



EMPLOYMENT

R. F. D. No.
Carrieville, Indiana
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Dear George:

Thanks for your information on the State Geological Survey, and for those civil service blanks. I've already sent them in.

If I land the job you'll probably be my boss, so you're entitled to an explanation of why I want to leave a well-paying private job and go to work for the state.

As you know, I was working for Lucifer Oil in 1937 when the depression hit, and pretty quick I was out of a job, and with a family to support. Through one of the journals I got in touch with Gil Platt, my present employer, who was looking for an experienced geologist. You've probably heard of him—he started out in paleontology, but never worked too very high in that field because he was temperamentally unable to work under anybody. Then he took to inventing prospecting devices, and for twenty years he's been as busy as a cat on fly paper, developing and patenting his gadgets and pursuing his paleo on the side. All the money he made in prospector royalties went into paleo expeditions and into litigation. In time he accumulated outstanding collections of patents, lawsuits pertaining thereto, and fossils.

About 1956 the Linvald Fund decided he'd done such good work as to deserve a little financial elbow room, and put him on their list. He'd designed a new prospector that looked quite wonderful, but that would take time and money to reduce to practice. So those monthly checks from Oslo were welcome.

Mrs. Staples and I were sorry to leave California for Indiana, both of us being natives of San Francisco, but in our business you can't be finicky about where you work.

I worked with Platt for about six months before we were ready to try it out. I'm not revealing any secrets by saying that it works by supersonic wave charting, like the old McCann prospector. The distinctive feature is that, by using two intersecting beams, Platt gets a stereoscopic effect and can chart the major discontinuities at any distance underground that he wants.

We tried it first mounted on a truck. We would set it for, say, two yards below the surface and buzz down the road to Fort Wayne— The truck purred down the outside lane of the concrete at a steady

fifteen miles an hour. Car after car swung to the inside lane and buzzed past, honking. Kenneth Staples, at the wheel, leaned back and shouted through the opening in the back of the cab: "Hey, Gil! Haven't we about reached the end of that strip?"

Something in the way of an affirmative floated back into the cab. Staples ran the truck off the concrete, stopped it, and went around to the rear. He was a



big, hard-looking, rather ugly man, on whom the elements had stamped a look of more than his thirty-five years. Under his stiff-brimmed engineer's hat he was very bald. He wore a hat whenever decency permitted. Men who go prematurely bald have, perhaps, a slightly greater tendency than others to select outdoor careers, or to join the army, where hats are kept on heads.

Inside the truck, a smaller, gray-haired man was bending over a machine. The top part of the machine included a long strip of graph paper carried over spools. Above the paper was poised a rank of little vertical pens. While the truck moved, these pens dropped down at intervals to make dots on the paper as it was reeled under them. The dots made irregular outlines and patterns.

Gilmore Platt said: "C'mere, Ken, and see what you think of this. I know what it is but I can't think."

Staples stared at the dots. "Looks to me like the outline of a piece out of a jigsaw puzzle."

"No. No. It isn't-I know what it is! It's a section of a skull! One of the Feiid~, probably FelLi atrox, from the size. We'll have to dig it up!"

"That squiggle? Well, maybe. You're the paleo man. But you can't go digging holes in a State highway just because there's a fossil lion buried under it."

"But, Ken, a beautiful thing like that-"

"Take it easy, Gil. This little Pleistocene overlay runs back to your place. If we run the truck around your grounds for a few hours we ought to be able to find some fossils."

"It's a rodent. I thought it was a bear at first from the size of the skull, but now I see those front teeth."

"Right so far. But what rodent?"

Staples frowned at the little heap of bones beside the pit. "Seems to me the only North American rodent that size was the giant beaver, Castoroides."

"Fine! Fine! I'll make a paleontologist out of you yet. What's this bone?"

"Scapula."

"Right. That's easy though. This one?"

"Uh. . . humerus."

"No, ulna. But you're doing pretty well. Too bad there isn't more of this one. I think we've about cleaned it out. Do you realize what this means? Hitherto we've been confined to surface indications in barren country. Now we can ignore the surface and locate all the fossils in a given area within fifteen or twenty feet of it! Only that truck won't do. We need something to carry the prospector cross country. An airplane would fly too high and too fast. I have it, a blimp I"

"Yeah?" Staples looked a trifle startled. "Seems to me like a lot to spend on applying a new device. But it's the Fund's money, not mine."

In due course Platt took delivery on the Goodyear Company's good ship Darwin. After we learned how to fly it, we covered most of Indiana in a couple of months, and had located more fossils than we could dig up in fifty years. We made out a checklist of their locations and sent copies to all the museums and universities in the country. For the rest of the summer Indiana was one big bone hunters' convention. If you took a drive into the country, the chances were that



you'd pass a field in which a couple of tough-looking parties were arguing with a farmer, and you'd know that they were probably paleontologists from the Field Museum or the University of California dickering with the owner of the field for permission to dig. Though Indiana isn't a very rich state as far as fossil vertebrates go. It's mostly Paleozoic with a little Pleistocene scattered around on top.

A friend of Platt's, a Dr. Wilhelmi of Zurich, arrived for a weekend. He was an archeologist and a dignified man. Staples felt a certain sympathy for him because he had even less hair than the geologist.

This Wilhelmi had been working in Anatolia, where he had found a carload of relics dating back to Tiridates the Great.

"You see, my friends," he explained, "they were mostly vessels and such of bronze. Here is a picture of one as we found it. It is so corroded that it is nothing but a lump of oxide. Now, here is a picture of that one after we restored it by the anode process."

"Say," said Staples, "are you sure that's the same one? The thing in the second picture looks like it was just fresh out of the shop."

"Ha-ha, that is witty. Yes, it is the same. We place it in an electrolytic bath, connected to one of the poles, and run a current through. So all the copper and tin atoms in the oxide crawl back to their proper places. It is quite wonderful to see."

After the Swiss gentleman had left, Platt went to Chicago for a consultation with his patent attorney. He returned looking thoughtful.

"Ken," he said, "let's play hooky for a few days."

Staples looked at him with a wary eye. "I suppose you mean to drop the prospector and work on your fossils for a while?"

"That's it exactly."

Thus it happened that the following day found them in the shop breaking a young Hyracodon-small hornless rhinoceros-out of its matrix. Staples remarked on what a dull piece the work was from a zoological point of view, compared to what it had been in times past.

"To some extent, yes," replied Platt. "Hand me the shellac, please. Though there may be a few whales left that haven't been turned into margarine and gun oil. We're living at the close of one of the many periodic extinctions of the larger forms. The only places you can find a fauna comparable with those of the Pleistocene is on a few preserves in Africa. And with our own bloodthirsty species infesting the earth, it's getting worse all the time. Hm-m-m. The left clavicle and left radius seem to be missing." He carefully chipped slivers of sandstone away with his needle. Being much more of a talker than his assistant, he continued: "I have an idea which, if it works, may do much to relieve the drabness of our present fauna. You heard

Wilhelmi tell about restoring oxidized metal by the anode process. Well, why couldn't we work something like that on fossils?"

"You mean to grow a complete animal, hair and all, from a skeleton?"

"Why not? You know what extraordinary things they do in medicine nowadays-growing arms and legs on people who have lost their own."

"With all due respect, my dear employer, I think you're screwbox."



"We'll see about that. I'm going to try some experiments, anyway. We'll keep them to ourselves, of course. If they didn't work, a lot of our colleagues might agree with your opinion."

Platt began his work with rabbits-modem rabbits, that is. He would kill a rabbit, remove various parts, and hook it up in a Ringer's solution bath to a current source. To build up the missing parts he used bio-charged amino acids, which will combine to form proteins and, in the presence of other cells, form whole new cells.

After many failures, he one day observed that the tissues of one of the rabbits were building up. He pointed the phenomenon out to Staples.

The geologist protested: "But it can't be that one. I turned the juice off in that tank."

"Yes?" replied Platt. "Let's see. Ah! You thought you turned it off, but look at this switch!"

Staples saw that he had accidentally struck the open knife switch so that the bars barely touched the contacts.

Platt said: "Now I know; we've been using too much voltage. It wants something like point oh one volts." And the little man was off like a chipmunk with a bunch of nuts, changing the rheostats to one calibrated for higher resistance.

They perfected their methods of reifying recent animals, which later proved of great value in surgery. Their results were not, however, so incredible when you consider that every cell in an animal's body contains a complete set of chromosomes with all the genes that determine the animal's form. It is as if in each cell there was a complete blueprint of the entire animal.

Their first attempt with fossils-the fragmentary remains of the *Castoroides*-failed. Staples wasn't sorry. He was worrying about the effect of the news of this bizarre experiment on his professional reputation.

Then at dinner one night Platt jumped up and began orating. He waved his knife and fork so that he almost speared his daughter's boy friend, who slid below the edge of the table until the storm had passed. "Ken!" cried the paleontologist. "I know what to do now! You've got to have a lot of the original organic matter of which the organism was composed, in the solution along with the bones. The current makes the original atoms resume their former places, and they serve as a framework for the amino acid molecules in their building-up work. We need a fairly complete skeleton, with considerable organic matter in the surrounding rock-if possible, with impressions of the soft parts. We'll have to analyze the rock, because if the fossil's at all old the original atoms will be scattered through the surrounding rock as to show no visible traces."

The next day they spent in the storehouse, unwrapping the burlap from fossils and testing their matrices for organic material. They picked a specimen of *Canis dirus* embedded in a big block of sandstone, strung the block up with a chain hoist, and dumped it into one of the tanks.

Nothing happened for a long time. Then the sandstone decomposed into mud, and in its place was a blob of jelly through which they could see the skeleton. The jelly became more and more opaque, and you could see the organs forming as the original atoms took their places, and the others, from the amino



acids, polypeptides, and other substances that were introduced into the tank, lined up alongside them. It was uncannily as though the atoms had definite memories of where they belonged in the animal's body back in the Pleistocene.

When the mass in the tank stopped changing, it had the form of a huge wolf, about the size of a Great Dane, but twice as muscular and ten times as mean-looking.

They fished the brute out of the tank, emptied the solution out of him, and applied an electric starter to his heart. After three hours of this, the wolf shuddered and began coughing the remainder of the Ringer's solution out of his lungs. It occurred to the experimenters that they had no place to keep the wolf, who would make a rather formidable house pet. They tethered him to a tree while they prepared a pen. But for a few days the wolf hardly moved at all. When he did, he was like a man who has been a year in the hospital, and is having to learn to walk all over again.

But at the end of two weeks he was eating of his own accord. His hair, which had been a mere fuzz at first-the process being effective in recreating the hair roots, but not the hairs, which are dead structures-rapidly grew to normal length. At the end of three weeks he was enough his old self to snarl at Staples when the geologist entered his cage. It was a most impressive snarl, sounding rather like tearing a piece of sheet iron in two.

After that I was careful about getting too near him or turning my back on him. But he didn't give us much trouble, though he never became what you'd call friendly. I always liked him for one reason: Platt's daughter had a fluffy dog that liked to bite people's ankles-no provocation necessary. After one of my kids had been nipped, the girl and I had a real row about the excrescence. Before we could have another, the dog went out one day and yapped at the dire wolf. Mr. Wolf sprang against his bars and growled-once. That was the last we saw of that accursed pooch.

Six months later, Platt and Staples hoisted out of its tank a specimen of *Arctotherium*, the immense bear from the California Pleistocene. Staples had had the busiest six months of his life, between helping the preparation of patent applications and getting the reification of more fossils started. There had been several failures-important parts of the skeletons missing, or insufficient organic matter in the surrounding rocks, or reasons unknown. This proved to be one of the last: the bear looked normal enough, but refused to come to life. Staples confessed that, looking at the thing's bulk, he had been more afraid of success than of failure. It was later mounted in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

They had made things as easy as possible by starting with the *Canis*, a moderate-sized species of recent date. They worked in two directions from there: backward in time, and upward in size. Platt had a number of fossils from the Miocene of Nebraska. They were successful in reifying a *Stenomylus hitchcocki*, a small guanacolike ancestral camel. Seeking a more exciting specimen, they went to work on Platt's pride and joy, a new species of *Trilophodon*, the smallest and oldest proboscidean found in America. It was probably the first member of the



elephant group to arrive from Asia. The animal turned out to be a female, rather like a large shaggy tapir, with long tapering jaws and four tusks.

After their partial failure with the Arctotheriun, they succeeded with a bear-dog, *Dinocyon gidleyi*. When Staples looked at the result his throat felt a little dry. The thing was built on the general lines of a polar bear, only bigger than even the Kodiak grizzly. Its large ears gave its head a wolfish appearance, and it had a long bushy tail. It weighed 1,978 pounds, and it didn't like anybody. Platt was delighted. "Now if I could only get an *Andrewsarchus*!" he beamed. "That's a still bigger carnivore, an Asiatic Oligocene creodont. One skull measured thirty-four inches."

"Yeah?" said Staples, still looking at the bear-dog. "You can have him. I haven't lost him. This thing we have here is quite big enough for me."

They had hired an old circus man named Elias to help them with their growing zoo. They had built a concrete barn for the animals with a row of cages down one side. It looked strong enough, until one afternoon Staples went out to investigate a racket from the cages. He found the bars of the bear-dog's cage bowed out-the lower ends had come out of the green concrete easily-and no *Dinocyon*. Staples had a horrible vision of the bear-dog wandering over Kosciusko County and eating everything he could catch.

The beast was not, however, far away. He was, in fact, just around the corner looking for a way to get into the *Stenomylus* cage. In a few seconds he reappeared. He looked at Staples. The geologist could have sworn that the expression in his big yellow eyes said: "Ah, dinner!" The bear-dog growled like a distant thunderstorm and started for Staples.

Staples knew that the animal could run circles around him on level ground, and moreover that if he caught him he wouldn't be satisfied to run circles around him. Staples' best idea was to swarm up the bars around the *Trilophodon*'s enclosure. He couldn't have climbed those bars ordinarily, but he did this time.

Arrived at the top, he couldn't stay there unless he wanted the beardedog to rear up and scoop him off his perch. On the other hand, the inside of the cage didn't look inviting. The "little" mastodon-standing five feet at the shoulder and weighing slightly over a ton-was half crazed with fear. She was gallumping around the enclosure making noises like a pig under a gate. An elephant's fear of dogs is not unreasonable when the elephant and the dog are about the same size.

Just before the bear-dog arrived, Staples jumped off and landed astride the *Trilophodon*'s neck. He didn't feel like a movie hero who 'umps off a balcony onto his horse. He was scaped stiff. He got a good grip on his mount's scalp hair and hung on desperately, knowing that he'd be trampled to jelly in no time if she bucked him off.

Staples heard a rifle go off, several times, and got a glimpse of Gil Platt shooting out of the workshop doorway. The *Dinocyon* gave a coughing roar and went over to see about it. Staples was too busy to watch closely, but got a few glimpses of the bear-dog running around the shop, trying to climb in the windows-which were too small. He finally settled down to dig under the house. All this time Platt was popping out of doors and windows to fire and popping back again. Staples had time to reflect that the bear-dog's insides must be taking



a terrible beating from the soft-nosed bullets, but that such was his vitality that you could shoot holes in him all day before he'd give up.

He made wonderful progress with his digging; he took the earth out like a bucket chain. Staples remembered that the shop had a thin wooden floor, which wouldn't offer much resistance if the animal got under the house. They needed a .~o-caliber machine gun, which they didn't have.

Before it came to that, Elias climbed out on the roof and dropped a stick of dynamite alongside the bear-dog. That did the trick. The effect was rather like hitting a cantaloupe with a mallet. Staples had just gotten his animated calliope calmed down, and the explosion started her off again. It was a question of which would collapse from exhaustion first. The geologist won by a hair.

When he examined the remains of the Dinocyon, he asked Platt: "Why didn't you shoot him in the head?"

"But if I'd done that I'd have smashed the skull, and we mightn't have been able to reify him!"

"You mean . . . you're going to-" But Staples didn't finish. He already knew the answer. They gathered up the bear-dog, put him back together more or less the way he had been, and hoisted him into the biggest tank again. Some days later Staples was sorry to observe that the animal was making a record recovery. But Platt had a new cage built that not even this monster could break out of.

But with his size and enormous appetite, Platt decided that he was too expensive and dangerous to keep. He sold him to the Philadelphia Zoo. After the zoo people became acquainted with him they probably regretted their bargain.

The sale attracted some attention, and the Philadelphia Zoo for a while had a capacity audience. Platt inquired about the market for more of his reified animals.

A couple of weeks after the sale, a sunburned man called at Platt's. He said his name was Nively, and that he represented the Marco Polo Co. This, he explained, included all the wild-animal importers and dealers in the country. It was a membership corporation instead of a stock corporation, to get around the antitrust laws.

Feeling that they could now afford some publicity, Platt and Staples showed him the place. He was duly impressed, especially with their new Dinohyus, a lower Miocene elothere. It was a piglike animal the size of a buffalo, with a mouth full of teeth like those of a bear. It ate practically anything.

Elias was assembling their biggest tank. Platt explained: "That's for Proboscidea. We haven't one big enough for them now. And out in the storehouse I've got a magnificent *Parelephas jeffersonhi*. You know, the Jeffersonian mammoth. That's much bigger than the ordinary or woolly mammoth that the cavemen made such pretty pictures of. The woolly mammoth was a rather small animal, not over nine feet high."

"That so?" said Nively. They were on their way back to the office. "My word! I thought all mammoths were huge things. I say, Dr. Platt, I have a little matter I'd like to discuss in private."

"You can go right ahead, Mr. Nively. I haven't any secrets from Staples."

"Very well. To begin, is this process of yours protected?"

"Sure it is. At least, as far as you can protect any invention by patent



applications. What are you getting at, Mr. Nively?"

"I think the Marco Polo might have a proposal that would interest you, Dr. Platt."

"Well?"

"We'd like to buy up your patent applications and all rights pertaining thereto."

"What do you want them for?"

"You see, our business requires considerable capital and involves a lot of risk. You load six giraffes on at Jibouti, and by the time you get to New York one of 'em is alive-if you're lucky. With your process we could put the animals in cold storage at the point of shipment, as it were, and-what's the word you use?-reify them in this country."

"That sounds interesting. Would you be interested in a nonexclusive license?"

"No, we want complete control. To . . . ah . . . keep up the ethical standards of the business."

"Sorry, but I'm not selling."

"Oh, come now, Dr. Platt-"

They argued some more, but Nively left without getting anywhere. A week later, just after the rock containing the mammoth had been hoisted into its tank, he was back.

"Dr. Platt," he began, "we're businessmen, and we're willing to pay a fair price-" So they went at it again-again without result.

After Nively had gone, Platt said to Staples: "He must think I'm pretty obtuse! The reason they're after my process is that they're afraid it'll break their monopoly. There isn't a circus or zoo in the country that wouldn't like one or two prehistoric animals."

The taciturn Staples opined: "I have an idea they'll get really riled when we get a couple of the same species and breed 'em."

"By Jove, I never thought of that! Nobody buys wild lions nowadays. It's too easy to raise your own. That gives me another idea. Suppose we start a race of, say, elotheres, like our big piggy friend over there. And suppose civilization collapses, so that the record of our work here is lost. Won't the paleontologists of a few thousand years hence have a time figuring how the elotheres disappeared completely in the Miocene, and then reappeared again twenty million years later, warts and all?"

"That's easy," retorted Staples. "They'll invent a sunken continent in the Pacific Ocean, where the Elotherid~ hung out during the Pliocene and Pleistocene. And then a land bridge was formed, enabling them to spread over North-Hey, don't throw that! I'll be good!"

Nively's third visit was sometime later, when the mammoth was almost ready to be hoisted out of his tank. The sunburned man came to the point right away.

"Dr. Platt," he said, "we have a big business, built up with a great deal of effort, and we shan't sit around and watch it destroyed just because some scientist gets a bright idea. We'll make you a perfectly fair offer: We buy your patent application, under an agreement whereby you can practice your process,



provided you name us exclusive agent for the sale of your animals. In that way you can continue your scientific work; we retain control of the commercial field; everyone's happy. What do you say, old chap?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Nively, but I'm not in the market for such an arrangement. If you want to talk nonexclusive licenses, I might be willing to listen."

"Now look here, Dr. Platt, you'd better think twice before you turn us down. We're a powerful organization, you know, and we can make things very unpleasant for you."

"I'll take a chance on that."

"A wild-animal collection's a vulnerable piece of property, you know. Accidents-"

"Mr. Nively"-here Platt's color wandered down the spectrum toward the red end-"will you please get to hell out of here?"

Nively got.

Platt, looking after him, mused: "There goes my temper again. Perhaps I should have stalled."

"Maybe," agreed Staples. "He wasn't actually muttering threats when he went out, but he looked as if he were thinking them."

"It's probably bluff," said Platt. "But I think I'll take on another man. We need somebody up and around all the time."

In due season they hoisted the mammoth out of his bath and started his heart. They were nervous, as he was by far the largest animal they had tried the process on. Platt whooped and threw his hat in the air when Parelaphas showed signs of life. Staples whooped, too, but he didn't throw his hat in the air.

They named the mammoth Tecumtha, after the famous Shawnee chief. He stood eleven feet six inches, which is about as big as the biggest modern African elephant. He had helically twisted tusks that almost crossed at the tips. When he became fully conscious he made some rumpus, but after a while calmed down like a modern elephant. During his recovery period he grew a thick coat of short, coarse brown hair.

Platt had, as he had said he would, taken on another man to help Elias. Early one morning Tecumtha had a slight stomach ache. This new man, Jake, went out to see what he was squealing about. Jake dissolved his medicine in an elephant highball-one bucketful, equal parts of gin and ginger extract-and took it in to him. Tecumtha was sucking it up his trunk and gurgling happily, and Jake had stepped out of sight, when Nively materialized. He walked up to the enclosure and shot Tecumtha through the upper part of his head with a Birmingham .303.

That was a mistake. The Birmingham .303 is much too light a rifle for shooting elephants. And the upper part of an elephant's head is merely a cellular bone structure to anchor its huge neck muscles. Its brain is much lower down. Nively had done all his field work in South America and didn't know that about an elephant's construction. The bullet went through Tecumtha's head, but it merely made him very, very angry. He trumpeted. That is a most startling sound the first time you hear it, like twenty men blowing bugles full of spit.

Jake heard the commotion and ran out. He took one look at Tecumtha and



made for the gate. In his hurry he left it open. Nively took one more shot, which went wild. Then he ran, too, with Tecumtha after him. He had no chance to reach his car. The mammoth would have caught him right there if he hadn't spotted Elias' bicycle leaning against a tree.

The noise brought Kenneth Staples out of bed. He got to the window in time to see Nively and the bicycle whirl down the driveway with Tecumtha close behind, and disappear on the highway headed for Carriesville.

Staples did not wait to dress, but ran downstairs and out to the garage. He did pause long enough to snatch a hat from the rack in the hall. He took the truck Platt had bought for moving large animals, and started after Nively and Tecumtha.

He had not gone a mile when he was stopped by Popenoe, the local state highway cop.

"Oh," said Popenoe, "it's you, Mr. Staples. Well, what the hell do you mean by-"

"I'm looking for my mammoth," Staples told him.

"Your what?"

"My mammoth-you know, a big elephant with hair."

"Well, I've sure heard funny excuses in my time, but this beats anything. And in your pajamas, too. I give up. Go ahead and chase your elephant. But I'll follow you, and he better turn out to be real. You sure he wasn't pink, with green spots?"

The geologist said he was sure, and drove on to Carriesville. He found a good part of the town turned out around the public square, although nobody seemed anxious to get close.

Towns like Carriesville almost always have a grassy spot in their middle, and on the grassy spot either a statue or a gun and a pile of cannonballs. A typical combination is that of a Krupp 15-centimeter howitzer, Model 1916, and a pile of four-inch iron roundshot of the vintage of 1849. Carriesville had an equestrian statue of General Philip Sheridan on a tall granite pedestal in front of the courthouse. The sun was just rising, and its pink rays shone on Mr. Nively, who was perched on General Sheridan's hat. Tecumtha was shuffling around the base of the statue and trying to reach Nively with his trunk.

Staples learned later that one local citizen had emptied a pistol at Tecumtha, but the mammoth hadn't even noticed it. Then somebody shot him with a deer rifle, which annoyed him. He took after the shooter, who went away. Nobody tried any more shooting. While Tecumtha's attention was distracted, Nively started to climb down, but the mammoth returned before he had a chance to do so.

Staples drove the truck up near the courthouse and got out. Tecumtha took a few steps toward him. Staples prepared to retreat, but the mammoth recognized him and went back to Nively. He paid no attention to Staples' calls. He figured how to get his head against the pedestal without his tusks being in the way, and with one good heave, over went little Phil Sheridan. As the statue toppled, Nively caught a branch of a big oak nearby and dangled like an oriole's nest. Tecumtha waltzed around underneath and made hostile noises.

Staples drove the truck up alongside the mammoth. He let down the



tailboard and called to Nively to swing over so he'd land on the roof of the cab, and stay there. Nively did so. Tecumtha tried to reach him there, but couldn't quite make it. He strolled around the truck. Seeing the tailboard, he ran up it into the body to get closer to Nively. Staples hoisted the tail into place and barred it. Then he went around to the front end and climbed up on the hood.

Nively was sitting on the roof of the cab, looking remarkably pale for such a sunburned man. Staples foresaw difficulties in getting back to Platt's, and he couldn't go around as he was. He thought, it's a shame to take advantage of a man who's so all in, but he has it coming to him. Aloud he said: "Lend me your pants and your money."

Nively protested. Staples was not given to lengthy arguments. He climbed up beside Nively and grabbed his arm. "Want to go over on top of your playmate?" he growled.

Nively was a hard man physically, but he winced under the geologist's grip. "You . . . you extortioner!" he sputtered. "I could have you arrested!"

"Yeah? So could I have you arrested for trespass and vandalism, not to mention stealing a bicycle. Come on, hand 'em over. I'll see that you get them back, and your car, too."

Nively looked at Tecumtha's trunk, which had crawled up over the front wall of the truck body and was feeling around hopefully, and gave in. Staples left him enough money to get back to Chicago, and he departed.

About this time Popenoe, the state policeman, and two of the town's three local cops had gotten up their courage to approach the truck. One of the latter carried a submachine gun.

"Better get out of the way, Mr. Staples," he said. "That there's a dangerous wild animal, and we're gonna kill him."

"Oh, no, you're not," answered Staples. "He's also a valuable piece of property and a scientifically important specimen."

"Don't make no difference. Municipal Ordinance No. 486-" He was peering under the edge of the canvas cover on the side of the truck body. He got the mammoth's location, stepped back, and raised his gun.

Staples did not see that sitting in the cab while his charge was filled with lead would serve any useful purpose. He backed the truck off the courthouse lawn and drove away. All three cops yelled. Staples couldn't go back the way he had come, because the road was blocked by cars and people. He took the opposite direction, toward Warsaw and Chicago. After two blocks he turned off and into a garage where he was known. Half a minute later he had the satisfaction of seeing two police cars shoot past the intersection with sirens going. In a few minutes they came scooting back, evidently thinking that Staples had sneaked around and made for home.

He telephoned Platt and told him what had happened. Platt said: "For God's sake, don't come back now, Ken. There's a state trooper out front waiting for you-or rather, for Tecumtha."

"Well, what'll I do? I've got to take care of him somehow. He'll be getting hungry, and he has a couple of gunshot wounds that need looking at."

Platt paused. "I'll tell you: Drive him up to Chicago and sell him to the zoo. The director's name is Traphagen. The cops won't be expecting you to go that



way, and if you bring Tecumtha back here it'll just make more trouble."

As Staples hung up, the garage man asked: "\Vho's that Tecumtha you was talking about, Mr. Staples?" He was leaning against the truck. At that instant the mammoth gave one of his spine. chilling toots. Kennedy, the garage man, jumped a foot straight up.

"That's Tecumtha," said Staples pleasantly. He got into the truck and drove off.

He reached Chicago about ten, and at eleven asked to see Dr. Traphagen. The director's secretary looked at Staples queerly, but then, he was a queer-looking sight, with his pajama coat, Nively's pants-six inches too short-and his bedroom slippers.

The girl asked Staples if he had a card. He got out his wallet and gave her one. When she had disappeared into the inner office, Staples remembered that it was Nively's wallet and cards that he had.

Presently she came out and ushered him in. He said; "Good morning, Dr. Traphagen."

"Mr. Staples . . . ah . . . Nively. . . ah . . . just take it easy; everything's going to be all right."

"It's all right about the card; I can explain. But my name's really Staples, and I-"

"Just what is it you want, Mr. . . . ah. . . Staples?"

"Would you be interested in buying a mammoth?"

"Well, my dear sir, we're only interested in live animals. If you have a fossil, I think the Field Museum is the place to go."

"I didn't say it was a fossil. It's very much alive; a fine adult male of *Parelephas jefiersonii*. Wouldn't you like to take a look at it?"

"Certainly, certainly, my dear sir, I shall be glad to." Traphagen started out. As Staples walked through the door two keepers seized him. Traphagen barked at the girl: "Quick now, call the asylum, or hospital, or whatever it is!"

Staples wriggled, but the keepers had handled tougher game than a mere human being. "Listen, Dr. Traphagen," he said, "you can decide I'm a nut if you like. But I wish you'd take a look at the mammoth first. Did you ever hear of Dr. Gilmore Plattr'?

"Tsk, tsk, my dear sir, first you say your name is Staples, then you produce a card with 'Nively' on it, and now you say you're Dr. Platt. Now just keep quiet. You're going to a nice place where you can play with all the mammoths you want"

Staples protested some more, but it got him nowhere. He was not a very articulate man, especially with his hat off, and he could make no headway against Traphagen's repeated injunctions to keep calm.

The ambulance arrived, and the men in white coats marched Staples out of the Administration Building and down the walk. Traphagen waddled behind. The truck was standing just in front of the ambulance. Staples yelled: "Tecumtha!" The mammoth hoisted his trunk and trumpeted. The horrible brassy sound so startled the internes that they let go of Staples, but to their credit they grabbed their patient again before he could take action.

Traphagen ran over and looked under the canvas. He came back crying: "Oh, dear me! Oh, dear me! I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry! Come to think of it, I do



know about Platt and his process. But I never thought you were really him-I mean from him. It's all a mistake, boys, it's all a mistake. He isn't crazy, after all."

The internes released Staples. In a tone of injured dignity, he said: "I've been trying for fifteen minutes to explain who I am, Dr. Traphagen, but you wouldn't let me."

Traphagen apologized some more, and said: "Now, I don't know if you still want to discuss the sale of that animal, my dear sir, but I'd be glad to. I'll have to look at our budget first, to see what our unexpended balance for the quarter is--"

I was really more amused than angry, though I didn't let Traphagen see that until we'd agreed on the price. He was so embarrassed that he gave me a good one. A few dollars of it had to go to the Benefit Fund of the Carrieville police department, to square me with them.

Platt has hired some guards and had the place fenced properly. I don't think the Marco Polo outfit will try anything again. After all that publicity any 'accidents would look suspicious. Platt also hired another assistant, an enthusiastic young paleontologist named Roubideaux. They're in Wyoming now digging dinosaurs out of the Laramie Cretaceous beds.

We have some fine specimens in the cages, and more coming along in the tanks. One of the latter is a Mastodon americanus, already promised to the Bronx Zoological Park in New York.

But I started out to tell you why I wanted to leave Platt. In the first place, I'm a geologist, not a wild-animal keeper. The above gives you some idea of what working for Platt is like. In the second, I have, as I said, a family to support, and I want to keep my health. Last week I got a wire from Platt saying they'd found a complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton, fifty feet long and with a mouth full of six-inch teeth. I know what that means, and I think I'd better clear out while I'm still in one piece.

Best personal regards to you and Georgia. See you soon, I hope. Ken.