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The Pet

Ellis Parker Butler

Mr. Philo Gubb, graduate of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, and paperhanger by trade, put down the pail of flour paste he was carrying and stared in amazement at the remarkable creature that came loping toward him across the open field. A small hickory thicket lay on the far side of the field, and beyond that were the circus grounds where the World's Monster Combined Shows were showing, and Philo Gubb's first -- and correct -- impression was that this was some wild creature escaped from the circus. The horrid creature was the Tasmanian Wild Man, escaped from his cage in the sideshow.

Under one arm Philo Gubb carried his straightedge, used in trimming the margins from wallpaper, and around this were wrapped his white overalls. As the Wild Man approached, Philo Gubb drew the straightedge from the roll and prepared to defend himself. He was a tall, slim man, somewhat resembling a flamingo in build and appearance, and as he swung the straightedge in two hands he looked like an agitated and long-legged bird frantically waving signals. But he was prepared to defend himself to his last drop of blood. He was ready for a desperate and murderous fray.

When halfway across the field, the Tasmanian Wild Man glanced back over his shoulder and, as if fearing pursuit, increased his speed and came toward Philo Gubb in great leaps and bounds. The Correspondence School Detective waved his straightedge more frantically than ever. The Tasmanian Wild Man stopped short within six feet of him.

Viewed thus closely, the Wild Man was a sight to curdle the blood. Remnants of chains hung from his wrists and ankles; his long hair

was matted about his face; and his fingernails were long and claw-like. His face was daubed with ochre and red, with black rings around the eyes, and the circles within the rings were painted white, giving him an air of wildness possessed by but few wild men. His only garments were a pair of very short trunks and the skin of some wild animal, bound about his body with ropes of horsehair.

Philo Gubb bent to receive the leap he felt the Tasmanian Wild Man was about to make, but to his surprise the Wild Man held up one hand in token of amity, and with the other removed the matted hair from his head, revealing an undercrop of taffy yellow hair, neatly parted in the middle and smoothed back carefully.

"I say, old chap," he said in a pleasant and well-bred tone, "stop waving that dangerous looking weapon at me, will you? My intentions are most kindly, I assure you. Can you inform me where a chap can get a pair of trousers hereabout?"

Philo Gubb's experienced eye saw at once that this creature was less wild than he was painted. While the face remained ferocious, the hair was quite gentle and kind looking. He lowered the straightedge.

"My name is Philo Gubb," he said, "and I am a complete and entire graduate of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting, and as such, clues and deductions of one thing from another is part of my business, and a man wouldn't have to have had more than Lesson One to see that you ain't what you look to be. When a man has had all twelve lessons, and is a full graduate, with a diploma, he don't suspect a head of hair like you've got, of evil intentions. It is as plain as day to me that you're in trouble."

"Right-o!" said the Tasmanian Wild Man. "And in deuced bad trouble, old chap. I'm a graduate, too. Harvard '06 was mine."

He kept looking over his shoulder toward the hickory thicket as he spoke, showing that he feared what might come from that direction.

"Come into this house," said Philo Gubb. "Between detections I permit myself to exercise the paperhanging arts, and I am so doing in this house to the extent of ten rolls of all-over in the kitchen and twenty rolls of twelve-cent stripe in the hallway. As one graduate to another, I bid you welcome, and inside the house we can discuss pants in calmness."

The Tasmanian Wild Man accepted.

"Now, then," said Philo Gubb, when they were safe in the kitchen, "I am all ears."

As a matter of fact, he was considerably more nose than ears, but he spoke in a metaphorical sense. He seated himself on a roll of wallpaper, and the Tasmanian Wild Man, whose real name was Waldo Emerson Snooks, told his brief story.

Upon graduating from Harvard well up in the class of '06, he had sought employment from an agency, offering to furnish entertainment by the evening reading an essay entitled, "The Comparative Mentality of Ibsen and Emerson, with Sidelights on the Effect of Turnip Diet at Brook Farm," but the agency was unable to get him any engagements. They happened, however, to receive a request from Mr. Dorgan, manager of the Sideshow of the World's Monster Combined Shows, asking that he be furnished immediately with a Tasmanian Wild Man, and Mr. Waldo Emerson Snooks had taken that job. To his own surprise, he made an excellent Wild Man. He was able to rattle his chains, dash up and down the cage, gnaw the iron bars of the cage, eat raw meat, and howl as no other Tasmanian Wild Man had ever succeeded in doing those things for Mr. Dorgan, and all would have been well if an interloper had not entered the

sideshow that very day.

The interloper was Mr. Winterberry, a small, bald man, field secretary of the Riverbank Ladies' Social Reform League, who had come to the sideshow and had organized the World's Monster Combined Shows Sideshow Literary Society. Mr. Winterberry had introduced the subject of Emerson's Essays, and in a discussion of them the Tasmanian Wild Man and Mr. Hoxie, the Strong Man, had quarreled, and Mr. Hoxie had threatened to tear Mr. Snooks limb from limb.

"And he would have done so," said the Tasmanian Wild Man with emotion, "if I had not fled. In his rage, he wrenched the bars of my cage apart and broke my chains as if they had been packthread, and so I was able to escape. I dare not return. I mean to work my way back to Boston and give up Tasmanian Wild Maning as a profession. But I cannot enter that center of culture, nor get far on my way, without what you call, in the vernacular, pants."

"I guess you can't," said Philo Gubb. "In any station of male life, pants is expected to be worn."

"So the question is, old chap, where am I to be panted?" said Waldo Emerson Snooks.

"I can't pant you here and now," said Philo Gubb, "but as one full graduate doing another a good turn, I can overall you. A pair of overalls with a bib in front and straps over the shoulders ain't swell, but they are more desirable than bareness of legs. And a pair of shoes, although pasty on top, and used by me when pursuing the paperhanging arts, are better than bareness of feet for tramping from here to Boston."

The late Tasmanian Wild Man was most grateful. When he was dressed in the overalls and shoes, and had been given a roll of paper

to carry under his arm, and had wiped the grease paint from his face on an old rag, no one would have recognized him.

"And as for thanks," said Philo Gubb, "don't mention it. A detective is obliged to keep up a set of disguises hitherto unsuspected by the mortal world. To deceive the malefactoring population he has to be quite, constantly in disguise, and while I can't recall any occasion mentioned in the Correspondence Course of Detecting as taught by the Rising Sun Correspondence School, that calls for a Tasmanian Wild Man in disguise, the thing that happened yesterday ain't the thing that happens tomorrow, and this outfit would do for a hermit disguise anyway, with a pair of pants added. So you don't owe me no thanks." As Philo Gubb watched Waldo Emerson Snooks start in the direction of Boston -- only some thirteen hundred miles away -- he had no idea how soon he would have occasion to use the Tasmanian Wild Man disguise. That very evening, the ladies of the Riverbank Social Service League held a meeting to receive the report of their field secretary, but, as he did not appear, they adjourned to meet the next evening; but even then the bald and gentle Mr. Winterberry failed to appear, and the hearts of the ladies were immediately filled with forebodings of disaster. And well might they be, for Mr. Winterberry had fallen in love with Syrilla, the Fat Woman of the sideshow, and he had deserted the Riverbank Ladies' Social Service League to travel with World's Monster Combined Shows, occupying the cage deserted so hastily by the Tasmanian Wild Man, and earning a wage as Waw Waw, the Chihuahua Mexican Hairless Dog-Man.

Not for an instant did the ladies imagine Mr. Winterberry would voluntarily desert them, and they blamed themselves for sending him to start a Sideshow Literary Society. There could be no doubt, they were sure, that Mr. Winterberry had been kidnapped and was being forced to learn to ride bareback or swing on a trapeze against his will, and they felt that it was their duty to rescue him, since they had

sent him into danger. Had they known that Mr. Winterberry had a wife, and that he had deserted his wife, and that when the sideshow reached Cedarville his wife had found him and had carried him away in triumph from before the eyes of the fainting Fat Lady, they would have worried about him no more; but they could not know that, and after consulting their treasurer, they sent for Philo Gubb.

For several months the detective business of Philo Gubb had been at a low ebb. A period of detestable freedom from crime had fallen upon Riverbank, and the correspondence school detective had begun to fear that the triumph of virtue had been accomplished and that the millennium was at hand. So hungry was he for an opportunity to exercise his knowledge of detection that he would have taken a job to detect where any hen had hidden her "stolen" nest, and would have accepted one tenth of the unhatched chicks as remuneration. He had hoped that the arrival of the circus in Riverbank might lead to a number of burglaries -- as it usually did -- but none had been reported. This particular circus seemed to have had none but honest hangers-on. It was, therefore, with a sense of elation that Philo Gubb dressed himself in his Sunday clothes and attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Ladies' Social Reform League.

"And so," said Mrs. Garthwaite, at the close of the interview, "you understand us, Mr. Gubb?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Philo Gubb. "I ain't right sure what the penalty is for stealing a full grown man like Mr. Winterberry away from a Ladies' Social Reform League, but it ought to be heavy. To steal a young child away from one lady is bad, and to steal a man four times as old as a child away from a whole female society ought to be multifariously worse. Now what you want me to do, first off, is to find Mr. Winterberry, ain't it?"

"Exactly," agreed Mrs. Garthwaite.

"And, when found," said Mr. Gubb, "the said stolen goods is to be returned to you?"

"Just so."

"And the fiends in human form that stole him are to be given the full limit of the law?"

"They certainly deserve it, abducting a nice little gentleman like Mr. Winterberry," said Mrs. Garthwaite.

"They do indeed," said Philo Gubb, "and they shall be. I would only ask how far you want me to arrest. If the manager of the sideshow stole him, my natural and professional detective instincts would tell me to arrest the manager; and if the whole sideshow stole him I would make bold to arrest the whole sideshow; but if the whole circus stole him, am I to arrest the whole circus, and if so ought I to include the menagerie? Ought I to arrest the elephants and the camels?"

"Arrest only those in human form," said Mrs. Garthwaite.

Philo Gubb sat straight and put his hands on his knees.

"In referring to human form, ma'am," he asked, "do you include them oorangootangs and apes?"

"I do," said Mrs. Garthwaite. "Association with criminals has probably inclined their poor minds to criminality."

"Yes, ma'am," said Philo Gubb, rising. "And I may say, in departure, that a circumstance over which I had but small control recently put into my hands a disguise of which I shall no doubt make use in coping with the abductionists. I leave on this case by the first train."

The disguise to which Philo Gubb referred was that left by the Tasmanian Wild Man. Mr. Gubb hastily packed this and six other disguises in a suitcase, put the fourteen dollars given him by Mrs. Garthwaite in his pocket, and hurried to catch the train for Bardville, where the World's Monster Combined Shows were to show the next day. With true detective caution Philo Gubb disguised even this simple act.

Having packed his suitcase, Mr. Gubb wrapped it carefully in manila paper and inserted a laundry ticket under the twine that bound it. Thus anyone seeing him might well suppose he was returning from the laundry and not going to Bardville. To make this seem the more likely, he donned his Chinese disguise, consisting of a pink, skull-like wig with a long pigtail, a blue jumper and a yellow complexion. Having put his make-up box in his suitcase and wrapped the suitcase in paper, Mr. Gubb was obliged to rub his face with crude ochre powder instead of using grease paint, and his yellow complexion was a little high, being more the hue of a pumpkin in the full sunlight than the true Oriental skin tint. This was not a disadvantage, however, for those whom he met as he threaded his way toward the station by back streets and alleys imagined he was in the last stages of yellow fever, and fled from him hastily. They imagined he was in the last stages of yellow fever.

He reached the station, feeling safe in this disguise, just as the train's wheels began to move; and he was springing up the steps onto the platform of the last car when a hand grasped his arm. He turned his head and saw that the man grasping him was Jonas Medderbrook.

"Gubb! Hold on! Get off the train! I want you!" shouted Mr. Medderbrook energetically, but Philo Gubb shook off the detaining arm.

"Me no savvy Melican talkee," he jabbered, and bunting Mr. Medderbrook off the car step with the paper-wrapped suitcase, he dashed into the car. Mr. Medderbrook, from the spot on the station platform where he had fallen, shouted after him, but in vain.

Bright and early next morning, Philo Gubb threw the sheet off himself and jumped out of bed in his room in the Bardville Hotel. He removed sundry traces of the yellow ochre and, from his make-up materials, gave himself a healthy coat of tan, with rather high color on his cheekbones. From his collection of beards and mustaches -- carefully tagged from "No. 1" to "No. 16" in harmony with the types of disguise mentioned in the twelve lessons of the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting -- he selected mustache No. 8 and inserted the spring wires in his nostrils.

Mustache No. 8 was a long, deadly black mustache with up-curved ends, and when Philo Gubb had donned it he had a most sinister appearance, particularly as he failed to remove the string tag which bore the legend, "No. 8. Gambler or Card Sharp. Manufactured and Sold by the Rising Sun Correspondence School of Detecting Supply Bureau." Having put on this mustache, Mr. Gubb took a common splint market basket from under the bed and placed in it the matted hair of the Tasmanian Wild Man, his make-up materials, a small mirror, two towels, a cake of soap, the Tasmanian Wild Man's animal skin robe, the hair rope and the abbreviated trunks. He covered these with a newspaper.

The sun was just rising when he reached the railway siding, but several small boys were already there, and hardly had Mr. Gubb arrived when the World's Monster Combined Shows pulled in, in two sections, and the work of unloading the circus began immediately. The unloading proceeded at several places at once, and Mr. Gubb -- searching for the abducted Mr. Winterberry -- sped rapidly from place

to place, the string tag on his mustache flapping over his shoulder, but although he saw many evil-looking parties at work unloading the wagons, he saw no one answering Mrs. Garthwaite's description of Mr. Winterberry. Indeed, all those he saw were of the rough roustabout class, excepting the man in charge, who seemed rougher and rouster-about than any of the men he freely cursed at their labors. When the tent wagons had departed, the elephants and camels were unloaded, but Mr. Winterberry did not seem to be concealed among them, and the animal cages -- which came next -- were all tightly closed. There were four or five cars, however, that attracted Philo Gubb's attention, and one in particular seemed to demand close inspection. This car bore the words, "World's Monster Combined Shows Freak Car." And as Mr. Winterberry had gone as a social reform agent to the sideshow, Mr. Gubb rightly felt that here if anywhere he would find a clue.

Walking around the car, he heard the door at one end open. He crouched under the platform, his ears and eyes on edge. Hardly was he concealed before the head ruffian of the unloading gang approached.

"Mister Dorgan," he said, in quite another tone than he had used to his laborers, "should I fetch that cage to the grounds for you today?"

"No," said Dorgan. "What's the use? I don't like an empty cage standing around. It looks bad. Leave it on the car, Jake. Or -- hold on! I'll use it. Take it up to the grounds and put it in the sideshow as usual. I'll put the Pet in it."

"Are ye foolin'?" asked the loading boss with a grin. "The cage won't know itself, Mister Dorgan, afther holdin' that rip-snortin' Wild Man to be holdin' a cold corpse like the Pet is."

"Never you mind," said Dorgan shortly. "I know my business, Jake."

"You and I know the Pet is a dead one, but these country yaps don't know it. We can fool 'em easy. I might as well make some use of the remains as long as I've got 'em on hand."

"Who you goin' to fool, sweetie," asked a voice, and Mr. Dorgan looked around to see Syrilla, the Fat Lady, standing in the car door.

"Oh, just folks!" said Dorgan, laughing.

"You're goin' to use the Pet," said the Fat Lady reproachfully, "and I don't think it is nice of you. Say what you will, Mr. Dorgan, a corpse is a corpse, and a respectable sideshow ain't no place for it. I wish you would take it out in the lot and bury it, like I wanted you to, or throw it in the river and get rid of it. Won't you, dearie?"

"I will not," said Mr. Dorgan firmly. "A corpse may be a corpse, Syrilla, any place but in a circus, but in a circus it is a feature. When a man is runnin' a sideshow he's got to make use of what he has. Now you and me and the rest of us know what we intended the Pet for, but nobody cared for him, and now he's a dead one. I did mean to let him stay boxed up, and to dump him in a river some day, but today he's goin' to be a first class sideshow feature. He's goin' to be one of the Seven Sleepers."

"One of what?" asked Syrilla.

"One of the Seven Sleepers," said Dorgan. "I'm goin' to put him in the cage the Wild Man was in, and I'm goin' to tell the audiences he's asleep. 'He looks dead,' I'll say, 'but I give my word he's only asleep. We offer five thousand dollars,' I'll say, 'to any man, woman or child that proves contrary than that we have documents provin' that this human bein' in this cage fell asleep in the year 1837 and has been sleepin' ever since. The longest nap on record,' I'll say. That'll fetch a laugh."

"And you don't care, dearie, that I'll be creepy all through the show, do you?"

"I won't care a hang," said Dorgan.

Mr. Gubb glided noiselessly from under the car and sped away. He had heard enough to know that deviltry was afoot. There was no doubt in his mind that the Pet was the late Mr. Winterberry, for if ever a man deserved to be called "Pet," Mr. Winterberry -- according to Mrs. Garthwaite's description -- was that man. There was no doubt that Mr. Winterberry had been murdered, and that these heartless wretches meant to make capital of his body. The inference was logical. It was a strong clue, and Mr. Gubb hurried to the circus grounds to study the situation.

"No," said Syrilla, tearfully, "you don't care a hang for the nerves of the lady and gent freaks under your care Mr. Dorgan. It's nothin' to you if repulsion from that corpse-like Pet drags seventy or eighty pounds of fat off of me, for you well know what my contract is -- so much a week and so much for each additional pound of fat, and the less fat I am the less you have to add onto your payroll. The day the Pet come to the show first I fainted outright and busted down the platform, but little do you care, Mr. Dorgan. You told me you'd can that corpse, and you done it; and you told me you'd get rid of it, and you ain't done that yet, and now you're goin' to show it off and -- and -- and --"

"Don't you worry; you didn't murder him," said Mr. Dorgan. "You ain't got him on your conscience."

"He looks so lifelike!" sobbed Syrilla.

"Oh, Hoxie!" shouted Mr. Dorgan.

"Yes, sir?" said the Strong Man, coming to the car door.

"Take Syrilla in and tell the girls to put ice on her head. She's gettin' hysterics again. And when you've told 'em, you go up to the grounds and tell Blake and Skinny to unpack the Petrified Man. Tell 'em I'm goin' to use him again today, and if he's lookin' shopworn, have one of the make-up men go over his complexion and make him look nice and lifelike."

Mr. Dorgan swung off from the car step and walked away.

The Petrified Man had been one of his mistakes. In days past petrified men had been important sideshow features and Mr. Dorgan had supposed the time had come to reintroduce them, and he had had an excellent petrified man made of concrete, with steel reinforcements in the legs and arms and a body of hollow tile so that it could stand the rough travel. At each sideshow performance for a week the Petrified Man had reposed on a platform in a glass case.

Unfortunately, the features of the Petrified Man had been intrusted to an artist who had learned face modeling in a wax figure establishment: devoted to the making of clothing dummies. Instead of an Aztec or Cave Dweller cast of countenance, he had given the Petrified Man the simpering features of the wax figures seen in cheap clothing stores on Third Avenue, New York. The result was that, instead of gazing at the Petrified Man with awe as a wonder of nature, the audiences laughed at him, and the living freaks dubbed him "the Pet," or, still more rudely, "the Corpse," and when the glass case broke at the end of the week, Mr. Dorgan ordered the Pet packed in a box.

At this juncture, however, the flight of the Tasmanian Wild Man, and the involuntary departure of Mr. Winterberry at the command of his

wife after his short appearance as Waw Waw, the Mexican Hairless Dog-Man, suggested a new use for the Petrified Man. Mr. Dorgan was a man of great capabilities. In his hands, a life preserver was never a mere life preserver but a life preserver from the Titanic; a knife was never a mere knife but the knife with which some one had killed someone; and if hard put to it he would not have hesitated to exhibit an Edam cheese as a meteor cast off by the moon, although Edam cheese is not green and the moon is, notoriously, made of green cheese.

When Detective Gubb reached the circus grounds the glaring banners had not yet been erected before the sideshow tent, but all the tents except the "big top" were up and all hands were at work on that one, or supposed to be. Two were not. Two of the roughest looking roustabouts, after glancing here and there, glided into the property tent and concealed themselves behind a pile of blue cases, hampers and canvas bags. One of them immediately drew from under his coat a small but heavy parcel wrapped in an old rag.

"Say, cul," he said in a coarse voice, "you sure have got a head on you. This here stuff will be just as safe in there as in a bank, see? Gimme the screwdriver."

"Not to be opened until Chicago," said the other gleefully, pointing to the words daubed on one of the blue cases. "But I guess it will be -- hey, old pal? I guess so!"

Together they removed the lid of the box, and Detective Gubb, seeking the sideshow, crawled under the wall of the property tent just in time to see the two ruffians hurriedly jam their parcel into the case and screw the lid in place again. Mr. Gubb's mustache was now in a diagonal position, but little he cared for that. His eyes were fastened on the countenances of the two roustabouts. The men were easy to remember. One was red headed and pock marked and the other

was dark and the lobes of his ears were slit, as if some one had at some time forcibly removed a pair of rings from them. Very quietly Philo Gubb wiggled backward out of the tent, but as he did so his eyes caught a word painted on the side of the blue case. It was "Pet!"

Mr. Gubb would have waited near and taken the first opportunity after the departure of the two men to examine the contents of the case had not six or seven property men entered the tent at that moment. He backed away, therefore, and proceeded to the next tent. Stooping, he peered inside, and what he saw satisfied him that he had found the sideshow. Around the inside of the tent, men were erecting a blue platform, and on the far side four men were wheeling a tongueless cage into place. A door at the back of the cage swung open and shut as the men moved the cage, but another in front was securely bolted and barred. Mr. Gubb lowered the tent wall and backed away. It was into this cage that the body of Mr. Winterberry was to be put to make a public holiday for yokels! And the murderer was still at large!

Murderer? Murderers! For who were the two rough characters he had seen tampering with the case containing the remains of the Pet? What had they been putting in the case? Embalming powder, no doubt. If not the murderers, they were surely accomplices. Walking like a wary flamingo, Mr. Gubb circled the tent. He saw Mr. Dorgan and Syrilla enter it. Himself hidden in a clump of bushes, he saw Mr. Lonergan, the Living Skeleton; Mr. Hoxie, the Strong Man; Major Ching, the Chinese Giant; General Thumb, the Dwarf; Princess Zozo, the Serpent Charmer; Maggie, the Circassian Girl; and the rest of the sideshow employees enter the tent. Then he removed his No. 8 mustache and put it in his pocket, and balanced his mirror against a twig. Mr. Gubb was changing his disguise.

For a while the lady and gentleman freaks stood talking, casting reproachful glances at Mr. Dorgan from time to time. Syrilla, with

traces of tears on her face, was complaining of the cruel man who insisted that the Pet become part of the show once more and Mr. Dorgan was resisting their reproached:

"I'm the boss of the show," he said firmly. "I'm willin' to do what I can to please you, ladies and gents, and far be it from me to want Syrilla to waste to a shadder; but an empty place in the tent is what I can't have. And an empty cage is as bad as an empty place. I i'm goin' to use that cage, and I'm goin' to use the Pet."

"Couldn't you put Orlando in it, and get up a spiel about him?" asked Princess Zozo, whose largest serpent was called Orlando. "If you got him a bottle of cold cream from the make-up tent he'd lie for hours with his dear little nose sniffin' it. He's pashnutly fond of cold cream."

"Well, the public ain't pashnutly fond of seein' a snake smell it," said Mr. Dorgan. "The Pet is goin' into that cage -- see?"

"Couldn't you borry an ape from the menagerie?" asked Mr. Lonergan, who was as passionately fond of Syrilla as Orlando was of cold cream. "And have him be the first man-monkey to speak the human language, only he's got a cold and can't talk today? You did that once."

"And got roasted by the whole crowd! No, sir, Mr. Lonergan. I can't, and I won't. Until I can find another first class Tasmanian Wild Man for that cage, the Pet goes into it as No. 7 of the Seven Sleepers. Bring that case right over here," he added, turning to the four roustabouts who were carrying the blue case into the tent. "Got it open? Good! Now --"

He stopped short, his mouth open and his eyes staring. Sitting on his haunches, his forepaws, or hands, hanging down like those of a "begging" dog, a Tasmanian Wild Man stared from between the bars

of the cage. There was no mistaking the make-up. The matted hair, the bare legs, the animal skin blanket, the streaks of ochre and red on the face, the black circles around the eyes with the white inside the circles, were those of a real Tasmanian Wild Man, but this Tasmanian Wild Man was tall and thin, almost rivaling Mr. Lonergan in that respect, and nothing in his aspect suggested a ferocity and wildness that could only find vent in gnawing the bars of the cage and bolting raw meat. The thin Roman nose and the blinky eyes, together with the manner of holding the head on one side, suggested a bird -- a large and dissipated flamingo, for instance.

Mr. Dorgan stared with his mouth open. He stared so steadily that he even took a telegram from the messenger boy who entered the tent, and signed for it without looking at the address. The messenger boy, too, stopped to stare at the Tasmanian flamingo. The men who had brought the blue case set it down and stared. The freaks gathered in front of the cage and stared. No one said a word -- they just stood and stared. They could not believe that anything like the Tasmanian flamingo could possibly exist in nature. They could not believe anything like it could be made up with a human being as a base. They were all astounded and overwhelmed.

"What is it?" asked Syrilla in a voice trembling with astonishment.

"Say! Where in the U. S. A. did you come from?" asked Mr. Dorgan suddenly. "What in the dickens are you, anyway? Who brought you in here? What under the sun --"

"I'm a Tasmanian Wild Man," said Mr. Gubb mildly. "I heard you needed one, so I came here. Wages no object," he added. "I merely wish to remain with this show for the pleasure of so doing. As a Tasmanian Wild Man --"

"You a Tasmanian Wild Man?" said Mr. Dorgan. "You don't think you

look like a Tasmanian Wild Man, do you? Why, you look like -- you look like -- you look --"

"He looks like an intoxicated pterodactyl," said Mr. Lonergan, who had some knowledge of prehistoric animals, "only hairier."

"He looks like a human turkey with a piebald face," suggested General Thumb.

"He don't look like nothin'!" said Mr. Dorgan at last. "That's what he looks like, and that's what he don't look like. You get out of that cage!" he added sternly to Mr. Gubb. "I won't have you in it. I don't want you around here. You come out, and then you get out, and don't you ever come back! I don't want nothin' that looks like you nowhere near this show."

"But, Mr. Dorgan, dearie, think how he'd draw crowds," said Syrilla.

"Crowds? Of course he'd draw crowds," said Mr. Dorgan. "Nobody that come in to look at him would ever want to stop lookin' at him. They'd come a thousand miles to look at him again if they saw him once. But what would I say when I lectured about him? What would I call him? No, he's got to go. Boys," he said to the four roustabouts, two of whom were those Mr. Gubb had seen in the property tent, "throw this feller out of the tent."

"Stop!" said Mr. Gubb, raising one hand. "I will admit I have tried to deceive you: I am not a Tasmanian Wild Man. I am Philo Gubb, the deteckative!"

"Gubb?" said Mr. Dorgan, as if trying to recall the name.

"In disguise," said Mr. Gubb modestly. "In the deteckative profession the assuming of disguises is often necessary to the completion of the

clarification of a mystery plot."

He pointed down at the Pet, whose newly rouged and powdered face rested smirkingly in the box below the cage.

"I arrest you all," he said.

"I arrest you all," he said, but before he could complete the sentence, the red-headed man and the black-headed man turned and bolted from the tent. Mr. Gubb beat and jerked at the bars of his cage as frantically as Mr. Waldo Emerson Snooks had ever beaten and jerked, but he could not rend them apart.

"Get those two fellers," Mr. Dorgan said to Mr. Hoxie, and the strong man ran from the tent. "What's this about arrest?" asked Mr. Dorgan.

"I arrest this whole sideshow," said Mr. Gubb, pressing his face between the bars of the cage, "for the murder of that poor, gentle, harmless man now a dead corpse in that blue box there -- Mr. Winterberry by name, but called by you by the alias of the 'Pet.'"

"Winterberry?" exclaimed Mr. Dorgan. "That Winterberry? Why, Winterberry was dragged out of this show day before yesterday by his own wife. That ain't Winterberry! That's a stone man, a made-to-order concrete man, with hollow tile stomach and reinforced concrete arms and legs. I had him made to order."

"The criminal mind is well equipped with explanations for use in time of stress," said Mr. Gubb. "Lesson Six of the Correspondence School of Detecting provides the deteckative with explanations of murderers when confronted by the victim. Arsenic preserves and saponification petrifies the victim. I demand an autopsy on Mr. Winterberry."

"Autopsy!" exclaimed Mr. Dorgan. "I'll autopsy him for you!"

He grasped one of the Pet's hands and wrenched off one concrete arm. He struck the head with a tent stake and shattered it into crumbling concrete. He jerked the Roman tunic from the body and disclosed the hollow tile stomach.

"Hello!" he said, lifting a rag-wrapped parcel from the interior of the Pet. "What's this?"

When unwrapped it proved to be two dozen silver forks and spoons and a good-sized silver trophy cup.

"'Riverbank Country Club, Duffers' Golf Trophy, 1909,'" Mr. Dorgan read. "'Won by Jonas Medderbrook.' How did that get there?"

"Jonas Medderbrook," said Mr. Gubb, "is a man of my own local town."

"He is, is he?" said Mr. Dorgan. "And what's your name?"

"Gubb," said the detective. "Philo Gubb, Esquire, Deteckative and paperhanger, Riverbank, Iowa."

"Then this is for you," said Mr. Dorgan, and he handed the telegram to Mr. Gubb. The detective opened it and read:

Gubb, Care Sideshow, Bardville, Ia.

My house robbed circus night. Golf cup gone. Game now rotten: never win another. Five hundred dollars reward for return to me.

Jonas Medderbrook.

"You didn't actually come here to find Mr. Winterberry, did you?"

asked Syrilla.

Mr. Gubb folded the telegram, raised his matted hair, and tucked the telegram between it and his own hair for safekeeping.

"When a deteckative starts out to detect," he said calmly, "sometimes he detects one thing and sometimes he detects two. That cup is one of the things I was detecting. And now, if all are willing, I'll step outside and get my pants on. I'll feel better."

"And maybe you'll look better," said Mr. Dorgan. "You couldn't look worse. You certainly look like the Old Harry! Yes, sir; you certainly do!"

"In the course of the deteckative career," said Mr. Gubb, "a gent has to look like a lot of different things, and while not intentionally representing the gent you name, I thank you for the compliment. The art of disguising the human physiognomy is difficult. This disguise is but one of many I am frequently called upon to assume."

"Well, if any more are like this one." said Mr. Dorgan with sincerity, "I'm glad I'm not a detective."

THE END