, and have 'em rollin' in the aisles."

"You mean rollin' in the nave, kiddo! That's a chapel," Angelina reminded him.

"Why don't you go lie down somewhere!" said Freddy.

"And what about all them secret passages?" cried Dinky. "You could charge extra just for a ride down that wooden elevator."

"What's all this?" the count asked in surprise.

"You don't know about them secret passages?"

"No, I don't!—There have always been rumors, of course. But then, people always invent rumors about secret passages in castles; because it's romantic, I guess.—Secret passages are like ghosts: people believe they are there because they *want* to believe they are there."

"Well, we been in 'em!" said Dinky.

Then we told the count all about the secret passages, and the odd room with the well shaft in it, and the tunnel to the gorge...and how

we discovered them.

“That must be where that dreadful draft came from,” said the count. “I never could stand it in the castle, because it was so drafty. And the older I got, the draftier it got. That’s why I moved out.”

“You lived in that castle most of your life, and you never discovered those secret passages?” asked Homer, in disbelief.

“No!” said the count. “But then, nobody ever chased me down those tower stairs, either.—I shall have to look into this. Tell me more about this man you call ‘the grizzled old Austrian’?”

We described him as fully as we could, and told him we suspected he was living in the mysterious room...at least part of the time.

“This is very odd,” he said. “I thought I knew everyone in the village, but I don’t know for sure who this could be.—Does Axel know about this?”

“We don’t know,” I said. “All he told us was the room had been locked up for four hundred years because the Margrave of Carinthia took a dive in there.”

“He did what?”

“He got shot,” I explained.

“Oh, yes! He went for six, you mean...as the English say.”

“I guess so,” I said.

“Oh, well...that is a well-established legend, of course.—Quite a remarkable shot, by the way. It’s estimated to be nearly four hundred yards to that window from the other side of the gorge.—But as for the room being locked up...I think maybe Axel was just telling you that to impress you...or scare you. You know, there are all sorts of rooms in the castle that have been locked up for years...simply because nobody had any use for them.”

“Then you really don’t know anything about all this,” said Angela.

“No,” said the count, “but I shall have to look into it.—You know...if Axel has been renting out rooms without my knowledge, I could be in serious trouble.” And the left corner of the count’s mouth crooked upward in a sardonic smile. “You know...I don’t have a permit for a rooming house!”

“Wow!” said Homer, in a half-whisper. “If the village authorities found out about that, they might increase your taxes.”

“That’s exactly it!” said the count with a hearty laugh.

“Well that would be to your advantage,” said Dinky, very seriously.

“Why’s that, young man?”

“Cause that would be a whole bunch more money you wouldn’t have to pay!”

That one really convulsed the count, who patted Dinky on the head. “You know, young man, you should be a politician when you grow up.”

“Naw,” said Dinky. “I think I wanna’ be an actor.”

“What’s the difference?” said Mortimer.

“By the way, Count Sigismund,” Angela said in a low voice. “You know everyone in the village. Who is that handsome, distinguished-looking man who keeps nodding and smiling at us? Are we supposed to know him?”

“Oh, that’s Herr Praxmire, the kaminkehrermeister...you know, the chimney sweeper.—Oh, he is a prince of a fellow. You should meet him.”

Axel's Farewell

“Hey, Henry! You mean we only got two more days to find that diamond?” Freddy Muldoon asked, as we tumbled down to breakfast early the next morning.

“Maybe less,” said Henry. “If the professor gets everything he wants today, we’ll probably leave sometime tomorrow.”

“Shucks! Can’t we hold somethin’ out on him. I gotta’ find me a dinosaur footprint, too. I ain’t had time yet.”

“You’ll just have to do the best you can, Freddy,” said Jeff. “We didn’t come here looking for diamonds and dinosaurs. We came to help the professor.”

“Maybe you’ll find one today,” said Henry. “The professor told me he wants you and Dinky to make some more plaster casts of some things up at the head of the gorge.—That is, if that icefall didn’t cover them all up.”

“We can’t leave too soon to suit me,” said Angelina, as we sat down. “One more night in this chamber of horrors and I’ll have bats in my belfry.”

“Nothing happened last night, did it?” Homer asked.

“No! But that’s only because we got in so late the vampires were all tired out.”

“Hey! That’s somethin’ we ain’t seen yet,” said Dinky. “I wonder where Axel keeps ‘em.”

“Well, I’ve got a few questions to ask that headsman if he shows up again,” said Mortimer.

“Like what?” Angelina asked, before Angela could stop her.

“Like...Who was that lady you sawed last, knight?”

“Oh! I imagine that would panic him!” said Angelina. “How do

you know he was a knight?”

“I figured that was a knightshirt he was wearin’. Nobody would go around dressed like that in the daytime.”

“Yeah? What about that kamikaze guy...Mr. Praxmire? He don’t mind!” said Freddy.

“Hey! What if that guy wasn’t no headsman at all? What if he was just a chimney sweeper, like Mr. Praxmire?” said Dinky.

“Yeah!” said Freddy. “Maybe that lady ghost had bats in *her* belfry, and he was just tryin’ to clean ‘em out?”

“Don’t be silly,” said Homer. “You don’t go after bats with an axe.”

“Not even a battle axe?” Freddy asked.

“Seriously,” said Homer. “If the count could open this place up to tourists, maybe he could make enough to fix the place up some. It sure needs it.”

“That’s for sure!” said Angela. “Five or six more bathrooms would help.”

“What good would that do, if Axel can’t get no soap?” said Dinky.

“The count could buy soap,” said Homer. “But there’s paint and plaster peelin’ off all over this place. If he could fix that up, it would look real neat.”

“Yeah!” said Mortimer. “And I wonder how that great hall would look with some ‘a that Walla Walla carpeting?”

“Oh, Mortimer, knock it off!” said Angela, slapping her forehead. “It’s too early for Geography, isn’t it?”

“Azov this moment, I’ve gotta’ agree with you,” said Mortimer, slurping up his cereal.

We were up at the mouth of the glacier early, but the Alpine rescue squads had gotten there even earlier and there was a great buzz of excitement when we unloaded from the bus at the lip of the gorge. Chief Gruber pointed excitedly at the sheer wall of bluish ice that had been exposed by the break.

“One of our bodies is missing!” he exclaimed. “It just plain disappeared overnight.—How do you explain zat?”

“Maybe it was a nobody!” said the professor. “I told you, you got to be careful in zis body business, Herr Gruber.”

“It got to be a *somebody*,” Chief Gruber insisted. “You see zat big hole in ze ice right zere?” And he focused the telescope he was carrying, so the professor could take a look. “Zat is where ze body was yesterday. We all saw it. Now it ain’t zere!—How you explain zat?”

“Maybe some ozzer body-snatcher got here before you did,” said the professor disgustedly. “You ain’t ze only ghoul on zis mountain, you know.”

“Maybe so,” said Herr Gruber, shaking his head. “But why would somebody want to chip a body out of ze ice? Tell me zat?”

“You tell me?” said the professor. “Last night you had all ze answers, Mister Smarty Gruber. How come, zis morning you got nossing but questions?” And the professor fitted his dark green monocle to his left eye and strode haughtily away.

We got to work immediately, despite the fact there were dozens of Alpine rescuers clambering all over the huge chunks and slabs of ice that had tumbled into the head of the gorge and up both sides of it. They had ropes and pulleys and ladders and ice axes, and everything imaginable with them, to try and reach the remaining body that could faintly be seen suspended high in the wall of ice that now formed the front edge of the glacier. The professor sent Freddy and Dinky down into the gorge to make plaster casts of two beautiful specimens of giant’s kettles, hollowed out in the bedrock by the swirling waters of the melting glacier in ages past. The rest of us divided up into two teams and scrambled out onto the mass of ice to gather the samples the professor wanted. We knew just which types of ice to look for, and the professor had designated the areas we should get them from.

Angela set up his canvas chair under a huge beach umbrella, and put up a folding table out in the hot sun where she could set out the samples to be tested. For each sample there was a crazy-looking glass dish with a pedestal in the center and calibrated markings on the sides measuring volume in cubic centimeters. Angela had to weigh each ice sample on a scale, note the type of ice and the location from which it was obtained, and then place it on the little pedestal in one of the dishes. Each hour, she had to weigh the sample again, and measure the amount of water that had collected in the dish. When a sample had melted completely, she had to pour the water into a large

test tube, cork it, and label it. Meanwhile, the professor sat there smoking cigars and making comments on the way she did her work.—There were times when Angela wished she was out on the jumbled mass of ice, risking her neck along with the rest of us.

Rather early in the morning, a curious thing happened. Messrs. Smellow, Stunkard, Rank and Pugh showed up at the lip of the gorge and volunteered to join the rescue squads in their attempt to recover the bodies. There followed a long discussion with Chief Gruber that bordered on an argument.

“Zere is only *one* body now, as far as we know, gentlemen,” said Herr Gruber. “But sank you very much, just ze same. We appreciate your kind spirit, but ze mountaineers have all ze help zey need, at present.”

When the four gentlemen kept pressing him, and almost insisted that they be allowed to risk their lives in helping to free a frozen corpse from ice that may have been formed from snow laid down a hundred years earlier, Herr Gruber told them:

“I am sorry, gentlemen. But I cannot take zat responsibility. You are not mountaineers...or even jagers. You have not been trained. I cannot allow you to go out on zat ice wizout competent guides...and I do not have zem!”

According to Angela, Mr. Rank was quite upset. “What about them snot-nosed kids? What are they doing out there?”

“Oh! Zey are wiz Sepp and Siegfried,” said Herr Gruber. “Zey are perfectly safe.”

The four legal eagles finally split the scene—as Angela put it—and got into a car that drove them back toward Heiligenblut.

At about noontime there was another buzz of excitement, and cries of surprise and triumph echoed back and forth across the gorge. The missing body had been discovered! It was wedged in a crevice between two giant slabs of ice that had been tilted toward each other at a precarious angle when they came to rest after the icefall. The rescue squad that discovered it, managed to retrieve it and drag it on a stretcher sled to where Herr Gruber directed operations near the professor’s outdoor laboratory. Angela turned her back and busied herself with her samples. But Freddy and Dinky managed to scamper all the way up from the bottom of the gorge to take a peek at the first

genuine corpse they had ever seen.

“Hey! No wonder they call them stiffs!” said Freddy. “That guy dove into a quick freeze, for sure. Look at his arms and legs! He musta’ been tryin’ to swim when he hit bottom.”

Dinky just gulped.

It was obvious that somebody had chopped away part of the clothing from the corpse, because only frozen remnants of the garments remained. Herr Gruber examined it briefly, then turned the body over to Mannheim Totengraber, who was the coroner for the district.

“Did you notice that funny little mole on his left ear?” said Dinky, as the two disappeared over the lip of the gorge again.

“I didn’t wanna’ look that close,” said Freddy.

It was a little later that we noticed one of the casement windows in the mysterious room near the tower had been opened again. Henry grabbed Mortimer’s field glasses and focused on it.

“There’ s the telescope again,” he said. “Somebody’s watching this whole operation very carefully.”

“Is it that old gray-haired character?” I asked.

“I can’t tell. I can’t see that clearly.—Anyway, we took his wig.”

“Wait’ll he misses that cake of soap,” said Mortimer. “He won’t be able to foam at the mouth anymore.”

“Hey! I’d swear he’s talkin’ on a radio...a walkie-talkie!”

“Who could he be talking to?” I wondered out loud.

“I don’t know!—He couldn’t be supervising the rescue operation.”

“Heck no!” said Mortimer. “These guys don’t have any radios.”

Just then we got a call on our own radio. “The professor wants to know what you’re doing. How about getting some more samples up here?”

“Okay, Angela! Okay!” I told her. “It’s time to put on the feedbag, anyway. We’ll be up in a minute.”

While we were munching sandwiches and knockwurst and pickles, and sipping iced tea, Freddy gave us an almost unintelligible account of how he had finally found what he thought might be a genuine dinosaur footprint.

“Why don’t you empty your mouth before you speak, Freddy!” said Angela, throwing him an extra napkin.

“Would you like to see me do it?” Freddy mumbled at her.

“Oh, no! I didn’t mean that!—Oh, Freddy! Sometimes you’re disgusting!”

“That depends on what I’m eating,” he said.

Then Freddy asked the professor if he could make a plaster cast of the footprint he thought he’d found.

“Hoh, boy, Freddy! You got some kind of a problem upstairs,” said the professor. “I told you you couldn’t find no dinosaur footprints here. Zose big fat-bellies couldn’t make it up zis hill!”

“‘Sposin’ it was borned up here?” Dinky suggested.

“Yeah!” said Freddy. “That coulda’ happened.”

“Yes, I suppose it could,” the professor grunted. “If his mozzar had ze same kind of problem you got, Freddy.—Come to sink of it... zey have found some dinosaurs wiz soft noodles.” Then he said, wearily: “If it makes you happy, Freddy, you can make a plaster cast of ze footprint.—But just one! We don’t got a lot of room on old Blimp for all ze casts we got to take back, you know.”

“Whoopee!” cried Freddy. “Let’s go!” And he and Dinky dropped out of sight again over the edge of the bluff.

“Freddy! You didn’t finish your sandwich!” Angela called after him.

Freddy’s head reappeared, momentarily. “I left it on purpose,” he said. “It’s for the birds!”

“Oh-h-h...zat Freddy got a kind heart. You got to say zat for him,” said the professor.

What happened next, we weren’t quite clear on for some time. But it was mid-afternoon, according to Angela, when the professor awoke from a brief snooze and pointed his finger at an ice sample that hadn’t melted very much.

“What is ze matter wiz zat crazy sing, Number One?”

“I don’t know, Professor. I’ve been watching it. It just seems to be slow.”

“When did you put it on ze pedestal, dummkopf?”

Angela consulted her notes. “My gosh, Professor! I put that one

out before we stopped for lunch.”

“Gott im Himmel!” the professor exclaimed, slapping his forehead. “We got to srow zat sing out! Zat could mess up ze whole experiment!” And he reached out and grabbed the offending specimen and hurled it over the precipice. “You got to watch it, Number One! I keep telling you...you got to learn which facts to reject in zis business...or you can get all messed up!—Hoh, boy, can you get messed up!”

“I’m sorry, Professor,” said Angela.

It was also about mid-afternoon, according to Freddy and Dinky, when an object about the size of a baseball came bouncing down the rocky slope of the gorge and landed plop in the middle of a fresh batch of plaster they had just poured into one of the giant’s kettles. Plaster splattered into Dinky’s eyes, and while he was wiping them clean, Freddy thrust his arm into the plaster right up to his armpit to try and retrieve the object.—It was then that a veritable giant of a man came plunging down the bank of the gorge from behind some protruding rocks. He frightened them so, that Freddy quickly withdrew his arm from the gooey mess of plaster and jumped to his feet. Dinky reeled back against a boulder at the edge of the stream and stood there stiffly, still trying to massage the white guck out of his eyes.

“What’s zat you got in your hand, zere, young man?” the man demanded. He had a huge, flowing moustache and eyes that bristled under wide, bushy eyebrows. Clenched in one ham-like fist was a mammoth alpenstock, and a long, mean-looking hunting knife was clasped to his belt. “Answer me! What you got in your hand, zere?”

“I got five fingers!” said Freddy, pulling one hand out from behind his back and spreading his fingers...while something dropped unnoticed behind him.

“I mean ze ozzer one! Ze one you had in ze plaster.”

“I got five more!” said Freddy, pulling the other hand from behind him and showing the man a mass of gooey plaster. “That makes ten!”

The man snorted. “What was zat I saw fall into ze plaster?”

“I don’t know,” said Freddy. “I didn’t see nothin’. I got bad eyesight.”

“Zen why did you stick your hand into zat mess, huh?”

“I gotta’ mix it.”

The man snorted again. “Well, you just stick your hand right back in zere, sonny, and see what you find.”

“I won’t, and you can’t make me!” said Freddy. “I done all the mixin’ I’m gonna’ do today.”

The man looked around him carefully, and looked up at the rim of the gorge. Then he took a step toward Freddy as he ran his fingers over the hilt of the knife at his belt. Freddy took one step backward and then stood his ground.

“I got bad eyesight, mister.—But I can sure holler!” he said. “You better watch it!—And don’t step in that, either! That’s my dinosaur footprint.” And Freddy pointed to a puddle of soft plaster at his feet.

The man grunted, looked up at the rim of the gorge again, and then stepped back. Finally, he bent over and plunged a huge arm into the plaster in the giant’s kettle and swirled it around. After a minute, he pulled his arm out and flipped it up and down, trying to shake off the goo. Then he spat in Freddy’s direction, turned, and walked angrily off among the rocks and scrub growth lining the gorge.

“Phew!” said Dinky. “Boy, he was big! Weren’t you scared?”

“Oh, I’ve out-talked ‘em bigger’n that,” said Freddy, with a contemptuous curl to his lip. “His tongue ain’t any bigger’n mine...and as long as they don’t get hold of you, it doesn’t matter how big they are.”

“What was that thing that fell in the plaster?”

“I don’t know,” said Freddy. “I ain’t seen it.” And as far as Freddy was concerned, that was the truth. And it was. He *hadn’t* seen it.

“Did you notice he had a walkie-talkie strapped over his shoulder?” said Dinky.

“Yeah! And I noticed something else.”

“What?”

“He called me ‘sonny’, and nobody ain’t called me that since we came here,” said Freddy.

“Hey, what’s wrong with your eyes anyway?”

“There ain’t nothin’ wrong with ‘em. I got eyes like an eagle.”

At the end of the day, Sepp and Siegfried went down into the

gorge with slings and pads to bring all the plaster casts up to the top, but Freddy insisted on carrying his “dinosaur’s foot” all by himself. “This here’s the most valuable specimen we got,” he explained. “I gotta’ take special care of it.” And from then on he almost never let the stupid-looking blob of plaster out of his sight.

“I sink zat Freddy got dinosaurs on ze brain,” said the professor. “But if wants to sink zat is a real dinosaur footprint, it’s hokay wiz me.”

Our work was now finished and the professor was positively delighted with the outcome of the melting rate experiments. “You see, Number One,” he told Angela, “you got to have a *controlled* experiment. If you don’t control sings, zey ain’t gonna’ come out ze way you want zem to.”

“I see!” said Angela.

“Hoh, boy! Was I lucky I discovered zat one stupid chunk of ice and srew it away.”

“Yeah,” said Mortimer. “That must have been a real cool piece of ice.”

“Oh, it was, Mortimer! And you got to be careful. You got to srow out all zee cool ice and all ze hot ice, if you want to have a nice, clean experiment.”

Then the professor announced we would move back down to the hotel that night, where we had left most of our belongings, so we could pack up and be ready to load things into Blimp the next morning.

“You mean we can’t spend another night with Axel?” Angelina asked in mock disappointment.

“Boy, you got zat *Axel* on ze brain, Number Two!”

“Couldn’t we stay just one more night in the castle, Professor?” Jeff pleaded, in earnest. “You know, I’m the only one in the bunch that hasn’t seen that lady ghost.”

“Hey, you’re right,” I agreed. “Only three of us saw her the first time. And then when she appeared in the chapel, you were up at the blimp with Henry.”

“Yeah!” said Jeff. “Sometimes I think all the rest of you have just been puttin’ me on.”

"I wish we had!" said Angela "But I know what I saw, and I don't want to see it again."

"You can stay zere all by yourself, if you want," said the professor. "But you'll have to be down at ze hotel by six o'clock in ze morning."

"Gee! That's an offer I can hardly refuse.—But I think I will, just the same."

"She might not show up, anyway," said Mortimer. "Maybe she's got a date tonight."

Sepp and Siegfried went up to the castle with us to help us pack stuff down the trail, but Axel wouldn't let them in through the great door, so they had to wait outside. You could see the look of relief on their faces when he closed the door on them. But when he heard we were leaving, Axel threw an unexpected tantrum. He jumped up and down and rolled on the floor, tore at his hair, and smashed his huge ring of keys against the wall of the great hall time and time again. He even ran at the professor and kicked him a good one on the shins.

"I was going to show you the wine cellars tonight," he blubbered. "I was even going to make one of you disappear!—Now you've gone and spoiled it all."

"We're sorry," Angela said, with genuine compassion. "But we thought you didn't like us."

"I don't!" Axel screamed at her. "But you're the first people I've had to play pranks on for ten years.....And now you had to go and spoil it all!" And he spat at Angela's feet and glared at the professor.

"I am so sorry, Axel," the professor apologized, bowing politely. "But you know what zey say in America... 'When you gotta' go, you gotta' go!'."

"Glad you mentioned that, you fool!" said Axel. "I might have forgotten to lock the bathroom on you!" And he started for the grand staircase.

"Please, Axel," the professor called to him. "We are not mad at you. I will leave a nice tip for you wiz ze count in ze morning.—You have been so kind to us....."

"Keep your tip, you blithering idiot! What would I do with money?—And another thing! I won't open the great door to let you

out!...So you can just find your *own* way out of the castle!”

And up the stairs he sprang. But he stopped at the first landing and turned a fiendish, grinning face toward us. “And don’t try using that secret passage you were snooping around in.—Maria Theresa will be waiting for you in that dumbwaiter!”

“Oh, my gosh!” I exclaimed. “Do you think he really means it?”

“Hey, daddy-oh,” Angelina wailed at the professor. “Do you realize we’re *prisoners*?”

“Now, everybody just keep calm! Just keep calm!” puffed the professor, striding up and down and fanning himself with his homburg. “This is no time to get excited!”

“You’re right!” said Mortimer. “This is a time to get excited.”

“What a mess we’re in, now!” said Jeff.

“Oh, it’s stercoricolous!” said Mortimer.

But, Henry, in his quiet way, stopped the professor in mid-stride and pulled him aside, where they held a whispered conversation. The professor kept nodding his head.

“Okay!” he said, clapping his hands. “Everybody upstairs and pack. When you got all your stuff ready...everybody meet by my door.—‘Enry and I will make all ze arrangements.”

We all flew upstairs in great haste, and, fortunately, Axel had not bothered to lock the doors to our rooms. I wondered why, at the time, but I realize on thinking back, that he didn’t have his stool with him when he went bouncing up the stairs. Meanwhile, the professor went to the main courtyard and explained the situation to Sepp and Siegfried through the little grille in the great door. He sent them scurrying back down the trail to bring grappling hooks, rope tackle and slings from the bus.—We were going out over the hundred-foot-high battlements...just like in a war!

But it was a one-man war we were facing, and we thought we could handle it.—I say: *we thought*. Axel soon appeared on the arcade overlooking the great hall from the other side with a huge pair of cymbals in his stubby arms. He marched up and down there, clashing the cymbals together with terrific force...while the Great Dane dog dashed up and down behind him, barking and howling at the top of his lungs. The din was positively deafening! It seemed to

be amplified by the high-arched ceiling of the great hall, and echoed and re-echoed throughout the corridors of the castle. Paint and plaster were sprinkling all over us again.

“Hey!” I shouted at Mortimer. “If the dog’s with him, maybe we could make it out through the secret passage.”

“Maybe he’s got two dogs!” he shouted back. “I wouldn’t trust him an inch!”

“Yipes!” Angelina shouted from her door, as she closed it. “Who does that midget think he is.”

“Ephraim Cymbalist, Sr. ...maybe!” Mortimer shouted back.

I guess Angela’s gentle nature and womanly instincts got the better of her in the end. She started searching through her things to find something she could leave for Axel, as a present.

“You carry any poison with you?” Angelina suggested.

“Of course not!”

“What about a cake of lye soap?”

“That would be insulting.”

Finally, Angela folded her most beautiful nightgown neatly on the coverlet of her bed, and dropped a note on it: “Dear Axel.” it read. “I don’t have anything suitable for a man. But perhaps your beautiful lady friend could use this. Please give it to her.—Angela Angelino.”

“You forgot to cut a hole in it for the dagger,” said Angelina as they closed the door of their room behind them.

Loaded down with our luggage, we struggled along behind the professor as he led us down corridors and up twisting stairways toward the west battlements. I carried Dinky’s pack for him, so he could walk behind Henry and balance the end of one of his three duffel bags on his head.

“I guess we’ll have to solve the mystery of that locked room some other time,” Henry muttered.

“Let” s do it in some future lifetime,” said Mortimer. “This one may be a little short.”

“*Will* you shut up! *Will* you shut up!” Angela pleaded.

Atop the battlements we found that Sepp and Siegfried had already slung their grappling hooks across the moat and lodged them securely in chinks in the outer parapet. And Siegfried had come up

one rope, hand-over-hand, to secure a block and pulley for a breeches-buoy. We would ride back to the real world, women and children first, dangling high over the moat in a sling.

“Gott im Himmel!” Siegfried spouted, his blue eyes twinkling at us. “Zis is a real good go...huh?”

“He’s stopped clashing those cymbals,” Angela cried, suddenly. “I wonder what the little fiend is up to now?”

“That’s what he’s up to!” Angelina gasped, pointing to the top of the tall tower that overlooked the gorge. “There’s your fine-feathered fiend...you square!”

Perched atop the tower was the squat figure of Axel...and clutched in his hands was a powerful-looking crossbow. He was taking pot shots at our bus, parked across the gorge, and you could hear the bolts twang and sing as they twirled through the air and then crashed through the treetops and rang and clattered among the rocks.

“Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! He wouldn’t *dare* shoot at *us*...would he, Professor Stratavarious?” Angelina went on, lapsing into English, for once. Her voice was trembling, and she was shaking all over.

“Oh, no, my dear! Oh, no!” the professor reassured her. “He would never, never shoot at *us*.—He got enough ghosts to take care of around here wizzout us. He don’t want no overpopulation, you know.”

Sepp had the ropes pulled taut around rocks on the other side of the moat, and staked to the ground. One-at-a-time, we lowered the girls into the sling of the breeches-buoy, then Dinky and Freddy, and let them slide as slowly as we dared to where Sepp caught them in his arms. Siegfried, meanwhile, was stuffing bags and rucksacks into cargo nets he had brought up, and just letting them ride free down the other rope. Some of them he simply hurled, with a prodigious heave, to the opposite bank of the moat.

When we stuffed the professor into the sling seat, he rode down holding on with one hand, while he waved his homburg gaily in Axel’s direction with the other. It was an empty gesture, however. For when we looked up at the tower, Axel had disappeared.

“We better hurry!” Jeff warned. “He may be up to some new deviltry.”

“We better stake out some security,” I said. “He might show up with that dog, and this is my last pair of pants.”

I grabbed a cargo sling, and Siegfried grabbed another, and we ran a few yards toward opposite ends of the battlement to stand guard, while Homer, Henry and Mortimer rode to safety.

“C’mon! C’mon!” Jeff cried. “Somebody’s got to let *me* down.”

Siegfried ran back to show Jeff how to let himself down by paying out the tow rope over his shoulder, and wished him luck with a slap on the back. Then he turned toward me, but it was already too late.—Axel had appeared in the doorway of a small watchtower...and over his shoulder leaped the snarling Great Dane. Her long legs ate up the distance between us in no time. I took one hasty glance over my shoulder and saw that Siegfried was still twenty yards from me, but coming fast.

“C’mon girl! C’mon girl!” I cried, feebly. “Nice girl! Nice girl! And I stumbled backwards as fast as I could.

Then the space between us disappeared, and the great beast flung herself at me, jaws extended, paws flailing. I backed off one more step, and with my eyes closed and my head turned away, I tried my best to slip the cargo net over her head. The next thing I knew, I was flat on my back on the hard stone floor of the battlement, in a tangle of arms and legs with Maria Theresa...but not the one you’ve read about.

Then I felt the pressure of Siegfried’s body, as he flung himself on the huge dog, pulled my cargo net taut about her jaws and flipped his own over her hindquarters. Then he grabbed me by the armpits and flung me like a sack of potatoes onto his back, as though he’d been doing it all his life.

“Lock your feet over my belt buckle,” he panted, “and don’t let go.” Then he grabbed my arms, passed them under his armpits and made me clasp my fingers tightly together behind the back of his neck. “Don’t let go! And don’t grab my sroat!” he ordered. “And don’t grab my arms! You will be all right!”

Then, while the dog writhed on the floor, hopelessly entangled in the nets, and Axel jumped up and down in impotent fury atop the inner parapet, Siegfried slid himself through an embrasure with me on his back, locked his feet over the cargo rope, and grabbed it with

his strong hands. We swung out over the moat, and I closed my eyes and hung on for dear life. Hand-over-hand, Siegfried's powerfully-muscled arms took us slowly downward in a sort of swaying diagonal toward the opposite side of the moat. All I could do was grit my teeth, hold my breath...and pray that the rope wouldn't break. My fate was in the strong hands of Siegfried...and those of Somebody Else.

Of course, you *know* we made it...or you wouldn't even be reading about it. All I can say is, I wasn't cut out to be a high wire aerialist, and Maria Theresa might just as well have had my last pair of pants.

I wish I had a film of Axel jumping up and down on the parapet and flinging curses at us as we gathered our baggage and prepared to descend to the chain bridge. Even worse, he ran up and down the battlements, kicking and pushing huge boulders over the side, that had probably been placed there hundreds of years ago to defend the castle against a siege. They fell harmlessly into the moat, of course, and all we could do was laugh at him.

"It's been nice knowing you!" Jeff hollered up to him.

"Remind me to send you a postcard when we get back to the States!" Dinky shouted.

"Hey! That was *my* bar of soap you locked in the bathroom!" shouted Freddy Muldoon. "Would you please mail it to me at....." And he started to give his address in Mammoth Falls.

"Oh, stop it! Stop it! Stop it!—Will you please stop it!" Angela sobbed, her shoulders heaving, as we made our way down the trail. "Don't you have any sympathy for that little man?"

"That" s what he gets for being small," said Freddy Muldoon.

"Oh-h-h-h!" Angela writhed. "I hope you shrink before you get any older!"

While Sepp expertly negotiated the dizzying curves of the Glockner Strasse on our way down to the hotel, Homer and Mortimer teamed up in a routine they had been practicing while the rest of us were worrying about ghosts, or trying to get some sleep. I guess it was relief from the tension of the past two hours that made it come boiling out of them. Homer was the straight man most of the time.

"Hey! How did Henry Ford make his fortune?" Homer asked, in a

loud voice.

“He Madagascar!” Mortimer shouted, slapping his thigh and cackling like a one-legged rooster loose in a chicken loft.

“What did the picador say to the matador?”

“Don’t let that Bulgaria on his horns!” And Mortimer laughed so hard he had to blow his nose.

“What did the third baseman say when that grounder skipped off his shoulder?”

“That Balkan sure bounce funny!” Mortimer snorted. “Hey! You know my sister was so bashful we called her Cheyenne?”

Then he slid down in his seat, writhing in a paroxysm of laughter. Angela was slumped against the window beside her seat, her shoulders shaking as she tried to laugh but wanted to cry. She hadn’t gotten over the experience at the castle yet. “Oh, please stop it,” she wailed. “I’m not in the mood for Geography right now.—Besides, I can’t keep score.”

“Cheer up!” Mortimer said, wiping the tears from his eyes. “As soon as we get to the hotel you can lay your Carcassone a bed and relax!” Then he screamed with delight while Homer slapped him all over the head and back, hollering, “That’s great, boy! Just great!”

“I hope you marry a gnome,” Angela moaned, slumping further down in her seat. “After all the mean things you’ve said about Axel, it would serve you right!”

Mortimer recovered himself long enough to spit out: “Next time I see a Nome, Alaska!” Then he almost passed out laughing at himself.

When we got to the Heiligenblutner Hof we all felt like just flopping into bed, from sheer exhaustion. But the professor insisted we have a good supper, and then get as many things packed as we could, so we could get an early start in the morning.

“Old Blimp is itching to go,” he explained. “She got to stretch her wings, you know.”

“She ain’t got any wings,” said Freddy, wearily, cradling his dinosaur foot in his arms.

“Zat’s what you sink, Mr. Smarty,” said the professor. “She got wings to her soul. Zat’s why she can fly so good.”

Chief Gruber found us in the dining room and came over to give

us the latest news about the rescue operation. The second body had been recovered successfully, and was being brought down the mountain. Coroner Totengraber had identified the body that had been chopped out of the ice by persons unknown the night before. It was the body of a man named Alistair Crooke, an Englishman. They had found a passport among the tattered remnants of his clothing, issued to him in 1871.

"I guess young Herr Mulligan was right after all," said Chief Gruber. "Zis man could have been one of ze diamond smugglers we were talking about ze night you arrived."

"Phooey!" said the professor. "Did you ask him if he was?"

"He can't talk," said Herr Gruber.

"Did you find any diamonds on him?"

"No! But zat could be ze reason somebody dug him out and tore half ze clothes off him.—We got a few...what you call?...‘smarties’?...in zis village, you know."

"You mean there might be more than one diamond, Professor?" said Dinky.

"Naturally," said the professor. "Zose stumblebums coulda' had a whole bunch of diamonds wiz zem.—Just because zat one old joker only mentioned ze great big one, doesn't mean zey didn't have some more."

"Oh, boy! Let's stay a couple more days and go look for them!"

"Naw!" said Freddy. "I wanna' get home. I'm tired."

"Freddy is right," said the professor. "We gotta' get home."

The next morning we had all our baggage down in the lobby shortly after daylight. The professor started counting noses.

"How many people did we have when we left ze university?" he asked.

"Ten, counting you, professor," said Henry.

"How come we only got nine, now?"

"You didn't count yourself, daddy-oh," said Angelina.

"Number Two, you call me zat one more time...and I gonna' leave you here."

"Okay, Whiskers!"

“Hey!” said Dinky. “Shouldn’t we say good-bye to them Smellow fellows?”

“Yes ,we should,” Henry agreed. “I wonder if they’re up yet?” And he went over to the desk and asked the clerk if he could ring their rooms.

“Oh, zose gentlemen are no longer wiz us, Herr Mulligan. Zey checked out very suddenly, late last night.”

“You mean they split the scene, dad?” asked Angela.

The clerk looked puzzled. “I don’t sink so,” he said. “I hope zey didn’t! We should have to charge zem for zat.”

“Did they say where they were going?” Henry asked, slightly curious.

“Zey only said zat some very important business had come up, and zey had to leave right away.

“Hey!” said Mortimer. “I betcha’ them guys found that diamond. That’s why they took off!—I betcha’ they’re the ones that dug that body out. You know, they were up there yesterday wanting to help get the other body out!”

“Which means they couldn’t have found the diamond on the first body,” said Henry. “If they had, they wouldn’t care about the second body.”

“I think Henry’s right,” said Freddy Muldoon. “C’mon, Dalrymple! Stop daydreamin’.”

“Well, they mighta’ wanted to find some ‘a them other diamonds the professor was talking about.”

“That was the professor’s idea,” Henry reminded him. “We don’t know whether anybody else thinks that.—I think you’re just making up a problem for yourself, Mortimer.”

Up the Glockner Strasse we went for the last time, with Burgermeister Weixelbaumer, Father Schafer, Chief Gruber and some of the other village dignitaries following in cars to give us a farewell send-off. But when we pulled up in front of the Glocknerhaus, the manager came running out to meet us, with his whiskers flapping in the breeze.

“Herr Professor! Herr Professor! Your plimp is gone!” he was shouting.

“Gone?” the professor snorted, unbelievably. “Zat is funny. Blimp never went anywhere alone before!”

“Oh, she didn’t just go away. Somebody cut ze mooring lines!— We just discovered it early zis morning. I been trying to get you on ze telephone for ze past hour.”

“Don’t never use ze telephone when you got somesing important to say!” the professor reprimanded him.

We ran out to where Blimp had been moored at the edge of the glacier, and she wasn’t there, alright. The mooring lines had all been neatly snipped. and she had just floated away, apparently.

“There she is! There she is!” Dinky cried, pointing off to the northeast.

Sure enough, we could just see her, lying low on the horizon, partially obscured by a snow-capped ridge. She appeared to be just drifting aimlessly.

“Hoh, boy! What we gonna’ do?” the professor wailed. “If I had my ground transmitter wiz me, maybe I could coax her back here.— But Blimp got it wiz her.”

Henry started scratching his head. “You know, Professor. There’s a big U. S. Air Force field near Munich. I’ve read all about it. It’s part of the NATO Forces. If they could send a couple of helicopters here, maybe they could snare her and tow her back here.”

“Zat’s a good idea, Herr Mulligan,” said Chief Gruber. “I will call ze U. S. Consulate in Salzburg for you.” And he ran into the Glocknerhaus lobby to grab a telephone.”

“Zat is stupid!” the professor snorted. “You can’t never get nobody on ze telephone when you want zem.”

“Please let him try, sir,” said Henry. “It might just work.”

Herr Gruber called the U. S. Consulate in Salzburg, and the U. S. Consulate in Salzburg called the U. S. Consulate in Munich, and the U. S. Consulate in Munich called the U. S. Air Force, and the Air Force Commander called the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe, and the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Central Europe called the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, and the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe called the Pentagon in Washington to ask them if they had any objections, and they asked

him who Henry Mulligan was. In about two hours a call came for Henry Mulligan from the U. S. Consulate in Salzburg, and he told them who he was...Henry Mulligan, of Mammoth Falls, U. S. A.

About three hours later, two helicopters did show up. They took Henry's suggestion, and when they had chop-chopped out to where Blimp was still hovering on the skyline, they lowered a man in a sling who clamped a tow cable to Blimp's nose. Then the other chopper lowered a man onto Blimp's back, who lowered Jeff Crocker in a sling down over Blimp's fat belly to where he could grab the cabin door with a skyhook and pull himself inside. As the first chopper towed Blimp back toward us, Jeff operated her elevators and rudder to keep her on an even keel, and to bring her low enough so we could grab the mooring lines and pull her down before the chopper blades severed the tow cable.

When we had her fast, we thanked the chopper crews, and they flew off shaking their heads in wonderment.

"You see, Professor...the telephone idea did work," said Henry.

"Zat don't prove nossing!" said the professor. "You was just lucky!"

"You know, there's something about this whole business that I don't understand," said Jeff. "Ever since we've been here, somebody's been trying to scare us into leaving. And now that we're ready to go...somebody cuts Blimp loose so we can't get away."

"It's a mystery," Henry agreed.

"Well, you ain't got time to figure it out right now," said the professor. "Come! We go now!"

But we didn't quite! We had to listen to about an hour of band music, speeches, and yodeling before we finally took off; and when we did, the sun was already low in the sky. The Professor headed Blimp due southeast toward Heiligenblut.

"Hey! You ain't gonna' fly upside down over that town, are ya'?" Freddy cried in alarm.

"Oh, no, Freddy," the professor laughed. "We just going souse for awhile, so I can show you some volcanoes."

Then he suddenly slapped his forehead. "Holy Moses! I forgot again!"

“Forgot what?” we all groaned, in a chorus.

“It’s not so much what I forgot. It’s what I didn’t remember. I didn’t remember not to fly over ze castle!—Look down zere, quick!”

We all craned our necks out the windows and we could see the castle directly below us. Suddenly the blimp began to rock and pitch violently as the professor jerked at the controls; and he revved the engines up to full throttle.

“What’s the matter, Professor? What’s going on?” cried Angela.

“You see zat nasty Axel down zere?”

“Yes! But I thought you said he was cute.”

“He not so cute when I fly over ze castle wiz ze blimp!” said the professor. And he gave the old gasbag full elevator upward.

Directly below us we could see Axel on top of one of the tall towers, and he was looking up at us with something cradled in his arms that looked suspiciously like his deadly crossbow.

“Look out!” Jeff shouted, jerking his head in from the window. And a steel bolt thudded against Blimp’s underbelly and bounced harmlessly off. Two others whirred past her tail before we were safely out of range.

“Hoh, boy! Zis old girl got a tough skin,” said the professor, patting the control panel affectionately.

“Wow! That was close!” gasped Homer. “What’s he trying to do...kill us?”

“I never been able to figure zat out,” said the professor. “Axel does zat every time I leave here.—But I keep forgetting to remember it!—I don’t know why he does zat!”

Interpolating Smithereens

We flew “souse” all right! In fact, it took us nearly four days to get home because of the zigzag course the professor had mapped out. He had certain landmarks in mind that he wanted to show us, and he had something to say about each of them.

He set a course that took us straight over Venice, across a corner of the Adriatic, then straight down the Italian “boot” toward Mount Vesuvius and Mount Etna.

“Oh, it’s beautiful! Beautiful!” Angela exclaimed, as we passed over Venice. “Just like it looked in fifteenth century prints I’ve seen. I can’t believe it!—Couldn’t we land here, and spend a day or two?”

“Ho! It’s beautiful...if you ain’t got no sense of smell,” said the professor. “Zis is ze best place to look at it.—Zose canals ain’t all water, you know!”

On we flew, toward Vesuvius and Etna. The sun had already set.

“Professor, it’s gonna’ be dark long before we get to Rome,” said Jeff. “What’s the point in flying over those volcanoes at night?”

“You don’t gotta’ *see* a volcano to know it’s zere!” the professor answered. “Sometimes you can just *smell* it.”

“I’d rather smell Venice,” said Angela. “I don’t like volcanoes. They frighten me to death.”

“Hoh, boy, Number One! You got a lot a’ work to do, if you gonna’ pass zis course! You don’t gotta’ be afraid of volcanoes. You should be sankful for zem. Zey are nature’s safety valves!”

“Safety valves!” Angela exclaimed. “Then how come they blow up?”

“Boy! You gotta’ lot to learn,” said the professor. “You know, zis old earse got a hot fire in her belly like you never saw.—Hoh, boy!

You talk about trapped gas! If it weren't for some of zese volcanoes letting all zat hot air loose...zis old earse would have blown up long ago!—Oh, zis old earse would have such a great big bellyache like you never heard of!”

“But a volcano causes so much destruction...and thousands of people are killed...and...”

“So?.....You want everybody on earse to be blown up at ze same time? Is zat what you want?—Hoh, boy! Number One.....you gotta' lotta' homework to do before you pass zis course!”

Angela fell silent for a moment, and gave that one some serious thought.

It was long after midnight when we passed over Vesuvius, and even later when Mount Etna. came into view. We had all long ago sacked out, but the professor stayed at the controls with only Jeff to help him, and prodded us into wakefulness so we could hang our heads out the windows and pretend to stare down at the steam and vapor rising from the two ancient volcanoes.

It was eight o'clock in the morning when we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and Mortimer was taking his turn at pushing Blimp's rudder pedals and keeping a hand on the elevator wheel. The professor was up early, and we wondered why he wasn't as sleepy as he had been the night we left Mammoth Falls.

“I want you all to look at zat rock,” he said. “Zat is ze greatest rock in all ze world.”

“Looks funny to me,” said Homer. “That's not like the pictures I've seen.”

“Zat is because you don't see no sign on zere telling you you gotta' buy insurance!” said the professor. “Zat is why I brought you here, Mr. Snodgrass. You gotta' see zese sings for yourself.”

On we flew into the Atlantic, and headed northwest. When Angela and Angelina served lunch, Freddy Muldoon gave one of his demonstrations of how to eat everything in sight. After he'd eaten everything left on the table, he started picking leftovers off other people's plates.

“Freddy! You shouldn't gorge yourself like that,” Angela warned him. “When you grow up, you'll be bigger than Blimp.”

“Oh, he’s always been gorgeous,” said Dinky Poore. “He just can’t help it.”

“Leastways, I can float!” said Freddy, with a sneering look at Dinky’s skinny frame.

“Yeah! But if they ever let the water out, you’d get stuck in the drain.”

Then Freddy took off after Dinky, and Mortimer had to knock their heads together again to restore order.

In the evening, while most of us were playing cards in the back cabin, things got a little out of hand again.

“Hey! You can’t take a Cardiff you don’t make a play! You gotta’ pass.” Mortimer warned Freddy.

“Okay, Angie. Let’s get him,” said Angela. “I’m getting sick of this.”

“Right on!” cried Angelina, as she jumped to her feet and started doing a soft shoe step with a long kitchen spoon crooked under her elbow. Then they broke into a routine they’d obviously been rehearsing in private.

“Are you in favor of women’s lib?” Angela chanted.

“Sure! The more Libya got, the Morocco Gibaltars you can conquer!”

“Hey! I thought that was women’s *lip*!” Mortimer complained.

“Hey! That must be a ten-pointer! Hey, Homer! Help!—Hey, we gotta’ challenge!”

Homer came running in from the front cabin, as Angela fed Angelina an other one.

“What kind of a car does a sheik drive?”

“A four-door Sudan...natch’!”

“What does the Queen of England drive?” Homer shouted.

“A Tudor sedan!” Mortimer shouted back.

“Hey, that doesn’t count!” said Angela. “Tudor’s a family name...not a place name.”

“We just expanded the game,” said Homer.

“Stow it, kiddo! You can’t do that!—You just can’t think fast enough,” said Angelina. “You gotta’ unlax them brain cells to keep

with it.”

“Try me!”

“Okay! Where’s the best place to raise dough?”

“At the Newfoundland Banks?”

“No-o-o!” Angela screamed with delight. “In a Bakersfield!” Then it went on.

“Hey, Number Two!”

“Hit me, Number One!”

“What do they call a Hindu in India?”

“That’s a Buddha-pest, Number One!” And Angelina broke into a clog step and flipped the kitchen spoon back-and-forth over her shoulder like a baton twirler.

“How does a farmer get his chickens to market?”

“A poultry truck can Cartagena long way!”

“Why does Batman chase Cat Lady?”

“What could a Katmandu for him...stupid!”

By this time, Homer and Mortimer were both holding their fingers in their ears, and I decided to take a nap because I had to stand watch at four o’clock.

“We gotta’ find time to rehearse,” Homer was telling Mortimer, as I left.

“Don’t worry.—We’ll get back at ‘em,” said Mortimer.

It seemed as though we would fly north forever: but the professor was insistent that we at least get a glimpse of the great Greenland icecap. So, on we went...at least two thousand miles out of our way. When the great, endless blanket of ice that smothers Greenland finally came into view, the professor was ecstatic.

“Number Two, you gotta’ get me a nice glass of acidophilus,” he said. “Did Sepp put it in ze cooler, like I told him?”

“He sure did,” said Angelina. “But it might have gotten churned up a bit while you were dodging Axel’s arrows.”

“Zose weren’t arrows,...zey were steel bolts!” said the professor. “Gott im Himmel! I hope he didn’t hit ze acidophilus cooler!”

“The last time I looked, it was still there,” said Angelina. And she went and got the professor a brimming glassful of the stuff.

“Boy, zat is good!” said the professor. “Now I want you all to look at zat ice out zere,” he exclaimed, as we skirted the coast of Greenland. “Zere is seven hundred sousand square miles of it! Some places it gotta’ be two miles sick, too!—Hoh, boy! Zat is a big chunk of ice!”

“Hey! I read that if all the polar ice caps melted, it would raise the level of the oceans...maybe two hundred feet,” said Homer.

“Zat is right,” said the professor.

“Boy! That would put all of New York City under water!”

“Is zat bad?” the professor asked. “Zat might solve some of ze problems zey got!—Not all of zem...but some of zem. At least, ze streets would be clean, for once!”

“But, how would all those people get to work?” Dinky asked.

“Zey got elevators in zose buildings,” said the professor. “A lot of zem would stick up srew ze water. All you gotta’ do is put on a diving suit and go down and catch an elevator!”

“What a way to get to. work!” said Freddy Muldoon.

“What’s so bad about zat?” the professor snorted. “If you got to wear a gas mask to get to work...you might as well wear a. diving suit!”

“Hey, look at that!” Mortimer cried, pointing to a great chunk of ice that had just broken loose and splashed into the ocean.

“Zat will become an iceberg,” said the professor. “Some of my colleagues call zat “calving”, when a big chunk drops off and floats away.—I don’t know what is ze matter wiz zose zanies! To have a calf, you got to have a cow. Can you imagine a cow zat is seven hundred sousand square miles big?—Hoh, boy! Would I like to have ze milk concession from zat! I could drink acidophilus all my life, and zen some.”

“Would you like another glass?” Angelina asked him.

“No sank, Number Two. I got a belly ache right now,” said the professor, as he turned the controls over to Jeff and walked up and down the cabin, rubbing his stomach. “Hoh, boy! Would I like to push zat big chunk of ice right off into ze ocean!—Hoh, boy! What a mess zat would make!”

We headed south, finally, as the sun was setting, and we were all

glad the geology lesson was finished and we would soon see the coast of Maine and be on our way home. But we still had a little more trouble to face from the female equality movement, and it nearly ended in disaster. Angelina kept insisting on equal time in the pilot's seat, and the professor finally relented and let her take over the controls.

"I gotta' do it!" he explained to Jeff. "'You don't know zat student newspaper zere at ze university.—Hoh, boy! Will zey climb all over me! Zey will charge me wiz discrimination. Zey will charge me wiz being over sirty years old!—Which is true, but zey don't gotta' print zat stuff.—And zey will even claim zat I don't give passing grades! —Hoh, boy! Zat is ze worst sing zat can happen to a professor! When zat kind of garbage gets around, nobody will sign up for your courses. Zat is why I only got two students right now.'"

Jeff just kept nodding his head and saying he understood, and we all realized the professor had a peculiar problem and felt a little sorry for him: but at the same time, nobody really had any objections to Angelina flying the blimp, anyway.—But maybe we should: have. She did pretty well for awhile; but then she got a little overconfident, and I think she became a victim of that peculiar psychology that infects a lot of people when they fly an airplane. They begin to think that they are lord and master of all they survey...that they control the whole world...that they can do anything they want to, because they are a special sort of person who has learned how to fly, and nothing can touch them—not even gravity! I don't think anyone has ever given a name to this exhilarating feeling, but it's a sort of Rapture of the Deep that hits you upstairs instead of downstairs.—And it hit Angelina.

She started diving Blimp up and down and skimming the tops of waves, while the rest of us staggered around in the cabin and held on for dear life. Finally, she zoomed down so close to the water that the professor panicked and tried to grab the controls from her. By mistake, he pulled the Emergency Release Lever, and the next thing we knew we had plopped into the water...while Blimp's gas bag floated far and free above us.

"Hoh, boy, Number Two! You gonna' flunk zis course!" the professor spouted, suddenly not caring about the student newspaper.

“You gonna’ get us all wet!”

Fortunately, only a few windows had been open, so we didn’t ship much water. But the propellers were still whirring and the gondola kept moving at a fast clip, diving up and down in the waves. Jeff dashed to the control panel and cut the engines.

“What do we do now, Professor?” he exclaimed, with more excitement in his voice than Jeff usually shows.

“Ze first sing we gotta’ do is keep calm!” the professor said sternly, as he paced up and down the cabin, wringing his hands and tearing at his hair. “Zat is ze first sing you always got to do!”

We all just stood there and watched him pace, while the gondola bobbed up and down in the sea. Angelina was crushed.

“I’m sorry, Professor,” she wailed. “I guess you got a right to be mad at me.”

“I ain’t mad at you, Number Two. You are a dummkopf. You got to expect a dummkopf to do sings like zat...so you don’t get mad at zem.—I am mad at *myself*, because I am supposed to be smart...and I didn’t have all my smarts wiz me when I let you fly ze blimp.—Come! We get to work now!” And he pulled a set of folding steps from beneath one of the front cabin bunks and opened a hatch in the cabin roof.

“What are we going to do?” Henry asked. “We’re adrift at sea. Shouldn’t we drop the centerboard and start the engines. Maybe we could make it to shore alright.”

“Enry, I am surprised at you,” said the professor. “You know you got to plan for zese sings.—All we gotta’ do is coax Blimp back here. She will come.”

I guess people who don’t know the professor wouldn’t believe this...but when Jeff and I stuck our heads up through the hatch the professor had opened, we could see the tattered old gas bag bobbing and swaying gently in the breeze about three hundred yards dead astern of us. She was still tethered to the gondola by a heavy nylon fishing line.

“Zat is a special fishing line,” the professor explained. “I. use it sometimes to give ze whales a little tickle when zey are going too slow.—You see, zere are copper wires embedded in ze line, and

Blimp got a bunch of batteries in her belly. All I gotta' do is send her some signals wiz zis little transmitter, and she will make her tail behave and keep her head in ze wind while we maneuver ze gondola right under her.—Zen I bring her down, and we reel her in, and a couple 'a you foolhardy rascals scramble up on ze cabin roof and fasten down ze latches I let go when I pulled zat stupid lever.”

It all sounded pretty simple...and actually it was. Jeff started the engines and backed up the gondola very slowly, while the professor gave Blimp all her instructions through his patented nylon fishing line. Then Mortimer and I got up on the gondola roof and grabbed the two thin steel cable. that dangled from Blimp's underside, and hooked them to two small winches on the roof. After the professor had reeled the old gas bag into a snug position atop the gondola, we just refastened all the latches and climbed back down into the cabin.

Henry Mulligan was shaking his head. “I've got to hand it to you, Professor. That was pretty neat!—I wouldn't believe it, if I hadn't seen it.”

“Remember what ze old count said,” the professor reminded him. “You gotta' believe...or maybe you don't see nossing!”

Meanwhile, Blimp had lifted us off the tossing surface of the ocean, and things settled down again.

“Yes, 'Enry, when you invent somesing...you got to invent it idiotproof,” the professor continued. “If you don't...some idiot gonna' mess it up for you.—No offense intended, Number Two. It's just zat science has proved zat half ze idiots in ze world are women.”

“I guess I can't argue with that,” said Angelina, after thinking it over for awhile.

Back in the air and back on course, we settled down for the night and cruised smoothly. In the morning we were over New York City again, and Angela had a small problem with Freddy and Dinky. She discovered them out on the observation deck, spot-bombing the taller buildings with fresh eggs they had swiped from the galley, and some of the stink bombs Freddy always carries in his luggage.

“We ain't got time to eat all these eggs,” Freddy complained when she stopped them. “Might as well put 'em to good use.”

“That's not the point!” she insisted. “You're not only wasting perfectly good food, but you're probably breaking the law, too.—

How do you know you won't hurt somebody? How do you know what might happen?"

"A good fresh egg never hurt anybody," said Dinky.

"Ceptin' the hen, maybe," Freddy mumbled.

"Well, knock it off!" she ordered. "You ought to be cleaning up and getting your things together. 'We'll be landing this afternoon.'"

"What about a couple more stink bombs?"

"You'll drop *nothing* overboard! Nothing at all!" And she herded them off the observation deck.

"I'm gonna' throw the whole bunch at the first woman I see...soon as we get home," Freddy muttered.

In the afternoon, the professor radioed the Clinton County Airport to tell them we'd be landing there.

"How come we ain't landing in that soccer field at the university?" Freddy asked. "I thought you was gonna' fly upside-down and amaze everybody."

"You mind your own business, Mr. Smarty!" said the professor. "I got my reasons."

Most of us could guess at the reason. By landing at the county airport he might avoid the reporter and photographer from the student newspaper, who might want to interview Angela and Angelina. And he might have to answer some embarrassing questions about why he didn't think women should fly blimps. Once he was safe in his office, of course, he could claim academic freedom and refuse to answer any questions at all.

In fact, the professor admitted as much to Henry. "'Enry," he said. "It is too bad sometimes when you get famous. Here I coming home from one of my greatest geological triumphs...I have proved zat ze Pasterzen Glacier behaves just like any ozzer glacier! But what I gotta' do?—I gotta' try and dodge one dinky little reporter who gonna' ask ze wrong questions!"

"That's too bad," said Henry. "But what can you do about it?"

"Zat is exactly it," the professor agreed. "You have put your finger right on it, 'Enry.—Of course, you can always tell a bunch of lies. But I don't like to do zat. I got enough trouble trying to tell ze truce...wizzout worrying about lying."

“It’s a real problem,” Henry agreed.

“Maybe you should grow up to be a used car salesman, or somesing like zat, and forget all about zis science stuff.”

“Oh, no!” said Henry. “I have trouble lying, too.”

Despite the professor’s last-minute change of plans, there was a considerable crowd waiting to greet us at the Clinton County Airport; and the professor, dressed in his aviator’s costume, white scarf and dark green monocle, posed endlessly for pictures. The county airport had apparently spread the word, and the entire Mammoth Falls Town Council had driven up with Mayor Scragg to welcome us home, and the president of the State University was there to greet the professor. The summer editor of the student newspaper had come along with him, and he did corner Angela and Angelina, of course. But Angela said all she wanted to do was get into a hot bath, and any interviews would have to wait.

Angelina agreed. “What I got to tell you would fill a book, buster!” she said. “You’ll have to take it sitting down.”

“But what did you do, and what did you see?” the editor persisted. “Couldn’t I just get a brief summary?”

“What we haven’t seen just hasn’t been invented yet, daddy-oh!” said Angelina. “I gotta’ think it over and decide whether *I* believe it, before I talk for publication.—Now, do you mind if we split the scene?”

There was no mention of her near-disastrous attempt to fly Blimp, nor of the professor’s deprecating remarks about people who didn’t happen to be men.

“Now you got ze right idea, Number Two,” the professor said, patting her on the back as we moved toward Richard the Deep Breather, where Zeke Boniface and Bo McSweeney were loading all our luggage. “Now you using your noodle.—Chust remember...you tell zem what I said about female idiots—and I tell zem all zose mean sings you said about Axel.”

“That sounds fair enough, Whiskers,” said Angelina.

“You know, Number Two...I sink you gonna’ pass zis course.”

“Glory be!” said Angelina.

While we were loading into the truck, Dinky plucked at Freddy’s

sleeve.

“Did you notice that guy with the funny little mole on his left ear?”

“What guy?”

“The one with all the reporters.—I betcha’ I seen him somewheres before.

“Big deal!” said Freddy.

“And there was another guy there wearin’ alligator shoes. I betcha’ I seen him before, too.”

“I didn’t know alligator’s wore shoes,” said Freddy, wiping his nose. “How’d he ever get ‘em away from the alligator?”

“Sometimes I think you got a fat head!” said Dinky, as he helped Freddy lift his dinosaur foot onto the bed of the truck.

We unloaded the girls and the professor at the university, and stored all the plaster casts, photos and notebooks in the professor’s laboratory. Then Zeke and Bo drove us home to Mammoth Falls. We still had about a week’s work to do, helping the professor mount and paint the castings for his museum, and cataloguing all the photos and notes. We all agreed to get right at it the following morning.

It wasn’t easy getting any sleep that night, because our families had so many questions to ask us about our trip, and we didn’t know whether to tell them everything that happened, or not. After all...you don’t want to get a reputation as a liar by telling people wild tales about dwarfs and ghosts and falcons and secret passages...so most of us just did the best we could. When Dinky’s mother and father asked him what had happened, he just said, “Nothin’!”, and they couldn’t get another thing out of him. I think Dinky had something on his mind that was troubling him.

It was nearly ten o’clock before Zeke got us all rounded up the next morning and bounced and jounced us over to the university. As soon as we pulled up in front of the building housing the professor’s laboratory, we knew something was wrong. It had to be. The professor was stretched out on the grass in front of the building, and Angela and Angelina were rubbing his wrists and fanning his head.

“What happened? What’s wrong? Is the professor sick?” we all clamored as we ran up to them.

“He just passed out,” Angela explained. “We’ve sent to the dispensary for an ambulance.”

“Just take a look inside,” Angelina spouted, gesturing toward the laboratory. “All the plaster casts have been smashed!”

We dashed inside, and sure enough, the place was just littered with smithereens of soft white plaster. There wasn’t a chunk left big enough to play baseball with.

“Do you think somebody broke in here?” Homer asked.

Angelina looked at him as though he had just crawled out of the wall. “No!” she said. “It’s those Austrian termites! They work fast.”

It almost made you want to cry. A good part of the work of the professor’s expedition had been irretrievably lost. It was no wonder he had passed out when he opened the door and saw the carnage.

“Look over here,” said Angelina. “They didn’t exactly *break in*...they just slipped in.”

She showed us how the latch on one of the windows had been pried upward with a screwdriver, or a stout knife, inserted between the upper and lower frames. Whoever had done it, had closed the window carefully when they left. But the damage to the latch was apparent for anyone to see.

While we were discussing the pro’s and con’s and the why’s and wherefore’s of the whole business, Dinky wandered outside and began a minute examination of the ground and shrubbery beneath the damaged window. Dinky reads a lot of detective stories, and he always know just what to do.

The professor recovered fully, shortly after the ambulance arrived; and it didn’t take long for the police to show up, either. The campus police called in the city police, and the city police called in the state police, and the place was alive for a few hours.

“Maybe you better make plaster casts ‘a them footprints under that window,” Dinky Poore suggested. And he showed the police what he had found.

“Good idea, sonny,” said a sergeant. “That might help.”

But the police were nonplussed. “Why would anybody want to break in here, Professor? You got anything valuable in here?”

The professor shook his head, sadly. “Frankly gentlemen, it is

nossing but a bunch of junk. It is only valuable to a scientist.”

“Maybe it was a scientist that broke in!”

“Oh, I don’t sink so,” said the professor, shaking his head again. “Most of zem ain’t smart enough to do zat.—Besides, I got nossing zey want.”

“What about all these castings they smashed up. Could some guy be mad enough at you to want to destroy all your work.—Some “mad” scientist, maybe, huh?”

“Zat is a possibility,” the professor agreed. “I got a lot of jealous colleagues. But I don’t understand how zey know what I got, when I ain’t shown it to nobody yet.”

“That is a poser!” said the sergeant.

“I betcha’ I know what they were after,” said Freddy Muldoon. “They was after that big rock I hid in the plaster.”

“What big rock, sonny?”

“That great big shiny thing that came bouncing down the hill where me and Dinky was workin’.”

“The sergeant looked at the professor. “What’s he talking about?”

“I don’t know,” said the professor. “Maybe he got a rock in the head.”

“Down there in that gorge...back at that Holy Blood place,” Freddy insisted. “I told ya’ about that big guy, Jeff! Dinky saw him.”

“You told me about the big guy with the knife...but you didn’t tell me anything about hiding a rock,” said Jeff.

“Well I did! I hid it in the plaster where he couldn’t find it.—I just betcha’ that’s what somebody was lookin’ for when they smashed all these things.”

“Well, how come you never told us about it?” Mortimer asked him.

“I was savin’ it for a surprise,” said Freddy, digging a toe in the floor. “I figured maybe it might be that big diamond we was all talkin’ about, and maybe it could make us a whole bunch of money.—It was real shiny—like.”

“Well...this is a fine time to tell us!” said Mortimer, looking around at the rest of us.

“I sink what he saw was a big chunk of ice,” said the professor,

shaking his head back and forth again. “Zey got a whole lot of ice up where we were.”

The policemen all laughed good-naturedly and shrugged their shoulders.

“Well, we’ll certainly investigate this vandalism for you, Professor, and let you know what we find out,” said the sergeant. “Oh, by the way...speaking of vandalism...this couldn’t have been a student prank...could it? I mean...are there any students.....?”

The professor was shaking his head again. “No! No! I don’t sink even ze editor of ze student paper would do somesing like zis to me.”

We all pitched in to help the professor clean up his lab, and then we set to work on the photos and notebooks. We had at least three days of work ahead of us just processing the photographs.

“That’s some theory Muldoon came up with,” Mortimer joked as we worked. “Can you imagine anybody following us all the way from Austria, because they thought we might have that big diamond? —Think of the plane fare, and all that.”

“Maybe they swan,” said Homer.

“It coulda’ happened, just the same! It coulda’ happened,” said Dinky. “I’m not so sure Freddy’s wrong.”

“They coulda’ even stowed away in Blimp’s belly,” said Freddy, defensively. Hey! I betcha’ it’s the same guy that cut the blimp loose!”

“Let’s cut out the chatter and get to work,” said Jeff. “You can daydream tonight.”

Daydream, or no, we were surprised two days later by another visit from the police. The state police sergeant showed up at the laboratory with three men in civilian clothes, and introduced them as detectives from Interpol.

“This is Mr. Murgatroyd Fitch of London, Professor,” and a tall, beefy man with a handlebar moustache and thinning black hair bowed politely.

“And this is Monsieur Claude Dauphine of Paris,” and an athletic-looking man with a shock of wavy blond hair smiled and nodded his head...particularly at Angela and Angelina.

“And this is Meinheer Hendryk van Oogle of Amsterdam,” and

the third man bowed elaborately. He had a florid face and red sandy hair, and just a touch of sidewhiskers, but bright, twinkling blue eyes like Siegfried's.

"These gentlemen read our report on the police wire about your break-in here, Professor," the sergeant went on, "and they seem to think it might have some connection with a case they've been working on."

"I told ya'! I told ya'!" Freddy butted in, but Angela clapped a hand over his mouth and held him by the shoulder.

"Anyway, they'd like to talk with all of you...if you don't mind," the sergeant continued. "And they'd be grateful for any cooperation you can give them."

"Cooperation don't cost nossing," said the professor.

The sergeant let a flicker of a smile escape him as he turned to the door to leave. "Oh, by the way, Professor. We have checked all their credentials.—I just thought you'd like to know that."

Despite the sergeant's assurances, Mr. Murgatroyd Fitch stepped forward, formally introduced himself in official fashion, flicked his wallet open under the professor's nose, and blathered something very vague about not having any jurisdiction in this country, and everything was completely voluntary we were to understand, and he hoped he wasn't intruding. The other two followed suit, going through the same routine with their speeches and wallets. You couldn't see what was in the wallets, they flicked them open and shut so fast. It could have been old credit cards. But the professor nodded his head and waved all three of them to a seat, and the rest of us sat down, too...mostly on the floor.

"Und dso? Vat can we do for you chentlemen?" The professor's accent had suddenly gotten thicker in the presence of fellow Europeans, but I won't try to imitate it for you.

Mr. Murgatroyd Fitch settled his ample frame into the largest chair he could find, and started talking at once. He was apparently the spokesman for the group, and he launched into a story that held us enthralled...and a lot of pieces began to fall into place, one by one.

"If young Mr. Muldoon, here, will pardon me for going over some obvious background....."

“How’d you know my name?” Freddy blurted out again, before Angela could get to him.

“Oh, we know all your names,” said Mr. Fitch. “You see, we were in Heiligenblut all the time you were there.—If you’ll pardon a professional slip, we know you all very well.”

A cold chill ran down my spine. What on earth was this? Were we suspected of something? I could see jaws dropping open all around the room.—Then the horrible thought struck me! What if Freddy actually did bring that big diamond back with him? Would that make him a smuggler? Was that why these men were here?

“Hey! You ain’t the guys tried to swipe our blimp, are you?” Freddy blustered.

“Hey! You ain’t one ‘a them Smellow fellows in disguise...are you?” Dinky challenged, pointing a finger right at Mr. Fitch.

I practically cringed, wishing I could hide myself, and I could see most of the others had the same feeling. But Mr. Fitch threw his head back and laughed long and loud.

“No, no!” he said, wiping a tear from his eye. “But I might like to talk to you a bit about Mr. Smellow and his friends.—And I can see jolly well that I might not have to explain as much to you two lads as I thought I might.”

Everybody looked more relieved after that.

“Wouldn’t you gentlemen like to take your coats off?” Angela suggested, with slightly exaggerated politeness. “It’s rather warm in here.”

But all three shook their heads.

“They don’t never take them trench coats off, you dummy!” Freddy sneered at her. “They got sawed-off automatics and all kinds ‘a stuff hidden under there!”

This precipitated another gale of laughter from the three.

“Yeah! Don’t try and take their hats, neither,” said Dinky. “I betcha’ they got radios in ‘em.”

Finally, Mr. Fitch got started. “Well...to make a long story short...we’ve been trailing a gang of blokes for nearly fifteen years now. International jewel thieves they are. But we’ve never quite been able to get our fingers on them, or even find out who they are...if you

can understand that. I'll admit it's a bit strange.—The fact is...these blokes are deucedly clever at disguise.—You know! Now you see them...now you don't...that sort of thing.”

“I think we know what you mean,” Jeff volunteered. “We’ve seen a lot of things recently we aren’t sure we saw.”

“Exactly! I’m coming to that.—At any rate...we’ve never actually seen these men, as far as we know...though we may have.—Am I making myself clear?”

“Perfectly!” said Mortimer. “*You’re* the ones with the badges.”

“All we know...or knew...is that they *exist*. If you know what I mean.—In other words...we’d pick up tips from the underworld about their activities, or we’d be able to attribute some big heist...er, some major job...to them. But we never could catch them in the act...and we never actually saw any of them...as far as we know.”

“I understand,” said Angelina. “They were the little men who weren’t there.”

“Exactly!—Now, early this year we picked up a tip that this gang would be operating in that tiny little village, Heiligenblut, up there in the Alps. You know, some silly legend about a fabulous diamond that had been smuggled out of Kimberley and then lost on the Pasterzen Glacier.—Whether the legend is true isn’t important. The important thing is...these men *thought* it was...and they thought they had figured out a means of finding this magnificent piece of ice...as it is called in the trade...I’m sure you’re familiar with the term.”

“We’ve heard it,” said Homer.

“It seems this particular piece of ice might be worth as much as a million pounds!—So, it was well worth getting...you can understand.”

“Golly! Jellyfish! How many ounces is that?” Dinky asked.

“Shut up!” said Homer.

“Well, anyway...the three of us decided to camp out in Heiligenblut ourselves, and set up a sort of surveillance system...as we like to call it...so we could find out what was going on...and maybe even find out who these blighters were.—That is how we came to know all of you so well. You see...we’re pretty good at disguises ourselves!”

“You mean you suspected us?” Jeff asked, incredulously.

“Oh, no, no! We were out after much bigger fish than you...if you’ll pardon the expression.—But, would you recognize that waiter who told you that Mr. Stunkard and his friends took long walks in the mountains every day?”

“I’m sure I would,” said Jeff.

“Well, he’s sitting right next to you, Mr. Crocker!” said Mr. Fitch, with a benign smile. And Jeff turned to see Monsieur Dauphine smiling and nodding at him.

“I think they take long walks in the mountains,” said Monsieur Dauphine, with a wicked wink. “Maybe they are...what you call it?...bird watchers? Or maybe they collect the mountain wildflowers...you know, a great many people do.”

“Practically word-for-word! I’d swear!” said Jeff, looking stunned.

“Practically?” said Monsieur Dauphine, with his eyebrows raised. “It *was* word-for-word!”

“And by the way, Mr. Dalrymple,” Mr. Fitch chuckled. “We all thoroughly enjoyed that outrageous pun of yours while all the pigs were parading past the hotel...the one about how Noah stood on the Arkansas all those critters filing on board.” And all three of them laughed uproariously again.

“Did you hear that one I pulled about.....” Freddy began. But Angela clapped her hand over his mouth again and said: “Shut up!”

“Well...to make a long story short,” Mr. Fitch started in again, wiping the tears from his eyes. “We were watching you...because a lot of other people were watching you, and.....”

“You can say that again!” said Mortimer.

“Okay! I will!” said Mr. Fitch, without batting an eye. “We were watching you...because a lot of other people were watching you...and we just thought you might possibly lead us to who the men were that we were looking for.—And I think you finally did!”

“Who were they?” almost everybody asked at once.

“I’m coming to that.—At any rate, things really got interesting when you moved up to that castle.”

“You can say that a’.....Never mind!” said Mortimer.

“Exactly!” said Mr. Fitch. “Well...we watched you all the time you

were living in that castle...and we watched the other men who were watching you...if you know what I mean.—But what really tipped it for us, was when Mr. Smellow and his friends...the Smellow fellows, you call them...pulled up stakes and left town the same day you flew off in your blimp.”

“They checked out the night *before* we left,” said Henry. “I asked the desk clerk.”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Fitch. “We all thought that. But why don’t you ask the desk clerk what really happened, Mr. Mulligan?”

“How can I?”

“Oh, zat is easy, Herr Mulligan. I am right here!” said Meinheer van Oogle, shifting about in his seat. Then he dropped the phony accent. “You see, they *did* check out of the hotel. But we later learned they went straight up to the castle.—They had an arrangement with Axel, by the way, to use one of the rooms up there so they could keep a close watch on whatever happened out on the glacier. We found this out when we went up there with the old count to inquire.”

“*That’s* why Axel was always trying to scare us out of the place!” said Henry. “We suspected that.”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Fitch. “At any rate, we suspect it was Smellow and his friends who cut your balloon loose.....”

“Zat is a blimp!.....Blimp!” said the professor, shaking himself out of a drowsy torpor.

“Excuse me...your blimp. They must have done that right after they checked out of the hotel. They thought that would keep you there...that you wouldn’t be able to leave. But, you fooled them and got it back.”

“But why?” Henry asked. “Why did they want us to stay there?”

Mr. Fitch cleared his throat. “I can only surmise that they had reason to believe one of you had the legendary diamond in his possession. I can’t think of any other reason.”

All eyes turned toward Freddy, who was picking his nose.

“Hey! I betcha’ that’s why Axel didn’t want us to leave, either!” Freddy exclaimed. “We know they was in cahoots with him.”

“Perhaps so,” said Mr. Fitch, “though we’re not too sure about Axel...”

“You can say...Oh, forget it!” said Mortimer.

“At any rate...Mr. Smellow and his friends just plain evaporated after they realized they couldn’t keep you there.—And that’s what really first put us onto them. Why did they disappear so suddenly, we asked ourselves.”

“Well, where does that bring us?” Angela asked.

“It brings us right here,” said Mr. Fitch.

“Exactly!” said Mortimer.

“Thank you, young man,” Mr. Fitch went on. “You saved me a word.—You see...we traced them to Paris, where they boarded a plane for New York. The scent was getting hot. We followed them to New York and found they’d taken a plane for Chicago.—But in Chicago we lost their trail completely. They had just evaporated again.”

“So?” Angela asked again.

“So...here we are! When we saw that item on the police wire about all your plaster casts being smashed...well...it rang a bell. So we hot footed it down here, figuring you must be the same group that was in Heiligenblut.”

“You mean, with all your savvy, you didn’t know where we came from?” Mortimer asked.

“Well...I’m not being completely honest,” Mr. Fitch admitted. “Of course we knew where you came from.—But we couldn’t come down here asking questions willy-nilly...out of the blue, so to speak. It would have exposed our cover, you know, and made everybody suspicious, and...well, after all, we didn’t have anything to go on, you know, except a vague theory we’d concocted.—But, when we read about the break-in here on the police wire...well, that settled it!—Now...we have a question or two we’d like to ask you.”

“I was wondering when you’d get around to the questions,” said Freddy.

So was I. But I couldn’t be quite as calm about it as Freddy seemed to be. I still wondered just what Mr. Fitch was driving at, and why the three of them thought we knew anything.

“Well...as a starter,” said Mr. Fitch, “has any of you seen Mr. Smellow or any of his friends anywhere in this vicinity.—Now,

before you answer, bear in mind please, that they would almost certainly be disguised.”

“I have!” said Dinky, raising his hand. And we all looked in amazement at him with our mouths agape. “I’ve seen both Mr. Smellow and Mr. Stunkard around here!”

Mr. Fitch’s eyebrows rose. “Well!” he said.

“Oh, Dinky! Do be still!” said Angela. “This is serious business. We don’t have time for one of your fantasies.”

“It ain’t no *fantasy*,” said Dinky. “I seen ‘em both!”

“Well!” said Mr. Fitch. “Perhaps we have something here, after all, gentlemen.—Where and when did you see them, young Mr. Poore?”

“I seen ‘em both at the Clinton Airport the night we arrived. They was pretendin’ to be reporters.”

We all gasped. But we still couldn’t believe Dinky wasn’t just pulling Mr. Fitch’s leg.

“If he’s right, a lot of things are beginning to fit together,” said Jeff.

“*How* do you know it was Mr. Smellow?...and Mr. Stunkard?” Murgatroyd Fitch persisted.

“You got any pitchers ‘a them guys?” Dinky asked.

“Well...yes and no!” said Mr. Fitch. “Some years ago we were given two snapshots by an informer who claimed they were photos of two members of the gang, but we’ve never been able to verify them.” And he glanced at Meinheer van Oogle who drew a large wallet from his breast pocket and pulled out two grimy, tattered snapshots that he placed on a table before Dinky.

“They’re so small,” Dinky complained. “I’d need a magnifying glass.”

“Wait a minute!” said Mortimer. “Let me have those.” And he took the two snapshots and dashed over to the professor’s enlarger in a corner of the laboratory. We all followed him.

Mortimer put one snapshot in the enlarger and blew it up as large as he could without losing detail. Then he threw the black cloth over Dinky’s head and held him up to the viewer.

“That there’s Mr. Stunkard!” said Dinky, with finality. “You take a

look here, Mr. Murgadoitch.—You see that little mole on his left ear?”

“The name is *Fitch*, Mr. Poore,” said Mr. “Murgadoitch”, as he squinted at the backplate of the enlarger. “By Jove! You’re right! That certainly looks like a mole on his ear...unless it’s just a piece of dirt.”

“Mr. Stunkard’s got one in the same place, and there’s a big hair growin’ out of it,” said Dinky, “And that old grizzled Austrian had one too!”

You could almost feel the obvious excitement the three detectives exhibited at Dinky’s identification. Mortimer slipped the other snapshot in the enlarger.

“This here’s a full-length, Dinky. I can’t make the face so big.”

“I don’t want to see his face,” said Dinky. “I just wanna’ see his shoes.”

Mortimer focused in on the feet of the figure and blew them up as large as he could. Then he hoisted Dinky up by his belt again.

“Boy, that’s fuzzy!” said Dinky.

Mortimer took the enlarger down a step, and hoisted Dinky up again.

“That there’s Mr. Smellow! I’m sure!” said Dinky. “Unless somebody else is wearin’ his shoes.—Ya’ see them shoes, Mr. Foitch?”

“The name is *Fitch*!”

“Well...Mr. Smellow always wears alligator shoes. But the laces ain’t zigzagged, like most people wear ‘em. He always laces them straight across!”

Mr. Fitch took a look, then he turned to his companions who were looking at each other goggle-eyed. “Oh, I wish you’d been born fifteen years earlier!” he exclaimed. “You could have saved us a lot of grief and trouble, Mr. Poore.”

“You should be a detective when you grow up,” Meinheer van Oogle smiled at him. “You have an inquisitive mind, a good memory, and a very observant eye.”

“Naw!” said Dinky. “I couldn’t stand all them blondes...always hidin’ behind every door.—It’s always ruinin’ the plot!”

“So! Our bald-headed friend, Mr. Smellow, may actually be Henrik Heist?” Monsieur Dauphine speculated.

Mr. Fitch shrugged his shoulders. “It’s a very good chance,” he said. “The question is...what do we do now?”

“Hey! I seen a bald-headed man with alligator shoes in Ned Carver’s barber shop the other day!” Homer cried.

“Don’t be silly,” Mortimer sneered at him. ““What would a bald-headed man with alligator shoes be doing in Mr. Carver’s barber shop?”

“Well, I think they were alligator shoes,” said Homer, uncertainly.

“Now to the next question,” said Mr. Fitch, clearing his throat. And a few of us got all tensed up again. “And I guess the only way to do it...is to put it to you straight!—*Did any of you find a diamond on that glacier?*”

It was like an electric shock...even though we’d been expecting the question...and you could see everybody twitch. All eyes, of course, turned to Freddy.

“The state police said something about one of you telling a wild tale about hiding a rock in those plaster casts,” Mr. Fitch continued. “Would you like to tell me about it?”

“Sure!” said Freddy, picking his nose with complete composure. “This big shiny thing came bouncin’ down the hill and I dropped it in the plaster, because that big, mean giant of a guy with the small brain came nosin’ around.”

“Do you think it could have been a diamond?”

“I don’t know,” said Freddy, spreading his hands outward. “I never got a good look at it.”

“But you brought it back here?”

“We brought all the plaster casts back,” said Freddy, suddenly interested in something outside the window. He was obviously trying to be as unspecific as possible.

“Well...!” said Mr. Fitch. “I think we may have established a motive for the break-in here, gentlemen...and the reason for all the professor’s plaster casts being smashed to smithereens. And I guess we have reasonable grounds to suspect that the “Smellow fellows” had something to do with it.—The big question is...what do we do

now?”

“You are right,” said Monsieur Dauphine, in his smooth, even style. “If the diamond *was* here...then they obviously have gotten it and vamoosed! The question is...where have they gone?...and where do we look next?—They already have three day’s start on us!”

“They ain’t *got* the diamond! If that’s what it is,” said Freddy, still looking out the window.

You could have heard a pin drop.

“Would you repeat that, please?” Mr. Fitch said finally. “I thought you said, ‘They ain’t got the diamond’?”

“You got pretty good ears,” said Freddy. “You might make a good detective.—I know they ain’t got the diamond...’cause I’ve got it!”

There was another stunned silence. This was the second big piece of news Freddy had come up with in the past three days.

“Well...where is it?” nearly everybody asked at once.

“I got it right at home under my bed,” said Freddy, finally turning away from the window. ‘Cause I dropped it into that dinosaur footprint I was makin’...and that big dope never even saw me do it!”

There was another big silence you could cut with a knife...except for the sound of snoring coming from the professor’s chair. He had fallen fast asleep!

Those Smellow Fellows

Late afternoon shadows had crept across the floor of the professor's laboratory as we stood there shaking our heads over Freddy's latest revelation. "Why on earth have you waited all this time to tell us this, Freddy?" Angela asked him. "Anyone would think you were trying to hide something."

"I was," said Freddy.

"Freddy!"

"I was jest waitin' for the right time," Freddy insisted stoutly. "Then I was gonna' tell you all about it."

"Like when?" Mortimer needled him.

"Like...well...I don't know," Then a sudden thought struck Freddy's nimble mind. "Well....you see...if you wanna' know the truth...you see, I figured these Smellow guys were hangin' around here, just like Dinky said they were. And I figured they were after the big diamond...like they were. And I figured they'd be watchin' *me* all the time, 'cause I'm the one they figured might have it."

"So?"

"So..." said Freddy, "at great personal risk, and without regard for my own safety, I just kept my mouth shut; so I could keep 'em guessin'.—You see, I figured the only way to catch these guys was to make 'em come out in the open...and maybe commit a foolhardy act...which is exactly what they done when they broke in here. Right? You follow me?"

"Keep going," said Mortimer. "You've almost got me snowed."

"Well...when they broke in here and smashed up all the professor's plaster, and didn't find no diamond...I figured, 'Uh-huh! I got 'em

right where I want ‘em now.’—Is that clear?”

“Perfectly clear,” said Mortimer. “You’re the one on the spot.”

“I figured they was gonna’ keep on followin’ me until they found out what I done with that diamond.—An’ even though it meant bein’ shadowed day and night...and not bein’ able to sleep nights...I figured it was worth it, ‘cause sooner or later the police would show up and get real interested...and then we’d be able to catch these guys.—If I hadn’t done that, they mighta’ gone clean away from here and we never would know who they were or where they went.”

There was the sound of quiet applause, and I turned to see Monsieur Dauphine softly clapping his hands and smiling his admiration of Freddy’s great story.

“I suppose that’s the reason you smuggled the diamond out of Austria in the first place, and never told us about it?” Mortimer needed him again.

“You got a better explanation?” said Freddy Muldoon.

And there was an explosion of laughter from Mr. Fitch.

“Boy I hope you never grow up to become president!” snorted Homer, with a look of great skepticism on his face.

Mr. Fitch took Freddy by the shoulder and led him to a chair. “Young man,” he said, “I don’t know about your explanation of what happened in the past...but you’ve presented us a corking good analysis of what is likely to happen in the future.—Now, if you’ll all sit down here with my colleagues, I’d like to propose a plan to you that will require your cooperation. You know, we may just catch these rascals yet!”

So we all sat in a tight circle and held a secret session with the detectives, while the professor snored peacefully in the background.

About ten o’clock the following morning, Freddy Muldoon appeared at the top of his front porch steps in broad daylight, cradling his precious plaster dinosaur foot in his arms. He didn’t have it wrapped up, or in a box. He just held it in his arms, glistening white in the sunlight. Then he trudged down the steps, looked up and down the street, and started walking north. He didn’t even take his bicycle. He just walked...clear out to Jeff Crocker’s place. When he got there, he looked carefully about him again, then walked to the

barn and entered the old tack room that was our clubhouse.

Once inside, he placed the dinosaur's foot carefully, and tenderly, in the center of the big packing crate Jeff uses for a desk when we hold our meetings. Beneath it was a small pressure switch that would pop up and close an electric circuit if anyone lifted the dinosaur foot off the crate. Then Freddy flipped a switch on the wall behind Jeff's broken-down chair, and went out the door. Again, he looked carefully about him, then thrust his hands in his pockets, and whistling cheerfully to himself he walked all the way home again.

As it does every day, darkness came to Mammoth Falls that night and engulfed Jeff Crocker's barn in its black cloak. You could hear tree toads chirping and some bull frogs croaking in the duck pond back of Jeff's house; and once in awhile you could hear a smothered burp coming from where Freddy Muldoon was hidden in the hayloft. But the rest of us kept as quiet as we could in the places we'd been assigned to hide and listen. The professor sat in a rocking chair in Mrs. Crocker's kitchen, with Angela and Angelina assigned to wake him if he snored too loudly.

I don't have to tell you the wait seemed interminable, and the minutes crawled by like hours, but I guess I already have. But finally I felt a pinch on my leg from Jeff. A shadow had flitted across the window of the tack room. We held our breath and readied ourselves. "Don't burp, Freddy!" I was praying silently.

For some reason the door of our clubhouse wasn't even locked...which is a mistake we've never made before in the entire history of The Mad Scientists' Club. We heard it creaking, and since our eyes had long ago gotten used to the darkness, we could see three figures creep silently inside. Then a flashlight briefly probed the darkness and came to rest on the dinosaur foot resting quietly on top of the packing case.

"There it is! Grab it!" said a voice, as the light flicked off again.

Somebody sure grabbed for it, because all of a sudden pandemonium broke loose. Bright floodlights suddenly turned the tack room into something that looked like an operating amphitheater at a medical school. Our tape recorder cut loose with a piece of rock music that would have driven Julius Caesar from his grave if we had let it keep on playing. An old fire alarm bell mounted over the door

chattered so loudly it shook the timbers of the barn, and a siren we'd installed on the roof wailed loudly enough to rouse the whole town. Mortimer claims the cock on Jeff's weather vane started to crow, but I don't believe it.

But what did happen was beautiful to see. A big, heavy fishing net we'd hung from the rafters plummeted to the floor and the sheer weight of its lead sinkers flattened two of the intruders on their backs. The third one, a ponderous figure of a man, stumbled backwards through the door and fought free of the netting. He scrambled to his feet and took off for the driveway, where he encountered the professor—walking stick, homburg, monocle and all.

What is zis?—Stop, you peasant!” the professor cried. But the man just kept running down the driveway with the professor beating him over the head with his walking stick from behind. Down the road he fled, with the professor flailing at him in hot pursuit, to where a car was parked in the darkness beneath a tree. The man lunged for it, opened a rear door and catapulted inside, while the professor tore helplessly at the locked doorhandle.

“Never mind, Herr Professor! Never mind!” said the quiet voice of Monsieur Dauphine, as he emerged from behind the tree with the collar of a man about the size of Mr. Pugh clutched firmly in his right hand. “I have the driver here, and the car has been disabled. He can't go anywhere.”

Then he opened one of the front doors of the car with a key, and said in perfect German, “Bitte, Herr Heist! Wollen sie nach hause kommen?” And the four of them came back up the driveway to the clubhouse, where the rest of us were still disentangling the other two interlopers from the fish net.

After making certain that none of them were carrying weapons, Detective Fitch lined the four prize catches against one wall of the tack room, seated on boxes. Under the glare and the heat of the floodlights I tried to figure out who was who. Seeing them all together, it was easy to assume that the big man who had tried to get away was Mr. Smellow, and that the next largest one was Stunkard. But, so help me, I couldn't tell the difference between Rank and Pugh. And none of them looked like the smiling legal eagles we'd

chatted with so frequently in Heiligenblut.

“Allow me to introduce everyone,” said Murgatroyd Fitch, with an elaborate bow. “I believe you four gentlemen are already familiar with all these young people and their distinguished professor. None of them has undergone a change of name or face since you last saw them in Heiligenblut.—However...my colleagues and I *have*.” Then he proceeded to give the formal, legal introduction for the members of the Interpol team, and to display their credentials.

“As for you four gentlemen...forgive me if I err...for though we have probably met many times during the past fifteen years...I sometimes have difficulty remembering faces—an inexcusable failing which, in your cases, gentlemen, I intend to remedy once and for all.—Believe me! Once I have seen your real faces, they will be graven on my memory along with your names.”

The four sat there, just about as glum and uncommunicative as a bear who just speared a fish and found out it was a piranha. In fact, Mr. Smellow looked just like one of those statues of Buddha trying to figure out what made his navel itch.

“Now, I presume you, sir, are Mr. Smellow...alias Jonathan Dimpfsnagel...alias Commerford Snipe...alias Henry Detwhiler...sometimes known as Joachim von Strump, Josef Hertenberger, Baron Axelrod von Edelweiss, or Benny Schultz...but truly named according to a birth certificate registered in the city of Marburg, Germany in the year 1923...*Henrik Heist*!—Is that correct?”

“Absolutely not!” said Mr. Smellow, bellowing in outrage. “I have *never* used the name Jonathan Dimpfsnagel!.....And I doubt that I ever will!”

“I think we will take steps to make certain of that, Herr Heist,” said Mr. Fitch, with one of his great bows. “I warned you I might make certain errors. But you admit to the other aliases...right?”

Mr. Smellow maintained a stony silence.

“And you, sir,” he went on to Mr. Stunkard, “have been variously known as Rollo Stunkard; Jeremiah Stubblebean; John Southington Withers, Earl of South Grottingham; Smedley Crimp; Jack Smith; and Cadwallader Derringham Fish! Am I not correct?”

Mr. Stunkard tried to smile, but ended up just nodding his head

with an asinine sort of expression on his face.

“But your real name is truly...*Alfred Crooke*! Right?”

Mr. Stunkard nodded again.

It turned out that Mr. Rank’s real name was Harry Stone, and Mr. Pugh was actually a man named John Cutter.

The introductions finished, Mr. Fitch turned directly to the matter at hand. He explained to the four men that they had been apprehended—“Caught red-handed, the Americans call it,”—trespassing on private property and attempting to make off with a unique specimen of outstanding geologic and paleontologic interest...namely a plaster cast of the footprint of a dinosaur.

“Oh, come off it, guvnor,” Mr. Rank complained. “Stow that blarney! You know what we was after.—It wasn’t no fossil, I’ll guarantee ya’.”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Fitch. “You were after a fabulous, legendary diamond you thought might be imbedded in that plaster...right, gentlemen?”

“Precisely!” said Mr. Pugh, alias John Cutter, in the crisp, clipped tones we had remembered him using. “And that diamond rightfully belongs to us, so I don’t see how you can charge us with any crime!”

“What about impersonating a human being?” said Freddy Muldoon. But Angela had grabbed him and pushed him down into his seat before he could say anything more.

“How do you explain that?” Mr. Fitch inquired, ignoring Freddy’s remark.

“The four men who were lost on that glacier a hundred years ago, were our great grandfathers,” Mr. Pugh-Cutter announced, in his dry, matter-of-fact manner. “We are their rightful heirs. For three generations our families have studied, researched, and explored the problem of how to recover that diamond if the glacier ever gave it up.—Not only do we deserve the fruits of that patient study and research—which has gone on for nearly a hundred years—but the diamond itself is our rightful legacy.—We demand that you turn it over to us!”

“Hear! Hear!” said Mr. Stunkard.

“Amen!” said Mr. Rank.

“Hey! They might be right!” Homer whispered to me. “You

remember, that little shrine we saw by the glacier had the name Adolf Heist on it!”

“Yeah! And that, first body they got out of the ice.—The coroner said his name was Alistair Crooke!”

“That’s the one that had a little mole on the left ear...just like Mr. Stunkard!” said Dinky, leaning in to our conversation.

“I wonder if that’s hereditary?” mused Homer.

“Might be,” I said.

“I heard them genes can do a lot of funny things,” said Dinky.

But Mr. Fitch was not distracted by our speculations.

“That may very well be the case,” he said, patiently. “But that is for a court to decide. We are not judges, Mr. Cutter, we are investigators. We don’t pretend to know who owns the diamond. We only know that you broke in here...illegally...to try and take possession of something that didn’t belong to you—a plaster dinosaur’s foot. That is a crime! We also suspect that you broke into the professor’s laboratory at the university. As soon as we can match your shoes against the plaster casts the state police made of those footprints under the window, we will have the answer to that one.—So, you see, we have plenty to hold you on, until these matters are cleared up.—Meanwhile, Meinheer van Oogle has some news for you. I know that it isn’t exactly news to you...and it isn’t good news, either. But we are required to inform you of the charges that may be placed against you.”

Mr. Fitch then sat down in Jeff’s chair behind the packing case and fanned himself with his hat while Meinheer van Oogle read off a long list of charges that had accumulated against the four over the past fifteen years. It seems they were wanted in France, England, Holland, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Portugal in connection with a series of celebrated jewel thefts...and in addition, Mr. Rank and Mr. Pugh were wanted in Spain for thumbing their noses at Francisco Franco during a parade in Madrid.

“Anybody who’d thumb his nose at Franco can’t be all bad!” Mortimer whispered.

“Yeah!” said Homer. “I could almost feel sorry for them...except they didn’t know how to spell ‘solicitor’.”

We heard the wail of sirens again, and it was Chief Harold Putney who had brought two squad cars up to take the prisoners down to the Mammoth Falls jail for the night.

“What about that diamond, guvnor?” Mr. Rank asked as they were being herded toward the door.

“Oh! Excuse me!” said Mr. Fitch, flashing a signal to Chief Putney to hold up proceedings. “It would indeed be cruel and unusual punishment to let you rot in jail overnight without even knowing whether what you came for was actually here...wouldn’t it now!” And with that, he moved toward the chunk of plaster that had been placed back on the packing case.

“Wait a minute!” Freddy cried, dashing in front of him. “What you got in mind?”

“Well...I just thought we’d break this thing open, finally, and find out what’s inside it,” said Mr. Fitch, drawing himself up to his full height.

“Oh, no you don’t!” Freddy sputtered. “That wasn’t in our agreement! I just agreed to bring it up here, so’s we could catch those crooks!”

The other two detectives had turned aside to hide their laughter, and left Mr. Fitch with the problem. He took his hat off and scratched his head for a moment.

“I tell you what...young Mr. Muldoon,” he said, finally. “What if I promise to send you a matched set of dinosaur footprints from the British Museum of Natural History, soon’s I get back to London?”

Freddy demurred for a moment. “Okay!” he said. “You just saved yourself a lot of trouble!”

Mr. Fitch raised Freddy’s dinosaur foot on high, then brought it crashing down on the packing case. It broke into several pieces, and a brilliant, shining object the size of a—with bits of plaster clinging to it—rolled out and bounced onto the floor. Freddy dove for it and scooped it up.

“There it is! There! Ya’ see! I told ya! I told ya!” he cried.

“You didn’t tell us nothin’!” Mortimer sneered. “Remember?—Here! Let me see that thing!”

The “thing” got juggled around a bit, from hand to hand, until it

was finally retrieved by Jeff and turned over to Mr. Fitch. The detective looked at it for a moment, and then handed it to Monsieur Dauphine, who gave it a careful scrutiny.

“What do you think, Claude?”

“I think it is very interesting. Very interesting,” said Monsieur Dauphine.

“The Case of the Topsy Tourist?” Mr. Fitch suggested.

“Yes! The Case of the Topsy Tourist...for sure!” Monsieur Dauphine agreed.

Then Monsieur Dauphine smiled at our looks of bewilderment. “I see you are all wondering what we are talking about,” he laughed. “It is very interesting. You see...this is not a diamond at all. Still, it is very interesting. This is a crystal doorknob that was stolen from the Palace of Versailles many years ago.—How many years ago, Hendryk?”

“I would say twelve years, at least,” said Meinheer van Oogle.

“Twelve years ago!—You see...they had a small problem there with a happy American tourist who was very drunk at the time. He insisted on taking a bath in the bathtub of Louis Quatorze. And when the guards refused to let him, he got very mad and tore the knob off the bathroom door and ran away with it.—We have never seen it since.”

“Oh! That was dreadful!” said Angela.

“Dreadful?” Monsieur Dauphine’s eyebrows rose. “This is a national treasure of La Belle France, young lady. It was a catastrophe!—We pursued that unfortunate tourist across the Swiss border, and into Liechtenstein, and then into Austria, and then into Italy, and then back into Austria again. By that time he was completely sober, and we finally cornered him in Heiligenblut—of all places—where he was arrested.”

“What did you do to him?”

“We couldn’t do anything!—He did not have the doorknob in his possession. He had no recollection of being in the Palace of Versailles. And worst of all...he could not remember who Louis Quatorze was!—So we had to let him go. Oh, it was a catastrophe!”

“The guy must have been a kook!” said Angelina. “Couldn’t you

sweat him any?"

Monsieur Dauphine shook his head. "His only recollection was that he had gone for a swim in a big mountain lake and had skinned his chin on some ice. He had the scabs to prove it...so, we had no choice but to let him go."

"I have a feeling that lake was six miles long and a hundred and fifty feet deep in some places," said Mortimer.

"It could have been," said Monsieur Dauphine.

At that moment, the faces of Messrs. Smellow, Stunkard, Rank, and Pugh would have looked pretty good on four tombstones. They stood at the doorway with their chins hung low, casting dark looks at each other as though they each felt the other three were to blame for the foolhardy escapade they had indulged in. It was Mr. Rank-Stone who spoke, his dark eyes flashing angrily.

"Three generations of research, six months of planning...and a free-wheelin' trip across the bloody ocean, to boot!.....And all that kid had was a bloomin' doorknob?—You blokes ought to have your ruddy crocks examined!—'Ere, let me see that thing, guvnor?"

"Certainly!" said Monsieur Dauphine, with exaggerated politeness. And he held the piece of crystal directly under Rank's nose. The little man quickly whipped a jeweler's glass from his pocket and screwed it to the socket of one eye. With his fingers he twisted and rotated the object slightly in the glare of the floodlights.

"It's a ruddy piece of glass awright, guvnor! You can 'ave it...far as I'm concerned!" And he spat on the floor.

"Thank you!" said Monsieur Dauphine. And he wrapped the doorknob carefully in his handkerchief and thrust it into his overcoat pocket.

Suddenly there was the sound of chair legs striking the floor, and we all turned to see Henry Mulligan getting up off his piano stool in the corner. "There's just one other thing that has to be cleared up," he said, thrusting his hand into his trouser pocket. "I believe this may be your cake of soap, Mr. Stunkard. I took it from that room you were using in the castle, and it doesn't belong to me." And he placed the cake of Lifebuoy soap in Mr. Stunkard's hand.

"It's mine, alright," said Mr. Stunkard-Crooke. "I wondered where

it disappeared to.”

“You didn’t wonder at all, you slippery blighter!” said Mr. Smellow, fastening a burning gaze upon him. “You accused *me* of stealing it!”

“Well, here...you can have it then!—You smell!” said Mr. Stunkard, thrusting the soap at him.

“You better keep it! You stink!” said Mr. Smellow, thrusting the cake back at him.

“‘Ere, ‘ere! Let’s not fight about it!” cried Mr. Rank. “Far as I’m concerned, I gotta’ ‘old my nose around both of ya’!”

“Amen!” said Mr. Pugh.

Then Chief Putney hustled them all out to the waiting squad cars, and we have never seen any of them since.

“Zowie!” said Angelina. “‘Let’s have a party! I feel...like, you know...like WOW, man!”

“It’s still only ten o’clock! I’ll ask my mother!” said Jeff. And he ran out the door.

Mrs. Crocker was equal to the occasion, as she usually is, and there was soon a steady stream of cakes, pies, ice cream and beverages coming out of the Crocker kitchen. Mortimer cranked up the old gramophone we have in the club, and put on a couple of hot old wax disks from the early thirties. It wasn’t long before the place was jumping up and down and Angela and Angelina were trying to get everybody to dance. Jeff is too bashful around girls, and I’m too clumsy, and Henry probably never will dance...but Mortimer and Homer can both cut a pretty mean caper when they want to. The girls even got the three Interpol detectives to take their trench coats off, and it turned out they didn’t have anything hidden underneath them, at all. In fact, Monsieur Dauphine was a little embarrassed because there was a big, ragged hole in the elbow of his suit jacket, but Angela got him to take that off, too.

“I took a bad fall in the gorge one day,” he explained, “while I was trying to focus my binoculars on the castle, and I haven’t had time to get the jacket repaired.”

“Oh, that was *you* we saw, looking at the guy that was looking at the glacier from that parapet!” said Jeff.

“Yes, that was me,” he admitted. “I was afraid you might have seen me. Please don’t let that get back to the home office.”

“Hey!” said Freddy, pulling on Monsieur Dauphine’s shirt. “If that there old thing I brought back is just a stinkin’ doorknob—that means maybe that great big diamond is still sittin’ there on that glacier somewhere’s, huh?”

“I guess so!” said Monsieur Dauphine.

“Hey! Let’s go back and get it!” Dinky cried, looking at the professor.

The professor smiled drowsily. “Be patient, little Dinky,” he said. “Maybe we will go back zere next summer.—We got to make a whole buncha’ new plaster casts, you know.”

“Wow!” said Dinky. “That’ll be neat.—Hey! Maybe we could even see Axel again!”

“Why wait till next summer?” Angelina cried as she writhed and stomped to the beat coring out of the old gramophone. “I feel Lackawanna go back there right now. Maybe tomorrow...huh?”

“Oh, boy! You’re in for it now!” Jeff warned the detectives. “Button your ears!”

Homer had heard it. “Oh, Mr. Dalrymple!” he shouted. “Are you ready for your Geography lesson?”

“Oh, yes, Mr. Snodgrass!” Mortimer replied

“Okay! How come you called that runner safe, Mr. Umpire?”

“Because the Baltic a bounce before the fielder caught it!”

“How come it’s so tough to make a triple play?”

“Cause you gotta’ throw the Baltimore people!”

“Cool off, man. You’re steamin’!”

“I’m ready when you are!”

“Okay, Mr. Grocer! You got any preserved peaches?”

“Yeah! Sammerkand and some are in jars.—Which do you want?”

“Could I have a Canada freestones? I like ‘em.”

“You can have as many Kansas you want.—Hold on, and I’ll get ‘em for you. We’re short of help, and I gotta’ Dublin brass.

“Oh, stop it, stop it, stop it!” Angela shouted. “You kids lay it on so thick that I’m just getting sick of Geography!”

“Well, it does take brains,” said Mortimer.

Angela moaned. “Oh, you brat! I hope some day you have to go to college and take geology!”

“You think I got rocks in my head?”

“I think I get the idea of the game,” said Monsieur Dauphine. “But you are right, Angela.—Too much of it could Rouen the party.”

“Oh, brother!” Angela sobbed, with her head in her hands. “Another country’s been heard from!”

It was late in the evening and the party was about to break up, when Homer buttonholed Mr. Fitch, with a few burning questions in his mind.

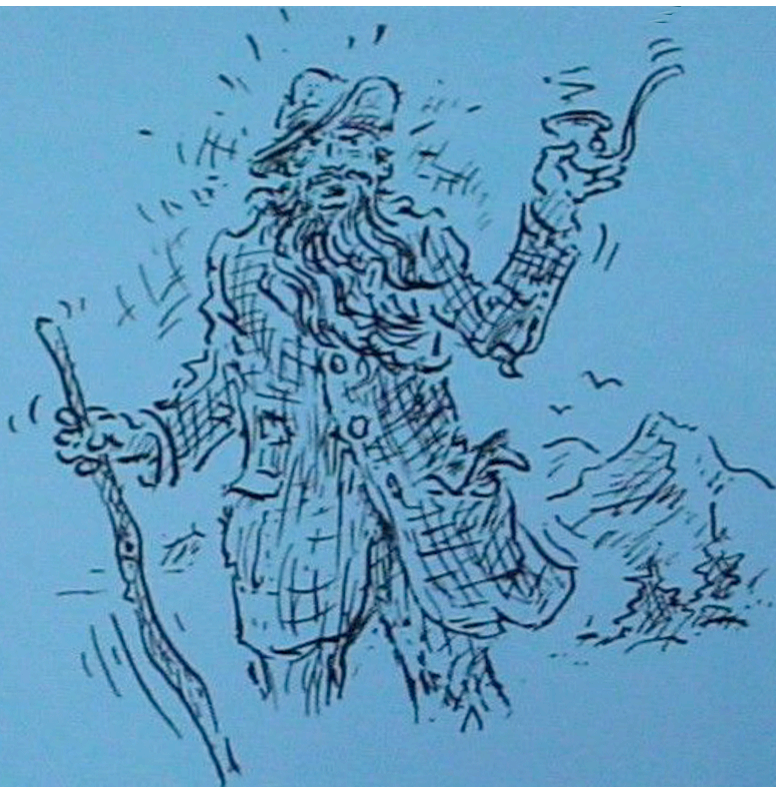
“Say, Mr. Fitch, sir...you know you’ve explained everything pretty well, and it all seems to make sense now.—But there’s something keeps bothering me.”

“What’s that, Mr. Snodgrass?”

“Well...we know all about these people who were watchin’ us all the time, and tryin’ to scare us away...Them Smellow fellows, you know...and how they were in cahoots with Axel, and all that.—But, who was that lady ghost we saw twice...and that headsman? Who were those people...huh?”

Mr. Murgatroyd Fitch looked at Monsieur Claude Dauphine, and Monsieur Claude Dauphine looked at Meinheer Hendryk van Oogle, and Meinheer Hendryk van Oogle looked at Mr. Murgatroyd Fitch. Then all three shrugged their shoulders and threw their hands up in the air.

“We don’t know anything about that,” said Mr. Fitch. “That’s not in our line.”



This guy certainly looks strange. Why is he warning the Mad Scientists to stay off the Pasterzen glacier in the Austrian Alps? Does he know something they don't? Or maybe he's just a local madman who doesn't want tourists hanging around the glacier, especially the Mad Scientists of Mammoth Falls.... Hey! This guy isn't related to Mayor Scragg by any chance, is he?

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