

Not a sound came from the drifting sand, not a whisper from the breath of wind, not a single voice of nature in all that vast expanse, but at intervals the silence was shattered by the echoing empty booms of bombs, and between them, faintly, monotonously, came the beat, beat, beat, of drums. White men may carry on warfare against other white men and great issues be so decided, but the torpid flow of native life persists undisturbed! Magic was being made, or the entrance of another soul into that unknown realm of spirits was being heralded by the insistent rhythm of those drums. A feeling of suspense, of suppressed fear, hovered over the empty world; a sense of impending disaster, soon to arrive,

pressed suffocatingly upon scorched earth.

To the khaki-clad humans, it seemed they were like two tiny ants inside a great brass bowl-trapped, but exposed to what dangers! Yet there was nothing around them, only the weird throb of the unseen drums and the far-off, hollow explosions! The tropical sun traveled higher in its path across the sky, with an ever increasing glare upon the white reflection of sand. Stillness hung in the air like an evil genie.

At last one of the men stirred, yawned, and raised himself slightly to address the other.

"Tsy, Bill, this is a ripping good mystery story in the *Saturday Evening Post!*"

## ABOUT DEFEAT

JEAN EBELING

There they lay, slung back in a corner, discarded from any future use, and looking as if every ounce of strength and good will had been wrung from their very soles. Only a few months before, that old pair of shoes could have held up its laces and thrown back its tongue, unshamefully encountering any other pair of shoes—even those of the higher priced class.

At present, this dilapidated footwear, thankful for the secluded refuge, was embarrassed for itself knowing that its once crisp and neat tongue now drooped wearily over the side of the shoe like that of a dog when gasping for its last breath. The rubber heels had taken on a defeated look, worn down at the edges to mere paper thinness from many miles of hard trudging. A small nail, which as a means of revenge had worked its way to the interior of the shoe, had punctured the heel of the wearer

and was now flattened down to sufficient smoothness.

The high polish characteristic of new shoes had been dulled by acute neglect, fall rains, and winter snows. The once strong and sinewy laces lay limp and bedraggled, their length broken at intervals by hastily and sloppily tied knots.

Only the toes had made a last, rather futile effort at being brave and enduring their inevitable fate with some show of courage. As a last stab at the cruel world, they had feebly turned up whether through their own strength or encouraged by an excess of moisture during those final days of drudgery. The creases formed in the dry, cracked leather by this curling up supplied a somewhat whimsical effect to this completely exhausted footwear. Finally they had been freed from their captivity and were content to await total destruction.