

apolis, and just before the ceremonies that marked the opening of Collins Bridge, he had a short talk with John Levi.

"John, if you'll stay here this summer and take charge of a gang of men, we'll develop this damn mangrove swamp into the prettiest city in the world."

John always seemed to know Carl's thoughts—even his thoughts toward the future. He said, "I'll stay."

That brief conversation began a new era for Florida.

Carl sent in hundreds of Negroes with machetes to clear the jungle. Foot by foot, their backs dripping with sweat and covered with mosquitoes, they hacked away through the palmetto and mangrove, working only a couple of hours at a time in the killing heat.

The pigmy-high palmetto had slender roots that reached out like tentacles from the thick tap root, and these deceitfully delicate-looking roots turned the steel blades of the machetes. The palmettos were almost impossible even for mules to uproot with chains and grappling hooks. I have seen Carl tugging with his hands at a smaller palmetto, trying to break it free from the sand, cursing until I stopped my ears.

The mangroves, with their canopy of glistening green leaves, were fascinating; but steely roots showered from the tips to fasten the trees to the ground with a network strong as metal mesh. The iron-like roots defied the heaviest axes.

Men and mules fought slowly through tropical growth centuries old. The jungle strove hard to hold its own. The work was agonizingly slow, and the clearing of a single acre cost over fifteen hundred dollars.

I know Carl began to suspect he was licked. The jungle was stronger than man. Great as was his personal fortune, terrible inroads were being made on it by the building of this kingdom in the sand. And there was no let-up in sight.

Carl asked for bids for the dredging. The Miami Beach-to-be would not only have to be reclaimed, but actually created. Within a week, the "fleet of Fisher dredges" was moving across the bay on heavy barges and hundreds of workmen were traveling to and fro across the new wooden bridge. The dirt flew on