Edgar Wallace

Bones in London

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BONES AND BIG BUSINESS

There was a slump in the shipping market, and men who were otherwise decent citizens wailed for one hour of glorious war, when Kenyon Line Deferred had stood at 88 1/2, and even so poor an organization as Siddons Steam Packets Line had been marketable at 3 3/8.

Two bareheaded men came down the busy street, their hands thrust into their trousers pockets, their sleek, well-oiled heads bent in dejection.

No word they spoke, keeping step with the stern precision of soldiers. Together they wheeled through the open doors of the Commercial Trust Building, together they left-turned into the elevator, and simultaneously raised their heads to examine its roof, as though in its panelled ceiling was concealed some Delphic oracle who would answer the riddle which circumstances had set them.

They dropped their heads together and stood with sad eyes, regarding the attendant's leisurely unlatching of the gate. They slipped forth and walked in single file to a suite of offices inscribed "Pole Brothers, Brokers," and, beneath, "The United Merchant Shippers' Corporation," and passed through a door which, in addition to this declaration, bore the footnote "Private."

Here the file divided, one going to one side of a vast pedestal desk and one to the other. Still with their hands pushed deep into their pockets, they sank, almost as at a word of command, each into his cushioned chair, and stared at one another across the table.

They were stout young men of the middle thirties, clean-shaven and ruddy. They had served their country in the late War, and had made many sacrifices to the common cause. One had worn uniform and one had not. Joe had occupied some mysterious office which permitted and, indeed, enjoined upon him the wearing of the insignia of captain, but had forbidden him to leave his native land. The other had earned a little decoration with a very big title as a buyer of boots for Allied nations. Both had subscribed largely to War Stock, and a reminder of their devotion to the cause of liberty was placed to their credit every half-year.

But for these, war, with its horrific incidents, its late hours, its midnight railway journeys by trains on which sleeping berths could not be had for love or money, its food cards and statements of excess profits, was past. The present held its tragedy so poignant as to overshadow that breathless terrifying moment when peace had come and found the firm with the sale of the Fairy Line of cargo steamers uncompleted, contracts unsigned, and shipping stock which had lived light-headedly in the airy spaces, falling deflated on the floor of the house.

The Fairy Line was not a large line. It was, in truth, a small line. It might have been purchased for two hundred thousand pounds, and nearly was. To-day it might be acquired for one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and yet it wasn't.

"Joe," said the senior Mr. Pole, in a voice that came from his varnished boots, "we've got to do something with Fairies."

"Curse this War!" said Joe in cold-blooded even tones. "Curse the Kaiser! A weak-kneed devil who might at least have stuck to it for another month! Curse him for making America build ships, curse him for——"

"Joe," said the stout young man on the other side of the table, shaking his head sadly, "it is no use cursing, Joe. We knew that they were building ships, but the business looked good to me. If Turkey hadn't turned up her toes and released all that shipping——"

"Curse Turkey!" said the other, with great calmness. "Curse the Sultan and Enver and Taalat, curse Bulgaria and Ferdinand——"

"Put in one for the Bolsheviks, Joe," said his brother urgently, "and I reckon that gets the lot in trouble. Don't start on Austria, or we'll find ourselves cursing the Jugo-Slavs."

He sighed deeply, pursed his lips, and looked at his writing-pad intently.

Joe and Fred Pole had many faults, which they freely admitted, such as their generosity, their reckless kindness of heart, their willingness to do their worst enemies a good turn, and the like. They had others which they never admitted, but which were none the less patent to their prejudiced contemporaries.

But they had virtues which were admirable. They were, for example, absolutely loyal to one another, and were constant in their mutual admiration and help. If Joe made a bad deal, Fred never rested until he had balanced things against the beneficiary. If Fred in a weak moment paid a higher price to the vendor of a property than he, as promoter, could afford, it was Joe who took the smug vendor out to dinner and, by persuasion, argument, and the frank expression of his liking for the unfortunate man, tore away a portion of his ill-gotten gains.

"I suppose," said Joe, concluding his minatory exercises, and reaching for a cigar from the silver box which stood on the table midway between the

two, "I suppose we couldn't hold Billing to his contract. Have you seen Cole about it, Fred?"

The other nodded slowly.

"Cole says that there is no contract. Billing offered to buy the ships, and meant to buy them, undoubtedly; but Cole says that if you took Billing into court, the judge would chuck his pen in your eye."

"Would he now?" said Joe, one of whose faults was that he took things literally. "But perhaps if you took Billing out to dinner, Fred——"

"He's a vegetarian, Joe"—he reached in his turn for a cigar, snipped the end and lit it—"and he's deaf. No, we've got to find a sucker, Joe. I can sell the *Fairy May* and the *Fairy Belle*: they're little boats, and are worth money in the open market. I can sell the wharfage and offices and the goodwill ——"

"What's the goodwill worth, Fred?"

"About fivepence net," said the gloomy Fred. "I can sell all these, but it is the *Fairy Mary* and the *Fairy Tilda* that's breaking my heart. And yet, Joe, there ain't two ships of their tonnage to be bought on the market. If you wanted two ships of the same size and weight, you couldn't buy 'em for a million—no, you couldn't. I guess they must be bad ships, Joe."

Joe had already guessed that.

"I offered 'em to Saddler, of the White Anchor," Fred went on, "and he said that if he ever started collecting curios he'd remember me. Then I tried to sell 'em to the Coastal Cargo Line—the very ships for the Newcastle and Thames river trade—and he said he couldn't think of it now that the submarine season was over. Then I offered 'em to young Topping, who

thinks of running a line to the West Coast, but he said that he didn't believe in Fairies or Santa Claus or any of that stuff."

There was silence.

"Who named 'em *Fairy Mary* and *Fairy Tilda*?" asked Joe curiously.

"Don't let's speak ill of the dead," begged Fred; "the man who had 'em built is no longer with us, Joe. They say that joy doesn't kill, but that's a lie, Joe. He died two days after we took 'em over, and left all his money—all our money—to a nephew."

"I didn't know that," said Joe, sitting up.

"I didn't know it myself till the other day, when I took the deed of sale down to Cole to see if there wasn't a flaw in it somewhere. I've wired him."

"Who—Cole?"

"No, the young nephew. If we could only——"

He did not complete his sentence, but there was a common emotion and understanding in the two pairs of eyes that met.

"Who is he—anybody?" asked Joe vaguely.

Fred broke off the ash of his cigar and nodded.

"Anybody worth half a million is somebody, Joe," he said seriously. "This young fellow was in the Army. He's out of it now, running a business in the City—'Schemes, Ltd.,' he calls it. Lots of people know him—shipping people on the Coast. He's got a horrible nickname."

"What's that, Fred?"

"Bones," said Fred, in tones sufficiently sepulchral to be appropriate, "and, Joe, he's one of those bones I want to pick."

There was another office in that great and sorrowful City. It was perhaps less of an office than a boudoir, for it had been furnished on the higher plan by a celebrated firm of furnishers and decorators, whose advertisements in the more exclusive publications consisted of a set of royal arms, a photograph of a Queen Anne chair, and the bold surname of the firm. It was furnished with such exquisite taste that you could neither blame nor praise the disposition of a couch or the set of a purple curtain.

The oxydized silver grate, the Persian carpets, the rosewood desk, with its Venetian glass flower vase, were all in harmony with the panelled walls, the gentlemanly clock which ticked sedately on the Adam mantelpiece, the Sheraton chairs, the silver—or apparently so—wall sconces, the delicate electrolier with its ballet skirts of purple silk.

All these things were evidence of the careful upbringing and artistic yearnings of the young man who "blended" for the eminent firm of Messrs. Worrows, By Appointment to the King of Smyrna, His Majesty the Emperor —— (the blank stands for an exalted name which had been painted out by the patriotic management of Worrows), and divers other royalties.

The young man who sat in the exquisite chair, with his boots elevated to and resting upon the olive-green leather of the rosewood writing-table, had long since grown familiar with the magnificence in which he moved and had his being. He sat chewing an expensive paper-knife of ivory, not because he was hungry, but because he was bored. He had entered into his kingdom brimful of confidence and with unimagined thousands of pounds to his credit in the coffers of the Midland and Somerset Bank.

He had brought with him a bright blue book, stoutly covered and brassily locked, on which was inscribed the word "Schemes."

That book was filled with writing of a most private kind and of a frenzied calculation which sprawled diagonally over pages, as for example:

Buy up old houses . . . . . say 2,000 pounds.
Pull them down . . . . . say 500 pounds.
Erect erect 50 Grand Flats . . . . . say 10,000 pounds.
Paper, pante, windows, etc. . . . . say 1,000 pounds.
Total . . . . . 12,000 pounds.

50 Flats let at 80 pounds per annum. 40,000 lbs.
Net profit . . . . . say 50 per cent.

NOTE.—For good middel class familys steady steady people. By this means means doing good turn to working classes solving houseing problem and making money which can be distribbuted distribbutted to the poor.

Mr. Augustus Tibbetts, late of H.M. Houssa Rifles, was, as his doorplate testified, the Managing Director of "Schemes, Ltd." He was a severe looking young man, who wore a gold-rimmed monocle on his grey check waistcoat and occasionally in his left eye. His face was of that brick-red which spoke of a life spent under tropical suns, and when erect he conveyed a momentary impression of a departed militarism.

He uncurled his feet from the table, and, picking up a letter, read it through aloud—that is to say, he read certain words, skipped others, and

substituted private idioms for all he could not or would not trouble to pronounce.

"Dear Sir," (he mumbled), "as old friends of your dear uncle, and so on and so forth, we are taking the first opportunity of making widdly widdly wee.... Our Mr. Fred Pole will call upon you and place himself widdly widdly wee—tum tiddly um tum.—Yours truly."

Mr. Tibbetts frowned at the letter and struck a bell with unnecessary violence. There appeared in the doorway a wonderful man in scarlet breeches and green zouave jacket. On his head was a dull red tarbosh, on his feet scarlet slippers, and about his waist a sash of Oriental audacity. His face, large and placid, was black, and, for all his suggestiveness of the brilliant East, he was undoubtedly negroid.

The costume was one of Mr. Tibbetts's schemes. It was faithfully copied from one worn by a gentleman of colour who serves the Turkish coffee at the Wistaria Restaurant. It may be said that there was no special reason why an ordinary business man should possess a bodyguard at all, and less reason why he should affect one who had the appearance of a burlesque Othello, but Mr. Augustus Tibbetts, though a business man, was not ordinary.

"Bones"—for such a name he bore without protest in the limited circles of his friendship—looked up severely.

"Ali," he demanded, "have you posted the ledger?"

"Sir," said Ali, with a profound obeisance, "the article was too copious for insertion in aperture of collection box, so it was transferred to the female lady behind postal department counter."

Bones leapt up, staring.

"Goodness gracious, Heavens alive, you silly old ass—you—you haven't posted it—in the post?"

"Sir," said Ali reproachfully, "you instructed posting volume in exact formula. Therefore I engulfed it in wrappings and ligatures of string, and safely delivered it to posting authority."

Bones sank back in his chair.

"It's no use—no use, Ali," he said sadly, "my poor uncivilized savage, it's not your fault. I shall never bring you up to date, my poor silly old josser. When I say 'post' the ledger, I mean write down all the money you've spent on cabs in the stamp book. Goodness gracious alive! You can't run a business without system, Ali! Don't you know that, my dear old image? How the dooce do you think the auditors are to know how I spend my jolly old uncle's money if you don't write it down, hey? Posting means writing. Good Heavens"—a horrid thought dawned on him—"who did you post it to?"

"Lord," said Ali calmly, "destination of posted volume is your lordship's private residency."

All's English education had been secured in the laboratory of an English scientist in Sierra Leone, and long association with that learned man had endowed him with a vocabulary at once impressive and recondite.

Bones gave a resigned sigh.

"I'm expecting——" he began, when a silvery bell tinkled.

It was silvery because the bell was of silver. Bones looked up, pulled down his waistcoat, smoothed back his hair, fixed his eye-glass, and took up a long quill pen with a vivid purple feather.

"Show them in," he said gruffly.

"Them" was one well-dressed young man in a shiny silk hat, who, when admitted to the inner sanctum, came soberly across the room, balancing his hat.

"Ah, Mr. Pole—Mr. Fred Pole." Bones read the visitor's card with the scowl which he adopted for business hours. "Yes, yes. Be seated, Mr. Pole. I shall not keep you a minute."

He had been waiting all the morning for Mr. Pole. He had been weaving dreams from the letter-heading above Mr. Pole's letter.

Ships … ships … house-flags … brass-buttoned owners….

He waved Mr. Fred to a chair and wrote furiously. This frantic pressure of work was a phenomenon which invariably coincided with the arrival of a visitor. It was, I think, partly due to nervousness and partly to his dislike of strangers. Presently he finished, blotted the paper, stuck it in an envelope, addressed it, and placed it in his drawer. Then he took up the card.

"Mr. Pole?" he said.

"Mr. Pole," repeated that gentleman.

"Mr. *Fred* Pole?" asked Bones, with an air of surprise.

"Mr. Fred Pole," admitted the other soberly.

Bones looked from the card to the visitor as though he could not believe his eyes.

"We have a letter from you somewhere," he said, searching the desk. "Ah, here it is!" (It was, in fact, the only document on the table.) "Yes, yes, to be sure. I'm very glad to meet you."

He rose, solemnly shook hands, sat down again and coughed. Then he took up the ivory paper-knife to chew, coughed again as he detected the lapse, and put it down with a bang.

"I thought I'd like to come along and see you, Mr. Tibbetts," said Fred in his gentle voice; "we are so to speak, associated in business."

"Indeed?" said Bones. "In-deed?"

"You see, Mr. Tibbetts," Fred went on, with a sad smile, "your lamented uncle, before he went out of business, sold us his ships. He died a month later."

He sighed and Bones sighed.

"Your uncle was a great man, Mr. Tibbetts," he said, "one of the greatest business men in this little city. What a man!"

"Ah!" said Bones, shaking his head mournfully.

He had never met his uncle and had seldom heard of him. Saul Tibbetts was reputedly a miser, and his language was of such violence that the infant Augustus was invariably hurried to the nursery on such rare occasions as old Saul paid a family visit. His inheritance had come to Bones as in a dream, from the unreality of which he had not yet awakened.

"I must confess, Mr. Tibbetts," said Fred, "that I have often had qualms of conscience about your uncle, and I have been on the point of coming round to see you several times. This morning I said to my brother, 'Joe,' I said, 'I'm going round to see Tibbetts.' Forgive the familiarity, but we talk of firms like the Rothschilds and the Morgans without any formality."

"Naturally, naturally, naturally," murmured Bones gruffly.

"I said: 'I'll go and see Tibbetts and get it off my chest. If he wants those ships back at the price we paid for them, or even less, he shall have them.' 'Fred,' he said, 'you're too sensitive for business.' 'Joe,' I said, 'my conscience works even in business hours.'"

A light dawned on Bones and he brightened visibly.

"Ah, yes, my dear old Pole," he said almost cheerily, "I understand. You diddled my dear old uncle—bless his heart—out of money, and you want to pay it back. Fred"—Bones rose and extended his knuckly hand—"you're a jolly old sportsman, and you can put it there!"

"What I was going to say——" began Fred seriously agitated.

"Not a word. We'll have a bottle on this. What will you have—ginger-beer or cider?"

Mr. Fred suppressed a shudder with difficulty.

"Wait, wait, Mr. Tibbetts," he begged; "I think I ought to explain. We did not, of course, knowingly rob your uncle——"

"No, no, naturally," said Bones, with a facial contortion which passed for a wink. "Certainly not. We business men never rob anybody. Ali, bring the drinks!"

"We did not consciously rob him," continued Mr. Fred desperately, "but what we did do—— ah, this is my confession!"

"You borrowed a bit and didn't pay it back. Ah, naughty!" said Bones. "Out with the corkscrew, Ali. What shall it be—a cream soda or non-alcoholic ale?"

Mr. Fred looked long and earnestly at the young man.

"Mr. Tibbetts," he said, and suddenly grasped the hand of Bones, "I hope we are going to be friends. I like you. That's my peculiarity—I like people or I dislike them. Now that I've told you that we bought two ships from your uncle for one hundred and forty thousand pounds when we knew—yes, positively knew—they were worth at least twenty thousand pounds more—now I've told you this, I feel happier."

"Worth twenty thousand pounds more?" said Bones thoughtfully.
Providence was working overtime for him, he thought.

"Of anybody's money," said Fred stoutly. "I don't care where you go, my dear chap. Ask Cole—he's the biggest shipping lawyer in this city—ask my brother, who, I suppose, is the greatest shipping authority in the world, or—what's the use of asking 'em?—ask yourself. If you're not Saul Tibbetts all over again, if you haven't the instinct and the eye and the brain of a shipowner—why, I'm a Dutchman! That's what I am—a Dutchman!"

He picked up his hat and his lips were pressed tight—a gesture and a grimace which stood for grim conviction.

"What are they worth to-day?" asked Bones, after a pause.

"What are they worth to-day?" Mr. Fred frowned heavily at the ceiling. "Now, what are they worth to-day? I forget how much I've spent on 'em—

they're in dock now."

Bones tightened *his* lips, too.

"They're in dock now?" he said. He scratched his nose. "Dear old Fred Pole," he said, "you're a jolly old soul. By Jove that's not bad! 'Pole' an' 'soul' rhyme —did you notice it?"

Fred had noticed it.

"It's rum," said Bones, shaking his head, "it is rum how things get about. How did you know, old fellow-citizen, that I was going in for shippin'?"

Mr. Fred Pole did not know that Bones was going in for shipping, but he smiled.

"There are few things that happen in the City that I *don't* know," he admitted modestly.

"The Tibbetts Line," said Bones firmly, "will fly a house-flag of purple and green diagonally—that is, from corner to corner. There will be a yellow anchor in a blue wreath in one corner and a capital T in a red wreath in the other."

"Original, distinctly original," said Fred in wondering admiration.
"Wherever did you get that idea?"

"I get ideas," confessed Bones, blushing, "some times in the night, sometimes in the day. The fleet"—Bones liked the sound of the word and repeated it—"the fleet will consist of the *Augustus*, the *Sanders*—a dear old friend of mine living at Hindhead—the *Patricia*—another dear old friend of mine living at Hindhead, too—in fact, in the same house. To tell you the truth, dear old Fred Pole, she's married to the other ship. And there'll be

the *Hamilton*, another precious old soul, a very, very, very, very dear friend of mine who's comin' home shortly——"

"Well, what shall we say, Mr. Tibbetts?" said Fred, who had an early luncheon appointment. "Would you care to buy the two boats at the same price we gave your uncle for them?"

Bones rang his bell.

"I'm a business man, dear old Fred," said he soberly. "There's no time like the present, and I'll fix the matter—*now!*"

He said "now" with a ferociousness which was intended to emphasize his hard and inflexible business character.

Fred came into the private office of Pole & Pole after lunch that day, and there was in his face a great light and a peace which was almost beautiful.

But never beamed the face of Fred so radiantly as the countenance of the waiting Joe. He lay back in his chair, his cigar pointing to the ceiling.

"Well, Fred?"—there was an anthem in his voice.

"Very well, Joe." Fred hung up his unnecessary umbrella.

"I've sold the *Fairies*!"

Joe said it and Fred said it. They said it together. There was the same lilt of triumph in each voice, and both smiles vanished at the identical instant.

"*You've* sold the *Fairies*!" they said.

They might have been rehearsing this scene for months, so perfect was the chorus.

"Wait a bit, Joe," said Fred; "let's get the hang of this. I understand that you left the matter to me."

"I did; but, Fred, I was so keen on the idea I had that I had to nip in before you. Of course, I didn't go to him as Pole & Pole——"

"To him? What him?" asked Fred, breathing hard.

"To What's-his-name—Bones."

Fred took his blue silk handkerchief from his pocket and dabbed his face.

"Go on, Joe," he said sadly

"I got him just before he went out to lunch. I sent up the United Merchant Shippers' card—it's our company, anyway. Not a word about Pole & Pole."

"Oh, no, of course not!" said Fred.

"And, my boy,"—this was evidently Joe's greatest achievement, for he described the fact with gusto—"not a word about the names of the ships. I just sold him two steamers, so and so tonnage, so and so classification ——"

"For how much?"

Fred was mildly curious. It was the curiosity which led a certain political prisoner to feel the edge of the axe before it beheaded him.

"A hundred and twenty thousand!" cried Joe joyously. "He's starting a fleet, he says. He's calling it the Tibbetts Line, and bought a couple of ships only this morning."

Fred examined the ceiling carefully before he spoke.

"Joe," he said, "was it a firm deal? Did you put pen to paper?"

"You-bet-your-dear-sweet-life," said Joe, scornful at the suggestion that he had omitted such an indispensable part of the negotiation.

"So did I, Joe," said Fred. "Those two ships he bought were the two *Fairies*."

There was a dead silence.

"Well," said Joe uneasily, after a while, "we can get a couple of ships——"

"Where, Joe? You admitted yesterday there weren't two boats in the world on the market."

Another long silence.

"I did it for the best, Fred."

Fred nodded

"Something must be done. We can't sell a man what we haven't got. Joe, couldn't you go and play golf this afternoon whilst I wangle this matter out?"

Joe nodded and rose solemnly. He took down his umbrella from the peg and his shiny silk hat from another peg, and tiptoed from the room.

From three o'clock to four Mr. Fred Pole sat immersed in thought, and at last, with a big, heavy sigh, he unlocked his safe, took out his cheque-book and pocketed it.

Bones was on the point of departure, after a most satisfactory day's work, when Fred Pole was announced.

Bones greeted him like unto a brother—caught him by the hand at the very entrance and, still holding him thus, conducted him to one of his beautiful chairs.

"By Jove, dear old Fred," he babbled, "it's good of you, old fellow—really good of you! Business, my jolly old shipowner, waits for no man. Ali, my cheque-book!"

"A moment—just a moment, dear Mr. Bones," begged Fred. "You don't mind my calling you by the name which is already famous in the City?"

Bones looked dubious.

"Personally, I prefer Tibbetts," said Fred.

"Personally, dear old Fred, so do I," admitted Bones.

"I've come on a curious errand," said Fred in such hollow tones that Bones started. "The fact is, old man, I'm——"

He hung his head, and Bones laid a sympathetic hand on his shoulder.

"Anybody is liable to get that way, my jolly old roysterer," he said. "Speakin' for myself, drink has no effect upon me—due to my jolly old nerves of iron an' all that sort of thing."

"I'm ashamed of myself," said Fred.

"Nothing to be ashamed of, my poor old toper," said Bones honestly in error. "Why, I remember once——"

"As a business man, Mr. Tibbetts," said Fred bravely, "can you forgive sentiment?"

"Sentiment! Why, you silly old josser, I'm all sentiment, dear old thing! Why, I simply cry myself to sleep over dear old Charles What's-his-name's books!"

"It's sentiment," said Fred brokenly. "I just can't—I simply can't part with those two ships I sold you."

"Hey?" said Bones.

"They were your uncle's, but they have an association for me and my brother which it would be—er—profane to mention. Mr. Tibbetts, let us cry off our bargain."

Bones sniffed and rubbed his nose.

"Business, dear old Fred," he said gently. "Bear up an' play the man, as dear old Francis Drake said when they stopped him playin' cricket. Business, old friend. I'd like to oblige you, but——"

He shook his head rapidly

Mr. Fred slowly produced his cheque-book and laid it on the desk with the sigh of one who was about to indite his last wishes.

"You shall not be the loser," he said, with a catch in his voice, for he was genuinely grieved. "I must pay for my weakness. What is five hundred pounds?"

"What is a thousand, if it comes to that, Freddy?" said Bones. "Gracious goodness, I shall be awfully disappointed if you back out—I shall be so

vexed, really."

"Seven hundred and fifty?" asked Fred, with pleading in his eye.

"Make it a thousand, dear old Fred," said Bones; "I can't add up fifties."

So "in consideration" (as Fred wrote rapidly and Bones signed more rapidly) "of the sum of one thousand pounds (say £1,000), the contract as between &c., &c.," was cancelled, and Fred became again the practical man of affairs.

"Dear old Fred," said Bones, folding the cheque and sticking it in his pocket, "I'm goin' to own up—frankness is a vice with me—that I don't understand much about the shippin' business. But tell me, my jolly old merchant, why do fellers sell you ships in the mornin' an' buy 'em back in the afternoon?"

"Business, Mr. Tibbetts," said Fred, smiling, "just big business."

Bones sucked an inky finger.

"Dinky business for me, dear old thing," he said. "I've got a thousand from you an' a thousand from the other Johnny who sold me two ships. Bless my life an' soul——"

"The other fellow," said Fred faintly—"a fellow from the United Merchant Shippers?"

"That was the dear lad," said Bones.

"And has he cried off his bargain, too?"

"Positively!" said Bones. "A very, very nice, fellow. He told me I could call him Joe—jolly old Joe!"

"Jolly old Joe!" repeated Fred mechanically, as he left the office, and all the way home he was saying "Jolly old Joe!"

HIDDEN TREASURE

Mrs. Staleyborn's first husband was a dreamy Fellow of a Learned University.

Her second husband had begun life at the bottom of the ladder as a three-card trickster, and by strict attention to business and the exercise of his natural genius, had attained to the proprietorship of a bucket-shop.

When Mrs. Staleyborn was Miss Clara Smith, she had been housekeeper to Professor Whitland, a biologist who discovered her indispensability, and was only vaguely aware of the social gulf which yawned between the youngest son of the late Lord Bortledyne and the only daughter of Albert Edward Smith, mechanic. To the Professor she was Miss *H. Sapiens*—an agreeable, featherless plantigrade biped of the genus *Homo*. She was also thoroughly domesticated and cooked like an angel, a nice woman who apparently never knew that her husband had a Christian name, for she called him "Mr. Whitland" to the day of his death.

The strain and embarrassment of the new relationship with her master were intensified by the arrival of a daughter, and doubled when that daughter came to a knowledgeable age. Marguerite Whitland had the inherent culture of her father and the grace and delicate beauty which had ever distinguished the women of the house of Bortledyne.

When the Professor died, Mrs. Whitland mourned him in all sincerity. She was also relieved. One-half of the burden which lay upon her had been