

to defend. We can throw up a breast-work or dig a trench and turn your search lights on an advancing enemy."

"Righto." He turned to the workmen. "Jones and Harrigan," he called. "You two shoulder rifles and patrol the space between the tents and the jungle. By Jove, fresh water!"

I was dismayed. The tents had been erected upon the beach immediately upon landing, and no stream found its way to the ocean at that point. Fresh water was indispensable, of course.

"What have you on hand?" I asked.

"Fifty cases of mineral water."

"We're all right to-night. In the morning we'll have to send out an exploring party and shift camp to a stream or a spring. There is sure to be plenty of water on this island, judging by the vegetation."

"The rest of you fellows stack the rifles and take down the tents. We're moving out to that point over there," he commanded.

No trained soldiers would have lowered tents and pulled up stakes quicker than the motion picture crew, and the bewildered actors came forth protesting. In ten minutes we had trekked to the point and were making camp again. We were perhaps a quarter of a mile from the mass of machinery, only part of which was unboxed, but Preudholm had no intention of leaving it unguarded.

"Six men will remain with the machinery to-night," he said to me. "They can sleep on the beach. It won't hurt them. I don't think savages could do much harm to the stuff, but there is no use in taking chances."

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

Serpents of the Sea

THERE are genuine serpents in the sea, not the terrifying monsters of sailors' tales, but a family of true snakes which make their home out in the salt water. They are found in tropical seas around the world, sometimes in considerable numbers. William Beebe, the naturalist, reports seeing them swimming literally by the hundreds through the fast tide-rip at Penang in the Straits Settlements. The sea is their natural element just as it is for the seals and sea lions, and they are clumsy, some of them almost helpless, if they find themselves on land. All species have the tail flattened to adapt it as a swimming organ. The largest of these sea snakes is ten or twelve feet in length and some are only three or four feet long.

They are brilliantly colored. An East Indian species is a bright olive green with many broad yellow cross bands. Like the seals, the young snakes are born on shore, usually in a crevice in some giant boulder—about the only occasion these creatures ever have for visiting the land. A naturalist once found a large female in a rocky crack coiled around her family of twenty young snakes, each of them about two feet long.

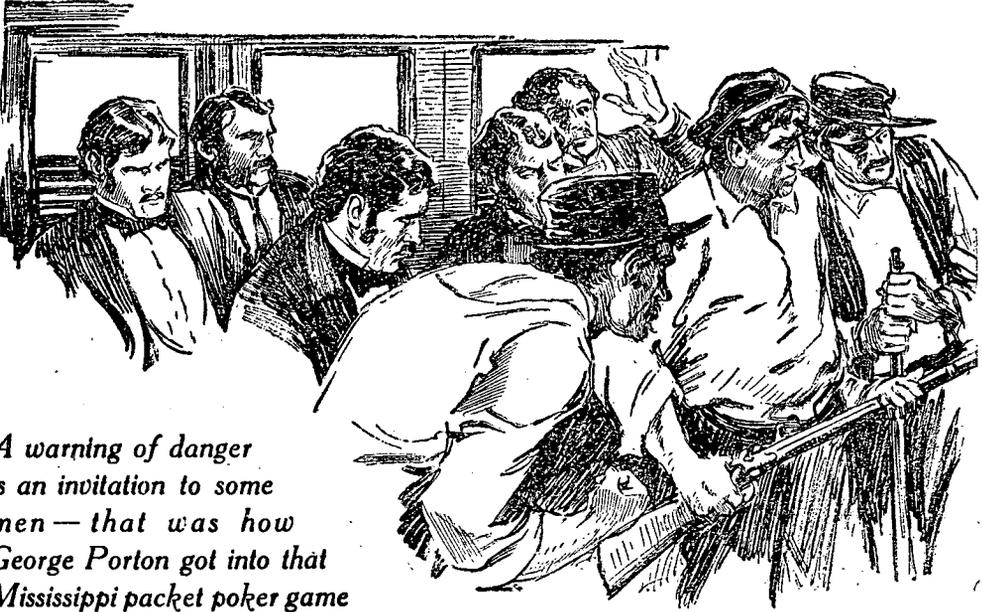
Though these sea serpents do not break any records for size, they must be treated with respect by every one who meets them, for, like many snakes found on land, they are very poisonous.

John H. Spicer.

River Pirates

By DONALD BARR CHIDSEY

Novelette—Complete



A warning of danger is an invitation to some men — that was how George Porton got into that Mississippi packet poker game

CHAPTER I.

MARKED CARDS.

THE Lelia Johnson was fairly large, and comfortable enough, but rather slow and old; and when she pulled out of Vicksburg one late afternoon in '57 she carried a good cargo of cotton and pig iron, but only a handful of cabin passengers.

The last of these to go aboard attracted the most attention. Grace Lexington and George Porton, who were very much in love with one another, and engaged to be married, watched him from a vantage point on the hurricane deck. He was a tall and very handsome man, perhaps forty years old, slim, firm, hard. There were

streaks of gray at his temples, but his mustache and the tiny spot of beard under his lower lip were an unmitigated black.

He was dressed, and he carried himself, with easy elegance; decidedly he had an air; and the fact that he attracted so much attention as he boarded the Lelia was, obviously, a fact which did not displease him. He had but a single bag, but it was a large one and new, and no less than three Negroes brought it aboard for him, while five or six others waved and called to him from the dock.

"Good-by, Massa! Doan you go fo' t' worry yo'self! We'll take care ob de plantation, Massa! Yes, *suh!*"

He waved back at them, smiling