

### The Story Thus Far:

HIS wealthy father having disinherited him, Fred Oaks, a restless soldier of fortune, joins the Spanish rebels, who send him to India to foment trouble among the natives. When his father dies, on the Pacific Coast, a girl—Lucy Steel—employs a young San Francisco detective—Bill Gabriel—to find him.

With the girl, Gabriel flies to India, where, posing as a teakwood buyer, he finds Oaks in Shakkarpur. At Gabriel's suggestion, Lucy takes a room in the old hotel—Seaside House—where Oaks is stopping. . . . Meanwhile, Fred Oaks has not been idle. Working with one Ganeshi Lal and other conspirators, he has planned a serious outbreak of the natives.

Reginald Hatton, the district officer, has an attractive sister, Virginia, with whom Oaks is frequently seen. Suspecting that Oaks is an enemy agent, he decides to arrest him. . . . Rhoda Curring, the wife of James Curring, a plantation manager, is infatuated with Oaks. She intimates that if he loves Virginia Hatton she may kill her. Then, after a few words with a mysterious visitor she loads a .32 automatic and disappears.

Bill Gabriel, wishing to have a talk with Lucy Steel, goes to Seaside House. Lucy is not in her room. He goes to Oaks' room. Oaks admits him—very reluctantly. Lucy Steel is in Oaks' bed. *And she is dead!*

Oaks asserts stoutly that he is innocent. While they converse, an old man—Dr. Forsythe—comes in. He says that Gwendolyn Small (an eccentric old woman who owns the hotel) had sent for him. Examining the body, he reports that the girl had been killed by a small bullet—perhaps a .32. . . . Gabriel leaves the room, has a talk with Gwendolyn Small. As Oaks and the doctor discuss the murder, someone outside hurls a .32 automatic through the window; it smashes the lamp, and thus enables Oaks to make his getaway.

Ganeshi Lal joins Oaks outside. Together they hurry to Lal's home, where Oaks goes into hiding. A few minutes later, Virginia Hatton arrives. While the entire household listens, she tells Lal that her brother will arrest Oaks that night. Then she hurries away.

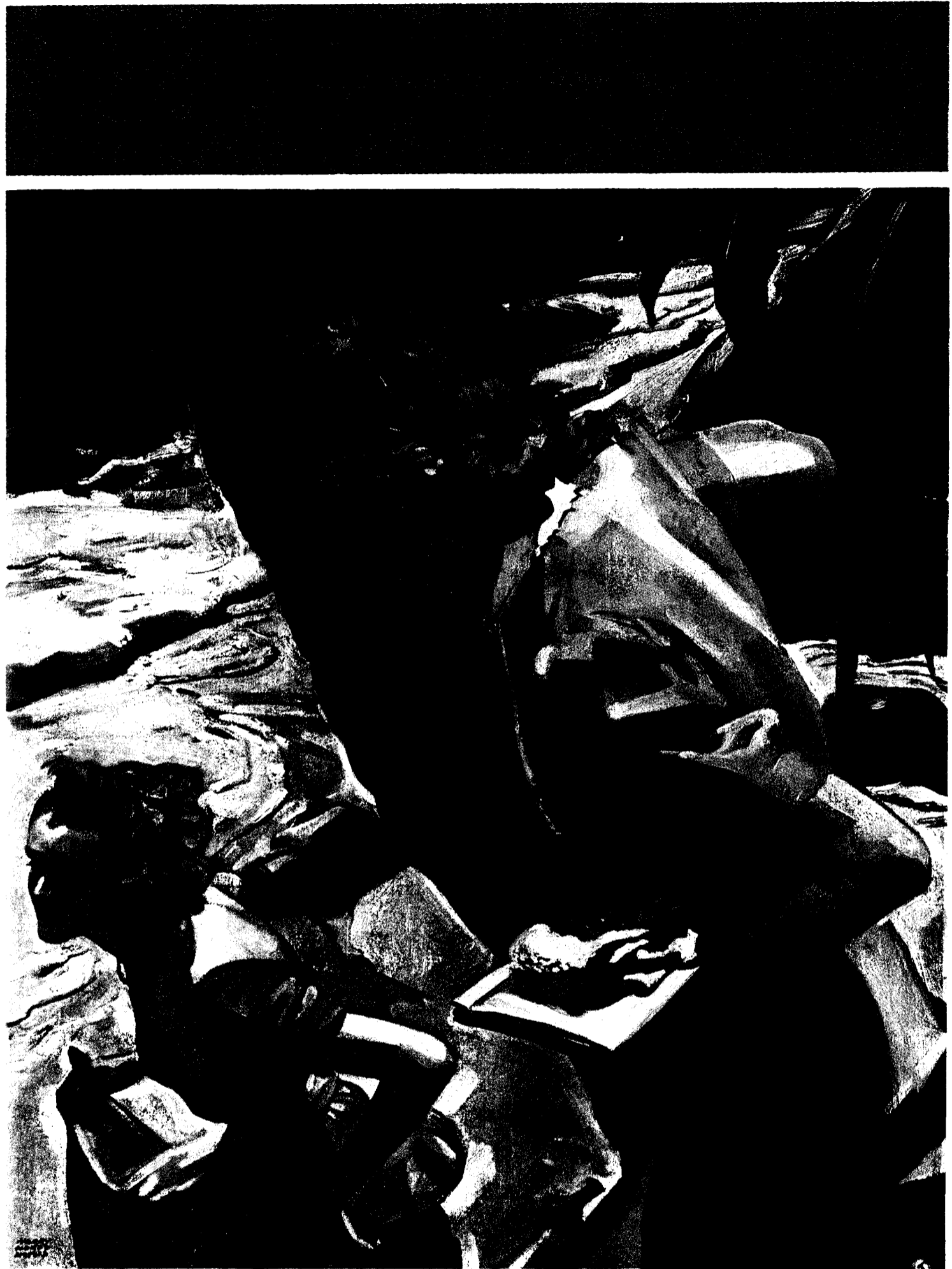
#### IV

VIRGINIA did not know where she was going, but she felt an imperative need to walk, to breathe the night air, to think. She could not quite understand why she was so upset to-night . . . but she was. Her thoughts were in a turmoil. It could not be the prospect of Hindu-Moslem rioting. Although she had a natural abhorrence of violence and bloodshed, she had gradually grown to feel an almost Oriental fatalism since she had been in India with her brother; and she had gone through the threat of similar disorders during the uprising of the untouchables the year before with a sense of worry that was purely mental, with nothing of the emotional stress she now felt.

It was not that she experienced any sense of personal danger. She knew that she would be the first to benefit by the limited police protection at the district officer's disposal. And it could not be that she was disturbed by what was happening to Fred Oaks, because she truly detested Fred Oaks. She hated everything about him, except, perhaps, his slow, disarming smile. Yes, and she hated his smile, too, because it was not really part of him, but something he wore like a flower in his buttonhole. Or was it that she hated herself for *not* hating his smile sufficiently? Whatever it was, for the first time since she had fled to the East, she wished fervently that she were back in England.

Virginia found herself walking aimlessly. It was only when she reached the seashore that she remembered Fred Oaks' admonition about not going home alone. At the seashore she saw Rhoda Curring.

Rhoda was hurrying along the beach, her copper hair flying in the wind. She



Rhoda was hurrying along the beach, her copper hair flying in the wind

was half running, half walking, between the high-tide mark and the wave line, where the sand was hard and her heels would not sink in. She passed within a few yards, so Virginia definitely recognized her. Then, in a few seconds, she was lost in the darkness.

The suddenness of the apparition, and its recollection of what Fred Oaks had said earlier in the evening, made Virginia's heart skip a beat. There was

nothing unusual in Rhoda's walking along the beach, because she was headed in the direction of her own bungalow; but the sight of the sedentary, fastidious Rhoda running bareheaded through the night instead of lolling in a chaise longue with a cigarette in her mouth was indeed unusual. Virginia turned and started home immediately.

She was inside her own compound and was walking along the path past the

badminton courts when a man stepped out from behind a jasmine bush directly in front of her. She stepped back in fright. Before she could scream, he had placed a large hand over her mouth. It was Fred Oaks.

"You, again!" she muttered through his fingers. "What—"

"You're coming with me," Fred Oaks declared. "I've got a job for you."

(Continued on page 44)

# OIL FOR EUROPE'S BURNING

**Cabled from Athens by Frank Gervasi**

**Balkan oil may win or lose the war. But not for the Balkans. Once more in their tragic and blood-soaked history Europe's poorest and most peaceful people, caught in the gears of machine war, await the worst**



EUROPEAN

**A Bulgarian Turk brings a pair of oxen to market. He is the plowman of Balkan peasantry with his income of from \$50 to \$65 a year**

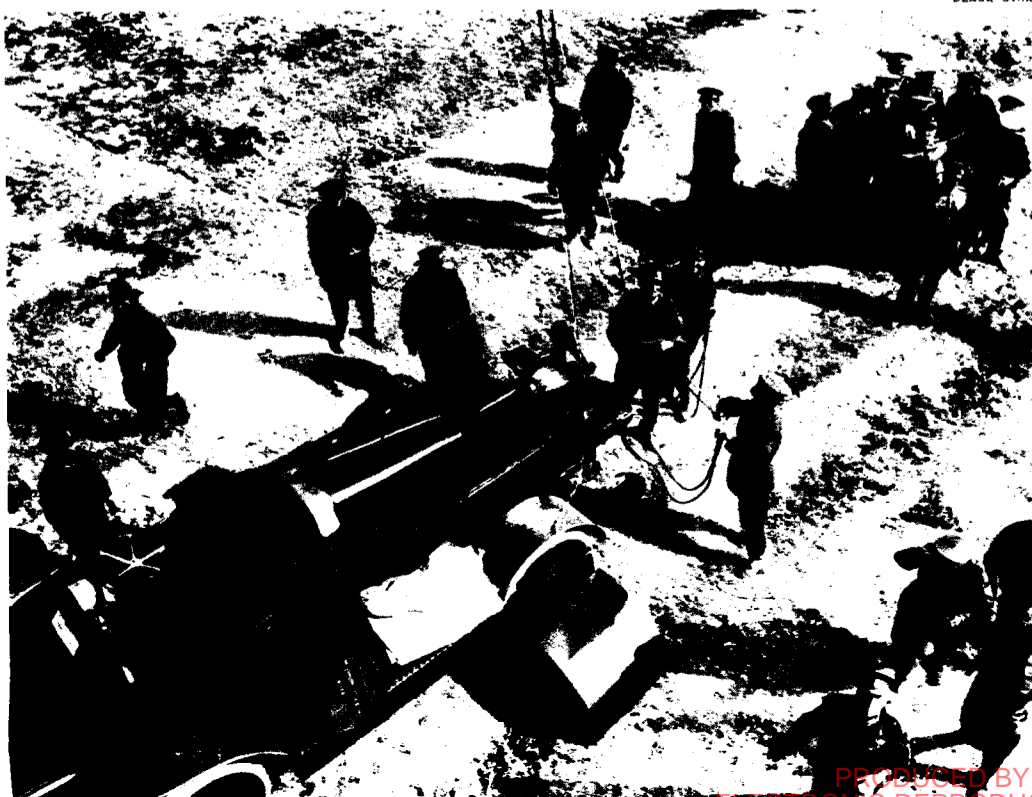
**An observation balloon unit of the small Rumanian army, which, even if Rumania resisted, could not hold off Germany for more than a few weeks**



BLACK STAR

**Rumania's oil industry, largely foreign-owned, is of little benefit to the poverty-stricken peasants but is a first-class military prize**

**France's General Maxime Weygand is poised in Syria with a huge Allied army, ready to move in the moment Germany invades the Balkans for oil**



BLACK STAR



PIX