The Free Press Short Story

A FLASH OF CRIMSON

BY ROY J. SNELL

turned to his companion, Albert Stein, "It is cort of strange about adventures. What is adventure for one fellow is just ordinary, everyday work for another. Remember that air pilot Punch Dioken,

we saw last spring?" dreamily. Something about the soft, thing. He stumbled and all but fell. balmy air of Florida made Albert feel like falling asleep at any hour of the balance. "Oh! Only that fish!" day. This, unfortunately, he could not do, since he and Dave were engaged in about thirty pounds, had come into the the business of driving a sizable dirigible gondola in a rather strange manner; in balloon across a cloudless sky.

Punch Dicken flies all the way along An officer of the company had come to the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Ocean Florida for a vacation, and seeing the it for years. Gets as much kick out of ocean, had conceived of a bright idea. as-you or I would in riding a bicycle.

"Y-es, I see," Albert yawned. "You don't see a thing!" Dave ex- pound jew-fish."

"Yes, I see them."

to look interested. the binoculars. They were pointing at ready the balloon was dropping. They us up here in this gondola. Their eyes were coming close to the surface. were big as saucers. I know just what that water, now at the crest of a small they were saying. 'Wouldn't it be won- wave, now ten feet down, but always derful to be riding up here?' And is outlined clearly in the blue water, was it wonderful to you and me?"

"Naw, I'd rather sleep," Albert yawn- bathing suit,

off short. His eyes were fixed on a spot of water a half mile farther north and queer!" he muttered. "I'm sure I caught ed. a crimson flash.

and watch! It sure is strange!"

is, mysterious! We'll just swing this I do?" He considered leaping from the old blimp around and go down there to gondola to her aid. see what's up. It's a little out of our beat, but who cares?"

their heads swung about. This young steel-blue beast of a shark! He's fourairship of theirs was an advertising teen feet if an inch!" He leaped to his dirigible. For one full month, save on feet. Springing toward a metal box he stormy days, which were few, these boys threw it open to drag out a large spool had flown this airship back and forth of heavy braided cord. To this, with along the well-populated shore line of astonishing speed, he attached a large Florida. Across the side of the great steel hook. bag, in letters taller than a man, was the sign: "Goodenough Tires. They Are he muttered. Good Enough for All." One hundred cars. Their tires must surely wear out. laughed. Florida is a good place to advertise; thus had the tire manufacturer reasoned. He Seizing the small tarpon, he embedded had sent these two skilled young mech- the hock solidly in the top of its head. anics down to do the advertising. They With a small copper wire he lashed the were doing it to the best of their ability. fish solidly to the hook. He flashed a Dave had been trying to say that elen riding in a blimp ten hours each day.

himself as to Albert, "we have to go lowering it rapidly. exploring during our hours of leisure just to keep from being bored.

"Yes." Albert laughed. "And we are old fellow's attention!" chased off an island by three big dogs. our boat drifts away and we have to the motor, Dave. Slow. The bait swim in our clothes to the boat or the with a big A!

"That!" Dave exploded hotly. "That prayer for divine help. was an outrage with a big O! - I'd like or two. He wouldn't even call the dogs it looked! If only the shark would see off when we asked him to, nor when we promised to leave the island. Of course we saw the 'No Trespassing' sign. There is one on nearly every island. A sign like that means 'Don't make a fire. Don't cut the trees. Don't shoot the birds. It doesn't mean, 'Don't come on this island to rest, or to study plants

and birds.' It-crimson flash again. This time it was

what it can be? "And do you know?" His tone changed. "That's at the end of the very island we tried to visit and got-chased

"In that case," Dave laughed, "I hope right. the flash is fire from the centre of the

and all its inhabitants." amiled. "Old graybeard and a young a better view of it. lady, probably his daughter, rather nice to feast your eyes on, that girl is, too." ""Look!" Dave pointed straight down. "There's a school of porpoise. Isn't it strange how clearly you can see things in the water when you are above it? I'll fust let the 'old blimp down a little." Slowly the great bag floated downward, cussion of the hour before about adven-So engrossed were the boys in their ture had come back to him. study of these strange denimens of the When at last Dave thought of it, he gave and circle a little!"

DVENTURE," Dave Stanton said And the crimson flash is a person in the word slowly. "Do you bright bathing suit! I wonder if know," his voice rose as he shark is after him! And he's a long way from shore!"

"It's not a man! It's that girl of the island, Dave! What can we do?" Alber was wide awake now. Springing to his feet, an instintive movement, born a desire to help, he staggered across the "Ya-as, I remember." Albert replied narrow gondola. His foot struck some-"Wha-what's that?" He regained his

The fish, a small tarpon, weighing truth it had been caught by a deep-sea "Well, you know," Dave went on, "this angler as he rode in that very dirigible.

"I'll go fishing with you," he had said But if I were booked for just one trip to Dave. "We'll cruise about rather low. to the Arctic, where I might meet up I'll put some bait on a large hook and with a polar bear or a walrus herd, that a long line. We'll allow that to skim would be one real adventure to me. See along on the crest of the wave and we'll get some fish. You'll see, a big old tarpon, a sailfish, or a two-hundred

Albert tried hard lying there in the bottom of the gondola, thought all this through in a flash. "Well, just now I looked at them with His eyes sought the water beneath. Althe crimson flash, a girl in a bright

"She she's heading for land." What "That's just it. That-" Dave broke he had said was true. The girl was

"If we could catch the shark's atten- midst!" close to the end of a small island. "That's tion before he sees her!" Dave groan-Gone was his dislike for these people of the island who had so curtly "Look, Albert! Wake up for a moment refused to call off their dogs that he might visit their island. Only one desire "Yes." Albert was all alive now. "Sure occupied his raring thoughts, "What can

"Too far!" Albert had read thoughts. "Be stunned by the fall; then Slowly the huge gas bag hanging over you'd be attacked. Only look at that

"You-you don't mean to hook that and fifty thousand people go to Florida girl!" Dave was horrified. In spite of resorts each winter. Most of them go in the gravity of the situation, Albert

"Going to have a try for the shark." "Good!" he murmured, "we're south of them, headed north. Here goes the line. "Fact is," he spoke now as much to He tossed the fish overboard and began

"Sharks have been caught this way," he muttered. "If only we can get that

"Now!" His tone changed. "Start up the officers and they vanished. almost down. I'll try to keep it skimdogs will eat us up. That is adventure ming the surface just as that fellow did. If-if only we can." Albert breathed a

The fish dangling from the line struck the water and began skimming along just beneath the surface. How lifelike

it instead of the girl! "We're going too fast," Albert warned. The ship slowed to a crawl. They were

coming closer, closer, closer, At that instant, e girl flashed glance skyward. Did she know of her peril? Did she understand?

"Yes! Yes! I think she does." Dave was sure. She seemed for the moment to lead this race of life and death by striking out bodily for the drifta hundred yards from shore. Wonder ing bait. Did she believe she might grip that line and be lifted from the water? "Line's strong enough, but the hook?"

> Wave's heart was in his throat. The girl did not try to grasp the the chances are it will be. line. Instead, she shot away to the

earth coming up to consume the island his eye caught the dangling lure? If it had, he did not follow it. In-"Inhabitants are just two," . Albert stead he turned over on his side to gain

"No good," Albert groaned. "We we're still dropping. A half minute more and it will be safe to fump."

"I'll go," said Dave soberly.

""But you have no bnife." "Doesn't matter." Dave's

"Quick, Dave!" Albert was more excited than ever. "I believe that they forgot the mysterious crimson flash, killer has his eye on our lure. Reverse the view from the bottom of the tower is petroleum, natural gas, asbestos, gyp-

island which was now quite close at surface once again. Of a sudden, Albert immensely; the horizon is pushed farther that vast areas of the Dominion, notably hand. A cry of horror escaped his line, gave out twenty feet of line. Like a live, away. Finally, as we reach the summit, portions of the Northwest Territories, yet

downward. It was enough. Next TWICE AS MANY BATS moment the boys felt a tug that sent the line through his hands at a burning

"Go got him!" He held on grimly, then succeeded in making a loop around is estimated to reach 25 millions. a peg. For a full half hour after that the boys fought the obstinate sea mon-

of the natives call him the Blue Demon.

Finally they steered their craft toward the shore, worked the shark over bathers ran screaming in wild consternation. When the shark was well up on dry land they cut the line.

"May get fired for this," Albert murnured, as they headed their craft toward the city. "We were told to be are known to carry disease. back at three o'clock and it's half past stoutest line he had in his kit."

let him 'fire," Dave grumbled. "Not the incisors is covered with enamel which back of them at the end of a small of the animal. island. The crimson flash had disap-

boys slowly lowered the big bag to its | The rat is the chief reservoir and source place. Hardly had the ship been tied of human plague. The plague is the up than the "reception committee" began | "black death" which in the years 1664to arrive. It was not just the sort of 65 killed 70,000 of the half million popucommittee one would wish to meet, but lation of London. Daniel Defoe, author -when a committee arrives it has to be of "Robinson Crusoe," wrote one of the it six stalwart men tumbled, two were epidemic. Infectious jaundice, leprosy,

the taller of the two officers, stepping slaughter houses and in groceries and "Oh-ah," Dave swallowed his Adam's

apple twice. "Er-for what?" "You know!" snapped a fat man in a bathing suit. "For frightening peoplepeaceful, innocent people. Suppose you thought that a huge joke-dragging that that-er dangerous creature into our

predicament. "I--I'm sorry. We-just had to get rid of him. Tha-that seemed the only place. We-" "What's this?" came in a brisk voice.

Dave's heart sank a few notches lower. The official of the company whose afternoon of fishing they had spoiled walked up to the group. As the two boys stood there, the centre

of an indignant, staring group, a tall, slim man, with a gray beard and a slender girl at his side, came up. "There! There they are, Father!" the girl exclaimed. "Oh, they-", Her voice

"Sorry for what, miss?" Dave managed to ask. "Sorry-we killed your pet shark?" "Oh-oh! No!" Her cheeks blanched. "No! No! That was wonderful! Oh-I-Father!" She took the bearded

man by the arm. "Mr. Fleetwood," said one of officers, touching his cap, "we are aresting these boys."

"For what?" His tone was crisp. "You let those boys alone. 'They performed a brave deed. Was anyone hurt? His tone changed.

"No, your honor." "But the beastly thing threw sand all over us," the stout bather protested. "Shocking!" A gleam was in the bearded man's eyes. "You may go, Dorrity, and you, Dirkin." He nodded to

Two hours later Dave and Albert found themselves seated on a broad, low veranda surrounded by bushes, and low tropical palms. "You see." Leora Fleetwood the one-time "crimson flash" was saying, "Father is mayor. He tries to keep the city clean. It's a hard task. He needs a retreat where no one can disturb him. This island is our retreat. We-we're sorry we were not more hos-

pitable to you the other night." thoughtfully, as, after a delightful evening he and Albert paddled slowly homeward, "there's no use getting angry at people who do things to you until you know all the facts. By that time like as not you've no desire to be angry."

A THOUGHT

believed than the statement that youth in Yukon. is the happiest time of life, said William . A glance, at the map shows that most Lyon Phelps in his autobiography. As of the principal metals and many of the we advance in years we really grow hap- principal non-metallic minerals are being pier, if we live intelligently. The uni- produced in the Dominion, some of them. verse is spectacular and it is a free show. | including sulphur, rock wool, nepheline Increase of difficulties and responsibili- syenite, radium, and magnesitic doloties strengthens and enriches the mind mite being fairly recent additions to the and adds to the variety of life. To live list. Chief among-the metals are gold. abundantly is like climbing a mountain silver, copper, lead, zinc, nickel and the or a tower: To say that youth is hap- platinum metals, while the non-metallics iper than maturity is like saying that include such important minerals as coal. better than the view from the top. As sum, salt, limestone and sodium sulone look toward the water nearest the! Dave obeyed. The lure skimmed the we ascend, the range of our view widens phate. It is evident from the map also "Look, Albert! Only look! A shark! fish seeking shelter, the dead tarpon shot it is as if we had the world, at our feet. remain to be explored for minerals:

AS HUMAN BEINGS

The population of Canada is under 12 millions-of people. The rat population

The rat is man's most intelligent and dangerous foe. He is filthy, destructive and disease-carrying; a menace to "I've heard of him!" Albert said once society. At a most conservative estimwhen they had all but lost him. "Some ate the rat population of Canada consumes food of a value of 50 millions a He makes swimming in these waters year. If this were his only fault the mighty dangerous. We-we must not let rat's continued existence might be tol-

It is not as a destroyer of property the shoals, then dragged him onto a menace that the rat does the greatest sandy beach from which a hundred sun harm. Because his body is infested with fleas, lice and mites the rat distributes what are known as mechanical carriers of disease. Investigation has shown that a single rat carries on the average 15 fleas, and these fleas in many instances,

Rats, as well as mice and squirrels now. That fellow we were to pick up furnish an important chapter in prevenis a big company official. We've not tive medicine. These rodents, as they only spoiled his afternoon of fishing, but are called, comprise more than onewe've lost his only fish and wrecked the third of all-living species of mannals. They have strongly developed incisor "If that's what a fellow gets fired for, teeth but no canine teeth. The front of much adventure in just running a blimp keeps them sharp and chisel-like. These anyway." His eyes were on a spot far teeth continue to grow during the life

A rat bite may cause fever (rat-bite fever) and other infections but the real danger from rats is because of the dis-Arriving at their landing base, the ease-carrying insects living on them. trichinosis and epidemic typhus are spread by rats. These rodents frequently

"Consider yourself under arrest," said infect food supplies in butcher shops, warehouses. The rat is prolific. Their increasing numbers are limited only by the available food supply and opportunities for nesting. The families run fro 7 to 14 in number.

The suppression of the rat is probably a biological impossibility. The animal is unusually intelligent, keen and cautious. Millions have been killed in the endeavor to control plague epidemics in India, Japan and in coast cities such as San Francisco, without causing an appreciable reduction of the stock.

Rat-proofing of buildings, starving, the use of traps, poisons and fumigation have all been tried with more or less success. The natural enemies of the rat are hawks, snakes, skunks, weasels, the mongoose, minks, dogs, cats and ferrets.

The rat cannot live without food and he will quickly migrate if food supplies are denied him, just as he will congregate where food is plentiful. All available forces must be arrayed against him dropped. Her cheeks flushed. "Oh! I- in order to limit this source of diseasecarrying parasites.

NEW MINERAL-MAP OF CANADA

Canada's diversity of mineral wealth and the widespread distribution of the mineral resources of the country are both shown to excellent advantage in a new mineral map of the Dominion, issued recently by the Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa. Measuring 18 by 35 inches, the map, which is on a the active sources of supply of the long list of metals and minerals being produced in Canada, together with the known, but as yet non-productive sources of supply. On it are shown also the locations of lode gold and placer gold areas; of all lead, zinc, copper, nickel, procious metals, iron and steel, and other metallurgical plants; and of cement plants, petroleum refineries, and fertilizer plants. Shown in colors are the geological divisions of the Dominion, the largest and most important of which from the viewpoint of mineral production is the Canadian Shield, which covers a total area of approximately two million square miles

Viewed alongside a similar map issued several years ago, the new map brings "Just goes to show," Dave said, to light much evidence of the rapid headway that has since been made in Canadian mining. One instance is the appearance on the map of many new fields of mining activity, among them Leing the radium-silver operations at Great Bear Lake, and the new gold camp in the Yellowknife River area in the Northwest Territories. Another is the appearance of the many air routes serving the mining fields across the Domin-Start the day with the feeling that it ion. Few such services had been is the best day you have ever lived-and developed when the former map was issued. One of the longer of the air The secret of contentment is knowing routes is shown extending from Edmonhow to enjoy what you have and to be | ton to Resolution, south of Great Slave The shark appeared to pause, Had able to lose all desire for things beyond Lake, from where it branches off to Aklavik and to Port Radium and Cop-Is youth the happiest time? I know permine. Another extends from Edof no greater fallacy or one more widely monton to Whitehorse and other centres

Canadian Navy Keeps Vigilant Patrol of Coastal Waters

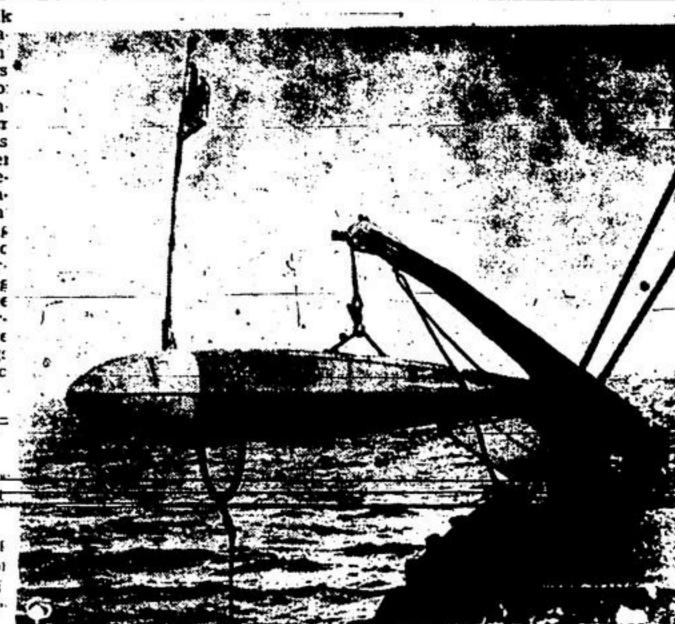


immediately upon the outbreak of war the small but efficient Canadran navy commenced its vigilan patrol of Canadian coastal waters R.M.C.S. Fundy. ABOVE, is one of the minesweepers patrolling Cane la's Atlantic coast to keep then c'ear of enemy mines. Paravanes RIGHT, are used by the minesweeper to locate the mines. The minesweeper tows one of these paradepth: They spread out, forming a wedge and sweeping a broac Freed of its mooring: the mine rises to the surface and is c. . ' destroyed.

ABOUT TIME

was afflicted with super-efficiency.

"We must," he said, "cost the costing of the costing and then cost the cost costing and costing and, after that, cos the cost of costing the costing. So they led him quietly away.





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