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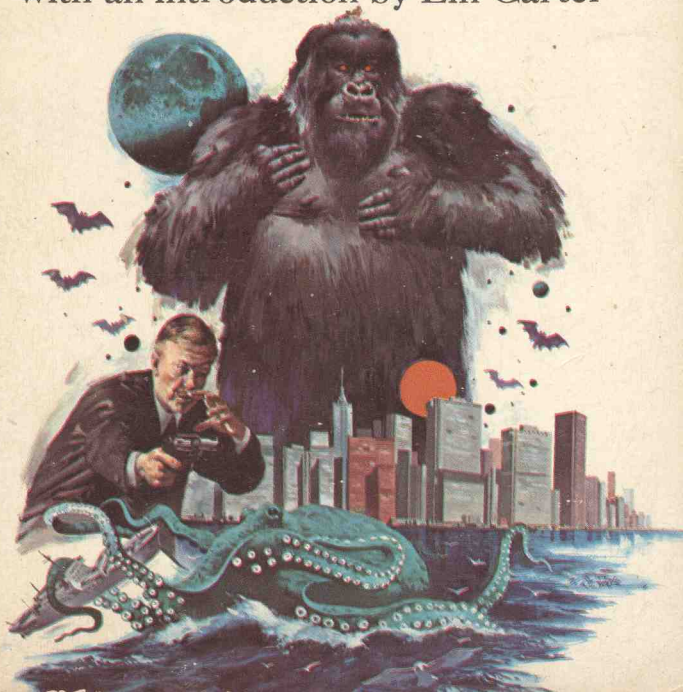
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The Adventures Of Jules de Grandin

SCIENCE FICTION

by Seabury Quinn

with an introduction by Lin Carter



COULD THIS HORROR BE REAL?

White as a figurine of carven alabaster, the slender, bare body of the girl lay in sharp silhouette against the darkness of the cavern floor, her ankles and wrists lashed firmly to stakes in the earth. Her luxuriant fair hair had been knotted together at the ends, then staked to the ground, so that her head was drawn far back, exposing her rounded throat to its fullest extent, and on the earth beside her left breast and beside her throat stood two porcelain bowls.

Crouched over her was the relic of a man, old, hideous and wrinkled. In one hand he held a long, gleaming, double-edged dagger while with the other he caressed the girl's smooth throat with gloating strokes of his skeleton fingers . . .

Jules de Grandin was moving to the rescue—but would he be in time—and could he defeat the most monstrous creature ever to escape from hell?

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**The Adventures Of
Jules
de
Grandin
by Seabury Quinn**

Edited by Robert Weinberg

Illustrations by Steve Fabian

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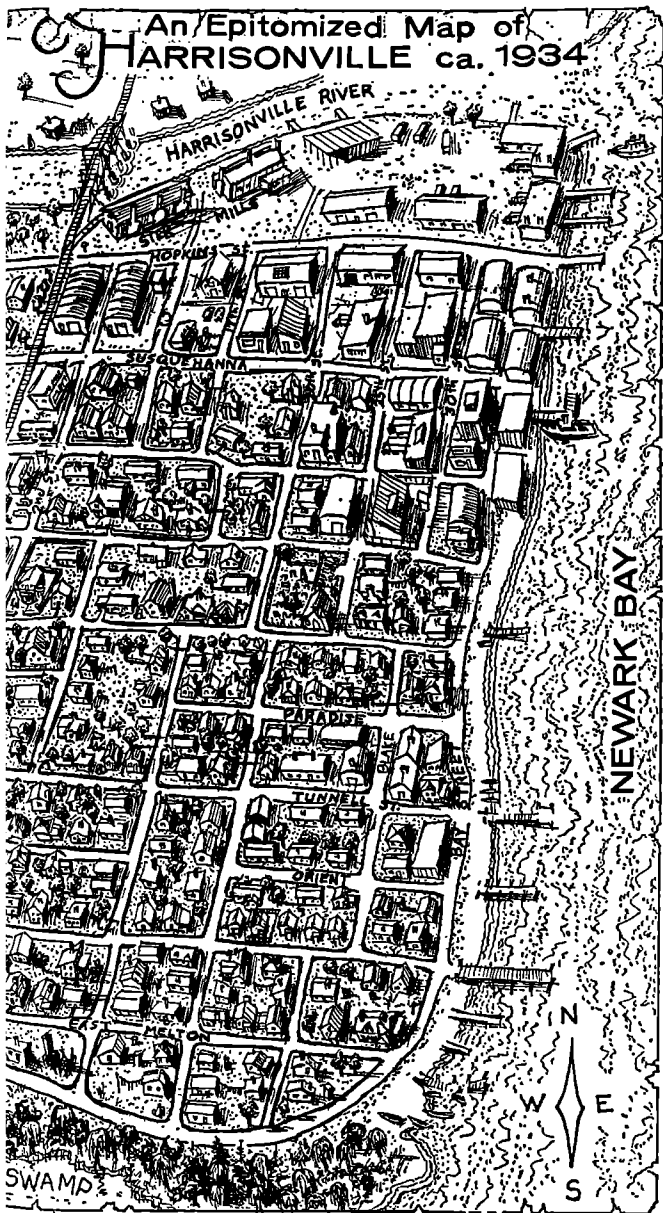
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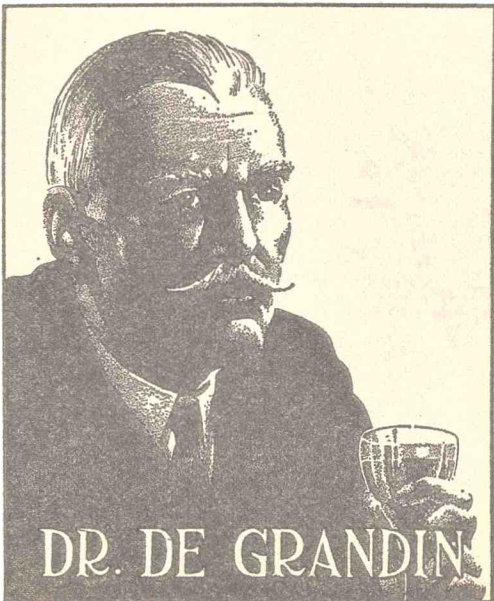
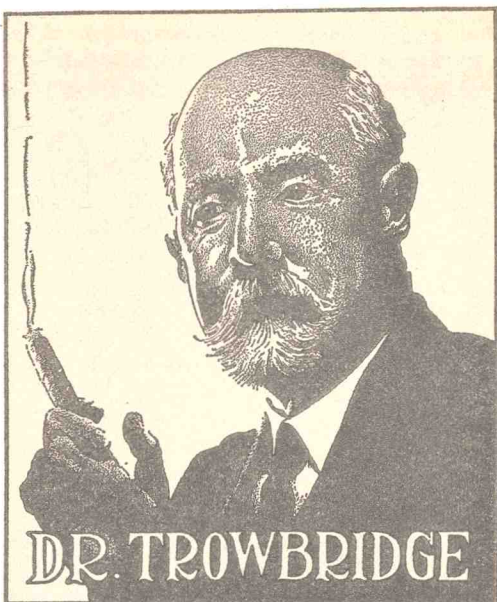
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A SHERLOCK OF THE SUPERNATURAL

by Lin Carter

Who was the single most popular *Weird Tales* author?

Considering that the list of contributors to this greatest of all the fantastic fiction magazines of the Golden Age of the Pulp included Sax Rohmer, A. Merritt, William Hope Hodgson, Algernon Blackwood and Ambrose Bierce,* you might be hard put to make even an intelligent guess.

Many readers would opt for Clark Ashton Smith, whose ornate and lapidary style in such ironic fables as his tales of Zothique, Hyperborea and Averroigne won him many admirers among the discerning connoisseurs of well-carved prose.

Others would vote, most likely, for Robert E. Howard, the founder of *Sword & Sorcery*, and creator of those swashbuckling heroes, Solomon Kane, King Kull, and the immortal Conan.

Probably, most of the *cognoscenti* would nominate the celebrated creator of the Cthulhu Mythos, H. P. Lovecraft, renowned today as perhaps the most gifted American master of the macabre since Poe.

However, they would be wrong!

The most popular *Weird Tales* contributor of all time was a gentleman named Seabury Quinn.

This can easily be demonstrated by a glance through the back files of "The Unique Magazine." *Weird Tales* con-

*To say nothing of Honoré de Balzac, Isaac Asimov, Tennessee Williams, Baudelaire, Robert A. Heinlein, Arthur Machen, Fritz Leiber, Guy de Maupassant, the author of *Psycho* as well as the author of *The Phantom of the Opera*, Edgar Allan Poe, and Houdini.

ducted a reader election in each issue, soliciting votes for the favorite story. The outcome of each poll was reported an issue or two later. And Seabury Quinn consistently took top honors.

His story "A Rival from the Grave," for instance, which ran in the January 1936 issue, took first place over such memorable fictions as C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry saga, "The Dark Land," and also beat out the second installment of "The Hour of the Dragon," Robert E. Howard's only book-length Conan epic, not to mention a rerun of Lovecraft's early eerie classic, "Dagon."

In the September 1929 number, Quinn's story "Trespassing Souls" nosed out such stiff competition as Howard's King Kull yarn, "The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune" and Lovecraft's "The Hound," which happens to be the first story to mention that blasphemous Bible of the Cthulhu cult, the shuddersome *Necronomicon* itself.

And even when up against the toughest possible contenders, Quinn generally at least tied for first place, as with his "The Jest of Warburg Tantavul" in the September 1934 issue, which tied with Howard's "The People of the Black Circle," and his "Hands of the Dead" in January 1935, which ran neck-and-neck with Smith's exquisitely mordant gem, "The Dark Eidolon."

Not only that, but Quinn stories invariably inspired the cover illustration, issue after issue after issue. In sorry contrast, *no* Lovecraft story was *ever* illustrated on the cover of the magazine in which most of his best work appeared.

And, as if that wasn't enough, Quinn had more stories in *Weird Tales* than any other author in the half-century-long history of the magazine—no fewer than one hundred and forty-nine stories, not counting some thirteen articles.

Considering his immense popularity with the readership of *WT*, it is surprising to note how little of his work has been preserved between book-covers, either hard-bound or paperback. Arkham House published his short novel, *Roads*, in 1948; Mycroft & Moran issued a slender collection of ten of the Jules de Grandin stories under the title of *The Phantom Fighter* in 1966; Jack Chalker printed a Quinn collection called *Is the Devil a Gentle-*

man? in 1970. Except for an occasional anthology selection, that is the extent of Quinn's book appearances—which serves to explain my enthusiasm for this, the first in a series of popular mass-market paperbacks drawn from the extensive Quinnian *oeuvre*.

Seabury Grandin Quinn was born in Washington, D.C. in 1889 and lived most of his life in that city. He graduated from the law school of the National University in D.C. in 1910 (bet you didn't even know we *had* a national university!) and was admitted to the bar of the District of Columbia.

After service with the U.S. Army in World War I, he returned to take up a new profession in journalism. In this capacity he was associated with several trade journals for which he wrote articles and sometimes acted as editor.

My favorite anecdote about Quinn concerns one of these editing jobs. It has always seemed to me singularly appropriate that an author whose name is primarily identified with tales of crawling horror, slithering doom, rotting corpses and hideous murders, moonlighted on the side as the editor of the morticians' journal, *Casket and Sunnyside*. What an ideal job for a *Weird Tales* contributor!

Quinn lived and worked in New York City for some time, where he taught medical jurisprudence and began turning out articles and stories. His first story was "The Stone Image," which appeared in the May 1, 1919 issue of *The Thrill Book*, Street & Smith's short-lived forerunner to *Weird Tales*.

Four years after this, Quinn made his first sale to Edwin Baird, the founding editor of *WT*, with a story called "The Phantom Farmhouse," which was printed in the issue for October 1923. After selling the magazine a series of articles on the Salem witchcraft hysteria, Quinn turned to fiction again. In the issue for October 1925 he introduced a spry, witty, brisk little spook-chasing French medico named de Grandin (after his mother's maiden name) in a tale called "The Horror on the Links."

During this first appearance on the stage of history, Jules de Grandin is presented to us as "Professor de

Grandin of the Paris police." It is explained that he happens to be "doin' some work for his department over here," as Sgt. Costello tells the narrator, Dr. Trowbridge, when the good doctor is called in to scrutinize a corpse. "Here," incidentally, is the fictitious town of Harrisonville, N.J., where Trowbridge lives and works as an old-fashioned country doctor.

de Grandin's professorship, as well as his connection with "the Paris police," are passed over in subsequent stories, as the author discreetly permits them to fade from the reader's memory. In "The Dead Hand," (1926) he is described as "Dr. de Grandin," a "French detective." Pooh-poohing this attempt to pigeonhole him, the debonair doctor retorts that he is only occasionally connected with the *Service de Sûreté*. By this time he has become "Dr. de Grandin of the Sorbonne," and "one of Europe's foremost criminologists and one of the world's greatest scientists." By 1928, in "Restless Souls," he has become an M.D. ("I was practising the treatment of angina pectoris when you were still unthought of," he says scoffingly to a young patient) as well as "an officer of the Paris secret police." From there on, the cover story is seldom mentioned. We never find out what mission it was which brought him to such an unlikely locale as Harrisonville, N.J., in the service of his government.

Most of the de Grandin stories take place in or near Harrisonville, which seems to be just about the most fiend-haunted, ghoulish, werewolf-plagued town this side of Arkham, Massachusetts. Flawed and repetitive as they often are, the de Grandin stories epitomized the essence of *Weird Tales* in that they translated the elements of the traditional European supernatural story to modern small-town American milieu.

And they were undeniably popular with the readers. This popularity was reflected in the frequency of their appearance in the magazine. During the decade of the '20s, no fewer than thirty-two de Grandin stories appeared. During the '30s, forty-six more were printed. Fifteen others ran in the magazine during the '40s and the

'50s. In all, I make out a total of ninety-three de Grandins in the entire run of *Weird Tales*.*

Where did the idea of Jules de Grandin originate, and what made these stories so popular that they could run in a popular magazine for a quarter of a century (the first appeared, as I have said, in 1925, the last in the September 1951 issue)?

The answer to both parts of this question is really quite easy. In the first place, it is perfectly obvious that in creating his famous team of Phantom-Fighters, Seabury Quinn was using for his model Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Jules de Grandin is a Gaelicized, medicinated, latter-day Sherlock Holmes. The Holmes of *Hound of the Baskervilles*, of course, rather than the Holmes who pitted his matchless ratiocination against purely mundane villainy. Quinn gives it away through the simple expedient of having the adventures narrated in the first person by de Grandin's amanuensis, Dr. Trowbridge, just as Doyle had Holmes' adventures scribed by another doctor named Watson.

As for the secret of his popularity, well, Jules de Grandin is nothing more than the most recent example of an old tradition. The psychic detective, the occult investigator, the spook-buster, goes back to Algernon Blackwood's John Silence, to William Hope Hodgson's Carnacki the Ghost-Finder, to Sax Rohmer's Morris Klaw. It was an old and treasured tradition, and one to which Quinn brought little that was new (John Silence, for instance, is also an M.D.). But Quinn was directed toward that tradition from the very beginning of his career—that first story in *Thrill Book* concerned a Dr. Trowbridge of Harrisonville, N.J.

In 1937, Seabury Quinn returned to Washington as a lawyer representing a chain of trade magazines, having given up his editorship in the field—perhaps because he

*But Quinn himself wrote, in 1966, in his preface to *The Phantom Fighter*, that some "three hundred" de Grandins had by that time been written. I don't know what he's talking about, myself.

was earning more from his free-lance writing than such meagre jobs paid in those days.*

During the '40s he was a government lawyer, a position which he held until the end of World War II. In this period he was active in the formation of the Washington Science Fiction Association, an sf fan club which is still going strong and which, in fact, played host to the Annual World Science Fiction Convention in 1974.

A series of strokes forced him into semi-retirement during the 1950s, but he continued to the end as a tireless letter-writer and served as an advisor in legal affairs. His last known public appearance was at the World Science Fiction Convention in 1963. His last story, "Master Nicholas," was published in *Mirage*, a prestigious fan magazine devoted to the *Weird Tales*/Arkham House subculture, in 1964. His literary career, therefore, spanned no less than forty-five years—a remarkable achievement.

Quinn died in 1969 at the age of eighty years, remaining active and alert to the end. He was survived by his wife and a son, Dr. Seabury Quinn, Jr.

With the appearance of this book, Jules de Grandin returns in a new, vigorous reincarnation. Even at its height, in the glorious '30s, fewer copies of *Weird Tales* were printed, distributed and sold, than there are copies of this book. The adventures of the debonair little French occult detective shall shortly be read by many times more people than ever thrilled to his spooky exploits in the pages of the pulps.

With the publication of these paperbacks, Jules de Grandin joins the immortals.

If Seabury Quinn in watching (from whatever shadowy but convivial Valhalla is reserved for the old-time

*Most of his *Weird Tales* stories were of novelette-length, about ten thousand words. According to *Fantasy Magazine*, the leading fan magazine of the '30's, Quinn averaged \$300 for each story. That means he was paid at the rate of three cents a word, which is remarkable, considering *Weird Tales'* shaky financial history—yet another indication of the esteem in which the editor and publisher of the magazine held their most popular contributor.

Weird Tales crew), he will be as pleased as punch, and as proud.

I'm kind of happy about it, too.

So will you be, after reading this book, knowing there are more to come!

—LIN CARTER

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

More than once I have been asked how I happened to evolve the character of Jules de Grandin, and when I have replied I do not know I have been accused of mendacity, even of attempting to adopt an artistically temperamental pose.

Nothing could be farther from the truth; the fact is Jules de Grandin is a sort of literary combination of Topsy and Minerva, that is, he just grewed—but grewed full-panoplied, and did not have to be “evolved.”

One evening in the spring of 1925 I was in that state that every writer knows and dreads; a story was due my publisher, and there didn't seem to be a plot in the world. Accordingly, with nothing particular in mind, I picked up my pen and—literally making it up as I went along—wrote the first story which appears in this book.

As with *Terror on the Links*, so with all other adventures of de Grandin. I have never had a definite plot in mind when commencing one of his memoirs, and it is seldom that I have so much as a single well defined incident of the proposed story thought out in advance. From first to last Jules de Grandin has seemed to say, “Friend Quinn, *je suis présent. En avant*, write me!” Perhaps there's something to the Socratic theory of the daemon within, after all.

The petit Jules is now quite an old gentleman. Numerically his adventures total almost 100, chronologically they span a quarter-century. Phil Stong in *THE OTHER WORLDS* calls him “the best known supernatural detective in weird fiction,” and as far as I have been able to ascertain he is second in longevity only to that hero of an earlier generation's adolescence, Nick Carter . . .

In any event, if the stories in this, the first collected sheaf of Jules de Grandin's adventures, serve to help the reader to forget some worrismatic incident of the workaday world, even for an hour or two, both Jules de Grandin and I shall feel we have achieved an adequate excuse for being.

SEABURY QUINN

Washington, D.C.
1966

Terror on the Links

It must have been past midnight when the skirling of my bedside telephone awakened me, for I could see the moon well down toward the horizon as I looked through the window while reaching for the instrument.

"Dr. Trowbridge," an excited voice bored through the receiver, "this is Mrs. Maitland. Can you come over right away? Something dreadful has happened to Paul!"

"Eh?" I answered half asleep. "What's wrong?"

"We—we don't know," she replied jerkily. "He's unconscious. You know, he'd been to the dance at the country club with Gladys Phillips, and we'd been in bed for hours when we heard someone banging on the door. Mr. Maitland went down, and when he opened the door Paul fell into the hall. Oh, Doctor, he's been hurt dreadfully. Won't you please come right over?"

Physicians' sleep is like a park—public property. With a sigh I climbed out of bed and into my clothes, teased my superannuated motor to life and set out for the Maitland house.

Young Maitland lay on his bed, eyes closed, teeth clenched, his face set in an expression of unutterable dread, even in his unconsciousness. Across his shoulders and on the backs of his arms I found several long incised wounds, as though the flesh had been raked by a sharp pronged instrument.

I sterilized and bandaged the cuts and applied restoratives, wondering what sort of encounter had produced such hurts.

"Help! Help! O, God, help!" the lad muttered thickly, like a person trying to call out in a nightmare. "Oh, oh, it's got me; it's"—his words drowned in a gurgling, in-

articulate cry of fear and he sat bolt upright, staring round with vacant, fear-filmed eyes.

"Easy, easy on, young fellow," I soothed. "Lie back, now; take it easy, you're all right. You're home in bed."

He looked uncomprehendingly at me a moment, then fell to babbling inanely. "The ape-thing—the ape-thing! It's got me! Open the door; for God's sake, open the door!"

"Here," I ordered gruffly as I drove my hypodermic into his arm, "none o' that. You quiet down."

The opiate took effect almost immediately, and I left him with his parents while I returned to catch up the raveled ends of my torn sleep.

Headlines shrieked at me from the front page of the paper lying beside my breakfast grapefruit:

SUPER FIEND SOUGHT IN GIRL'S SLAYING

**Body of Young Woman Found Near Sedgemore
Country Club Mystifies Police—Criminal
Pervert Blamed for Killing—Arrest Imminent**

Almost entirely denuded of clothing, marred by a score of terrible wounds, her face battered nearly past recognition and her neck broken, the body of pretty Sarah Humphreys, 19, a waitress in the employ of the Sedgemore Country Club, was found lying in one of the bunkers of the club's golf course this morning by John Burroughs, a greens keeper. Miss Humphreys, who had been employed at the clubhouse for three months, completed her duties shortly before midnight, and, according to statements of fellow workers, declared she was going to take a short cut across the links to the Andover Road, where she could get a late bus to the city. Her body, terribly mutilated, was found about 25 yards from the road on the golf course this morning.

Between the golf links and the Andover Road is a dense growth of trees, and it is thought the young woman was attacked while walking along the path through

the woods to the road. Deputy Coroner Nesbett, who examined the body, gave his opinion that she had been dead about five hours when found. She had not been criminally assaulted.

Several suspicious characters have been seen in the neighborhood of the club's grounds recently, and the police are checking up on their movements. An early arrest is expected.

"There's two gintelmen to see ye, sor." Nora McGinnis, my household factotum, interrupted my perusal of the paper. "'Tis Sergeant Costello an' a Frinchman, or Eytalian, or sumpin. They do be warntin' ter ax ye questions about th' murther of th' pore little Humphreys gurl."

"Ask *me* about the murder?" I protested. "Why, the first I knew of it was when I looked at this paper, and I'm not through reading the account of the crime yet."

"That's all right, Dr. Trowbridge," Detective Sergeant Costello answered with a laugh as he entered the dining room. "We don't figure on arrestin' you, but there's some questions we'll be askin', if you don't mind. This is Professor de Grandin of the Paris police. He's been doin' some work for his department over here, an' when this murder broke he offered th' chief his help. We'll be needin' it, too, I'm thinkin'. Professor de Grandin, Dr. Trowbridge," he waved an introductory hand from one of us to the other.

The professor bowed stiffly from the hips in continental fashion, then extended his hand with a friendly smile. He was a perfect example of the rare French blond type, rather under medium height, but with a military erectness of carriage that made him seem several inches taller than he actually was. His light blue eyes were small and exceedingly deep-set, and would have been humorous had it not been for the curiously cold directness of their gaze. With his blond mustache waxed at the ends in two perfectly horizontal points and those twinkling, stock-taking eyes, he reminded me of an alert tom-cat. Like a cat's, too, was his lithe, noiseless step as he crossed the room to shake hands.

"I fear Monsieur Costello gives you the misapprehen-

sion, doctor," he said in a pleasant voice, almost devoid of accent. "It is entirely true I am connected with the *Service de Sûreté*, but not as a vocation. My principal work is at the University of Paris and St. Lazaire Hospital; at present I combine the vocation of *savant* with the avocation of criminologist. You see—"

"Why," I interrupted as I grasped his slim, strong hand, "you're Professor Jules de Grandin, the author of *Accelerated Evolution*?"

A quick, infectious grin swept across his mouth and was reflected in his eyes. "You know me, *hein*? "Good, it is that I am among friends! However, at the moment our inquiries lie in quite another field. You have a patient, one Monsieur Paul Maitland, yes? He was set upon last night in the Andover Road, no?"

"I have a patient named Paul Maitland," I admitted, "but I don't know where he received his injuries."

"Nor do we," he answered with a smile, "but we shall inquire. You will go with us while we question him, no?"

"Why, yes," I acquiesced. "I should be looking in on him this morning, anyhow."

"And now, young Monsieur," Professor de Grandin began when introductions had been completed, "you will please tell us what happened last night to you. Yes?"

Paul looked uncomfortably from one of us to the other and swallowed nervously. "I don't like to think of it," he confessed, "much less talk about it; but here's the truth, believe it or not:

"I took Gladys home from the club about 11 o'clock, for she had developed a headache. After I'd said good night to her I decided to go home and turn in, and had gotten nearly here when I reached in my pocket for a cigarette. My case was gone, and I remembered laying it on a window ledge just before my last dance.

"The Mater gave me that case last birthday, and I didn't want to lose it, so, instead of telephoning the club and asking one of the fellows to slip it in his pocket, like a fool I decided to drive back for it.

"You know—at least Dr. Trowbridge and Sergeant Costello do—the Andover Road dips down in a little

valley and curves over by the edge of the golf course between the eighth and ninth holes. I'd just reached that part of the road nearest the links when I heard a woman scream twice—it really wasn't two screams, more like one and a half, for her second cry was shut off almost before it started.

"I had a gun in my pocket, a little .22 automatic—good thing I did, too—so I yanked it out and drew up at the roadside, leaving my engine running. That was lucky, too, believe me.

"I ran into the woods, yelling at the top of my voice, and there I saw something dark, like a woman's body, lying across the path. I started toward it when there was a rustling in the trees overhead and—*plop!*—something dropped right down in front of me.

"Gentlemen, I don't know what it was, but I know it wasn't human. It wasn't quite as tall as I, but it looked about twice as wide, and its hands hung down. Clear down to the ground.

"I yelled, 'What the hell goes on here?' and pointed my gun at it, and it didn't answer, just started jumping up and down, bouncing with its feet and hands on the ground at once. I tell you, it gave me the horrors.

"'Snap out of it,' I yelled again, 'or I'll blow your head off.' Next moment—I was so nervous and excited I didn't know what I was doing—I let fly with my pistol, right in the thing's face.

"That came near bein' my last shot, too. Believe me or not, that thing, whatever it was, reached out, snatched the gun out of my hand, and broke it. Yes, sir, snapped that pistol in two with its bare hands as easily as I could break a match.

"Then it was on me. I felt one of its hands go clear over my shoulder from breast to back in a single clutch, and it pulled me toward it. Ugh! It was hairy, sir. Hairy as an ape!"

"*Morbleu!* Yes? And then?" de Grandin prompted eagerly.

"Then I lunged out with all my might and kicked it on the shins. It released its grip a second, and I beat it. Ran as I never had on the quarter-mile track, jumped into my

car and took off down the road with everything wide open. But I got these gashes in my back and arms before I got to the roadster. He made three or four grabs for me, and every one of 'em took the flesh away where his nails raked me. By the time I got home I was almost crazy with fright and pain and loss of blood. I remember kicking at the door and yelling for the folks to open, and then I went out like a light."

The boy paused and regarded us seriously. "You think that I'm the biggest liar out of jail, most likely, but I've been telling you the absolute, straight truth, sirs."

Costello looked skeptical, but de Grandin nodded eagerly, affirmatively. "But certainly you speak the truth, *mon vieux*," he agreed. "Now, tell me, if you can, this *poilu*, this hairy one, how was he dressed?"

"U'm." Paul wrinkled his brow. "I can't say surely, for it was dark in the woods and I was pretty rattled, but—I—think it was in evening clothes. Yes; I'd swear to it. I saw his white shirt bosom."

"Ah?" de Grandin murmured. "A hairy thing, a fellow who leaps up and down like a mad monkey or a jumping-jack and wears the evening clothes? It is to think, *mes amis*."

"I'll say it is," Costello agreed. "It is to think what sort o' hooch they're servin' to th' youngsters nowadays—or mebbe they can't take it like us old vets o' th' World War—"

"Dr. Trowbridge is wanted on the 'phone, please," a maid's announcement cut his ponderous irony. "You can take it on this one, if you wish, sir. It's connected with the main line."

"This is Mrs. Comstock, doctor," a voice informed me. "Your cook told us you were at Mrs. Maitland's. Can you come to my house when you leave there? Mr. Manly my daughter's fiancéé, was hurt last night."

"Hurt last night?" I repeated.

"Yes, out by the country club."

"Very well, I'll be right over," I promised, and held out my hand to Professor de Grandin. "Sorry I have to run away," I apologized, "but another man was hurt at the club last night."

"*Pardieu!*" His little round blue eyes bored into mine. "That club, it are a most unhealthy place, *n'est-ce-pas?* May I accompany you? This other man may tell us something that we ought to know."

Young Manly's injury proved to be a gunshot wound inflicted by a small calibre weapon, and was located in the left shoulder. He was reticent concerning it, and neither de Grandin nor I felt inclined to press him insistently, for Mrs. Comstock hovered in the sick room from our entrance till the treatment was concluded.

"*Nom d'un petit porc!*" the little Frenchman muttered as we left the Comstock residence. "He is close-mouthed, that one. Almost, it would appear—pah! I talk the rot. Let us go to the morgue, *cher collègue*. You shall drive me there in your motor and tell me what it is you see. Ofttimes you gentlemen of general practice see things that we specialists cannot because we wear the blinders of our specialties, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

In the cold, uncharitable light of the city mortuary we viewed the remains of poor little Sarah Humphreys. As the newspaper had said, she was disfigured by a score or more of wounds, running, for the most part, down her shoulders and arms in a series of converging lines, and incised deeply enough to reveal the bone where skin and flesh had been shorn through in places. On throat and neck were five distinct livid patches, one some three inches in size, roughly square, the other four extending in parallel lines almost completely round her neck, terminating in deeply pitted scars, as though the talons of some predatory beast had sunk into her flesh. But the most terrifying item of the grisly sight was the poor girl's face. Repeated blows had hammered her once-pretty features to a purpled level, bits of sand and fine gravel still bedded in the cuticle told how her countenance must have been ground into the earth with terrific force. Never, since my days as emergency hospital interne, had I seen so sickening an array of injuries on a single body.

"And what is it you see, my friend?" the Frenchman asked in a low, raucous whisper. "You look, you meditate. You do think—what?"

"It's terrible," I began, but he cut me off impatiently.

"But certainly. One does not look to see the beautiful in the morgue. I ask for what you see, not for your esthetic impressions. *Parbleu!*"

"If you want to know what interests me most," I answered, "it is those wounds on her shoulder and arms. Except in degree they're exactly like those which I treated on Paul Maitland last night."

"Ah-ha?" His small blue eyes were dancing with excitement, his cat's-whiskers mustache was bristling more fiercely than ever. "Name of a little blue man! We begin to make the progress. Now"—he touched the livid patches on the dead girl's throat daintily with the tip of a well-manicured nail—"these marks, do they tell you something?"

I shook my head. "Possibly the bruise left by some sort of garrote," I hazarded. "They are too long and thick for fingerprints; besides, there's no thumb mark."

"Ha-ha." His laugh was mirthless as that of an actor in a high school play. "No thumb mark, you say? My dear sir, had there been a thumb mark I should have been all at sea. These marks are the stigmata of the truth of young Monsieur Maitland's story. When were you last at *le jardin des plantes*, the how do you say him?—zoölogical garden?"

"The zoo?" I echoed wonderingly.

"*Précisément*, the zoo, as you call him. Have you never noted how the quadrumana take hold of a thing? I tell you, *cher collègue*, it is not very much of an exaggeration to say the thumb is the difference between man and monkey. Man and the chimpanzee grasp objects with the fingers, using the thumb as a fulcrum. The gorilla, the orang-utan, the gibbon are all fools, they know not how to use their thumbs. Now see"—again he indicated the bruises on the dead girl's throat—"this large square patch, it is the mark of the heel of the hand, these circling lines, they are the fingers, and these wounds, they are nail prints. Name of an old and very wicked tom-cat! It was the truth young Maitland told. It was an ape that he met in the wood. An ape in evening clothes! What do you make of that, *hein?*"

"God knows," I answered helplessly.

"Assuredly," he nodded solemnly. "*Le bon Dieu* truly knows, but me, I am determined that I shall know, too." Abruptly he turned from the dead girl and propelled me gently toward the door by the elbow. "No more, no more now," he declared. "You have your mission of help to the sick to perform; I also have some work to do. If you will take me to police headquarters I shall be obliged to you, and, if the imposition is not too great, may I dwell at your house while I work upon this case? You consent? Good. Until tonight, then, *au 'voir*."

It was some time after 8 o'clock that evening when he came to the house, laden with almost enough bundles to tax a motor truck. "Great Scott, professor," I exclaimed as he laid his parcels on a convenient chair and gave me a grin which sent the waxed points of his mustache shooting upward like a pair of miniature horns, "have you been buying out the town?"

"Almost," he answered as he dropped into an easy chair and lit an evil-smelling French cigarette. "I have talked much with the grocer, the druggist, the garage man and the tobacconist, and at each place I made purchases. I am, for the time, a new resident of your so charming city of Harrisonville, eager to find out about my neighbors and my new home. I have talked like a garrulous old woman, I have milled over much wordy chaff, but from it I have sifted some good meal, *grâce à Dieu!*"

He fixed me with his curiously unwinking cat-stare as he asked: "You have a Monsieur Kalmar as a neighbor, have you not?"

"Yes, I believe there's such a person here," I replied, "but I know very little about him."

"Tell me that little, if you will be so kind."

"H'm. He's lived here just about a year, and kept very much to himself. As far as I know he's made no friends and has been visited by no one but tradesmen. I understand he's a scientist of some sort and took the old Means place out on the Andover Road so he could pursue his experiments in quiet."

"One sees," de Grandin tapped his cigarette case thoughtfully. "So much I have already gathered from my

talks with the trades people. Now tell me, if you can, is this Monsieur All-Unknown a friend of the young Manly's—the gentleman whose wound from gunshot you dressed this morning?"

"Not that I know," I answered. "I've never seen them together. Manly's a queer, moody sort of chap, never has much to say to anyone. How Millicent Comstock came to fall in love with him I've no idea. He rides well and is highly thought of by her mother, but those are about the only qualifications he has as a husband that I've been able to see."

"He is very strong, that one?"

"I wouldn't know," I had to confess.

"Very well, then. Listen at me, if you please. You think de Grandin is a fool, *hein?* Perhaps yes; perhaps no. Today I do other things than talk. I go to the Comstock lady's house and reconnoiter. In an ash can I find a pair of patent leather dress shoes, very much scratched. I grease the palm of a servant and find out they belong to that Monsieur Manly. In the trash container I make further researches, and find a white-linen dress shirt with blood on it. It is torn about the cuffs and split at the shoulder, that shirt. It, too, I find, belonged to Monsieur Manly. Me, I am like the dealer in old clothes when I talk with Madame Comstock's servant. I buy that shirt and those shoes from him. Behold!"

From one of his parcels he drew forth a pair of dress shoes and a shirt and spread them for my inspection as if they were curios of priceless value. "In Paris we have ways of making the inanimate talk," he asserted as he thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a bit of folded paper. "That shirt, those shoes, I put them through the degree of the third time, and how they talk to me. *Mordieu*, they gabble like a pair of spinsters over the tea-cups!" Opening the paper he disclosed three coarse dull-brown hairs, varying from a half inch to three inches in length.

I looked at them curiously. They might have been from a man's head, for they were too long and straight to be body-hairs, but their texture seemed too harsh for human growth. "U'm," I commented noncommittally.

"*Précisément*," he grinned. "You cannot classify them, eh?"

"No," I admitted. "They're entirely too coarse to have come from Manly's head. Besides, they're almost black; his hair is a distinct brown."

"My friend," he leaned toward me and stared unwinkingly into my face, "I have seen hairs like that before. So have you, but you did not recognize them. They are from a gorilla."

"From a gor—man, you're raving!" I jerked back. "How could a gorilla's hair get on young Manly's shirt?"

"You have the wrong preposition," he corrected. "They were not on his shirt, but *in* it. Below the neck line, where a bullet had torn through the linen and wounded him. The hairs I found embedded in the dried blood. Look at this garment, if you please"—he held the shirt before me for inspection—"behold how it is split. It has been on a body much too big for it. I tell you, Monsieur Trowbridge, that shirt was worn by the thing—the monster—which killed that pitiful girl dead on the links last night, which attacked the young Maitland a few minutes later, and—which got paint from Madame Comstock's house on these shoes when it climbed into that house last night.

"You start, you stare? You say to yourself, 'This de Grandin he is crazy like the April-fish, him!' Attend me while I prove each step in the ladder:

"This morning, while you were examining young Monsieur Manly's wound I was examining both him and his room. On his window sill I noted a few scratches—such scrapes as one who drags his legs and feet might make in clambering across the window ledge. I look out of the window, and on the white-painted side of the house I see fresh scratches in the paint. Also I find scratch-marks on the painted iron pipe that carries water from the roof in rainy weather. That pipe runs down the corner of the house near Manly's window, but too far away for a man to reach it from the sill. But if a man has arms as long as my leg, what then? Ah, then he could have made the reach most easily. Yes.

"Now, when I buy those shoes, that shirt, from Ma-

dame Comstock's servant, I note both paint and scratches on the patent leather. Later I compare the paint on the shoes with that on the house-side. They are the same.

"Also I note the shirt, how he is blood-stained and all burst-out, as though the man who wore him suddenly expanded and burst through him. I find beast-hairs in the bloodstains on the shirt. So, now, you see?"

"I'm hanged if I do," I denied.

He bent forward again, speaking with rapid earnestness: "The Comstock servant tells me more when I quiz him. He tells me, by example, that last night the young Manly was nervous, what you call ill at ease. He complained of headache, backache, he felt what he called rotten. Yes. He went to bed early, and his fiancée went to the country club dance without him. The old madame, she, too, went to bed early.

"Ha, but later in the night—at almost midnight—the young man went for a walk, because, he said, he could not sleep. That is what he told the servant this morning, but"—he paused impressively, then went on, spacing his words carefully—"the servant had been up all night with the toothache, and while he heard the young man come in sometime after midnight, *he did not hear him leave*, as he certainly would have done had he gone out the door.

"And now, consider this: A policeman of the motorcycle tells me he observed the young Manly coming from that Monsieur Kalmar's house, staggering like one drunk. He wonders, that policeman, if Monsieur Kalmar keeps so much to himself because he sells unlicensed liquor after the saloons are closed. What now, *cher collègue*? You say what?"

"Damn it!" I exploded. "You're piecing out the silliest nonsense story I ever heard, de Grandin. One of us is crazy as hell, and I don't think it's I!"

"Neither of us is crazy, *mon vieux*," he returned gravely, "but men have gone mad with knowing what I know, and madder yet with suspecting what I am beginning to suspect. Will you be good enough to drive me past the house of Monsieur Kalmar?"

A few minutes' run carried us to the lonely dwelling occupied by the eccentric old man whose year's residence

had been a twelve months' mystery. "He works late, that one," de Grandin commented as we drove by. "Observe, the light burns in his workshop."

Sure enough, from a window at the rear of the house a shaft of bright light cut the evening shadow, and, as we stopped the car and gazed, we could see Kalmar's bent form, swathed in a laboratory apron, passing and repassing the window. The little Frenchman looked long at the white-draped figure, as if he would imprint its image on his memory, then touched me on the elbow. "Let us go back," he ordered softly, "and as we go I shall tell you a story."

"Before the war that wrecked the world there came to Paris from Vienna one Doctor Beneckendorff. As a man he was intolerable, but as a *savant* without parallel. With my own eyes I saw him do things that in an age less tolerant of learning would have brought him to the stake as a wizard.

"But science is God's tool, my friend. It is not meant that man should play at being God. That man, he went too far. We had to put him in restraint."

"Yes?" I answered, not particularly interested in his narrative. "What did he do?"

"Ha, what did he not do, *pardieu*? Children of the poor were found missing at night. They were nowhere. The gendarmes' search narrowed to the laboratory of this Beneckendorff, and there they found not the poor missing infants, but a half-score ape-creatures, not wholly human nor completely simian, but partaking horribly of each, with fur and handlike feet, but with the face of something that had once been of mankind. They were all dead, those poor ones, fortunately for them.

"He was adjudged mad as the June-beetle by the court, but ah, my friend, what a mentality, what a fine brain gone bad!

"We shut him up for the safety of the public, and for the safety of humanity we burned his notebooks and destroyed the serums with which he had injected the human babes to turn them into pseudo-apes."

"Impossible!" I scoffed.

"Incredible," he agreed, "but not, unfortunately, im-

possible—for him. His secret entered the madhouse with him; but in the turbulence of war he escaped.”

“Good God,” I cried. “You mean this monster-maker is loose on the world?”

He shrugged his shoulders with Gallic fatalism. “Perhaps. All trace of him has vanished, but there are reports he was later seen in the Congo Beligique.”

“But—”

“No buts, my friend, if you will be so kind. To speculate is idle. We have arrived at an *impasse*, but presently we may find our way over, under or around it. One favor, if you will be good enough to grant it: When next you attend the young Manly permit that I accompany you. I would have a few minutes’ talk with Madame Comstock.”

Cornelia Comstock was a lady of imposing physique and even more imposing manner. She browbeat fellow club members, society reporters, even solicitors for “causes,” but to de Grandin she was merely a woman who had information he desired. Prefacing his inquiry with the sort of bow no one but a Frenchman can achieve, he began directly:

“Madame, do you, or did you ever, know one Doctor Beneckendorff?”

Mrs. Comstock gave him a look beside which the basilisk’s most deadly glare would have been languishing. “My good man—” she began as if he were an overcharging taxi driver, but the Frenchman met her cold gaze with one equally frigid.

“You will be good enough to answer me,” he told her. “Primarily I represent the Republic of France; but I also represent humanity. Once more, please, did you ever know a Doctor Beneckendorff?”

Her cold eyes lowered before his unwinking stare, and her thin lips twitched a little. “Yes,” she answered in a voice not much more than a whisper.

“Ah. So. We make progress. When did you know him—in what circumstances? Believe me, you may speak in confidence before me and Dr. Trowbridge, but please speak frankly. The importance is great.”

“I knew Otto Beneckendorff many years ago. He had

just come to this country from Europe and was teaching biology at the university near which I lived as a girl. We—we were engaged.”

“And your betrothal, for what reason was it broken, please?”

I could scarcely recognize Cornelia Comstock in the woman who regarded Jules de Grandin with wondering, frightened eyes. She trembled as with a chill, and her hands played nervously with the cord of her tortoiseshell pince-nez as she replied: “He—he was impossible, sir. We had vivisectionists, even in those days—but this man seemed to torture poor, defenseless beasts for the love of it. I handed back his ring when he boasted of one of his experiments to me. He positively seemed to gloat over the memory of the poor brute’s sufferings before it died.”

“*Eh bien, Madame,*” de Grandin shot me a quick glance, “your betrothal, then, was broken. He left you, one assumes, but did he leave in friendship?”

Cornelia Comstock looked as if she were upon the verge of fainting as she whispered, “No, sir. No! He left me with a dreadful threat. I recall his very words—how can I ever forget them? He said, ‘I go, but I return. Nothing but death can cheat me, and when I come back I shall bring on you and yours a horror such as no man has known since the days before Adam.’ ”

“*Parbleu,*” the little Frenchman almost danced in his excitement. “We have the key to the mystery, almost, Friend Trowbridge!” To Mrs. Comstock he added, “One more little, so small question, if you please, Madame: your daughter is betrothed to one Monsieur Manly. Tell me, when and where did she meet this young man?”

“I introduced them,” Mrs. Comstock’s hauteur showed signs of return. “Mr. Manly came to my husband with letters of introduction from an old schoolmate of his—a fellow student at the university—in Capetown.”

“Capetown, do you say, Madame? Capetown in South Africa? *Nom d’un petit bonhomme!* When was this, if you please?”

“About a year ago. Why—”

“And Monsieur Manly, he has lived with you how

long?" his question shut off her offended protest half uttered.

"Mr. Manly is *stopping* with us," Mrs. Comstock answered icily. "He is to marry my daughter next month. And, really, sir, I fail to see what interest the Republic of France, which you represent, and humanity, which you also claim to represent, can have in my private affairs. If—"

"This Capetown friend," the little Frenchman interrupted feverishly. "His name was what, and his business?"

"Really, I must decline—"

"*Tell me!*" he thrust forth both his slender hands as if to shake an answer from her. "It is that I must know. *Nom d'un fusil!* Tell me, at once!"

"We do not know his street and number," Mrs. Comstock seemed completely cowed, "but his name is Alexander Findlay, and he's a diamond factor."

"*Bien.*" The Frenchman struck his heels together and bowed as if hinged at the hips. "Thank you, Madame. You have been most kind and helpful."

It was past midnight when the 'phone began to ring insistently. "Western Union speaking," a girl's voice announced. "Cablegram for Dr. Jules de Grandin. Ready?"

"Yes," I answered, seizing pencil and pad from the bedside table, "Read it please."

"No person named Alexander Findlay diamond factor known here no record of such person in last five years. Signed, Burlingame, Inspector of Police."

"It's from Capetown, South Africa," she added as I finished jotting down her dictation.

"Very good," I answered. "Forward a typed confirmation, please."

"*Mille tonneres!*" de Grandin exclaimed as I read the message to him. "This makes the picture-puzzle complete, or very nearly so. Attend me, if you please."

He leaped across the room and extracted a black-leather notebook from his jacket pocket. "Behold," he consulted a notation, "this Monsieur Kalmar whom no one knows, he has lived here for ten months and twenty-six days—twenty-seven when tomorrow morning comes. This informa-

tion I have from a realtor whom I interviewed in my rôle as compiler of a directory of scientists.

"The young Monsieur Manly, he has known the Comstocks for 'about a year.' He brought them letters from a schoolmate of Monsieur Comstock who proves to be unknown in Capetown. *Parbleau*, my friend, from now on Jules de Grandin turns night into day, if you will be so kind as to take him to a gun merchant from whom he may procure a Winchester rifle. Yes," he nodded solemnly, "it is so. *Vraiment*."

Time drifted by, de Grandin going gun in hand each night to keep his lonely vigils, but no developments in the mystery of the Humphreys murder or the attack on Paul Maitland were reported. The date of Millicent Comstock's wedding approached, and the big house was filled to overflowing with boisterous young folks; still de Grandin kept up his lonely patrols—and kept his own counsel.

The night before the wedding day he accosted me as he came down the stairs. "Trowbridge, my friend, you have been most patient with me. If you will come with me tonight I think that I may show you something."

"All right," I agreed. "I haven't the slightest notion what all this folderol's about, but I'm willing to be convinced."

A little after twelve we parked the car at a convenient corner and walked quickly to the Comstock place, taking shelter in the shadow of a hedge that marked the boundary of the lawn.

"Lord, what a lovely night!" I exclaimed. "I don't think I remember ever seeing brighter moonlight—"

"*H'm'm'm'm!*" His interruption was one of those peculiar nasal sounds, half grunt, half whinny, which none but the true Frenchman can produce. "Attend me, if you please, my friend: no man knows what part Tanit the Moon Goddess plays in our affairs, even today when her name is forgotten by all but dusty-dry antiquaries. This we do know, however; at the entrance of life our appearance is governed by the phases of the moon. You, as a physician with wide obstetrical experience, can confirm

that. Also, when the time of exit approaches, the crisis of disease is often governed by the moon's phase. Why this should be we do not know, but that it is so we know all too well. Suppose, then, the cellular organization of a body be violently, unnaturally, changed, and nature's whole force be exerted toward a readjustment. May we not suppose that Tanit who affects childbirth and death, might have some force to apply in such a case?"

"I dare say," I conceded, "but I don't follow you. Just what is it you expect, or suspect, de Grandin?"

"*Hélas*, nothing," he answered. "I suspect nothing, I affirm nothing, I deny nothing. I am agnostic, but also hopeful. It may be that I make a great black *lutin* of my own shadow, but he who is prepared for the worst is most agreeably disappointed if the best occurs." Irrelevantly he added, "That light yonder, it shines from Mademoiselle Millicent's chamber, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

"Yes," I confirmed, wondering if I were on a fool's errand with an amiable lunatic for company.

The merrymaking in the house had quieted, and one by one the lights went out in the upper windows. I had an almost overwhelming desire to smoke, but dared not strike a match. The little Frenchman fidgeted nervously, fussing with the lock of his Winchester, ejecting and reinserting cartridges, playing a devil's tattoo on the barrel with his long white fingers.

A wrack of clouds had crept across the moon, but suddenly it swept away, and like a floodlight turned on the scene the bright, pearly moonlight deluged everything. "Ah," my companion murmured, "now we shall see what we shall see—perhaps."

As if his words had been a cue there echoed from the house a scream of such wild, frenzied terror as a lost soul might emit when summoned to eternal torment. "Ah-ha?" de Grandin exclaimed as he raised his rifle. "Will he come forth or—"

Lights flashed inside the house. The patter of terrified feet sounded among the babel of wondering, questioning voices, but the scream was not repeated.

"Come forth, accursèd one—come forth and face de

Grandin!" I heard the small Frenchman mutter, then: "Behold, my friend, he comes—*le gorille!*"

From Millicent's window, horrible as a devil out of lowest hell, there came a hairy head set low upon a pair of shoulders at least four feet across. An arm which somehow reminded me of a giant snake slipped past the window casing, grasped the cast-iron downspout at the corner of the house, and drew a thickset, hairy body after it. A leg tipped with a handlike foot was thrown across the sill, and, like a spider from its lair, the monster leaped from the window and hung a moment to the iron pipe, its sable body silhouetted against the white wall of the house.

But what was that, that white-robed thing which hung pendant from the grasp of the beast's free arm? Like a beautiful white moth inert in the grasp of the spider, her fair hair unbound, her silken night robe rent into a motly of tatters, Millicent Comstock lay senseless in the creature's grasp.

"Shoot, man, shoot!" I screamed, but only a thin whisper came from my fear-stiffened lips.

"Silence, *imbécile!*" de Grandin ordered as he pressed his cheek against his gunstock. "Would you give warning of our ambushade?"

Slowly, so slowly it seemed an hour was consumed in the process, the great primate descended the water-pipe, leaping the last fifteen feet of the descent and crouching on the moonlit lawn, its small red eyes glaring malignantly, as if it challenged the world for possession of its prey.

The bellow of de Grandin's rifle almost deafened me, and the smokeless powder's flash burned a gash in the night. He threw the loading mechanism feverishly, and fired a second time.

The monster staggered drunkenly against the house as the first shot sounded. At the second it dropped Millicent to the lawn and uttered a cry which was part roar, part snarl. Then, one of its great arms trailing helplessly, it leaped toward the rear of the house in a series of long, awkward bounds which reminded me, absurdly, of the bouncing of a huge inflated ball.

"Attend her, if you please, my friend," de Grandin

ordered as we reached Millicent's inert form. "I shall make *Monsieur le Gorille* my personal business!"

I bent above the senseless girl and put my ear to her breast. Faint but perceptible, I made out a heart-beat, and lifted her in my arms.

"Dr. Trowbridge!" Mrs. Comstock, followed by a throng of frightened guests, met me at the front door. "What's happened? Good heavens, Millicent!" Seizing her daughter's flaccid hand in both her own she burst into a flood of tears. "Oh, what's happened? What is it?"

"Help me get Millicent to bed, then get some smelling salts and brandy," I commanded, ignoring her questions.

A little later, with restoratives applied and electric pads at her feet and back, the girl showed signs of waking. "Get out—all of you!" I ordered. Hysterical women, especially patients' mothers, are rather less than useless when consciousness returns after profound shock.

"Oh—oh, the ape-thing! The dreadful ape-thing!" cried Millicent in a small, childish whimper. "It's got me—help—"

"It's all right, dear," I comforted. "You're safe, safe home in your own bed, with old Dr. Trowbridge standing by." It was not till several hours later that I realized her first waking exclamation had been almost identical to Paul Maitland's when he revived from his faint.

"Dr. Trowbridge," Mrs. Comstock whispered from the bedroom door. "We've looked all over, but there's no sign of Mr. Manly. Do—do you suppose anything could have happened to him?"

"I think it quite likely that something could—and did," I answered curtly, turning from her to smooth her daughter's fluttering hand.

"*Par le barbe d'un bouc vert!*" de Grandin exclaimed as, disheveled, but with a light of exhilaration in his eyes, he met me in the Comstock hall some two hours later. "Madame Comstock, you are to be congratulated. But for my so brave colleague Dr. Trowbridge and my own so

very clever self your charming daughter would have shared the fate of the poor Sarah Humphreys.

"Trowbridge, *mon vieux*, I have not been quite frank with you. I have not told you all. But this thing, it was so incredible, so seemingly impossible, that you would not have believed. *Parbleu*, I do not quite believe it myself, even though I know that it is so!

"Let us recapitulate: When this *sacré* Beneckendorff was in the madhouse he raved continually that his confinement cheated him of his revenge—the revenge he had so long planned against one Madame Cornélie Comstock of America.

"We French are logical, not like you English and Americans. We write down and keep for reference even what a madman says. Why not? It may be useful some day, who knows?

"Now, Friend Trowbridge, some time ago I told you this Beneckendorff was reported in the Congo Belgique. Yes? But I did not tell you he were reported in charge of a young, half-grown gorilla. No.

"When this so unfortunate Mademoiselle Humphreys is killed in that so terrible manner I remember my own African experiences, and I say to me, 'Ah-ha, Jules de Grandin, it look as if *Monsieur le Gorille* has had a finger in this pie.' And thereupon I ask to know if any such have escape from a circus or zoo nearby. All answers are no.

"Then that Sergeant Costello, he bring me to this so splendid *savant*, Dr. Trowbridge, and with him I go to interview the young Monsieur Maitland who have encountered much strangeness where the young Humphreys girl met death.

"And what does the young Maitland tell me? He tells of something that have hair, that jump up and down like an enraged ape and that act like a gorilla, but wears man's evening clothes, *parbleu!* It is to think. No gorilla have escaped yet what *seems* like a gorilla—in gentleman's evening clothes, *mordieu!*—have been encountered on the golf links.

"Thereupon I search my memory. I remember that madman and the poor infants he has turned into half-ape things by administration of his so vile serums. I say to

me, 'If he can turn man-children into monkey-things, for why can he not turn ape-things into men-things. *Hein?*'"

"Then I find one Dr. Kalmar who has lived here for a year, almost, and of whom no one knows anything. I search about, I make the inquiries, and learn one man has been seen coming to and from this place in secret. Also, in this same man's discarded shirt I find the hairs of a gorilla. *Morbleu!* I think some more, and what I think is not particularly pleasant.

"I reason: suppose this serum which may make a man-thing of an ape-thing is not permanent in its effect? What then? If it is not renewed at stated intervals the man becomes an ape again. You follow? *Bien.*

"Now, the other day I learn something which gives me to think some more. This Beneckendorff, he raves against one Madame Comstock. You, Madame, admit you once knew him. He had loved you as he understood love. Now he hated you as only he could hate. Is it not against you he plans this devilish scheme? I think it quite possible.

"And so I send a cablegram—never mind to whom, Dr. Trowbridge knows that—and I get the answer I expect and fear. The man in whose shirt I find those hairs of the gorilla is no man at all, he is one terrible masquerade of a man. So. Now, I reason, 'Suppose this masquerading monkey-thing do not get his serum as expected, what will he do?' I fear to answer my own question, but I make myself do so: *Voilà*, I buy me a rifle.

"This gun has bullets of soft lead, and I made them even more effective by cutting a V-shaped notch in each of their heads. When they strike something they spread out and make a nobly deadly wound.

"Tonight what I have feared, but yet expected, comes to pass. *Ha*, but I am ready, me! I shoot, and each time I shoot my bullet tears a great hole in the ape-thing. He drops his prey and seeks the only shelter that his little ape-brain knows, the house of Dr. Kalmar. Yes.

"I follow all quickly, and reach the house almost as soon as he. He is maddened with the pain of my bullets, and in his rage he tears this so vile Kalmar into little bits, even as he has done to poor young Sarah Humphreys.

And I, arriving with my gun, dispatch him with another shot. *C'est une affaire finie.*

"But before I come back here I recognize the corpse of this Dr. Kalmar. Who is he? Who but the escaped lunatic, the monster-maker, the entirely detestable Dr. Otto Beneckendorff? Before I leave I destroy the devil's brews with which he makes monkeys of men and men of monkeys. It is far better that their secret be forever lost.

"I think Mademoiselle Humphreys was unfortunate enough to meet this ape-man when he was on his way to Dr. Kalmar's, as he had been taught to come. As a man, perhaps, he did not know this Kalmar, or, as we know him, Beneckendorff; but as a brute he knew no other man but Beneckendorff—his master, the man who brought him from Africa.

"When he came upon the poor girl on the golf links she screamed in terror, and at once his savageness became uppermost. Believe me, the gorilla is more savage than the bear, the lion or the tiger. Therefore, in his anger, he tear her to pieces. He also tried to tear the young Monsieur Maitland, but luckily for us he failed, and so we got the story which put us on his trail.

"*Voilà.* It is finished. Anon I shall report to the good Sergeant Costello and show him the bodies at the Kalmar house. Also I shall cable back to Paris. The ministry of health will be glad to know that Beneckendorff is no more."

"But, Monsieur de Grandin," Mrs. Comstock demanded, "who was this man—or ape—you killed?"

I held my breath as he fixed his cold stare on her, then sighed with relief as he answered. "I can not say, Madame."

"Well," Mrs. Comstock's natural disputatiousness came to the surface, "I think it's very *queer*—"

His laugh was positively Olympian. "*You think it very queer, Madame? Mort d'un rat mort!*" as Balkis said of Solomon's magnificence, the half has not been told you!"

"When the police look for Monsieur Manly—*mon dieu*, what a name for an ape-thing!—they will be puzzled," he told me as we walked to my car. "I must warn

Costello to enter his disappearance as a permanently unsolved case. No one will ever know the true facts but you, I and the ministry of health, Friend Trowbridge. The public would not believe, even if we told them."

The Tenants of Broussac

The Rue des Batailles was justifying its name. From my table on the narrow sidewalk before the Café de Liberté I could view three distinct fights alternately, or simultaneously. Two cock-sparrows contended noisily for possession of a wisp of straw, a girl with unbelievably small feet and incredibly thick ankles addressed a flood of gamin abuse to an oily-haired youth who wore a dirty black-silk muffler in lieu of a collar. At the curb a spade-bearded patron, considerably the worse for *vin ordinaire*, haggled volubly with an unshaven taxi chauffeur over an item of five francs.

I had dropped my cigar end into my empty coffee cup, motioned the waiter for my *addition* and shoved back my chair, when a light but commanding tap fell on my shoulder.

"Now for it," I muttered, feeling sure some passing bravo, aching for a fight, had chosen me for his attentions. Turning suddenly, I looked straight into a pair of light-blue eyes, round as a cat's, and just missing a humorous expression because of their challenging directness. Beneath the eyes was a straw-colored mustache, trimly waxed into a horizontal line and bristling so belligerently as to heighten its wearer's resemblance to a truculent tom-cat. Below the feline mustache was a grin wider and friendlier than any I'd seen in Paris.

"*Par la barbe d'un bouc vert!*" swore my accoster. "If it

is not truly my friend, the good Dr. Trowbridge, then I am first cousin to the Emperor of China."

"Why, de Grandin," I exclaimed, grasping his small sinewy hand, "fancy meeting you this way! I called at the *École de Médecine* the day after I arrived, but they told me you were off on one of your wild goose chases and only heaven knew when you'd be back."

He tweaked the points of his mustache alternately as he answered with another grin. "But of course! Those dull-witted ones would term my researches in the domain of inexact science a wild goose hunt. *Pardieu!* They have no vision beyond their test tubes and retorts, those ones."

"What is it this time?" I asked as we caught step. "A criminal investigation or a ghost-breaking expedition?"

"*Morbleu!*" he answered with a chuckle; "I think, perhaps, it is a little of both. Listen, my friend, do you know the country about Rouen?"

"Not I," I replied. "This is my first trip to France, and I've been here only three days."

"Ah, yes," he returned, "your ignorance of our geography is truly deplorable; but it can be remedied. Have you an inflexible program mapped out?"

"No. This is my first vacation in ten years—since 1915—and I've made no plans, except to get as far away from medicine as possible."

"Good!" he applauded. "I can promise you a complete change from your American practise, my friend, such a change as will banish all thoughts of patients, pills and prescriptions entirely from your head. Will you join me?"

"Hm, that depends," I temporized. "What sort of case are you working on?" Discretion was the better part of acceptance when talking with Jules de Grandin, I knew. Educated for the profession of medicine, one of the foremost anatomists and physiologists of his generation, and a shining light in the University of Paris faculty, this restless, energetic little scientist had chosen criminology and occult investigation as a recreation from his vocational work, and had gained almost as much fame in these activities as he had in the medical world. During the war he had been a prominent, though necessarily anonymous, member of the Allied Intelligence Service; since the Armi-

stice he had penetrated nearly every quarter of the globe on special missions for the French Ministry of Justice. It behooved me to move cautiously when he invited me to share an exploit with him; the trail might lead to India, Greenland or Tierra del Fuego before the case was closed.

"*Eh bien*," he laughed. "You are ever the old cautious one, Friend Trowbridge. Never will you commit yourself until you have seen blueprints and specifications of the enterprise. Very well, then, listen:

"Near Rouen stands the very ancient chateau of the de Broussac family. Parts of it were built as early as the Eleventh Century; none of it is less than two hundred years old. The family has dwindled steadily in wealth and importance until the last two generations have been reduced to living on the income derived from renting the chateau to wealthy foreigners.

"A common story, *n'est-ce-pas*? Very well, wait, comes now the uncommon part: Within the past year the Chateau Broussac has had no less than six tenants; no renter has remained in possession for more than two months, and each tenancy has terminated in a tragedy of some sort.

"Stories of this kind get about; houses acquire unsavory reputations, even as people do, and tenants are becoming hard to find for the chateau. Monsieur Bergeret, the de Broussac family's *avoue*, has commissioned me to discover the reason for these interrupted tenancies; he desires me to build a dam against the flood of ill fortune which makes tenants scarce at the chateau and threatens to pauperize one of the oldest and most useless families of France."

"You say the tenancies were terminated by tragedies?" I asked, more to make conversation than from interest.

"But yes," he answered. "The cases, as I have their histories, are like this:

"Monsieur Alvarez, a wealthy Argentine cattle raiser, rented the chateau last April. He moved in with his family, his servants and entirely too many cases of champagne. He had lived there only about six weeks when, one night,

such of the guests as retained enough soberness to walk to bed missed him at the goodnight round of drinks. He was also missing the following morning, and the following night. Next day a search was instituted, and a servant found his body in the chapel of the oldest part of the chateau. *Morbleu*, all the doctors in France could not reassemble him! Literally, my friend, he was strewn about the sanctuary; his limbs torn off, his head severed most untidily at the neck, every bone in his trunk smashed like crockery in a china store struck by lightning. He was like a doll pulled to pieces by a peevish child. *Voilà*, the Alvarez family decamped the premises and the Van Brundt family moved in.

"That Monsieur Van Brundt had amassed a fortune selling supplies to the *sale Boche* during the war. *Eh bien*, I could not wish him the end he had. Too much food, too much wine, too little care of his body he took. One night he rose from his bed and wandered in the chateau grounds. In the place where the ancient moat formerly was they found him, his thick body thin at last, and almost twice its natural length—squeezed out like a tube of *creme* from a lady's dressing table trodden under foot by an awkward servant. He was not a pretty sight, my friend.

"The other tenants, too, all left when some member of their families or suites met a terrifying fate. There was Simpson, the Englishman, whose crippled son fell from the battlements to the old courtyard, and Biddle, the American, whose wife now shrieks and drools in a madhouse, and Muset, the banker from Montreal, who woke one night from a doze in his study chair to see Death staring him in the eye.

"Now Monsieur Luke Bixby, from Oklahoma, resides at Broussac with his wife and daughter, and—I wait to hear of a misfortune in their midst.

"You will come with me? You will help me avert peril from a fellow countryman?"

"Oh, I suppose so," I agreed. One part of France appealed to me as strongly as another, and de Grandin was never a dull companion.

"Ah, good," he exclaimed, offering his hand in token of

our compact. "Together, *mon vieux*, we shall prove such a team as the curse of Broussac shall find hard to contend with."

2.

The sun was well down toward the horizon when our funny little train puffed officiously into Rouen the following day. The long European twilight had dissolved into darkness, and oblique shadows slanted from the trees in the nascent moonlight as our hired *moteur* entered the chateau park.

"Good evening, Monsieur Bixby," de Grandin greeted as we followed the servant into the great hallway. "I have taken the liberty to bring a compatriot of yours, Dr. Trowbridge, with me to aid in my researches." He shot me a meaning glance as he hurried on. "Your kindness in permitting me the facilities of the chateau library is greatly appreciated, I do assure you."

"Bixby, a big, full-fleshed man with ruddy face and drooping mustache, smiled amiably. "Oh, that's all right, Monsoor," he answered. "There must be a couple o' million books stacked up in there, and I can't read a one of 'em. But I've got to pay rent on 'em, just the same, so I'm mighty glad you, or someone who savvies the lingo, can put 'em to use."

"And Madame Bixby, she is well, and the so charming *Mademoiselle*, she, too, is in good health, I trust?"

Our host looked worried. "To tell you the truth, she ain't," he replied. "Mother and I had reckoned a stay in one of these old houses here in France would be just the thing for her, but it seems like she ain't doin' so well as we'd hoped. Maybe we'd better try Switzerland for a spell; they say the mountain air there . . ."

De Grandin bent forward eagerly. "What is the nature of *Mademoiselle's* indisposition?" he asked. "Dr. Trowbridge is one of your America's most famous physicians, perhaps he . . ." He paused significantly.

"That so?" Bixby beamed on me. "I'd kind o' figured you was one of them doctors of philosophy we see so

many of round here, 'stead of a regular doctor. Now, if you'd be so good as to look at Adrienne, Doc, I'd take it right kindly. Will you come this way? I'll see supper's ready by the time you get through with her."

He led us up a magnificent stairway of ancient carved oak, down a corridor paneled in priceless wainscot, and knocked gently at a high-arched door of age-blackened wood. "Adrienne, darlin'," he called in a huskily tender voice, "here's a doctor to see you—an American doctor, honey. Can you see him?"

"Yes," came the reply from beyond the door, and we entered a bedroom as large as a barrack, furnished with articles of antique design worth their weight in gold to any museum rich enough to buy them.

Fair-haired and violet-eyed, slender to the borderline of emaciation, and with too high flush on her cheeks, Bixby's daughter lay propped among a heap of real-lace pillows on the great carved bed, the white of her thin throat and arms only a shade warmer than the white of her silk nightdress.

Her father tiptoed from the room with clumsy care and I began my examination, observing her heart and lung action by auscultation and palpation, taking her pulse and estimating her temperature as accurately as possible without my clinical thermometer. Though she appeared suffering from fatigue, there was no evidence of functional or organic weakness in any of her organs.

"Hm," I muttered, looking as professionally wise as possible, "just how long have you felt ill, Miss Bixby?"

The girl burst into a storm of tears. "I'm not ill," she denied hotly. "I'm not—oh, why won't you all go away and leave me alone? I don't know what's the matter with me. I—I just want to be let alone!" She buried her face in a pillow and her narrow shoulders shook with sobs.

"Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin whispered, "a tonic—something simple, like a glass of sherry with meals—is indicated, I think. Meantime, let us repair to the so excellent supper which waits below."

We repaired. There was nothing else to do. His advice was sound, I knew, for all the physician's skill is powerless to cheer a young woman who craves the luxury of being miserable.

3

"Find anything serious, Doc?" Bixby asked as de Grandin and I seated ourselves in the chateau's paneled dining hall.

"No," I reassured him. "She seems a little run down, but there's certainly nothing wrong which can't be corrected by a light tonic, some judicious exercise and plenty of rest."

"Uh-huh?" he nodded, brightening. "I've been right smart worried over her, lately.

"You know, we wasn't always rich. Up to a couple o' years ago we was poor as church mice—land poor, in the bargain. Then, when they begun findin' oil all round our place, Mother kept at me till I started some drillin', too, and darned if we didn't bring in a gusher first crack outa the box.

"Adrienne used to teach school when we was ranchin' it—tryin' to, rather—an' she an' a young lawyer, name o' Ray Keefer, had it all fixed up to get married.

"Ray was a good, upstandin' boy, too. Had a considerable practice worked up over Bartlesville way, took his own company overseas durin' the war, an' would a' been run for the legislature in a little while, like as not. But when we started takin' royalties on our leases at the rate of about three hundred dollars a week, Mother, she ups and says he warn't no fittin' match for our daughter.

"Then she and Adrienne had it hot an' heavy, with me stayin' outa the fuss an' bein' neutral, as far as possible. Mother was all for breakin' the engagement off short, Adrienne was set on gettin' married right away, an' they finally compromised by agreein' to call a truce for a year while Ray stayed home an' looked after his practice an' Adrienne come over here to Europe with Mother an' me to see the world an' 'have her mind broadened by travel,' as Mother says.

"She's been gettin' a letter from Ray at every stop we made since we left home, an' sendin' back answers just as regular, till we come here. Lately she ain't seemed to care nothin' about Ray, one way or the other. Don't answer his letters—half the time don't trouble to open 'em, even, an' goes around the place as if she was sleep-walkin'. Seems kind o' peaked an' run down, like, too. We've been right worried over her. You're sure it ain't consumption, or nothin' like that, Doc?" He looked anxiously at me again.

"Have no fear, *Monsieur*," de Grandin answered for me. "Dr. Trowbridge and I will give the young lady our greatest care; rest assured, we shall effect a complete cure. We . . ."

Two shots, following each other in quick succession, sounded from the grounds outside, cutting short his words. We rushed to the entrance, meeting a breathless game-keeper in the corridor. "*Le serpent, le serpent!*" he exclaimed excitedly, rushing up to Bixby. "*Ohe, Monsieur, un serpent monstrueux, dans le jardin!*"

"What is it you say?" de Grandin demanded. "A serpent in the garden? Where, when; how big?"

The fellow spread his arms to their fullest reach, extending his fingers to increase the space compassed. "A great, a tremendous serpent, *Monsieur*," he panted. "Greater than the boa constrictor in the Paris menagerie—ten meters long, at the shortest!"

"*Pardieu*, a snake thirty feet long?" de Grandin breathed incredulously. "Come, *mon enfant*, take us to the spot where you saw this so great zoological wonder."

"Here, 'twas here I saw him, with my own two eyes," the man almost screamed in his excitement, pointing to a small copse of evergreens growing close beside the chateau wall. "See, it's here the shots I fired at him cut the bushes"—he pointed to several broken limbs where buck-shot from his fowling piece had crashed through the shrubs.

"Here? *Mon Dieu!*" muttered de Grandin.

"Huh!" Bixby produced a plug of tobacco and bit off a generous mouthful. "If you don't lay off that brandy they sell down at the village you'll be seein' pink elephants roostin' in the trees pretty soon. A thirty-foot snake! In

this country? Why, we don't grow 'em that big in Oklahoma! Come on, gentlemen, let's get to bed; this feller's snake didn't come out o' no hole in the wall, he came outa a bottle!"

4

Mrs. Bixby, a buxom woman with pale eyes and tinted hair, had small courtesy to waste on us next morning at breakfast. A physician from America who obviously did not enjoy an ultra fashionable practise at home, and an undersized foreigner with a passion for old books, bulked of small importance in her price-marked world. Bixby was taciturn with the embarrassed silence of a wife-ridden man before strangers, and de Grandin and I went into the library immediately following the meal without any attempt at making table talk.

My work consisted, for the most part, of lugging ancient volumes in scuffed bindings from the high shelves and piling them on the table before my colleague. After one or two attempts I gave over the effort to read them, since those not in archaic French were in monkish Latin, both of which were as unintelligible to me as Choctaw.

The little Frenchman, however, dived into the moldering tomes like a gourmet attacking a feast, making voluminous notes, nodding his head furiously as statement after statement in the books seemed to confirm some theory of his, or muttering an occasional approving "*Morbleu!*" or "*Pardieu!*"

"Friend Trowbridge," he looked up from the dusty book spread before him and fixed me with his unwinking stare, "is it not time you saw our fair patient? Go to her, my friend, and whether she approves or whether she objects, apply the stethoscope to her breast, and, while you do so, *examine her torso for bruises.*"

"Bruises?" I echoed.

"Precisely, exactly, quite so!" he shot back. "Bruises, I have said it. They may be of the significance, they may not, but if they are present I desire to know it. I have an hypothesis."

"Oh, very well," I agreed, and went to find my stethoscope.

Though she had not been present at breakfast, I scarcely expected to find Adrienne Bixby in bed, for it was nearly noon when I rapped at her door.

"S-s-s-sh, *Monsieur le Docteur*," cautioned the maid who answered my summons. "*Mademoiselle* is still asleep. She is exhausted, the poor, pretty one."

"Who is it, Roxanne?" Adrienne demanded in a sleepy, querulous voice. "Tell them to go away."

I inserted my foot in the door and spoke softly to the maid. "*Mademoiselle* is more seriously ill than she realizes; it is necessary that I make an examination."

"Oh, good morning, doctor," the girl said as I pushed past the maid and approached the bed. Her eyes widened with concern as she saw the stethoscope dangling from my hand. "Is—is there anything the matter—seriously the matter with me?" she asked. "My heart? My lungs?"

"We don't know yet," I evaded. "Very often, you know, symptoms which seem of no importance prove of the greatest importance; then, again, we often find that signs which seem serious at first mean nothing at all. That's it, just lie back, it will be over in a moment."

I placed the instrument against her thin chest, and, as I listened to the accelerated beating of her healthy young heart, glanced quickly down along the line of her ribs beneath the low neckband of her nightrobe.

"Oh, oh, doctor, what is it?" the girl cried in alarm, for I had started back so violently that one of the ear-phones was shaken from my head. Around the young girl's body, over the ribs, was *an ascending livid spiral*, definitely marked, as though a heavy rope had been wound about her, then drawn taut.

"How did you get that bruise?" I demanded, tucking my stethoscope into my pocket.

A quick flush mantled her neck and cheeks, but her eyes were honest as she answered simply, "I don't know, doctor. It's something I can't explain. When we first came here to Broussac I was as well as could be; we'd only

been here about three weeks when I began to feel all used up in the morning. I'd go to bed early and sleep late and spend most of the day lying around, but I never seemed to get enough rest. I began to notice these bruises about that time, too. First they were on my arm, about the wrist or above the elbow—several times all the way up. Lately they've been around my waist and body, sometimes on my shoulders, too, and every morning I feel tireder than the day before. Then—then"—she turned her face from me and tears welled in her eyes—"I don't seem to be interestsd in th-things the way I used to be. Oh, doctor, I wish I were dead! I'm no earthly good, and . . ."

"Now, now," I soothed. "I know what you mean when you say you've lost interest in 'things'. There'll be plenty of interest when you get back to Oklahoma again, young lady."

"Oh, doctor, are we going back, really? I asked Mother if we mightn't yesterday and she said Dad had leased this place for a year and we'd have to stay until the lease expired. Do you mean she's changed her mind?"

"M'm, well," I temporized, "perhaps you won't leave Broussac right away; but you remember that old saying about Mohammed and the mountain? Suppose we were to import a little bit of Oklahoma to France, what then?"

"No!" She shook her head vigorously and her eyes filled with tears again. "I don't want Ray to come here. This is an evil place, doctor. It makes people forget all they ever loved and cherished. If he came here he might forget me as . . ." the sentence dissolved in a fresh flood of tears.

"Well, well," I comforted, "we'll see if we can't get Mother to listen to medical advice."

"Mother never listened to anybody's advice," she sobbed as I closed the door softly and hurried downstairs to tell de Grandin my discovery.

"*Cordieu!*" de Grandin swore excitedly as I concluded my recitation. "A bruise? A bruise about her so white

body, and before that on her arms? *Non d'un nom!* My friend, this plot, it acquires the thickness. What do you think?"

"M'm." I searched my memory for long-forgotten articles in the MEDICAL TIMES. "I've read of these stigmata appearing on patients' bodies. They were usually connected with the presence of some wasting disease and an abnormal state of mind, such as extreme religious fervor, or . . ."

"Ah, bah!" he cut in. "Friend Trowbridge, you can not measure the wind with a yardstick nor weigh a thought on the scales. We deal with something not referable to clinical experiments in this case, or I am much mistaken."

"Why, how do you mean . . . ?" I began, but he turned away with an impatient shrug.

"I mean nothing, now," he answered. "The wise judge is he who gives no decision until he has heard all the testimony." Again he commenced reading from the huge volume open before him, making notations on a slip of paper as his eyes traveled rapidly down the lines of faded type.

Mrs. Bixby did not join us at dinner that evening, and, as a consequence, the conversation was much less restrained. Coffee was served in the small corridor connecting the wide entrance hall with the library, and, under the influence of a hearty meal, three kinds of wine and several glasses of *liqueur*, our host expanded like a flower in the sun.

"They tell me Jo-an of Arch was burned to death in Ruin," he commented as he bit the end from a cigar and elevated one knee over the arm of his chair. "Queer way to treat a girl who'd done so much for 'em, seems to me. The guide told us she's been made a saint or somethin' since then, though."

"Yes," I assented idly, "having burned her body and anathematized her soul, the ecclesiastical authorities later decided the poor child's spirit was unjustly condemned. Too bad a little of their sense of justice wasn't felt by the court which tried her in Rouen."

De Grandin looked quizzically at me as he pulled his waxed mustaches alternately, for all the world like a tom-

cat combing his whiskers. "Throw not too many stones, my friend," he cautioned. "Nearly five hundred years have passed since the Maid of Orleans was burned as a heretic. Today your American courts convict high school-teachers for heresy far less grave than that charged against our Jeannè. We may yet see the bones of your so estimable Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin exhumed from their graves and publicly burned by your heretic-baiters of this today. No, no, my friend, it is not for us of today to sneer at the heretic-burners of yesterday. Torquemada's body lies in the tomb these many years, but his spirit still lives. *Mon Dieu!* What is it that I say? 'His spirit still lives'? *Sacre nom d'une souris!* That may be the answer!" And, as if propelled by a spring, he bounded from his seat and rushed madly down the corridor into the library.

"De Grandin, what's the matter?" I asked as I followed him into the book-lined room.

"*Non, non*, go away, take a walk, go to the devil!" he shot back, staring wildly around the room, his eager eyes searching feverishly for a particular volume. "You vex me, you annoy me, you harass me; I would be alone at this time. Get out!"

Puzzled and angered by his brusqueness, I turned to leave, but he called over his shoulder as I reached the door: "Friend Trowbridge, please interview Monsieur Bixby's chef and obtain from him a sack of flour. Bring it here to me in not less than an hour, please."

6

"Forgive my rudeness, Friend Trowbridge," he apologized when I re-entered the library an hour or so later, a parcel of flour from Bixby's pantry under my arm. "I had a thought which required all my concentration at the time, and any disturbing influence—even your own always welcome presence—would have distracted my attention. I am sorry and ashamed I spoke so."

"Oh, never mind that," I replied. "Did you find what you were looking for?"

He nodded emphatically. "*Mais oui*," he assured me.

"All which I sought—and more. Now let us to work. First I would have you go with me into the garden where that gamekeeper saw the serpent last night."

"But he couldn't have seen such a snake," I protested as we left the library. "We all agreed the fellow was drunk."

"Surely, exactly; of course," he conceded, nodding vigorously. "Undoubtedly the man had drunk brandy. Do you recall, by any chance, the wise old Latin proverb, '*In vino veritas*'?"

"'In wine is truth'?" I translated tentatively. "How could the fact that the man was drunk when he imagined he saw a thirty-foot snake in a French garden make the snake exist when we know perfectly well such a thing could not be?"

"*Oh la, la,*" he chuckled. "What a sober-sided one you are, *cher ami*. It was here the fellow declared *Monsieur le Serpent* emerged, was it not? See, here are the shot-marks on the shrubs."

He bent, parting the bushes carefully, and crawled toward the chateau's stone foundation. "Observe," he commanded in a whisper, "between these stones the cement has weathered away, the opening is great enough to permit passage of a sixty-foot serpent, did one desire to come this way. No?"

"True enough," I agreed, "but the driveway out there would give room for the great Atlantic sea serpent himself to crawl about. You don't contend he's making use of it, though, do you?"

He tapped his teeth thoughtfully with his forefinger, paying no attention to my sarcasm. "Let us go within," he suggested, brushing the leaf-mold carefully from his knees as he rose.

We re-entered the house and he led the way through one winding passage after another, unlocking a succession of nail-studded doors with the bunch of jangling iron keys he obtained from Bixby's butler.

"And here is the chapel," he announced when half an hour's steady walk brought us to a final age-stained door. "It was here they found that so unfortunate Monsieur Alvarez. A gloomy place in which to die, truly."

It was, indeed. The little sanctuary lay dungeon-deep, without windows or, apparently, any means of external ventilation. Its vaulted roof was composed of a series of equilateral arches whose stringers rose a scant six feet above the floor and rested on great blocks of flint carved in hideous designs of dragons' and griffins' heads. The low altar stood against the farther wall, its silver crucifix blackened with age and all but eaten away with erosion. Row on row, about the low upright walls, were lined the crypts containing the coffins of long dead de Broussacs, each closed with a marble slab engraved with the name and title of its occupant. A pall of cobwebs, almost as heavy as woven fabrics, festooned from vaulted ceiling to floor, intensifying the air of ghostly gloom which hung about the chamber like the acrid odor of ancient incense.

My companion set the flickering candle-lantern upon the floor beside the doorway and broke open the package of flour. "See, Friend Trowbridge, do as I do," he directed, dipping his hand into the flour and sprinkling the white powder lightly over the flagstone pavement of the chapel. "Back away toward the door," he commanded, "and on no account leave a footprint in the meal. We must have a fair, unsoiled page for our records."

Wonderingly, but willingly, I helped him spread a film of flour over the chapel floor from altar-step to doorway, then turned upon him with a question: "What do you expect to find in this meal, de Grandin? Surely not footprints. No one who did not have to would come to this ghastly place."

He nodded seriously at me as he picked up his lantern and the remains of the package of flour. "Partly right and partly wrong you are, my friend. One may come who must, one may come who wants. Tomorrow, perhaps, we shall know more than we do today."

7

I was in the midst of my toilet when he burst into my bedroom next morning, feline mustache bristling, his round eyes fairly snapping with excitement. "Come, *mon vieux*," he urged, tugging at my arm as a nervous

terrier might have urged his master to go for a romp, "come and see; right away, quick, at once, immediately!"

We hastened through the chateau's modern wing, passed the doors blocking the corridors of the fifteenth century buildings and came at last to the eleventh century chapel. De Grandin paused before the oak-and-iron door like a showman about to raise the curtain from an exhibit as he lit the candle in his lantern, and I heard his small, even teeth clicking together in a chill of suppressed excitement. "Behold, *mon ami*," he commanded in a hoarse whisper more expressive of emotion than a shout, "behold what writings are on the page which we did prepare!"

I looked through the arched doorway, then turned to him, dumb with surprise.

Leading from the chapel entrance, and ending at the center of the floor, directly before the altar, was the unmistakable trail of little, naked feet. No woodcraft was needed to trace the walker's course. She had entered the sanctuary, marched straight and unswervingly to a spot about fifteen feet from the altar, but directly before it, then turned about slowly in a tiny circle, no more than two feet in diameter, for at that point the footprints were so superimposed on each other that all individual traces were lost.

But the other track which showed in the strewn flour was less easily explained. Beginning at a point directly opposite the place the footprints ceased, this other trail ran some three or four inches wide in a lazy zigzag, as though a single automobile wheel had been rolled in an uncertain course across the floor by someone staggeringly drunk. But no prints of feet followed the wheel-track. The thing had apparently traversed the floor of its own volition.

"See," de Grandin whispered, "flour-prints lead away from the door"—he pointed to a series of white prints, plainly describing bare heels and toes, leading up the passage from the chapel floor, diminishing in clearness with each step until they faded out some ten paces toward the modern part of the chateau. "And see," he repeated, drawing me inside the chapel to the wall where

the other, inexplicable, track began, "a trail leads outward here, too."

Following his pointing finger with my eye I saw what I had not noticed before, a cleft in the chapel wall some five inches wide, evidently the result of crumbling cement and gradually sinking foundation stones. At the entrance of the fissure a tiny pile of flour showed, as though some object previously dusted with the powder had been forced through the crevice.

I blinked stupidly at him. "Wh-what is this track?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Ah, bah!" he exclaimed disgustedly. "The blindest man is he who shuts his own eyes, my friend. Did you never, as a boy, come upon the trail of a serpent in the dusty road?"

"A snake track"—my mind refused the evidence of my eyes—"but how can that be—here?"

"The gamekeeper *thought* he saw a serpent in the garden *exactly outside this chapel*," de Grandin replied in a low voice, "and it was where that besotted gamekeeper *imagined* he beheld a serpent that the body of Mijnheer Van Brundt was found crushed out of semblance to a human man. Tell me, Friend Trowbridge—you know something of zoology—what creature, besides the constrictor-snake, kills his prey by crushing each bone of his body till nothing but shapeless pulp remains? *Hein?*"

"Bu—but . . ." I began, when he cut me short.

"Go call on our patient," he commanded. "If she sleeps, do not awaken her, but *observe the drugget on her floor!*"

I hastened to Adrienne Bixby's room, pushed uncere-
moniously past Roxanne, the maid, and tiptoed to the girl's bedside. She lay on her side, one cheek pillowed on her arm, sleeping the sleep of utter exhaustion. I bent over her a moment, listening to her even breathing, then, nodding to the maid, turned and walked softly from the room, my eyes glued to the dark-red plush carpet which covered the chamber floor.

Five minutes later I met the little Frenchman in the library, my excitement now as high as his own. "De

Grandin," I whispered, involuntarily lowering my voice, "I looked at her carpet. The thing's made of red velvet and shows a spot of dust ten feet away. A trail of faint white footprints leads right up to her bed!"

8

"*Sacre nom d'un petit bonhomme!*" He reached for his green felt hat and turned toward the door. "The trail becomes clear; even my good, skeptical friend Trowbridge can follow it, I think. Come, *cher ami*, let us see what we can see."

He led me through the chateau park, between the rows of tall, trembling poplar trees, to a spot where black-boughed evergreens cast perpetual shade above a stone-fenced area of a scant half acre. Rose bushes, long deteriorated from their cultivated state, ran riot over the ground, the whole enclosure had the gloomy aspect of a deserted cemetery. "Why," I asked, "what place is this, de Grandin? It's as different from the rest of the park as . . ."

"As death is from life, *n'est-ce-pas?*" he interjected. "Yes, so it is, truly. Observe." He parted a mass of intertwined brambles and pointed to a slab of stone, once white, but now brown and roughened with centuries of exposure. "Can you read the inscription?" he asked.

The letters, once deeply cut in the stone, were almost obliterated, but I made out.

*CI GIT TOUJOURS RAIMOND
SEIGNEUR DE BROUSSAC*

"What does it say?" he demanded.

"'Here lies Raimond, Lord of Broussac,' " I replied, translating as well as I could.

"*Non, non,*" he contradicted. "It does not say, '*Ci git,*' here lies; but '*Ci git toujours*'—here lies always, or forever. Eh, my friend, what do you make of that, if anything?"

"Dead men usually lie permanently," I countered.

"Ah, so? Have I not heard your countrymen sing:

“*John Brown’s body lies a-moldering
in the grave,
But his soul goes marching on.*”

“What of the poor Seigneur de Broussac, is he to lie buried here *toujours*, or shall he, too, not rise once again?”

“I’m not familiar with French idioms,” I defended. Perhaps the stonecutter merely intended to say the Seigneur de Broussac lies here for his last long sleep.”

“*Cher Trowbridge*,” de Grandin replied, speaking with slow impressiveness, “when a man’s monument is carved the words are not chosen without due consideration. Who chose Raimond de Broussac’s epitaph thought long upon its wording, and when he dictated those words his wish was father to his thought.”

He stared thoughtfully at the crumbling stone a moment, repeating softly to himself, “And *Madame l’abesse* said, ‘Snake thou art, and . . .’” he shook his shoulders in an impatient shrug as though to throw off some oppressive train of thought. “*Eh bien*, but we waste time here, my friend; let us make an experiment.” Turning on his heel he led the way to the stables.

“I would have some boards, a hammer and some sharp nails, if you please,” he informed the hostler who greeted us at the barn door. “My friend, the very learned *Docteur Trowbridge*, from America, and I desire to test an idea.”

When the servant brought the desired materials, de Grandin sawed the boards into two lengths, one about eighteen inches, the other about three feet, and through these he drove the sharp-pointed horseshoe nails at intervals of about three-quarters of an inch, so that, when he finished, he had what resembled two large combs of which the boards were the backs and the needle-pointed nails the teeth. “Now,” he announced, surveying his work critically, “I think we are prepared to give a little surprise party.”

Taking up the hammer and two short pieces of boards in addition to his “combs,” he led the way to the spot outside the chateau walls where the tipsy gamekeeper

claimed to have seen the great snake. Here he attached the two strips of wood at right angles to the shorter of the pieces of board through which he had driven the nails, then, using the lateral lengths of wood as staked, attached the comblike contrivance he had made firmly to the earth, its back resting levelly in the ground, its sharp spikes pointing upward before the crevice in the chateau foundations. Any animal larger than an earthworm desiring to make use of the crack in the wall as a passageway would have to jump or crawl over the sharp, lancelike points of the nails. "*Bien*," he commented, viewing his work with approval, "now to put your wise American maxim of 'Safety First' into practice."

We found our way to the ancient, gloomy chapel, and he wedged the longer of the nail-filled boards firmly between the jambs at the inner side of the doorway. "And now," he announced, as we turned once more toward the inhabited part of the house, "I have the splendid appetite for dinner, and for sleep, too, when bedtime arrives."

"What on earth does all this child's play mean, de Grandin?" I demanded, my curiosity getting the better of me.

He winked roguishly by way of answer, whistled a snatch of tune, then remarked, irrelevantly, "If you have the desire to gamble, *cher ami*, I will lay you a wager of five francs that our fair patient will be improved tomorrow morning."

9

He won the bet. For the first time since we had been seen at Broussac, Adrienne Bixby was at the breakfast table the following day, and the healthy color in her cheeks and the clear sparkle of her lovely eyes told of a long, restful sleep.

Two more days passed, each seeing a marked improvement in her spirits and appearance. The purple semi-circles beneath her eyes faded to a wholesome pink, her laughter rippled like the sound of a purling brook among the shadows of the chateau's gloomy halls.

"I gotta hand it to you, Doc," Bixby complimented

me. "You've shore brought my little girl round in great shape. Name your figger an' I'll pay the bill, an' never paid one with a better heart, neither."

"Dr. Trowbridge," Adrienne accosted me one morning as I was about to join de Grandin in the library. "Remember what you said about importing a little bit of Oklahoma to France the other day? Well, I've just received a letter—the dearest letter—from Ray. He's coming over—he'll be here day after tomorrow, I think, and no matter what Mother says or does, we're going to be married, right away. I've been Mrs. Bixby's daughter long enough; now I'm going to be Mr. Keefer's wife. If Mother makes Dad refuse to give us any money, it won't make the least little bit of difference. I taught school before Father got his money, and I know how to live as a poor man's wife. I'm going to have my man—my own man—and no one—*no one at all*—shall keep him away from me one day longer!"

"Good for you!" I applauded her rebellion. Without knowing young Keefer I was sure he must be a very desirable sort of person to have incurred the enmity of such a character as Bixby's wife.

But next morning Adrienne was not at breakfast, and the downcast expression of her father's face told his disappointment more eloquently than any words he could have summoned. "Reckon the girl's had a little set-back, Doc," he muttered, averting his eyes. His wife looked me fairly between the brows, and though she said never a word I felt she considered me a pretty poor specimen of medical practitioner.

"*Mais non, Monsieur le Docteur,*" Roxanne demurred when I knocked at Adrienne's door, "you shall not waken her. The poor lamb is sleeping, she exhaust this morning, and she shall have her sleep. I, Roxanne, say so."

Nevertheless, I shook Adrienne gently, rousing her from a sleep which seemed more stupor than slumber. "Come, come, my dear," I scolded, "this won't do, you know. You've got to brace up. You don't want Ray to

find you in this condition, do you? Remember, he's due at Broussac tomorrow."

"Is he?" she answered indifferently. "I don't care. Oh, doctor, I'm—so—tired." She was asleep again, almost at the last word.

I turned back the covers and lifted the collar of her robe. About her body, purple as the marks of a whiplash, lay the wide, circular bruise, fresher and more extensive than it had been the day I first noticed it.

"Death of my life!" de Grandin swore when I found him in the library and told him what I had seen. "That *sacre* bruise again? Oh, it is too much! Come and see what else I have found this cursed day!" Seizing my hand he half led, half dragged me outdoors, halting at the clump of evergreens where he had fixed his nail-studded board beside the chateau wall.

Ripped from its place and lying some ten feet away was the board, its nails turned upward in the morning sunlight and reminding me, somehow, of the malicious grin from a fleshless skull.

"Why, how did this happen?" I asked.

He pointed mutely to the moist earth in which the dwarf cedars grew, his hand shaking with excitement and rage. In the soft loam beside the place where the board had been fixed were the prints of two tiny, bare feet.

"What's it mean?" I demanded, exasperated at the way he withheld information from me, but his answer was no more enlightening than any of his former cryptic utterances.

"The battle is joined, my friend," he replied through set teeth. "Amuse yourself as you will—or can—this day. I go to Rouen right away, immediately, at once. There are weapons I must have for this fight besides those we now have. Eh, but it will be a fight to the death! Yes, *par la croix*, and we shall help Death reclaim his own too. *Pardieu!* Am I not Jules de Grandin? Am I to be made a monkey of by one who preys on women? *Morbleu*, we shall see!"

And with that he left me, striding toward the stables in search of a motor car, his little yellow mustache bristling

with fury, his blue eyes snapping, French oaths pouring from him like spray from a garden-sprinkler.

10

It was dark before he returned, his green hat set at a rakish angle over his right ear, a long, closely wrapped brown paper parcel under his arm. "*Eh bien,*" he confided to me with an elfish grin, "it required much argument to secure this. That old priest, he is a stubborn one, and unbelieving, almost as skeptical as you, Friend Trowbridge."

"What on earth is it?" I demanded, looking curiously at the package. Except that it was too long, it might have been an umbrella, judging by its shape.

He winked mysteriously as he led the way to his room, where, having glanced about furtively, as though he apprehended some secret watcher, he laid the bundle on the bed and began cutting the strings securing its brown paper swaddling clothes with his pocket knife. Laying back the final layer of paper he uncovered a long sword, such a weapon as I had never beheld outside a museum. The blade was about three and a half feet in length, tapering from almost four inches and a half at the tip, where, it terminated in a beveled point. Unlike modern weapons, this one was furnished with two sharpened edges, almost keen enough to do duty for a knife, and, instead of the usual groove found on the sides of sword blades, its center presented a distinct ridge where the steep bevels met at an obtuse angle as they sloped from the edges. The handle, made of ivory or some smoothly polished bone, was long enough to permit a two-handed grip, and the hilt which crossed the blade at a right angle turned downward toward the point, its ends terminating in rather clumsily carved cherubs' heads. Along the blade, apparently carved, rather than etched, marched a procession of miscellaneous angels, demons and men at arms with a mythological monster, such as a griffin or dragon, thrown in for occasional good measure. Between the crudely carved figures I made out the letters of the motto: *Dei Gratia*—by the grace of God.

"Well?" I asked wonderingly as I viewed the ancient weapon.

"Well?" he repeated mockingly, then: "Had you as many blessings on your head as this old bit of carved metal has received, you would be a very holy man indeed, Friend Trowbridge. This sword, it was once strapped to the thigh of a saint—it matters not which one—who fought the battles of France when France needed all the champions, saintly or otherwise, she could summon. For centuries it has reposed in a very ancient church at Rouen, not, indeed, as a relic, but as a souvenir scarcely less venerated. When I told the *curé* I proposed borrowing it for a day or more I thought he would die of the apoplexy forthwith, but"—he gave his diminutive mustache a complacent tweak—"such was my power of persuasion that you see before you the very sword."

"But what under heaven will you do with the thing, now you've got it?" I demanded.

"Much—perhaps," he responded, picking up the weapon, which must have weighed at least twenty pounds, and balancing it in both hands as a wood-chopper holds his ax before attacking a log.

"*Nom d'un bouc!*" he glanced suddenly at his wrist-watch and replaced the sword on his bed. "I do forget myself. Run, my friend, fly, fly like the swallow to Mademoiselle Adrienne's room and caution her to remain within—at all hazards. Bid her close her windows, too, for we know not what may be abroad or what can climb a wall this night. See that stubborn, pig-foolish maid of hers has instructions to lock her mistress' door on the inside and, should Mademoiselle rise in the night and desire to leave, on no account permit her to pass. You understand?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," I replied. "What . . . ?"

"*Non, non!*" he almost shrieked. "Waste not time nor words, my friend. I desire that you should do as I say. Hurry, I implore; it is of the importance, I do assure you."

I did as he requested, having less difficulty than I had expected concerning the windows, since Adrienne was

already sunk in a heavy sleep and Roxanne possessed the French peasant's inborn hatred of fresh air.

"Good, very, very good," de Grandin commended when I rejoined him. "Now we shall wait until the second quarter of the night—then, ah, perhaps I show you something to think about in the after years, Friend Trowbridge."

He paced the floor like a caged animal for a quarter-hour, smoking one cigarette after another, then: "Let us go," he ordered curtly, picking up the giant sword and shouldering it as a soldier does his rifle. "*Aller au feu!*"

We tramped down the corridor toward the stairway, when he turned quickly, almost transfixing me with the sword blade, which projected two feet and more beyond his shoulder. "One more inspection, Friend Trowbridge," he urged. "Let us see how it goes with Mademoiselle Adrienne. *Eh bien*, do we not carry her colors into battle this night?"

"Never mind that monkey-business!" we heard a throaty feminine voice command as we approached Adrienne's room. "I've stood about all I intend to from you; tomorrow you pack your clothes, if you've any to pack, and get out of this house."

"Eh, what is this?" de Grandin demanded as we reached the chamber door and beheld Roxanne weeping bitterly, while Mrs. Bixby towered over her like a Cochin hen bullying a half-starved sparrow.

"I'll tell you what it is!" replied the irate mistress of the house. "I came to say goodnight to my daughter a few minutes ago and this—this hussy!—refused to open the door for me. I soon settled her, I can tell you. I told her to open that door and get out. When I went into the room I found every window locked tight—in this weather, too.

"Now I catch her hanging around the door after I'd ordered her to her room. Insubordination; rank insubordination, it is. She leaves this house bright and early tomorrow morning, I can tell you!"

"Oh, Monsieur Trow-breege, Monsieur de Grandin," sobbed the trembling girl, "I did but attempt to obey your orders, and—and she drove me from my duty. Oh, I am so soree!"

de Grandin's small teeth shut with a snap like a miniature steel trap. "And you forced this girl to unbar the door?" he asked, almost incredulously, gazing sternly at Mrs. Bixby.

"I certainly did," she bridled, "and I'd like to know what business is it of yours. If . . ."

He brushed by her, leaping into the bedroom with a bound which carried him nearly two yards beyond the doorsill.

We looked past him toward the bed. It was empty. Adrienne Bixby was gone.

"Why—why, where can she *be*?" Mrs. Bixby asked, her domineering manner temporarily stripped from her by surprise.

"I'll tell you where she is!" de Grandin, white to the lips, shouted at her. "She is where you have sent her, you meddling old ignoramus, you, you—oh, *mon Dieu*, if you were a man how I should enjoy cutting your heart out!"

"Say, see here . . ." she began, her bewilderment sunk in anger, but he cut her short with a roar.

"Silence, you! To your room, foolish, criminally foolish one, and pray *le bon Dieu* on your bare knees that the pig-ignorance of her mother shall not have cost your daughter her life this night! Come, Trowbridge, my friend, come away; the breath of this woman is a contamination, and we must hurry if we are to undo her fool's work. Pray God we are not too late!"

We rushed downstairs, traversed the corridors leading to the older wing of the house, wound our way down and down beneath the level of the ancient moat till we stood before the entrance of the chapel.

"Ah," de Grandin breathed softly, lowering his sword point a moment as he dashed the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand, "no sound, Friend Trowbridge. Whatever happens, whatever you may see, do not cry out; 'tis death to one we seek to save if you waken her!"

Raising his hand, he signed himself quickly with the cross, muttering an indistinct *in nomine*, while I gaped in amazement to see the cynical, scoffing little man of science

shedding his agnosticism and reverting to a simple act of his childhood's faith.

Lifting the sword in both hands, he gave the chapel door a push with his foot, whispering to me, "Hold high the lanterns, Friend Trowbridge; we need light for our work."

The rays from my lamp steamed across the dark, vaulted chapel and I nearly let the lantern crash to the floor at what I beheld.

Standing before the ancient, tumbledown altar, her nude, white body gleaming in the semi-darkness like a lovely, slender statue of sun-stained marble, was Adrienne Bixby. Her long rippling hair, which had always reminded me of molten gold in the assayer's crucible, streamed over her shoulders to her waist; one arm was raised in a gesture of absolute abandon while her other hand caressed some object which swayed and undulated before her. Parted in a smile such as Circe, the enchantress, might have worn when she lured men to their ruin, her red lips were drawn back from her gleaming teeth, while she crooned a slow, sensuous melody the like of which I had never heard, nor wish to hear again.

My astounded eyes took this in at first glance, but it was my second look which sent the blood coursing through my arteries like river-water in zero weather. About her slender, virginal torso, ascending in a spiral from hips to shoulders, *was the spotted body of a gigantic snake.*

The monster's horrid, wedge-shaped head swung and swayed a scant half-inch before her face, and its darting, lambent tongue licked lightly at her parted lips.

But it was no ordinary serpent which held her, a laughing prisoner, in its coils. Its body shone with alternate spots of green and gold, almost as if the colors were laid on in luminous paint; its flickering tongue was red and glowing as a flame of fire, and in its head were eyes as large and blue as those of human kind, but set and terrible in their expression as only the eyes of a snake can be.

Scarcely audible, so low his whisper was, de Grandin hissed a challenge as he hurled himself into the chapel with one of his lithe, catlike leaps: "*Snake thou art,*

Raimond de Broussac, and snake thou shalt become!
Garde à vous!"

With a slow, sliding motion, the great serpent turned its head, gradually released its folds from the leering girl's body and slipped to the floor, coiled its length quickly, like a giant spring, and launched itself like a flash of green-and-gold lightning at de Grandin!

But quick as the monster's attack was, de Grandin was quicker. Like the shadow of a flying hawk, the little Frenchman slipped aside, and the reptile's darting head crashed against the granite wall with an impact like a wave slapping a ship's bow.

"One!" counted de Grandin in a mocking whisper, and swung his heavy sword, snipping a two-foot length from the serpent's tail as neatly as a seamstress snips a thread with her scissors. "*En garde, fils du diable!*"

Writhing, twisting, turning like a spring from which the tension has been loosed, the serpent gathered itself for another onslaught, its malign, human-seeming eyes glaring implacable hatred at de Grandin.

Not this time did the giant reptile launch a battering-ram blow at its adversary. Instead, it reared itself six feet and more in the air and drove its wicked, scale armored head downward with a succession of quick, shifting jabs, seeking to take de Grandin off his guard and enfold him in its crushing coils.

But like a veritable *chevaux-de-frise* of points, de Grandin's sword was right, left, and in between. Each time the monster's head drove at the little man, the blade engraved with ancient battle-cry stood in its path, menacing the hateful blue eyes and flashing, backward-curving fangs with its sharp, tapering end.

"Ha, ha!" de Grandin mocked; "to fight a man is a greater task than to bewitch a woman, *n'est-ce-pas, M'sieur le Serpent?*"

"Ha! You have it!" Like a wheel of living flame, the sword circled through the air; there was a sharp, slapping impact, and the steel sheared clean and clear through the reptile's body, six inches below the head.

"*Sa, ha; sa, ha!*" de Grandin's face was set in a look of

incomparable fury; his small mouth was squared beneath his bristling mustache like that of a snarling wildcat, and the sword rose and fell in a quick succession of strokes, separating the writhing body of the serpent into a dozen, twenty, half a hundred sections.

"S-s-h, no noise!" he cautioned as I opened my lips to speak. "First clothe the poor child's nakedness; her gown lies yonder on the floor."

I looked behind me and saw Adrienne's silk nightrobe lying in a crumpled ring against the altar's lowest step. Turning toward the girl, revulsion and curiosity fighting for mastery of my emotions, I saw she still retained the same fixed, carnal smile; her right hand still moved mechanically in the air as though caressing the head of the loathsome thing yet quivering in delayed death at her white feet.

"Why, de Grandin," I exclaimed in wonder, "why, she's *asleep*!"

"S-s-h, no sound!" he cautioned again, laying his finger on his lips. "Slip the robe over her head, my friend, and pick her up gently. She will not know."

I draped the silken garment about the unconscious girl, noticing as I did so, that a long, spiral bruise was already taking form on her tender flesh.

"Careful! Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin commanded, picking up the lantern and sword and leading the way from the chapel. "Carry her tenderly, the poor, sinned-against one. Do not waken her, I beseech you. *Pardieu*, if that scolding mother of hers does but open her shrewish lips within this poor lamb's hearing this night, I shall serve her as I did the serpent. *Mordieu*, may Satan burn me if I do not so!"

11

"Trowbridge, Trowbridge, my friend, come and see!" de Grandin's voice sounded in my ear.

I sat up, sleepily staring about me. Daylight had just begun; the gray of early morning still mingled with the first faint rose of the new day, and outside my window the blackbirds were singing.

"Eh, what's up?" I demanded, swinging my feet to the floor.

"Plenty, a very plenty, I do assure you," he answered, tugging delightedly first at one end of his mustache, then the other. "Arise, my friend, arise and pack your bags; we must go immediately, at once, right away."

He fairly pranced about the room while I shaved, washed, and made ready for the journey, meeting my bewildered demands for information only with renewed entreaties for haste. At last, as I accompanied him down the great stairway my kit bags banging against my knees:

"Behold!" he cried, pointing dramatically to the hall below. "Is it not superb?"

On a couch before the great empty fireplace of the chateau hall sat Adrienne Bixby, dressed and ready for a trip, her slender white hands securely held in a pair of bronzed ones, her fluffy golden head pillowed on a broad, homespun-clad shoulder.

"Monsieur Trowbridge," de Grandin almost purred in his elation, "permit that I present to you Monsieur Ray Keefer, of Oklahoma, who is to make happy our so dear Mademoiselle Adrienne at once, right away, immediately. Come, *mes enfants*, we must go away," he beamed on the pair of lovers. "The American consul at Rouen, he will unite you in the bonds of matrimony, then—away for that joyous wedding trip, and may your happiness never be less than it is this day. I have left a note of explanation for Monsieur your father, Mademoiselle; let us hope he gives you his blessing. However, be that as it may, you have already the blessing of happiness."

A large motor was waiting outside, Roxanne seated beside the chauffeur, mounting guard over Adrienne's baggage.

"I did meet Monsieur Keefer as he entered the park this morning," de Grandin confided to me as the car gathered speed, "and I did compel him to wait while I rushed within and roused his sweetheart and Roxanne from their sleep. Ha, ha, what was it Madame the Scolding One did say to Roxanne last night, that she should pack her clothes and leave the house bright and early this morning? *Eh bien*, she has gone, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

Shepherded by de Grandin and me, the lovers entered the consulate, emerging a few minutes later with a certificate bearing the great seal of the United States of America and the information that they were man and wife.

de Grandin hunted feverishly in the gutters, finally discovered a tattered old boot, and shied it after them as, with the giggling Roxanne, they set out for Switzerland, Oklahoma, and happiness.

"Name of a little green man!" he swore, furtively flicking a drop of moisture from his eyes. "I am so happy to see her safe in the care of the good young man who loves her that I could almost bring myself to kiss that so atrocious Madame Bixby!"

12

"Now, de Grandin," I threatened, as we seated ourselves in a compartment of the Paris express, "tell me all about it, or I'll choke the truth out of you!"

"*La, la,*" he exclaimed in mock terror, "he is a ferocious one, this *Americain!* Very well, then, *cher ami*, from the beginning:

"You will recall how I told you houses gather evil reputations, even as people do? They do more than that, my friend; they acquire character.

"Broussac is an old place; in it generations of men have been born and have lived, and met their deaths; and the record of their personalities—all they have dreamed and thought and loved and hated—is written fair upon the walls of the house for him who cares to read. These thoughts I had when first I went to Broussac to trace down the reason for these deaths which drove tenant after tenant from the chateau.

"But fortunately for me there was a more tangible record than the atmosphere of the house to read. There was the great library of the de Broussac family, with the records of those who were good, those who were not so good, and those who were not good at all written down. Among those records did I find this story:

"In the years before your America was discovered, there dwelt at Broussac one Sieur Raimond, a man beside whom the wickedest of the Roman emperors was a mild-mannered gentleman. What he desired he took, this one, and as most of his desires leaned toward his neighbors' women folk, he was busy at robbery, murder, and rapine most of the time.

"*Eh bien*, he was a mighty man, this Sieur Raimond, but the Bishop of Rouen and the Pope at Rome were mightier. At last, the wicked gentleman came face-to-face with the reckoning of his sins, for where the civil authorities were fearful to act, the church stepped in and brought him to trial.

"Listen to this which I found among the chronicles at the chateau, my friend. Listen and marvel!" He drew a sheaf of papers from his portmanteau and began reading slowly, translating as he went along:

Now when the day for the wicked Sieur Raimond's execution was come, a great procession issued from the church where the company of faithful people were gone to give thanks that Earth was to be ridded of a monster.

Francois and Henri, the de Broussac's wicked accomplices in crime, had become reconciled to Mother Church, and so were accorded the mercy of strangling before burning, but the Sieur Raimond would have none of repentance, but walked to his place of execution with the smile of a devil on his false, well-favored face.

And as he marched between the men at arms toward the stake set up for his burning, behold, the Lady Abbess of the convent of Our Lady of Mercy, together with the gentlewomen who were her nuns, came forth to weep and pray for the souls of the condemned, even the soul of the unrepentant sinner, Raimond de Broussac.

And when the Sieur Raimond was come over against the place where the abbess stood with all her company, he halted between his guards and taunted her, saying, "What now, old hen, dost seek the chicks

of thy brood who are missing?" (For it was a fact that three novices of the convent of Our Lady had been ravished away from their vows by this vile man and great was the scandal thereof everywhere.)

Then did the Lady Abbess pronounce these words to that wicked man, "Snake thou art, Raimond de Broussac, snake thou shalt become and snake thou must remain until some good man and true shall cleave thy foul body into as many pieces as the year hath weeks."

And I, who beheld and heard all, do declare upon the rood that when the flames were kindled about that wicked man and his sinful body had been burned to ashes, a small snake of the colors of green and gold was seen by all to emerge from the fire and, maugre the efforts of the men at arms to slay it, did escape to the forest of the chateau of Broussac.

"Eh? What think you of that, Friend Trowbridge?" he asked as he laid the papers beside him on the car-seat.

"Rather an interesting medieval legend," I answered, "but hardly convincing today."

"Truly," he conceded, "but as your English proverb has it, where there is much smoke there is apt to be a little flame. Other things I found in the records, my friend. For instance:

"The ashes of this Raimond de Broussac could not be buried in the chateau chapel among his ancestors and descendants, for the chapel is consecrated ground, and he died excommunicate. They buried him in what was then a pine forest hard by the house where he lived his evil life, and on the stone which they set over him they did declare that he lay there forever.

"But one year from the day of his execution, as the de Broussac chaplain was reciting his office in the chapel, he did see a green-and-gold snake, something thicker than a monk's girdle but not so long as a man's forearm, enter the chapel, and the snake attacked the holy man so fiercely that he was much put to it to defend himself.

"Another year went by, and a servant bearing oil to re-

fill the sanctuary lamp in the chapel did behold a similar snake, but now grown to the length of a man's arm, coiled above one of the tombs; and the snake also attacked that servant, and nearly slew him.

"From year to year the records go on. Often about Broussac was seen a snake, but each succeeding time it appeared larger than before.

"Too, there were strange stories current—stories of women of the locality who wandered off into the woods of Broussac, who displayed strange bruises upon their bodies, and who died eventually in a manner unexplained by any natural cause. One and all, *mon ami*, they were crushed to death.

"One was a member of the de Broussac family, a distant kinswoman of Sieur Raimond himself, who had determined to take the veil. As she knelt in prayer in the chapel one day, a great sleep fell upon her, and after that, for many days, she seemed distraught—her interest in everything, even her religious vocation, seemed to wane to nothing. But it was thought that she was very saintly, for those who watched her did observe that she went often to the chapel by night. One morning she was found, like the others, crushed to death, and on her face was the look not of the agony of dying but the evil smile of an abandoned woman. Even in death she wore it.

"These things I had already read when that game-keeper brought us news of the great snake he had seen in the garden, and what I had noted down as idle legend appeared possible to me as a sober fact—if we could prove it.

"You recall how we spread flour on the chapel floor; you also recall the tracks we read in the flour next day.

"I remembered, too, how that poor Madame Biddle, who went mad in the chateau Broussac, did so when she wandered one day by chance into the chapel, and I remembered how she does continually cry out of a great snake which seems to *kiss* her. The doctor who first attended her, too, when her reason departed, told me of a bruise not to be explained, a spiral bruise about the lady's arm.

"*Pardieu!* I think I will test these legends some more,

and I search and search until I find this wicked *Sieur Raimond's* grave. It was even as the chronicler wrote, for, to prove it, I made you go with me and read the inscription on the tombstone. *Morbleu!* Against my reason I am convinced, so I make and place them so that their sharp nails would scratch the belly of any snake—if he were really a snake—who tried to crawl over them. *Voilà*, next she was better. Then I knew for a certainty that she was under the influence of this *Sieur Raimond* snake, even as that poor intending-nun lady who met so tragic a death in the days of long ago.

“Something else I learn, too. This demon snake, this relic of the accursed *Raimond de Broussac*, was like a natural snake. Material iron nails would keep him from the house his wickedness had so long held under a spell. If this was so, then a natural weapon could kill his body if one man was but brave enough to fight him. ‘*Cordieu*, I am that man!’ says *Jules de Grandin* to *Jules de Grandin*.

“But in the meantime what do I see? *Helas!* That wicked one has now so great an influence over poor *Mademoiselle Adrienne* that he can compel her, by his wicked will, to rise from her bed at night and go barefoot to the garden to tear away the barrier I have erected for her protection.

“*Nom d'un coq!* I am angered, I am furious. I decide this snake-devil have already lived too long; I shall do even as the lady abbess prescribes and slash his so loathly body into as many parts as the year has weeks.

“*Morbleu!* I go to *Rouen* and obtain that holy sword; I come back, thinking I shall catch that snake waiting alone in the chapel for his assignation, since I shall bar *Mademoiselle's* way to him. And then her so stupid mother must needs upset all my plans, and I have to fight that snake almost in silence—I can not shout and curse at him as I would, for if I raise my voice I may waken that then, perhaps she goes mad, even as did *Madame Bidde*.

“*Eh bien*, perhaps it is for the best. Had I said all the foul curses I had in mind as I slew that blue-eyed snake, all the priests, clergymen, and rabbis in the world could scarce have shriven my soul of their weight.

"*Voilà tout!* We are in Paris once more, my friend. Come, let us have a drink!"

The Isle of Missing Ships

The *Mevrouw*, Sumatra-bound out of Amsterdam, had dropped the low Holland coast an hour behind that day in 1925, when I recognized a familiar figure among the miscellany of Dutch colonials. The little man with the erect, military carriage, trimly waxed mustache and direct, challenging blue eyes was as conspicuous amid the throng of over-fleshed planters, traders and petty administrators as a *fleur-de-lis* growing in the midst of a cabbage patch.

"For the Lord's sake, de Grandin! What are you doing here?" I demanded, seizing him by the hand. "I thought you'd gone back to your microscopes and test tubes when you cleared up the Broussac mystery."

He grinned at me like a blond brother of Mephistopheles as he linked his arm in mine and caught step with me. "*Eh bien,*" he agreed with a nod, "so did I; but those inconsiderate Messieurs Lloyd would not have it so. They must needs send me an urgent message to investigate a suspicion they have at the other end of the earth.

"I did not desire to go. The summer is come and the blackbirds are singing in the trees at St. Cloud. Also, I have much work to do; but they tell me: 'You shall name your own price and no questions shall be asked,' and, *hélas*, the franc is very low on the exchange these days.

"I tell them, 'Ten pounds sterling for each day of my travels and all expenses.' They agree. *Voilà*. I am here."

I looked at him in amazement. "Lloyds? Ten pounds sterling a day?" I echoed. "What in the world—?"

"*La, la!*" he exclaimed. "It is a long story, Friend

Trowbridge, and most like a foolish one in the bargain, but, at any rate, the English money is sound. Listen"—he sank his voice to a confidential whisper—"you know those Messieurs Lloyd, *hein?* They will insure against anything from the result of one of your American political elections to the loss of a ship in the sea. That last business of theirs is also my business, for the time.

"Of late the English insurers have had many claims to pay—claims on ships which should have been good risks. There was the Dutch Indiaman *Van Damm*, a sound little iron ship of twelve thousand tons displacement. She sail out of Rotterdam for Sumatra, and start home heavy-laden with spices and silks, also with a king's ransom in pearls safely locked in her strong box. Where is she now?" He spread his hands and shrugged expressively. "No one knows. She was never heard of more, and the Lloyds had to make good her value to her owners.

"There was the French steamer *l'Orient*, also dissolved into air, and the British merchantman *Nightingale*, and six other sound ships gone—all gone, with none to say whither, and the estimable Messieurs Lloyd to pay insurance. All within one single year. *Parbleu*, it is too much! The English company pays its losses like a true sportsman, but it also begins to sniff the aroma of the dead fish. They would have me, Jules de Grandin, investigate this business of the monkey and tell them where the missing ships are gone.

"It may be for a year that I search; it may be for only a month, or, perhaps, I spend the time till my hair is as bald as yours, Friend Trowbridge, before I can report. No matter; I receive my ten pounds each day and all incidental expenses. Say now, are not those Messieurs Lloyd gambling more recklessly this time than ever before in their long career?"

"I think they are," I agreed.

"But," he replied with one of his elfish grins, "remember, Trowbridge, my friend, those Messieurs Lloyd were never known to lose money permanently on any transaction. *Morbleu!* Jules de Grandin, as the Americans say, you entertain the hatred for yourself!"

The *Mevrouw* churned and wallowed her broad-

beamed way through the cool European ocean, into the summer seas, finally out upon the tropical waters of Polynesia. For five nights the smalt-blue heavens were ablaze with stars; on the sixth evening the air thickened at sunset. By 10 o'clock the ship might have been draped in a pall of black velvet as a teapot is swathed in a cozy, so impenetrable was the darkness. Objects a dozen feet from the porthole lights were all but indistinguishable, at twenty feet they were invisible, and, save for the occasional phosphorescent glow of some tumbling sea denizen, the ocean itself was only an undefined part of the surrounding blackness.

"Eh, but I do not like this," de Grandin muttered as he lighted a rank Sumatra cigar from the ship steward's store and puffed vigorously to set the fire going: "this darkness, it is a time for evil doings, Friend Trowbridge."

He turned to a ship's officer who strode past us toward the bridge. "Is it that we shall have a storm, Monsieur?" he asked. "Does the darkness portend a typhoon?"

"No," returned the Dutchman. "Id iss folcanic dust. Some of dose folcano mountains are in eruption again and scatter steam and ash over a hundred miles. Tomorrow, perhaps, or de nex' day, ve are out of id an' into de zunzhine again."

"Ah," de Grandin bowed acknowledgment of the information, "and does this volcanic darkness frequently come at this latitude and longitude, Monsieur?"

"Ja," the other answered, "dese vaters are almost always cofered; de chimneys of hell poke up through de ocean hereabouts, *Mijnheer*."

"Cordieu!" de Grandin swore softly to himself. "I think he has spoken truth, Friend Trowbridge. Now if—*Grand Dieu*, see! What is that?"

Some distance off our port bow a brand of yellow fire burned a parabola against the black sky, burst into a shower of sparks high above the horizon and flung a constellation of colored fireballs into the air. A second flame followed the first, and a third winged upward in the wake of the second. "Rockets," de Grandin announced. "A ship is in distress over there, it would seem."

Bells clanged and jangled as the engine room telegraph

sent orders from the bridge; there was a clanking of machinery as the screws churned in opposite directions and the steering mechanism brought the ship's head about toward the distress signals.

"I think we had best be prepared, my friend," de Grandin whispered as he reached upward to the rack above us and detached two kapok swimming jackets from their straps. "Come, slip this over your shoulders, and if you have anything in your cabin you would care to save, get it at once," he advised.

"You're crazy, man," I protested, pushing the life preserver away. "We aren't in any danger. Those lights were at least five miles away, and even if that other ship is fast on a reef our skipper would hear the breakers long before we were near enough to run aground."

"*Nom d'un nom!*" the little Frenchman swore in vexation. "Friend Trowbridge, you are one great zany. Have you no eyes in that so empty head of yours? Did you not observe how those rockets went up?"

"How they went up?" I repeated. "Of course I did; they were fired from the deck—perhaps the bridge—of some ship about five miles away."

"So?" he replied in a sarcastic whisper. "Five miles, you say? And you, a physician, do not know that the human eye sees only about five miles over a plane surface? How, then, if the distressed ship is five miles distant, could those flares have appeared to rise from *a greater height than our own deck*? Had they really a masthead, at that distance—they should have appeared to rise across the horizon. As it was, they first became visible at a considerable height."

"Nonsense," I rejoined; "whoever would be setting off rockets in midair in this part of the world?"

"Who, indeed?" he answered, gently forcing the swimming coat on me. "That question, *mon ami*, is precisely what those Messieurs Lloyd are paying me ten pounds a day to answer. Hark!"

Distinctly, directly in our path, sounded the muttering roar of waves breaking against rocks.

Clang! The ship's telegraph shrieked the order to reverse, to put about, to the engine room from the bridge.

Wheels and chains rattled, voices shouted hoarse orders through the dark, and the ship shivered from stem to stern as the engine struggled hysterically to break our course toward destruction.

Too late! Like a toy boat caught in a sudden wind squall, we lunged forward, gathering speed with each foot we traveled. There was a rending crash like all the crockery in the world being smashed at once, de Grandin and I fell headlong to the deck and shot along the smooth boards like a couple of ball players sliding for second base, and the stout little *Mevrouw* listed suddenly to port, sending us banging against the deck rail.

"Quick, quick, my friend!" de Grandin shouted. "Over the side and swim for it. I may be wrong, *prie-Dieu* I am, but I fear there will be devil's work here anon. Come!" He lifted himself to his feet, balanced on the rail a moment, then slipped into the purple water that swirled past the doomed ship's side a scant seven feet below us.

I followed, striking out easily toward the quiet water ahead, the kapok jacket keeping me afloat and the rushing water carrying me forward rapidly.

"By George, old fellow, you've been right this far," I congratulated my companion, but he shut me off with a sharp hiss.

"Still, you fool," he admonished savagely. "Keep your silly tongue quiet and kick with your feet. Kick, kick, I tell you! Make as great commotion in the water as possible—*nom de Dieu!* We are lost!"

Faintly luminous with the phosphorescence of tropical sea water, something seeming as large as a submarine boat shot upward from the depths below, headed as straight for my flailing legs as a sharpshooter's bullet for its target.

de Grandin grasped my shoulder and heaved me over in a clumsy back somersault, and at the same time thrust himself as deeply into the water as his swimming coat would permit. For a moment his fiery silhouette mingled with that of the great fish and he seemed striving to embrace the monster, then the larger form sank slowly away, while the little Frenchman rose puffing to the surface.

"*Mordieu!*" he commented, blowing the water from his mouth, "that was a near escape, my friend. One little second more and he would have had your leg in his belly. Lucky for us. I knew the pearl divers' trick of slitting those fellows' gills with a knife, and luckier still I thought to bring along a knife to slit him with."

"What was it?" I asked, still bewildered by the performance I had just witnessed. "It looked big enough to be a whale."

He shook his head to clear the water from his eyes as he replied. "It was our friend, *Monsieur le Requin*—the shark. He is always hungry, that one, and such morsels as you would be a choice titbit for his table, my friend."

"A shark!" I answered incredulously. "But it couldn't have been a shark, *de Grandin*, they have to turn on their backs to bite, and that thing came straight at me."

"*Ah, bah!*" he shot back disgustedly. "What old wives' tale is that you quote? *Le requin* is no more compelled to take his food upside down than you are. I tell you, he would have swallowed your leg up to the elbow if I had not cut his sinful gizzard in two!"

"Good Lord!" I began splashing furiously. "Then we're apt to be devoured any moment!"

"Possibly," he returned calmly, "but not probably. If land is not too far away that fellow's brethren will be too busy eating him to pay attention to such small fry as us. *Grace à Dieu*, I think I feel the good land beneath our feet even now."

It was true. We were standing armpit-deep on a sloping, sandy beach with the long, gentle swell of the ocean kindly pushing us toward the shore. A dozen steps and we were safely beyond the tide-line, lying face down upon the warm sands and gulping down great mouthfuls of the heavy, sea-scented air. What *de Grandin* did there in the dark I do not know, but for my part I offered up such unspoken prayers of devout thanksgiving as I had never breathed before.

My devotions were cut short by a sputtering mixture of French profanity.

"What's up?" I demanded, then fell silent as *de Gran-*

din's hand closed on my wrist like a tightened tourniquet.

"Hark, my friend," he commanded. "Look across the water to the ship we left and say whether or no I was wise when I brought us away."

Out across the quiet lagoon inside the reef the form of the stranded *Mevrouw* loomed a half shade darker than the night, her lights, still burning, casting a fitful glow upon the crashing water at the reef and the quiet water beyond. Two, three, four, half a dozen shades gathered alongside her; dark figures, like ants swarming over the carcass of a dead rat, appeared against her lights a moment, and the stabbing flame of a pistol was followed a moment later by the reports of the shots wafted to us across the lagoon. Shouts, cries of terror, screams of women in abject fright followed one another in quick succession for a time, then silence, more ominous than any noise, settled over the water.

Half an hour, perhaps, de Grandin and I stood tense-muscled on the beach, staring toward the ship, waiting expectantly for some sign of renewed life. One by one her porthole lights blinked out; at last she lay in utter darkness.

"It is best we seek shelter in the bush, my friend," de Grandin announced matter-of-factly. "The farther out of sight we get the better will be our health."

"What in heaven's name does it all mean?" I demanded as I turned to follow him.

"Mean?" he echoed impatiently. "It means we have stumbled on as fine a nest of pirates as ever cheated the yardarm. When we reached this island, Friend Trowbridge, I fear we did but step from the soup kettle into the flame. *Mille tonneres*, what a fool you are, Jules de Grandin! You should have demanded fifty pounds sterling a day from those Messieurs Lloyd! Come, Friend Trowbridge, let us seek shelter. Right away, at once, immediately."

2

The sloping beach gave way to a line of boulders a hundred yards inland, and these in turn marked the beginning

of a steady rise in the land, its lower portion overgrown with bushes, loftier growth supplanting the underbrush as we stumbled upward over the rocks.

When we had traversed several hundred rods and knocked nearly all the skin from our legs against unexpectedly projecting stones, de Grandin called a halt in the midst of a copse of wide-leaved trees. "We may as well rest here as elsewhere," he suggested philosophically. "The pack will scarcely hunt again tonight."

I was too sleepy and exhausted to ask what he meant. The last hour's events had been as full of surprises to me as a traveling carnival is for a farmhand.

It might have been half an hour later, or only five minutes, judging by my feelings, that I was roused by the roar of a muffled explosion, followed at short intervals by two more detonations. "*Mordieu!*" I heard de Grandin exclaim. "Up, Friend Trowbridge. Rise and see!" He shook me roughly by the shoulder, and half dragged me to an opening in the trees. Out across the lagoon I saw the hulk of the *Mevrouw* falling apart and sliding into the water like a mud bank attacked by a summer flood, and round her the green waters boiled and seethed as though the entire reef had suddenly gone white hot. Across the lagoon, wave after swelling wave raced and tumbled, beating on the glittering sands of the beach in a furious surf.

"Why—" I began, but he answered my question before I could form it.

"Dynamite!" he exclaimed. "Last night, or early this morning, they looted her, now they dismantle the remains with high explosives; it would not do to let her stand there as a sign-post of warning for other craft. *Pardieu!* They have system, these ones. Captain Kidd and Blackbeard, they were but freshmen in crime's college, Friend Trowbridge. We deal with postgraduates here. Ah"—his small, womanishly slender hand caught me by the arm—"observe, if you please; what is that on the sands below?"

Following his pointing finger with my eyes, I made out, beyond a jutting ledge of rocks, the rising spiral of a column of wood smoke. "Why," I exclaimed delighted-

ly, "some of the people from the ship escaped, after all! They got to shore and built a fire. Come on, let's join them. Hello, down here; hello, hello! You . . ."

"Fool!" he cried in a suppressed shout, clapping his hand over my mouth. "Would you ruin us altogether, completely, entirely? *Le bon Dieu* grant your ass's bray was not heard, or, if heard, was disregarded!"

"But," I protested, "those people probably have food, de Grandin, and we haven't a single thing to eat. We ought to join them and plan our escape."

He looked at me as a school teacher might regard an unusually backward pupil. "They have food, no doubt," he admitted, "but what sort of food, can you answer me that? Suppose—*nom d'un moineau, regardez vous!*"

As if in answer to my hail, a pair of the most villainous-looking Papuans I had ever beheld came walking around the rocky screen beyond which the smoke rose, looked undecidedly toward the heights where we hid, then turned back whence they had come. A moment later they reappeared, each carrying a broad-bladed spear, and began climbing over the rocks in our direction.

"Shall we got to meet them?" I asked dubiously. Those spears looked none too reassuring to me.

"*Mais non!*" de Grandin answered decidedly. "They may be friendly; but I distrust everything on this accursed island. We would better seek shelter and observe."

"But they might give us something to eat," I urged. "The whole world is pretty well civilized now, it isn't as if we were back in Captain Cook's day."

"Nevertheless," he returned as he wriggled under a clump of bushes, "we shall watch first and ask questions later."

I crawled beside him and squatted, awaiting the savages' approach.

But I had forgotten that men who live in primitive surroundings have talents unknown to their civilized brethren. While they were still far enough away to make it impossible for us to hear the words they exchanged as they walked, the two Papuans halted, looked speculative-

ly at the copse where we hid, and raised their spears menacingly.

"*Ciel!*" de Grandin muttered. "We are discovered." He seized the stalk of one of the sheltering plants and shook it gently.

The response was instant. A spear whizzed past my ear, missing my head by an uncomfortably small fraction of an inch, and the savages began clambering rapidly toward us, one with his spear poised for a throw, the other drawing a murderous knife from the girdle which constituted his sole article of clothing.

"*Parbleu!*" de Grandin whispered fiercely. "Play dead, my friend. Fall out from the bush and lie as though his spear had killed you." He gave me a sudden push which sent me reeling into the open.

I fell flat to the ground, acting the part of a dead man as realistically as possible and hoping desperately that the savages would not decide to throw a second spear to make sure of their kill.

Though my eyes were closed, I could feel them standing over me, and a queer, cold feeling tingled between my shoulder blades, where I momentarily expected a knife thrust.

Half opening one eye, I saw the brown, naked shins of one of the Papuans beside my head, and was wondering whether I could seize him by the ankles and drag him down before he could stab me, when the legs beside my face suddenly swayed drunkenly, like tree trunks in a storm, and a heavy weight fell crashing on my back.

Startled out of my sham death by the blow, I raised myself in time to see de Grandin in a death grapple with one of the savages. The other one lay across me, the spear he had flung at us a few minutes before protruding from his back directly beneath his left shoulder blade.

"*A moi, Friend Trowbridge!*" the little Frenchmen called. "Quick, or we are lost."

I tumbled the dead Papuan unceremoniously to the ground and grappled with de Grandin's antagonist just

as he was about to strike his dirk into my companion's side.

"*Bien, très bien!*" the Frenchman panted as he thrust his knife forward, sinking the blade hilt-deep into the savage's left armpit. "Very good, indeed, Friend Trowbridge. I have not hurled the javelin since I was a boy at school, and I strongly misdoubted my ability to kill the one with a single throw from my ambush, but, happily, my hand has not lost its cunning. *Voilà*, we have a perfect score to our credit! Come, let us bury them."

"But was it necessary to kill the poor fellows?" I asked as I helped him scrape a grave with one of his victim's knives. "Mightn't we have made them understand we meant them no harm?"

"Friend Trowbridge," he answered between puffs of exertion as he dragged one of the naked bodies into the shallow trench we had dug, "never, I fear me, will you learn the sense of the goose. With fellows such as these, even as with the shark last night, we take necessary steps for our own protection first.

"This interment which we make now, think you it is for tenderness of these *canaille*? *Ah, non*. We bury them that their friends find them not if they come searching, and that the buzzards come not flapping this way to warn the others of what we have done. Good, they are buried. Take up that one's spear and come with me. I would investigate that fire which they have made."

We approached the heights overlooking the fire cautiously, taking care to remain unseen by any possible scout sent out by the main party of natives. It was more than an hour before we maneuvered to a safe observation post. As we crawled over the last ridge of rock obstructing our view I went deathly sick at my stomach and would have fallen down the steep hill, had not de Grandin thrown his arm about me.

Squatting around a blazing bonfire in a circle, like wolves about the stag they have run to earth, were perhaps two dozen naked savages, and, bound upright to a stake fixed in the sand, was a white man, lolling forward against the restraining cords with a horrible limpness. Before him stood two burly Papuans, the war clubs in their

hands, red as blood at the tips, telling the devil's work they had just completed. It was blood on the clubs. The brown fiends had beaten their helpless captive's head in, and even now one of them was cutting the cords that held his body to the stake.

But beyond the dead man was a second stake, and, as I looked at this, every drop of blood in my body seemed turned to liquid fire, for, lashed to it, mercifully unconscious, but still alive, was a white woman whom I recognized as the wife of a Dutch planter going out from Holland to join her husband in Sumatra.

"Good God, man!" I cried. "That's a woman; a white woman. We can't let those devils kill *her*!"

"Softly, my friend," de Grandin cautioned, pressing me back, for I would have risen and charged pellmell down the hill. "We are two, they are more than a score; what would it avail us, or that poor woman, were we to rush down and be killed?"

I turned on him in amazed fury. "You call yourself a Frenchman," I taunted, "yet you haven't chivalry enough to attempt a rescue? A fine Frenchman you are!"

"Chivalry is well—in its place," he admitted, "but no Frenchman is so foolish as to spend his life where there is nothing to be bought with it. Would it help her if we, too, were destroyed, or, which is worse, captured and eaten also? Do we, as physicians, seek to throw away our lives when we find a patient hopelessly sick with phthisis? But no, we live that we may fight the disease in others—that we may destroy the germs of the malady. So let it be in this case. Save that poor one we can not; but take vengeance on her slayers we can and will. I, Jules de Grandin, swear it. Ha, she has it!"

Even as he spoke one of the cannibal butchers struck the unconscious woman over the head with his club. A stain of red appeared against the pale yellow of her hair, and the poor creature shuddered convulsively, then hung passive and flaccid against her bonds once more.

"*Par le sang du diable*," de Grandin gritted between his teeth, "if it so be that the good God lets me live, I swear

to make those *sales bouchers* die one hundred deaths apiece for every hair in that so pitiful woman's head!"

He turned away from the horrid sight below us and began to ascend the hill. "Come away, Friend Trowbridge," he urged. "It is not good that we should look upon a woman's body served as meat. *Pardieu*, almost I wish I had followed your so crazy advice and attempted a rescue; we should have killed some of them so! No matter, as it is, we shall kill all of them, or may those *Messieurs Lloyd* pay me not one penny."

3

Feeling secure against discovery by the savages, as they were too engrossed in their orgy to look for other victims, we made our way to the peak which towered like a truncated cone at the center of the island.

From our station at the summit we could see the ocean in all directions and get an accurate idea of our surroundings. Apparently, the islet was the merest point of land on the face of the sea—probably only the apex of a submarine volcano. It was roughly oval in shape, extending for a possible five miles in length by two-and-a-quarter miles at its greatest width, and rising out of the ocean with a mountainous steepness, the widest part of the beach at the water-line being not more than three or four hundred feet. On every side, and often in series of three or four, extended reefs and points of rock (no doubt the lesser peaks of the mountain whose unsubmerged top constituted the island) so that no craft larger than a whaleboat could hope to come within half a mile of the land without having its bottom torn out by the hidden semi-submerged crags.

"*Nom d'un petit bonhomme!*" de Grandin commented. "This is an ideal place for its purpose, *c'est certain*. Ah, see!"—he drew me to a ridge of rock which ran like a rampart across the well-defined path by which we had ascended. Fastened to the stone by bolts were three sheet-iron troughs, each pointing skyward at an angle of some fifty degrees, and each much blackened by smoke stains. "Do you see?" he asked. "These are for firing rockets—

observe the powder burns on them. And here"—his voice rose to an excited pitch and he fairly danced in eagerness—"see what is before us!"

Up the path, almost at the summit of the peak, and about twenty-five feet apart, stood two poles, each some twelve feet in height and fitted with a pulley and lanyard. As we neared them we saw that a lantern with a green globe rested at the base of the right-hand stake, while a red-globed lamp was secured to the rope of the left post. "Ah, clever, clever," de Grandin muttered, staring from one pole to the other. "Observe, my friend. At night the lamps can be lit and hoisted to the tops of these masts, then gently raised and lowered. Viewed at a distance against the black background of this mountain they will simulate a ship's lights to the life. The unfortunate mariner making for them will find his ship fast on these rocks while the lights are still a mile or more away, and—too well we know what happens then. Let us see what more there is, eh?"

Rounding the peak we found ourselves looking down upon the thatched beehive-roofs of a native village, before which a dozen long Papuan canoes were beached on the narrow strip of sand. "Ah," de Grandin inspected the cluster of huts, "it is there the butchers dwell, eh? That will be a good spot for us to avoid, my friend. Now to find the residence of what you Americans call the master mind. Do you see aught resembling a European dwelling, Friend Trowbridge?"

I searched the greenery below us, but nowhere could I descry a roof. "No," I answered after a second inspection, "there's nothing like a white man's house down there; but how do you know there's a white man here, anyway?"

"Ho, ho," he laughed, "how does the rat know the house contains a cat when he hears it mew? Think you those *sacre* eaters of men would know enough to set up such devil's machinery as this, or that they would take care to dynamite the wreck of a ship after looting it? No, no, my friend, this is white man's work, and very bad work it is, too. Let us explore."

Treading warily, we descended the smooth path leading

to the rocket-troughs, looking sharply from left to right in search of anything resembling a white man's house. Several hundred feet down the mountain the path forked abruptly, one branch leading toward the Papuan village, the other running to a narrow strip of beach bordering an inlet between two precipitous rock walls. I stared and stared again, hardly able to believe my eyes, for, drawn up on the sand and made fast by a rope to a ringbolt in the rock was a trim little motor-boat, flat-bottomed for navigating the rock-strewn waters in safety, broad-beamed for mastering the heavy ocean swells, and fitted with a comfortable, roofed-over cabin. Forward, on the little deck above her sharp clipper bow, was an efficient-looking Lewis gun mounted on a swivel, and a similar piece of ordnance poked its aggressive nose out of the engine cockpit at the stern.

"*Par la barbe d'un bouc vert,*" de Grandin swore delightedly, "but this is marvelous, this is magnificent, this is superb! Come, Friend Trowbridge, let us take advantage of this miracle; let us leave this hell-hole of an island right away, immediately, at once. *Par—*" The exclamation died, half uttered, and he stared past me with the expression of a superstitious man suddenly face-to-face with a sheeted specter.

3

"Surely, Gentlemen," said a suave voice behind me, "you are not going to leave without permitting me to offer you some slight hospitality? That would be ungenerous."

I turned as though stung by a wasp and looked into the smiling eyes of a dark-skinned young man, perhaps thirty years of age. From the top of his spotless *topi* to the tips of his highly polished tan riding boots he was a perfect model of the well-dressed European in the tropics. Not a stain of dust or travel showed on his spruce white drill jacket or modishly cut riding breeches, and as he waved his silver-mounted riding crop in greeting, I saw his slender hands were carefully manicured, the nails cut rather long and stained a vivid pink before being polished to the brightness of mother-of-pearl.

de Grandin laid his hand upon the knife at his belt, but before he could draw it, a couple of beetle-browed Malays in khaki jackets and *sarongs* stepped from the bushes bordering the path and leveled a pair of business-like Mauser rifles at us. "I wouldn't," the young man warned in a blasé drawl, "I really wouldn't, if I were you. These fellows are both dead shots, and could put enough lead in you to sink you forty fathoms down before you could get the knife out of its sheath, much less into me. Do you mind, really?" He held out his hand for the weapon. "Thank you, that is much better"—he tossed the blade into the water of the inlet with a careless gesture—"really, you know, the most frightfully messy accidents are apt to happen with those things."

de Grandin and I eyed him in speechless amazement, but he continued as though our meeting were the most conventional thing imaginable.

"Mr. Trowbridge—pardon my assumption, but I heard your name called a moment ago—will you be good enough to favor me with an introduction to your friend?"

"I am Dr. Samuel Trowbridge, of Harrisonville, New Jersey," I replied, wondering, meanwhile, if I were in the midst of some crazy dream, "and this is Dr. Jules de Grandin, of Paris."

"So good of you," the other acknowledged with a smile. "I fear I must be less frank than you for the nonce and remain veiled in anonymity. However, one really must have some sort of designation, mustn't one? So suppose you know me for the present as Goonong Besar. Savage, unchristian-sounding sort of name, I'll admit, but more convenient than calling, 'hey, you!' or simply whistling when you wish to attract my attention. Eh, what? And now"—he made a slight bow—"if you will be so kind as to step into my humble burrow in the earth . . . Yes, that is it, the doorway right before you."

Still under the menacing aim of the Malays' rifles, de Grandin and I walked through the cleft in the rock, traversed a low, narrow passage, darker than a windowless cellar, made a sharp turn to the left, and halted abruptly, blinking our eyes in astonishment.

Before us, seeming to run into infinity, was a wide, long apartment paved with alternate squares of black and white marble, colonnaded down each side with double rows of white-marble pillars and topped with a vaulted ceiling of burnished copper plates. Down the center of the corridor, at intervals of about twenty feet, five silver oil lamps with globes of finely cut crystal hung from the polished ceiling, making the entire room almost as bright as equatorial noon.

"Not half bad, eh?" our host remarked as he viewed our astonishment with amusement. "This is only the vestibule, gentlemen; you really have no idea of the wonders of this house under the water. For instance, would either of you care to retrace your steps? See if you can find the door you came in."

We swung about, like soldiers at the command of execution, staring straight at the point where the entranceway should have been. A slab of marble, firm and solid as any composing the walls of the room, to all appearances, met our gaze; there was neither sign nor remote evidence of any door or doorway before us.

Goonong Besar chuckled delightedly and gave an order to one of his attendants in the harsh, guttural language of Malaya. "If you will look behind you, gentlemen," he resumed, again addressing us, "you will find another surprise."

We wheeled about and almost bumped into a pair of grinning Malay lads who stood at our elbows.

"These boys will show you to your rooms." Goonong Besar announced. "Kindly follow them. It will be useless to attempt conversation, for they understand no language but their native speech, and as for replying, unfortunately, they lack the benefits of a liberal education and can not write, while . . ." he shot a quick order to the youths, who immediately opened their mouths as though yawning. Both de Grandin and I gave vent to exclamations of horror. The boys' mouths gaped empty. Both had had their tongues cut off at the roots.

"You see," Goonong went on in the same musical, slightly bored voice, "these chaps can't be a bit of use to you as gossips, they really can't."

"I think I can furnish you with dinner clothes, Dr. de Grandin, but"—he smiled apologetically—"I'm afraid you, Dr. Trowbridge, are a little too—er—corpulent to be able to wear any garments made for me. So sorry! However, no doubt we can trick you out in a suit of whites. Captain Van Thun—er, that is, I'm sure you can be accommodated from our stores. Yes.

"Now, if you will follow the guides, please"—he broke off on a slightly interrogative note and bowed with gentle courtesy toward each of us in turn—"you will excuse me for a short time, I'm sure."

Before we could answer, he signaled his two attendants, and the three of them stepped behind one of the marble columns. We heard a subdued click, as of two pieces of stone coming lightly together.

"But, Monsieur, this is incredible, this is monstrous!" de Grandin began, striding forward. "You shall explain, I demand—*Cordieu*, he is gone!"

He was. As though the wall had faded before his approach, or his own body had dissolved into ether, Goonong Besar had vanished. We were alone in the brilliantly lighted corridor with our tongueless attendants.

Nodding and grinning, the lads signaled us to follow them down the room. One of them fan a few paces ahead and parted a pair of silken curtains, disclosing a narrow doorway through which only one could go at a time. Obeying the lad's gestures, I stepped through the opening, followed by de Grandin and our dumb guides.

The lad who had held aside the curtains for us ran ahead a few paces and gave a strange, eerie cry. We looked sharply at him, wondering what the utterance portended, and from behind us sounded the thud of stone on stone. Turning, we saw the second Malay grinning broadly at us from the place where the doorway had been. I say "had been" advisedly, for, where the narrow arched door had pierced the thick wall a moment before, was now a solid row of upright marble slabs, no joint or crack showing which portion of the wall was solid stone and which cunningly disguised door.

"*Sang du diable!*" de Grandin muttered. "But I do not

like this place. It reminds me of that grim fortress of the Inquisition at Toledo where the good fathers, dressed as demons, could appear and disappear at will through seeming solid walls and frighten the wits out of and the true faith into superstitious heretics."

I suppressed a shudder with difficulty. This underground house of secret doors was too reminiscent of other practises of the Spanish Inquisition besides the harmless mummery of the monks for my peace of mind.

"*Eh bien*," de Grandin shrugged, "now we are here we may as well make the best of it. Lead on, *Diablotins*"—he turned to our dark-skinned guides—"we follow."

We were standing in a long, straight passage, smooth-walled with panels of polished marble, and, like the larger apartment, tiled with alternate squares of black and white. No doorways led off the aisle, but other corridors crossed it at right angles at intervals of thirty to thirty-five feet. Like the larger room, the passage was lighted by oil lamps swung from the ceiling.

Following our guides, we turned to the right down a passageway the exact duplicate of the first, entered a third corridor, and, after walking a considerable distance, made another turn and stopped before a narrow curtained archway. Through this we entered a large square room, windowless, but well lighted by lamps and furnished with two bedsteads of bamboo having strong China matting on them in lieu of springs or mattress. A low bamboo dressing table, fitted with a mirror of polished metal, and several reed chairs constituted the residue of the furniture.

One of the boys signed to us to remove our clothes, while the other ran out, returning almost immediately dragging two sheet-iron bath tubs after him. Placing these in the center of the room he left us again, and reappeared in a few minutes with a wheeled contrivance something like a child's express wagon in which stood six large earthen jars, four containing warm water, the other two cold.

We stepped into the tubs and the lads proceeded to rub us down with an oily liquid, strongly perfumed with

sandalwood and very soothing to feel. When this had been well worked into our skins the lads poured the contents of the warm-water jars over us, splashing us thoroughly from hair to feet, then sluiced us off with a five-gallon douche of almost ice-cold water. Towels of coarse native linen were unfolded, and in less than five minutes we were as thoroughly cleansed, dried and invigorated as any patron of a Turkish bath at home.

I felt rather dubious when my personal attendant produced a clumsy native razor and motioned me to be seated in one of the cane chairs, but the lad proved a skilful barber, light and deft of touch and absolutely speechless—a great improvement upon the loquacious American tonsorialist, I thought.

Dinner clothes and a suit of carefully laundered white drill, all scented with the pungent, pleasing odor of clove husks, were brought in on wicker trays, and as we put the finishing touches on our toilet one of the lads produced a small casket of polished cedar in which reposed a layer of long, black cigars, the sort which retail for a dollar apiece in Havana.

"Nom d'un petit bonhomme!" de Grandin exploded as he exhaled a lungful of the fragrant smoke; "this is marvelous; it is magnificent; it is superb—but I like it not, Friend Trowbridge."

"Bosh," I responded, puffing in placid content, "you're afraid of your shadow, de Grandin! Why, man, this is wonderful—think where we were this morning, shipwrecked, pursued by man-eaters, with starvation as the least of our perils, and look at us now, both dressed in clean clothes, with every attention and convenience we could have at home, and safe, man, safe."

"Safe?" he answered dubiously. "'Safe,' do you say? Did you apprehend, my friend, how our host, that so mysterious Monsieur Goonong, almost spoke of Captain Van Thun when the question of clothing you came up?"

"Why, now you speak of it, I do remember how he seemed about to say something about Captain Something-or-Other, and apparently thought better of it," I agreed. "But what's that to do with us?"

The little Frenchman came close to me and sank his voice to a scarcely audible whisper: "Captain Franz Van Thun," he breathed, "was master of the Dutch Indiaman *Van Damm*, which sailed from Rotterdam to Sumatra, and was lost, as far as known, *with all on board*, on her homeward voyage."

"But—" I protest.

"*She-s-sh!*" he cut me off. "Those servant boys are beckoning: come, we are wanted elsewhere."

I looked up at the two mutes, and shuddered at sight of the leering grins on their faces.

4

The lads led us through another bewildering series of corridors till our sense of location was completely obfuscated, finally paused, one on each side of an archway, and, bowing deeply, signaled us to enter.

We strode into a long, marble-tiled room which, unlike every other apartment in the queer house, was not brilliantly lighted. The room's sole illumination was furnished by the glow of fourteen wax candles set in two seven-branched silver candelabra which stood at opposite ends of a polished mahogany table of purest Sheraton design, its waxed surface giving back reflections of crystal, and silver dinner service fit for the table of a king.

"Ah, gentlemen," Goonong Besar, arrayed in immaculate evening clothes, greeted us from the farther end of the room. "I hope you have brought good appetites with you. I'm fairly ravenous, for my part. Will you join me?"

The same Malay servitors who had accompanied him at our meeting stood behind him now, their semi-military khaki jackets and *sarongs* exchanged for costumes of freshly ironed white linen and their rifles replaced by a pair of large-caliber Luger pistols which each wore conspicuously tucked in his scarlet silk cummerbund.

"Sorry I can't offer you a cocktail," our host apologized as we seated ourselves, "but ice is not among the improvements available in my modest little menage, unfortunately. However, we find the sea caves do quite well as refrigerators and I think you'll find this chilled

wine really acceptable as a substitute. Ah"—he looked diffidently from one of us to the other, finally fixing his gaze on me—"will you be good enough to ask the blessing, Dr. Trowbridge? You look as if you might be experienced in that line."

Startled, but greatly reassured by the request, I bowed my head and repeated the customary formula, almost springing from my chair with amazement as I opened my eyes at the prayer's end. While de Grandin and I had bent above the table during grace, the servants had pulled back the rich *batik* with which the wall facing us was draped, revealing a series of heavy plate glass panels against which the ocean's green waters pressed. We are looking directly on to the sea bottom.

"Jolly clever idea, what?" Goonong Besar inquired smiling at our surprised faces. "Thought it all up myself; like to see the little finny fellows swim past, you know. Had a beastly hard time getting workmen to do the job for me, too; but all sorts of unbelievable persons trickle into these islands from time to time—architects gone *gaga* with drink, skilled artisans in all the trades and what-not—I finally managed to collect the men I wanted."

"But, Monsieur, the expense," de Grandin protested with typical Gallic logic, "it must have been prodigious!"

"Oh, no," the young man answered negligently. "I had to feed the beggars, of course, but most of 'em were habituated to native food, and that's not very expensive."

"But their salaries," de Grandin persisted; "why Monsieur, this house is a work of genius, a marvel of engineering; even drink-ruined architects and engineers capable of producing such a place as this would demand fabulous fees for their services—and the laborers, the men who cut and polished the marble here, they must have been numerous as an army; their wages would be ruinous."

"Most of the marble was salvaged from deserted Dutch colonial palaces," Goonong Besar replied. "You know, Holland built a mighty empire in these islands a century or so ago, and her planters lived in palaces fit for kings. When the empire crumbled the planters left,

and he who cared to might help himself to their houses, wholly or in part. As for wages"—he waved a jeweled hand carelessly—"I am rich, but the wages made no great inroads on my fortune. Do you remember your medieval history, Dr. de Grandin?"

"Eh? But certainly," the Frenchman responded, "but . . ."

"Don't you recall, then, the precaution the nobles, ecclesiastical as well as temporal, took to insure the secrecy of their castle or cathedral plans?" He paused, smiling quizzically at de Grandin.

"*Parbleu!* But you would not; you could not, you would not dare!" the Frenchman almost shouted, half rising from his chair and staring at our host as though a mad dog sat in his place.

"Nonsense, of course I would—and did," the other replied good-humoredly. "Why not? The men were bits of human flotsam, not worth salvaging. And who was to know? Dead men are notoriously uncommunicative, you know. Proverbially so, in fact."

"But, you tell this to me?" de Grandin looked at him incredulously.

Our host's face went perfectly expressionless as he stared directly at de Grandin for a period while one might count five slowly, then his dark, rather sullen face lighted with a smile. "May I offer you some more wine, my dear doctor?" he asked.

I looked alternately at my companions in wonderment. Goonong Besar had made some sinister implication which de Grandin had been quick to comprehend, I knew, and their subsequent conversation concerning dead men telling no tales contained a thinly veiled threat; but try as I would I could not find the key to their enigmatic talk. "Medieval castles and cathedrals? Dead men tell no tales?" I repeated to myself. What did it all mean?

Goonong Besar broke in on my thought: "May I offer you a bit more of this white meat, Dr. Trowbridge?" he asked courteously. "Really, we find this white meat" (the words were ever so slightly emphasized) "most delicious. So tender and well flavored, you know. Do you like it?"

"Very much, thank you," I replied. "It's quite different from anything I've ever tasted. In a way it reminds me of delicate young pork, yet it's different, too. Is it peculiar to the islands, Mr. Goonong?"

"Well—er"—he smiled slightly as he cut a thin slice of the delicious roast and placed it on my plate—"I wouldn't say it is peculiar to our islands, though we have an unusual way of preparing it in this house. The natives hereabouts refer to the animal from which it comes as 'long pig'—really a disgusting sort of beast while living; but quite satisfactory when killed and properly cooked. May I serve you again, Dr. de Grandin?" He turned toward the Frenchman with a smile.

I sat suddenly upright in utter, dumfounded amazement as I beheld Grandin's face. He was leaning forward in his chair, his fierce little blue eyes very round and almost protruding from his head, his weather-tanned cheeks gone the color of putty as he stared at our host like a subject regarding a professional hypnotist. "*Dieu, grand Dieu!*" he ejaculated in a choking whisper. "'Long pig,' did you say? *Sang de St. Denis!* And I have eaten it!"

"My dear chap, are you ill?" I cried, leaping from my chair and hastening to his side. "Has your dinner disagreed with you?"

"*Non, non!*" he waved me away, still speaking that choking whisper. "Sit down, Friend Trowbridge, sit down; but *par l'amour de Dieu*, I beseech you, eat no more of that accurst meat, at least not tonight."

"Oh, my dear sir!" Goonong Besar protested mildly. "You have spoiled Dr. Trowbridge's appetite, and he was enjoying this delicious white meat so much, too. This is really too bad, you know. Really, it is!"

He frowned at the silver meat platter before him a moment, then signaled one of his attendants to take it away, adding a quick command in Malayan as he did so.

"Perhaps a little entertainment will help us forget this unfortunate *contretemps*," he suggested. "I have sent for Miriam. You will like her, I fancy. I have great hopes for her; she has the makings of a really accomplished *artiste*, I think."

The servant who had taken away the meat returned and whispered something in our host's ear. As he listened, Goonong Besar's thin, well-bred face took on such an expression of fury as I had never before seen displayed by a human being. "What?" he shouted, forgetting, apparently, that the Malay did not understand English. "I'll see about this—we'll soon see who says 'must' and 'shall' in this house."

He turned to us with a perfunctory bow as he rose. "Excuse me, please," he begged. "A slight misunderstanding has arisen, and I must straighten it out. I shan't keep you waiting long, I hope; but if you wish anything while I am gone, Hussein"—he indicated the Malay who stood statue-still behind his chair—"will attend your wants. He speaks no English, but you can make him understand by signs, I think."

"Quick, de Grandin, tell me before he comes back," I besought as Goonong Besar, accompanied by one of the Malays, left the room.

"Eh?" replied the Frenchman, looking up from an absorbed contemplation of the tableware before him. "What is it you would know, my friend?"

"What was all that word-juggling about medieval builders and dead men telling no tales?" I demanded.

"Oh, that?" he answered with a look of relief. "Why, do you not know that when a great lord of the Middle Ages commissioned an architect to build a castle for him it was almost tantamount to a death sentence? The architect, the master builders, even the principal workmen, were usually done to death when the building was finished in order that they might not divulge its secret passages and hidden defenses to an enemy, or duplicate the design for some rival noble."

"Why—why, then, Goonong Besar meant he killed the men who built this submarine house for him!" I ejaculated, horror-stricken.

"Precisely," de Grandin answered, "but, bad as that may be, we have a more personal interest in the matter. Did you notice him when I showed surprise he should confess his guilt to us?"

"Good heavens, yes!" I answered. "He meant—"

"That, though still breathing, we are, to all intents, dead men," de Grandin supplied.

"And that talk of 'white meat,' and 'long pig'?" I asked.

He drew a shuddering breath, as though the marble-lined cavern had suddenly gone icy-cold. "Trowbridge, my friend," he answered in a low, earnest whisper, "you must know this thing; but you must control yourself, too. Not by word or sign must you betray your knowledge. Throughout these devil-ridden islands, wherever the brown fiends who are their natives eat men, they refer to the cannibal feast as a meal of long pig. That so unfortunate man we saw dead at the stake this morning, and that pitiful Dutch woman we saw clubbed to death—they, my friend, were 'long pigs.' That was the *white meat* this devil out of lowest hell set before us this night. That is the food we have eaten at this accursed table!"

"My God!" I half rose from my chair, then sank back, overcome with nausea. "Did we—do you suppose—was it *her* flesh—?"

"S-s-sh!" he warned sharply. "Silence, my friend; control yourself. Do not let him see you know. He is coming!"

As though de Grandin's words had been a theatrical cue for his entrance, Goonong Besar stepped through the silken portières at the doorway beyond the table, a pleased smile on his swarthy face. "So sorry to keep you waiting," he apologized. "The trouble is all adjusted now, and we can proceed with our entertainment. Miriam is a little diffident before strangers, but I—er—persuaded her to oblige us." He turned toward the door through which he had entered and waved his hand to someone behind the curtains.

Three Malays, one a woman bent with age and hideously wrinkled, the other two vacant-faced youths, came through the doorway at his gesture. The woman, bearing a section of bamboo fitted with drumheads of rawhide at each end, led the way, the first boy rested his hand on her shoulder, and the second lad, in turn, held tightly to his companion's jacket. A second glance told us the reason for this procedure. The woman, though aged almost

to the point of paralysis, possessed a single malignant, blood-shot eye; both boys were sightless, their scarred and sunken eyelids telling mutely of eyeballs gouged from their faces by unskilled hands which had torn the surrounding tissues as they ripped the optics from the quivering flesh.

"*Ha-room; ha-room!*" cried the old crone in a cracked treble, and the two blind boys seated themselves cross-legged on the marble floor. One of them raised a reed pipe to his lips, the other rested a sort of zither upon his knees, and each began trying his instrument tentatively, producing a sound approximating the complaints of a tom-cat suffering with cholera morbus.

"*Ha-room; ha-room!*" the hag cried again, and commenced beating a quick rhythm on her drum, using her fingertips and the heels of her hands alternately for drumsticks. "*Tauk-auk-a—tau-k-auk-a—tau-k-auk-a!*" the drum-beats boomed hollowly, the first stroke heavily accented, the second and third following in such quick succession that they seemed almost indivisible parts of one continuous thrumming.

Now the pipe and zither took up the tribrach tune, and a surge of fantastic music swirled and eddied through the marble-walled apartment. It was unlike anything I had ever heard, a repetitious, insistent, whining of tortured instruments, an air that pleaded with the hearers' evil nature to overthrow restraint and give the beast within him freedom, a harmony that drugged the senses like opium, or the extract of the cola-nut. The music raced and soared, faster, shriller and higher, the painted-silk curtains swung apart and a girl glided out upon the tessellated pavement.

She was young—sixteen, or seventeen at the most—and the sinuous, lithe grace of her movements was as much due to healthy and perfectly co-ordinated muscles as to training. The customary *sarong* of the islands encased her nether limbs, but, instead of the native woman's jacket, her *sarong* was carried up beyond the gold six-inch wide belt about her waist and tightly wrapped about her bosom so that it formed a single comprehen-

sive garment covering her from armpits to ankles. Save for a chaplet of blazing cabochon rubies about her slender throat, her neck and shoulders were bare, but ornaments in the form of flexible golden snakes with emerald eyes twined up each arm from elbow to shoulder, and bangles of pure, soft gold, hung with triple rows of tiny hawk-bells, circled her wrists. Other bangles, products of the finest goldsmiths of India, jangled about her white ankles above the pearl-encrusted slippers of amethyst velvet, while the diamond aigrette fastened comb-fashion in her sleekly parted black hair was worth a king's ransom. Fit to ransom a monarch, too, was the superb blue-white diamond of her nose-stud, fixed in her left nostril, and the rope of pearls which circled her waist and hung swaying to the very hem of her *sarong* of Philippine pineapple gauze was fit to buy the Peacock Throne of the Grand Mogul himself.

Despite the lavishly applied cosmetics, the antimony which darkened her eyelids to the color of purple grape skins, the cochineal which dyed her lips and cheeks a brilliant scarlet and the powdered charcoal which traced her eyebrows in continuous, fluted line across her forehead, she was beautiful with the rich, ripe beauty of the women who inspired Solomon of old to indite his *Song of Songs*. None but the Jewish race, or perhaps the Arabian, could have produced a woman with the passionate, alluring beauty of Miriam, the dancer in the house beneath the sea.

Back and forth across the checkered floor the girl wove her dance, tracing patterns intricate as lace from Canary or the looms of spiders over the marble with the soft soles of her velvet slippers, the chiming bells at her wrists and ankles keeping time to the calling, luring tune of the old hag and her blind musicians with the consummate art of a Spanish castanet dancer following the music with her hand cymbals.

At last the dance was done.

Shaking like a leaf with the intoxication of her own rhythmic movements, Miriam flung herself full length face downward, before Goonong Besar, and lay upon the marble floor in utter, abject self-abasement.

What he said to her we did not understand, for the words were in harsh Malayan, but he must have given her permission to go, for she rose from her prostration like a dog expecting punishment when its master relents, and ran from the room, bracelets and anklets ringing time to her panic flight, pearls clicking together as they swayed with the motion of her *sarong*.

The old crone rose, too, and led her blind companions from the room, and we three sat staring at each other under the winking candles' light with the two impassive Malay guards standing motionless behind their master's chair.

"Do you think she is beautiful?" Goonong Besar asked as he lighted a cigarette and blew a cloud of smoke toward the copper ceiling.

"Beautiful?" de Grandin gasped, "*Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, she is wonderful, she is magnificent, she is superb. Death of my life, but she is divine! Never have I seen such a dancer; never such, such—*nom de Dieu*, I am speechless as the fish! In all the languages I know there are no words to describe her!"

"And you, Dr. Trowbridge, what do you think of my little Miriam?" Goonong addressed me.

"She is very lovely," I acknowledged, feeling the words foolishly inadequate.

"Ha, ha," he laughed good-naturedly. "Spoken with true Yankee conservatism, by Jove.

"And that, gentlemen," he continued, "leads us to an interesting little proposition I have to make you. But first you will smoke? You'll find these cigars really good. I import them from Havana." He passed the polished cedar humidor across the table and held a match for us to light our selections of the expensive tobacco.

"Now, then," he commenced, inhaling a deep lungful of smoke, "first a little family history, then my business proposition. Are you ready, gentlemen?"

de Grandin and I nodded, wondering mutely what the next chapter in this novel of incredible surprises would be.

"When we met so auspiciously this afternoon," our host began in his pleasant voice, "I requested that you call me Goonong Besar. That, however, is what we might call, for want of a better term, merely my *nom de l'île*. Actually, gentlemen, I am the Almost Honorable James Abingdon Richardson.

"*Parbleu, Monsieur,*" de Grandin demanded, "how is it you mean that, 'the Almost Honorable'?"

The young man blew a cloud of fragrant smoke toward the room's copper ceiling and watched it float upward a moment before he replied: "My father was an English missionary, my mother a native princess. She was not of the Malay blood, but of the dominant Arab strain, and was known as Laila, Pearl of the Islands.

"My father had alienated himself from his family when he and an elder sister deserted the Church of England and, embracing a dissenting creed, came to Malay to spread the gospel of repentance or damnation among the heathen in their blindness."

He drew thoughtfully at his cigar and smiled rather bitterly as he resumed: "He was a fine figure of a man, that father of mine, six feet tall, blue-eyed and curly-haired, with a deep, compelling voice and the fire of fanaticism burning in his heart. The natives, Arab and Malay alike, took to his fiery gospel as the desert dwellers of Arabia once listened to the preaching of Mohammed, the camel driver. My grandfather, a pirate prince with a marble palace and a thousand slaves of his own, was one of the converts, and came to the mission bringing his ten-year-old daughter, Laila, with him. He left her at the mission school to learn the gentle teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth. She stayed there four years."

Again our host paused, puffing silently at his cigar, seemingly attempting to marshal his thoughts. "I believe I said my father was a dissenting clergyman? Yes, so I did, to be sure. Had he been a member of the established church things might have been different. The established English clergy are bad enough, with their fox hunting and

general worldiness, but they're usually sportsmen. When she was a scant fifteen years old—women of the East mature more rapidly than your Western women, you know—Laila, the Pearl of the Islands, came back to her father's palace of marble and cedar, bearing a little boy baby in her arms. The charitable Christian sister of the missionary had driven her out of the mission settlement when she learned that she (the sister) was about to have a little nephew whose birth was not pre-sanctified by a wedding ring.

"The old pirate prince was furious. He would have put his daughter and her half-caste child to death and swooped down on the mission with fire and dagger, but my mother had learned much of Christian charity during her stay at the school. She was sure, if she went to my father with as many pearls as her hands could hold, and with a dowry of rubies strung round her neck, he would receive her as his wife—er—make an honest woman of her, as the saying goes.

"However, one thing and another prevented her return to the mission for three years, and when we finally got there we found my reverend sire had taken an English lady to wife.

"Oh, he took the jewels my mother brought—no fear of his refusing—and in return for them he permitted us to live in the settlement as native hangers-on. She, a princess, and the daughter of generations of princesses, scrubbed floors and baked bread in the house presided over by my father's wife and I, my father's first-born son, duly christened with his name, fetched and carried for my father's younger sons.

"They were hard, those days at the mission school. The white boys who were my half-brothers overlooked no chance to remind me of mother's shame and my own disgrace. Humility and patience under affliction were the lessons my mother and I had ground into us day by day while we remained there.

"Then, when I was a lad of ten years or so, my father's cousin, Viscount Abingdon, broke his neck at a fox hunt, and, as he died without issue, my father became a member of England's landed gentry, and went

back home to take over the title and the entails. He borrowed on his expectancy before he left and offered my mother money to have me educated as a clerk in some trader's store, but my mother, for all her years of servitude, was still a princess of royal blood. Also she remembered enough Scripture to quote, 'Thy money perish with thee.' So she spat in his face and went back to the palace of her father, telling him that her husband was dead.

"I was sent to school in England—oh, yes, I'm a public school man, Winchester, you know—and I was down from my first term at Cambridge when the war broke out in 1914.

"Why should I have fought for England? What had England or the English ever done for me? It was the call of the blood—the English blood—perhaps. At any rate I joined up and was gazetted to a London regiment. Everything was death or glory those days, you know. 'For King and Country,' and all that sort of tosh. Racial lines were wiped out, and every man, whatever his color or creed, was for the common cause. Rot!

"I came into the officers' mess one night after a hard day's drill, and was presented to a young man from one of the guards regiments. 'Lieutenant Richardson,' my captain said, 'this is Lieutenant Richardson. Queer coincidence, you chaps are both James Abingdon Richardson. Ought to be great pals on that account, what?'"

"The other Lieutenant Richardson looked me over from head to foot, then repeated distinctly, so everyone in the room could hear and understand. 'James, my boots need polishing. Attend to it.' It was the same order he had given me at the mission school a hundred times when we were lads together. He was Lieutenant the Honorable James Abingdon Richardson, *legitimate* eldest son of Viscount Abingdon. I was . . ."

He broke off, staring straight before him a moment, then: "There was a devil of a row. Officers weren't supposed to beat other officers into insensibility in company mess, you know. I was dismissed from the service, and came back to the islands.

"My grandfather was dead; so was my mother. I was

monarch of all I surveyed—if I was willing not to look too far—and since my return I have consecrated my life to repaying my debt to my father on such of his race as crossed my path.

“The hunting has been fairly good, too. White men are such fools! Ship after ship has run aground on the rocks here, sometimes in answer to my signal rockets, sometimes mistaking the red and green lamps on the hill up yonder for ships’ lights.

“It’s been profitable. Nearly every ship so far has contained enough loot to make the game distinctly worth the trouble. I must admit your ship was somewhat of a disappointment in respect of monetary returns, but then I have had the pleasure of your company; that’s something.

“I keep a crew of Papuans around to do the dirty work, and let ‘em eat a few’ prisoners now and then by way of reward—don’t mind an occasional helping of ‘long pig’ myself, as a matter of fact, provided it’s a white one.

“But”—he smiled unpleasantly—“conditions aren’t ideal, yet. I still have to install electricity in the house and rig up a wireless apparatus—I could catch more game that way—and then there’s the question of women. Remember how Holy Writ says, ‘It is not good for man to dwell alone’? I’ve found it out, already.

“Old Umera, the woman who played the drum to-night, and the slave girl, Miriam, are the only women in the establishment, thus far, but I intend to remedy that—soon. I shall send to one of the larger islands and buy several of the most beautiful maidens available within the next few months, and live as befits a prince—a pirate prince, even as my grandfather was.

“Now, white men”—his suave manner dropped from him like a mask let down, and implacable hatred glared from his dark eyes—“this is my proposition to you. Before I establish my seraglio it is necessary that I possess suitable furniture. I can not spare any of my faithful retainers for the purpose of attending my women, but you two come into my hands providentially. Both of you are surgeons—you shall perform the necessary operations on each other. It is a matter of indifference to me which of

you operates first—you may draw straws for the privilege, if you wish—but it is my will that you do this thing, and my will is law on this island.”

Both de Grandin and I looked at him in speechless horror, but he took no notice of amazement. “You may think you will refuse,” he told us, “but you will not. Captain Van Thun, of the Dutch steamer *Van Damm*, and his first mate were offered the same chance and refused it. They chose to interview a little pet I keep about the premises as an alternative: but when the time for the interview came both would gladly have reconsidered their decision. This house is the one place in the world where a white man must keep his word, willy-nilly. Both of them were obliged to carry out their bargain to the letter—and I can not say the prestige of the pure Caucasian breed was strengthened by the way they did it.

“Now, I will give you gentlemen a greater opportunity for deliberation than I gave the Dutchmen. You shall first be allowed to see my pet, then decide whether you will accept my offer or not. But I warn you beforehand, whatever decision you make must be adhered to.

“Come.” He turned to the two armed Malays who stood behind his chair and barked an order. Instantly de Grandin and I were covered by their pistols, and the scowling faces behind the firearms’ sights told us we might expect no quarter if the order to fire were given.

“Come,” Goonong Besar—or Richardson—repeated imperiously, “walk ahead, you two, and remember, the first attempt either of you makes to escape will mean a bullet through his brain.”

We marched down a series of identical corridors as bewildering as the labyrinth of Crete, mysterious stone doors thudding shut behind us from time to time, other doors swinging open in the solid walls as our guards pressed cunningly concealed springs in the walls or floor. Finally we brought up on a sort of colonnaded porch, a tiled footpath bordered with a low stone parapet from which a row of carved stone columns rose to a concave ceiling of natural stone. Below the balcony’s balustrade

stretched a long, narrow pool of dead-motionless water between abrupt vertical walls of rock, and, some two hundred feet away, through the arch of a natural cave, the starlit tropical sky showed like a little patch of freedom before our straining eyes. The haze which had thickened the air the previous night must have cleared away, for rays of the bright, full moon painted a "path to Spain" over the waters at the cavern's mouth, and sent sufficient light as far back as our balcony to enable us to distinguish an occasional tiny ripple on the glassy surface below us.

"Here, pretty, pretty!" our captor called, leaning forward between two columns. "Come up and see the brave white men who may come to play with you. Here, pretty pet; come up, come up!"

We stared into the purple waters like lost souls gazing on the hell prepared for them, but no motion agitated the depths.

"Sulky brute!" the half-caste exclaimed, and snatched a pistol from the girdle of one of his attendants. "Come up," he repeated harshly. "Damn you, come when I call!" He tossed the weapon into the pool below.

de Grandin and I uttered a gasp of horror in unison, and I felt his nails bite into my arm as his strong slender fingers gripped me convulsively.

As though the pistol had been superheated and capable of setting the water in the cave boiling by its touch, the deep, blue-black pool beneath us suddenly woke to life. Ripples—living, groping ripples—appeared on the pool's smooth face and long, twisting arms, sinuous as snakes, thick as fire-hose, seemed waving just under the surface, flicking into the air now and again and displaying tentacles roughened with great, wart-like protuberances. Something like a monster bubble, transparent-gray like a jelly-fish, yet, oddly, spotted like an unclean reptile, almost as big around as the umbrellas used by teamsters on their wagons in summer-time, and, like an umbrella, ribbed at regular intervals, rose from the darker water, and a pair of monstrous, hideous white eyes, large as dinner plates, with black pupils large as saucers, stared greedily, unwinkingly, at us.

"*Nom de Dieu de nom de Dieu!*" de Grandin breathed. "The sea-devil; the giant octopus!"

"Quite so," Goonong Besar agreed affably, "the giant octopus. What he grasps he holds forever, and he grasps all he can reach. A full-grown elephant thrown into that water would have no more chance of escape than a minnow—or, for unpleasant example, than you gentlemen would. Now, perhaps you realize why Captain Van Thun and his first officer wished they had chosen to enter my—er—employ, albeit in a somewhat extraordinary capacity. I did not afford them a chance of viewing the alternative beforehand, as I have you, however. Now that you have had your chance, I am sure you will take the matter under serious advisement before you refuse."

"There is no hurry; you will be given all tonight and tomorrow to arrive at a decision. I shall expect your answer, at dinner tomorrow. Good gentlemen, my boys will show you to your room. Good night, and—er—may I wish you pleasant dreams?"

With a mocking laugh he stepped quickly back into the shadows, we heard the sound we had come to recognize as the closing of one of the hidden stone doors, and found ourselves alone upon the balcony over-looking the den of the giant octopus.

"*Bon Dieu!*" de Grandin cried despairingly, "Trowbridge, my friend, they make a mistake, those people who insist the devil dwells in hell. *Parableu!* What is that?"

The noise which startled him was the shuffling of bare brown feet. The tongueless youths who acted as our *valets de chambre* were coming reluctantly toward us down the passageway, their eyes rolling in fearful glances toward the balustrade beyond which the devil of the sea lurked in his watery lair.

"*En bien,*" the Frenchman shrugged, "it is the two devilkins again. Lead on, *mes enfants*; any place is better than this threshold of hell."

"And now," he announced as he dropped into one of the bedroom's wicker chairs and lighted a cigarette, "we are

in what you Americans would call a tight fix, Friend Trowbridge. To accede to that half-caste hellion's proposition would be to dishonor ourselves forever—that is unthinkable. But to be eaten up by that so infernal octopus, that, too, is unthinkable. *Morbleu*, had I known then what I know now I should have demanded one thousand pounds a day from those Messieurs Lloyd and then refused their offer. As your so splendid soldiers were wont to say during the war, we are, of a surety, S. O. L., my friend."

Beneath the bamboo bedstead across the room a slight rustling sounded. I looked apathetically toward the bed, indifferent to any fresh horror which might appear; but, wretched as I was, I was not prepared for the apparition which emerged.

Stripped of her gorgeous raiment of pineapple gauze, a *sarong* and jacket of the cheapest native cotton inadequately covering her glorious body, an ivory-wood button replacing her diamond nose-stud, her feet bare and no article of jewelry adorning her, Miriam, the dancer, crept forth and flung herself to her knees before de Grandin.

"Oh, Monsieur," she begged in a voice choked with tears, "have pity on me, I implore you. Be merciful to me, as you would have another in your place be pitiful to your sister, were she in mine."

"*Morbleu*, child, is it of me you ask pity?" de Grandin demanded. "How can I, who can not even choose my own death, show compassion to you?"

"Kill me," she answered fiercely. "Kill me now, while yet there is time. See, I have brought you this"—from the folds of her scanty *sarong* she drew a native *kris*, a wavy-bladed short sword with a razor edge and needle point.

"Stab me with it," she besought, "then, if you wish, use it on your friend and yourself; there is no other hope. Look about you, do not you see there is no way of dying in this prison room? Once on a time the mirror was of glass, but a captive white man broke it and almost succeeded in cutting his wrists with the pieces until he died.

Since then Goonong Besar has had a metal mirror in this room."

"*Pardieu*, you are right, child!" de Grandin agreed as he glanced at the dressing table over which the metal mirror hung. "But why do you seek death? Are you, too, destined for the octopus?"

She shuddered. "Some day, perhaps, but while I retain my beauty there is small fear of that. Every day old Umera, the one-eyed she-devil, teaches me to dance, and when I do not please her (and she is very hard to please) she beats me with bamboo rods on the soles of my feet till I can scarcely bear to walk. And Goonong Besar makes me dance for him every night till I am ready to drop, and if I do not smile upon him as I dance, or if I grow weary too soon, so that my feet lag before he gives me permission to stop, he beats me.

"Every time a ship is caught in his trap he saves some of the officers and makes me dance before them, and I know they are to be fed to the fish-devil, yet I must smile upon them, or he will beat me till my feet bleed, and the old woman will beat me when he is weary of it.

"My father was French, Monsieur, though I, myself, was born in England of a Spanish mother. We lost all our money in the war, for my father kept a goldsmith's shop in Rheims, and the *sale boche* stole everything he had. We came to the islands after the war, and my father made money as a trader. We were returning home on the Dutch ship *Van Damm* when Goonong Besar caught her in his trap.

"Me he kept to be taught to dance the dances of the islands and to be tortured—see, he has put a ring in my nose, like a native woman's." She lifted a trembling hand to the wooden peg which kept the hole pierced in her nose from growing together when she was not wearing her jeweled stud. "My father—oh, God of Israel!—he *fed to the devil-fish before my eyes* and told me he would serve me the same way if I proved not submissive to his will in all things.

"And so, Monsieur," she ended simply, "I would that you cause me to die and be out of my unhappiness."

As the girl talked, de Grandin's face registered every emotion from amazement to horror and compassion. As

she completed her narrative he looked thoughtful. "Wait, wait, my pretty one," he besought, as she would have forced the *kris* into his hand. "I must think. *Pardieu!* Jules de Grandin, you silly fool, you must think now as never before." He sank his face in his hands and bowed his chin nearly to his knees.

"Tell me, my little cabbage," he demanded suddenly, "do they let you out of this accurst house by daylight, *hein?*"

"Oh, yes," she responded. "I may go or come as I will when I am not practising my dances or being beaten. I may go anywhere on the island I wish, for no one, not even the cannibals who live on the shore, would dare lay his little finger on me for fear of the master. I belong to Goonong Besar, and he would feed anyone who touched his property to the great fish-devil."

"And why have you never sought to die by your own hand?" de Grandin asked suspiciously.

"Jews do not commit suicide," she answered proudly. "To die by another's hand is not forbidden—Jephthah's daughter so died—but to go from life with your hands reddened with your own blood is against the law of my fathers."

"Ah, yes, I understand," he agreed with a short nod. "You children of Jacob shame us so-called Christians in the way you keep your precepts, child. *Eh bien*, 'tis fortunate for all us you have a strong conscience, my beautiful.

"Attend me: In your walks about this never-enough-to-be-execrated island have you observed, near the spot where the masts which carry the false ship's lights stand, certain plants growing, plants with shining leaves and a fruit like the unripe apple which grows in France—a low bush with fruit of pale green?"

The girl wrinkled her white forehead thoughtfully, then nodded twice. "Yes," she replied, "I have seen such a plant."

"*Très bien*," he nodded approvingly, "the way from this evil place seems to open before us, *mes amis*. At least, we have the sporting chance. Now listen, and lis-

ten well, my little half-orange, for upon your obedience rests our chance of freedom.

"Tomorrow, when you have a chance to leave this vestibule of hell, go you to the place where those fruits like apples grow and gather as many of them as you can carry in your *sarong*. Bring these fruits of the *Cocculus indicus* to the house and mash them to a pulp in some jar which you must procure. At the dinner hour, pour the contents of that jar into the water where dwells the devil-fish. Do not fail us, my little pigeon, for upon your faithful performance of your trust our lives, and yours, depend, *pardieu!* If you do but carry out your orders we shall feed that Monsieur Octopus such a meal as he will have small belly for, *parbleu!*

"When you have poured all the crushed fruit into the water, secret yourself in the shadows near by and wait till we come. You can swim? Good. When we do leap into the water, do you leap also, and altogether we shall swim to that boat I was about to borrow when we met this so excellent Monsieur Goonong-Besar-James-Abingdon-Richardson-Devil. *Cordieu*, I think that Jules de Grandin is not such a fool as I thought he was!

"Good night, fairest one, and may the God of your people, and the gentle Mary, too, guard you this night, and all the nights of your life."

7

"Good evening, gentlemen," Goonong Besar greeted as we entered the dining room next evening; "have you decided upon our little proposition?"

"But certainly," de Grandin assured him. "If we must choose between a few minutes' conversation with the octopus and a lifetime, or even half an hour's sight of your neither-black-nor-white face, we cast our vote for the fish. He, at least, does what he does from nature; he is no vile parody of his kind. Let us go to the fish-house *tout vite, Monsieur*. The sooner we get this business completed, the sooner we shall be rid of you!"

Goonong Besar's pale countenance went absolutely livid with fury. "You insignificant little fool," he cried,

"I'll teach you to insult me! *Ha-room!*" he sent the call echoing through the marble-lined cave, "You'll not be so brave when you feel those tentacles strangling the life out of your puny body and that beak tearing your flesh off your bones before the water has a chance to drown you."

He poured a string of burning orders at his two guards, who seized their rifles and thrust them at us. "Off, off to the grotto!" he shrieked, beside himself with rage. "Don't think you can escape the devil-fish by resisting my men. They won't shoot to kill; they'll only cripple you and drag you to the pool. Will you walk, or shall we shoot you first and pull you there?"

"Monsieur," de Grandin drew himself proudly erect, "a gentleman of France fears no death, a Malay *batard* can offer. Lead on!"

Biting his pale lips till the blood ran to keep from screaming with fury, Goonong Besar signaled his guards, and we took up our way toward the sea monster's lair.

"*La bon Dieu* grant *la belle juive* has done her work thoroughly," de Grandin whispered as we came out upon the balcony. "I like not this part of our little playlet, my friend. Should our plan have failed, *adieu*." He gave my hand a hasty pressure.

"Who goes first?" Goonong Besar asked as we halted by the balustrade.

"*Pardieu*, you do!" de Grandin shouted, and before anyone was aware of his intention he dashed one of his small hard fists squarely into the astonished half-caste's face, seized him about the waist and flung him bodily into the black, menacing water below.

"In, Friend Trowbridge!" he called, leaping upon the parapet. "Dive and swim—it is our only chance!"

I waited no second bidding, but jumped as far outward as possible, striking out vigorously toward the far end of the cave, striving to keep my head as near water-level as possible, yet draw an occasional breath.

Horror swam beside me. Each stroke I took I expected one of the monster's slimy tentacles to seize me and drag me under; but no great, gray bubble rose from the black depths, no questing arms reached toward me.

For all we could observe to the contrary, the pool was as harmless as any of the thousands of rocky caves which dot the volcanic coast of Malaya.

Bullets whipped and tore the water around us, striking rocky walls and singing off in vicious ricochets; but the light was poor, and the Malay marksmen emptied their pieces with no effect.

"*Triomphe!*" de Grandin announced, blowing the water from his mouth in a great, gusty sigh of relief as we gained the single outside the cave. "Miriam, my beautiful one, are you with us?"

"Yes," responded a voice from the darkness. "I did as you bade me, Monsieur, and the great fish-devil sank almost as soon as he thrust his snake-arms into the fruit as it floated on the water. But when I saw he was dead I did not dare wait; but swam out here to abide your coming."

"It is good," de Grandin commended. "One of those bullets might easily have hit you. They are execrable marksmen, those Malays, but accidents do occur."

"Now, Monsieur," he addressed the limp bundle he towed behind him in the water, "I have a little business proposition to make to *you*. Will you accompany us, and be delivered to the Dutch or British to be hanged for the damned pirate you are, or will you fight me for your so miserable life here and now?"

"I cannot fight you now," Goonong Besar answered, "you broke my arm with your cowardly ju-jitsu when you took advantage of me and attacked me without warning."

"Ah, so?" de Grandin replied, helping his captive to the beach. "That is unfortunate, for—*mordieu*, scoundrel, would you do so!"

The Eurasian had suddenly drawn a dagger from his coat and lunged viciously at de Grandin's breast.

With the agility of a cat the Frenchman evaded the thrust, seized his antagonist's wrist, and twisted the knife from his grasp. His foot shot out, he drove his fist savagely into Goonong's throat, and the half-caste sprawled helplessly on the sand.

"Attend Mademoiselle!" de Grandin called to me. "It is not well for her to see what I must do here."

There was the sound of a scuffle, then a horrible gar-

gling noise, and the beating of hands and feet upon the sands.

"*Fini!*" de Grandin remarked nonchalantly, dipping his hands in the water and cleansing them of some dark stains.

"You . . . ?" I began.

"*Mais certainement,*" he replied matter-of-factly. "I slit his throat. What would you have? He was a mad dog; why should he continue to live?"

Walking hurriedly along the beach, we came to the little power-boat moored in the inlet and set her going.

"Where to?" I asked as de Grandin swung the trim little craft around a rocky promontory.

"Do you forget, *cher* Trowbridge, that we have a score to settle with those cannibals?" he asked.

We settled it. Running the launch close inshore, de Grandin shouted defiance to the Papuans till they came tumbling out of their cone-shaped huts like angry bees from their hives.

"*Sa ha, messieurs,*" de Grandin called, "we give you food of another sort this night. Eat it, *sacre canaille*; eat it!" The Lewis machine-gun barked and sputtered, and a chorus of cries and groans rose from the beach.

"It is well," he announced as he resumed the wheel. "They eat no more white women, those ones. Indeed, did I still believe the teachings of my youth, I should say they were even now partaking of the devil's hospitality with their late master."

"But see here," I demanded as we chugged our way toward the open water, "what was it you told Miriam to put in the water where the octopus was, de Grandin?"

He chuckled. "Had you studied as much biology as I, Friend Trowbridge, you would recognize that glorious plant, the *Cocculus indicus*, when you saw it. All over the Polynesian islands the lazy natives, who desire to obtain food with the minimum of labor, mash up the berry of that plant and spread it in the water where the fish swim. A little of it will render the fish insensible, a little more will kill him as dead as the late lamented Goonong Besar. I noticed that plant growing on the island, and when our

lovely Jewess told me she could go and come at will I said to me, 'By the George, why not have her poison that great devil-fish and swim to freedom?' *Voilà tout!*"

A passing Dutch steamer picked us up two days later.

The passengers and crew gaped widely at Miriam's imperial beauty, and wider still at de Grandin's account of our exploits. "*Pardieu!*" he confided to me one night as we walked the deck, "I fear those Dutchmen misbelieve me, Friend Trowbridge. Perhaps I shall have to slit their ears to teach them to respect the word of a Frenchman."

It was six months later that a Western Union messenger entered my consulting room at Harrisonville and handed me a blue-and-white envelope. "Sign here," he ordered.

I tore the envelope open, and this is what I read:

Miriam made big sensation in Follies Bèrgères to-night. Felicitations.

de Grandin

The Dead Hand

Jules de Grandin passed his coffee cup across the breakfast table for its third replenishment. "It seems, my friend," he told me with a serio-comic grimace, "as if I exercise some sort of malign influence upon your patients. Here I have been your guest but two short weeks and you all but lose Mademoiselle Drigo and the so excellent Madame Richards is dead altogether."

"I'd hardly blame you for Mrs. Richards' death," I comforted as I refilled his cup. "She'd suffered from mitral stenosis for the past two years, and the last time I ex-

amined her I was able to detect a diastolic murmur without my stethoscope. No, her trouble dated back some time before your advent, de Grandin."

"You relieve my conscience," he replied. "And now you go to offer your condolences to the family? May I accompany you? Always, I have found, there is opportunity for those who will to learn something."

"*Nom d'un nom*, but it is the good Sergeant Costello!" he exclaimed as a heavy-set man closed the door of the Richards mansion and strode across the wide veranda. "*Eh bien*, my friend, do not you remember me?" He stretched both slender, well kept hands to the big Irishman. "Surely, you have not forgotten—"

"I'll say I ain't," the big detective denied with a welcoming grin. "You sure showed us some tricks in the Kalm case, sir. Belike you'd like to give us a lift with this one?" He jerked a thumb toward the house he had just quit. "It's a bughouse in there, Dr. de Grandin."

"Ha, do you say so?" de Grandin's small eyes lit up expectantly. "You interest me. Assuredly you shall have such help as I can provide. Come let us enter; together we shall shake the facts from this mystery of yours as a mother shakes the stolen cookies from her *enfant's* blouse, by blue!"

Willis Richards, financial nabob of our small sub-metropolitan community, stood on the hearth rug of his library, a living testimonial to the truth of the axiom that death makes all men equals. For all his mop of white hair, his authoritative manner and imposing embonpoint, he was only a bereft and bewildered old man, unable to realize that in his wife's death he had encountered something not to be remedied by his signature on a five-figured check.

"Well, Sergeant," he asked with a pitiful attempt at his usual brusk manner, as he recognized Costello at de Grandin's elbow, "have you found out anything?"

"No, sir," the policeman confessed, "but here's Dr. de Grandin of Paris, France, and he can help us out if any-

one can. He's done some mighty fine work for us before, and—"

"A French detective!" Richards scoffed. "D'ye need to get a foreigner to help you find some stolen property? Why—"

"Monsieur!" de Grandin's angry protest brought the irate financier's expostulation to an abrupt halt, "you do forget yourself. I am Jules de Grandin, occasionally connected with the *Service de Sûreté*, but more interested in the solution of my cases than in material reward."

"Oh." Mr. Richards' disgust deepened. "An amateur, eh? Costello, I'm ashamed of you, bringing a dabbler into my private affairs. By George, I'll telephone the Blynn Agency and take the whole case out of your hands!"

"One moment, Mr. Richards," I broke in, relying on my position as family physician to lend strength to my statement. "This gentleman is Dr. Jules de Grandin of the Sorbonne, one of Europe's foremost criminologists and one of the world's greatest scientists. Criminal investigation is a phase of his work, just as military service was a phase of George Washington's; but you can no more compare him with professional detectives than you can compare Washington with professional soldiers."

Mr. Richards looked from de Grandin to me, then back again. "I'm sorry," he confessed, extending his hand to the little Frenchman, "and I shall be very grateful for any help that you can give me, sir."

"To be entirely frank," he motioned us to seats and began pacing the floor restlessly, "Mrs. Richards' death was not quite so natural as Dr. Trowbridge believes. Though it's true she had been suffering from heart disease for some time, it was not heart disease alone that caused her death. She was scared to death. Literally."

"I returned from New York, where I'd been attending a banquet of my alumni association, about 2 o'clock day before yesterday morning. I let myself in with my latch key and went directly to my room, which adjoined my wife's. I was beginning to undress when I heard her call, and ran into her bedroom just in time to see her fall to the floor, clutching at her throat and trying to say something about a hand."

"Ah?" de Grandin regarded our host with his sharp cat-stare. "And then, Monsieur?"

"And then I saw—well, fancied I saw—something drift across the room, about level with my shoulders, and go out the window. I ran over to my wife, but when I reached her she was dead."

The little Frenchman made small deprecating sounds while he looked at his well-cared-for nails, but otherwise he made no comment.

Richards gave him an annoyed look as he continued. "It was not till this morning that I discovered all my wife's jewels and about twenty thousand dollars' worth of unregistered securities had disappeared from the wall safe in her room.

"Of course," he concluded, "I didn't really see anything in the air when I ran from my room. That's palpably absurd."

"Quite obviously," I agreed.

"Sure," Costello nodded.

"Not at all," de Grandin denied, shaking his head vigorously. "It is entirely possible your eyes did not deceive you, Monsieur. Tell us, what was it you saw?"

Mr. Richards' annoyance deepened to exasperation. "It looked like a hand," he snapped. "A hand with four or five inches of wrist attached to it, *and no body*. D'ye mean to tell me I saw anything like that?"

"*Quod erat demonstrandum*," the Frenchman replied softly.

"What say?" demanded Richards testily.

"I said this is a truly remarkable case, Monsieur."

"Well, d'ye want to take a look at my wife's room?" Mr. Richards turned to lead the way upstairs, but again de Grandin shook his head.

"Not at all, Monsieur. The good Sergeant Costello has already seen it, he can tell me all I need to know. Me, I shall look elsewhere for the confirmation of a possible theory."

Mr. Richards' white thatch fairly bristled. "I'll give you forty-eight hours to accomplish something—you and Costello. Then I'll call up the Blynn Agency and see what real detectives can do for me."

"You are more than generous in your allowance, Monsieur," de Grandin replied icily.

To me, as we left the house, he confided, "I should greatly enjoy pulling that one's fat nose, Friend Trowbridge."

"Can you come over to my house at once, Doctor?" a voice hailed me as de Grandin and I entered my office.

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Kinnan?" I asked as I recognized the visitor.

"Huh! What isn't the matter, Doctor? My wife's been in hysterics since this morning, and I'm not sure I shouldn't ask you to commit me to the asylum."

"*Pardieu, Monsieur,*" de Grandin exclaimed, "this statement, he is vastly interesting, but not particularly enlightening. You will explain yourself, *n'est-ce-pas?*"

"Explain? What d'ye mean? How'm I going to explain a thing I know's impossible? At twenty minutes after 5 this morning my wife and I saw something that wasn't there, and saw it take the Lafayette cup, to boot!"

"*Sacré nom d'un petit porc!*" de Grandin swore. "What is it that you say? You saw a thing that was not there and saw it take a cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette? *Non, non, non!* Not you, but I am of the deranged mind. Friend Trowbridge, look to me. I hear remarks this gentleman has not made!"

In spite of his own trouble Kinnan laughed at the little Frenchman's tragic face. "I'll be more explicit," he promised. "The baby was fretful the entire early part of last evening, and we didn't get to sleep till well after midnight. Along about 5 this morning he woke up on another rampage, and my wife and I went to the nursery to see what we could do. Our maid had gone to New York for the night, and as usual there wasn't a drop of milk ready for the youngster, so I started to pasteurize some for him in the dining room chafing dish. I can place the time exactly, for the library clock has been running erratically of late and only yesterday I'd gotten it so it ran just ten minutes fast. Well, that clock had just struck half-past 5 when—like an echo of the gong—there came a crash at

the window, and the pane was shattered, right before our eyes."

"U'm?" observed de Grandin noncommittally.

"Right before our eyes, gentlemen. By a hammer."

"Ah?" de Grandin's interest in the narrative seemed something less than breathless.

"And whether you believe me or not, that hammer was held in a hand—a woman's hand—and that was all! No arm, no body; just a hand—a hand that smashed that windowpane with a hammer and floated through the air as if it were attached to an invisible body; right across the room to the cabinet where the Lafayette cup was. It unlatched the cabinet door, took the cup out and floated out the window with it. How's that for a pipe-dream? The only trouble with it is it's true!"

"Ah? Ah-ha-ha?" de Grandin exclaimed on a rising accent.

"Oh, I don't expect you to believe me. I'd say anyone who told me such a wild tale was a candidate for the bug-house, but—"

"*Au contraire*, Monsieur," de Grandin denied, "I do believe you. For why? Because, *mordieu*, that same hand-without-body was seen at Monsieur Richards' house the night his wife died."

"Eh? The devil!" This time it was Kinnan who looked skeptical. "You say someone else saw that hand. Wh—why, they couldn't!"

"Of course not," agreed Jules de Grandin evenly. "Nevertheless, they did, and there is reason to suspect it made away with jewelry and securities. Now tell me, if you please, this Lafayette cup, what was it?"

"It's a silver wine goblet that belonged to my great-great-grandfather, sir. Intrinsically I don't suppose it worth more than thirty or forty dollars, but it's valuable to us as an heirloom because Lafayette drank out of it while he was on his second visit to this country. I've been offered up to a thousand dollars for it by collectors."

de Grandin beat his fingertips together in a nervous tattoo. "This are a most unusual burglar we have here, *mes amis*. He has a hand, but no body; he enters sick ladies' bedrooms and frightens them to death; he breaks

honest men's windows with a hammer and steals away the cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette while they heat milk for their babies. *Cordieu*, he will bear investigation, this one!"

"You don't believe me," Kinnan declared, half truculently, half shamefacedly.

"Have I not said I do?" the Frenchman answered almost angrily. "When you have seen such things as I have seen, Monsieur—*parbleu*, when you have seen one half as much!—you will learn to believe many things that fools declare impossible.

"This hammer"—he rose, almost glaring at Kinnan, so intense was his stare—"Where is he? I would see him, if you please."

"It's over at the house," our visitor replied, "lying right where it fell when the hand dropped it. Neither Dorothy nor I would touch it for a farm."

"Tremendous, gigantic, magnificent!" de Grandin ejaculated, nodding vigorously as he shot out each adjective. "Come, my friends, let us hasten, let us fly. Trowbridge, my old, you shall attend the so excellent Madame Kinnan while I go upon the trail of this bodiless burglar, and it shall be a matter of remarkableness if I do not find him. *Morbleu*, Monsieur le *Fantôme*, when you slay poor Madame Richards with fright, that is one thing; when you steal Monsieur Kinnan's cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette, that is also one thing, but when you think to thumb your invisible nose at Jules de Grandin—*parbleu*, that is entirely something else! We shall see who makes a monkey out of whom, and that without unnecessary delay."

The hammer proved to be an ordinary one, with nickel head and imitation ebony handle, such as could be bought at any hardware store, but de Grandin pounced on it like a famished tom-cat on a mouse.

"But this is wonderful, this is superb!" he almost cooed as he swathed the implement in several layers of paper and stowed it tenderly in the pocket of his great coat.

"Trowbridge, my friend," he threw me one of his quick, enigmatic smiles, "do you attend the good Madame Kinnan. I have important duties to perform elsewhere. If

possible I shall return for dinner, and if I do I pray that you will have your amiable cook prepare for me one of her so delicious apple tarts. If I should be delayed"—his little blue eyes twinkled for a moment with frosty laughter—"I shall eat that tart for my breakfast tomorrow, like a good Yon-kee."

Dinner was long since over, and the requested apple tart had been reposing on the pantry shelf for several hours when de Grandin popped from a taxicab like a jack-in-the-box from its case and rushed up the front steps, the waxed ends of his little blond mustache twitching like the whiskers of an excited cat. "Quick, quick, Friend Trowbridge," he commanded as he laid a bulky paper parcel on the office desk, "to the telephone! Call that Monsieur Richards, that rich man who so generously allowed me forty-eight hours to recover his lost treasures, and that Monsieur Kinnan, whose so precious cup of the Marquis de Lafayette was stolen—call them both and bid them come here right away, at once, immediately!

"*Mordieu!*" He strode across the office with a step that was half run, half jig. "This Jules de Grandin, he is the sly, clever one. Never is the task imposed too great for him. No, of a certainty!"

"What the devil's biting you?" I asked as I rang up the Richards house.

"*Non, non,*" he waved my question aside, lit a cigarette, and flung it away almost unpuffed. "Wait, I entreat you; only wait until those others come, then you shall hear about my monstrous cleverness!"

The Richards limousine, like its owner impressive in both size and upholstery, was panting before my door in half an hour, and Kinnan drove up in his modest sedan almost at the same time. Sergeant Costello, looking mystified, but concealing his wonder with the inborn reticence of the professional policeman, came into the office close on Kinnan's heels.

"What's all this nonsense, Trowbridge?" Mr. Richards asked. "Why couldn't you come over to my house instead of dragging me out this hour o' night?"

"Tut, tut, Monsieur," de Grandin cut him short, run-

ning the admonitions so close together that they sounded like the exhaust of a miniature motor boat. "Tut, tut, Monsieur, is it not worth a short trip in the cold to have these back?" From a brown-paper parcel he produced a purple velvet case which he snapped open dramatically, disclosing an array of scintillating gems.

"These, one assumes, were once the property of Madame your wife?"

"Great Scott!" gasped Richards, reaching for the jewels. "Why, you got 'em!"

"But naturally, Monsieur." The Frenchman deftly drew the jewelry out of Richards' reach. "And also I have these." From another parcel he drew a sheaf of engraved stock certificates. "You said twenty thousand dollars' worth, I believe? *Bien*. There are here just twenty-one thousand dollar certificates, according to my count.

"Monsieur Kinnan," he bowed to the other visitor, "permit that I restore to you the cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette." The Lafayette cup was duly extracted from another package and handed to its owner.

"And now," de Grandin lifted an oblong pasteboard box of the sort used for shoes and held it toward us as a prestidigitator might hold the hat from which he was about to extract a rabbit, "I will ask you to give me the close attention. *Regardez, s'il vous plaît*. Is it not this you gentlemen saw in your respective houses?"

As he withdrew the box lid we beheld lying on a bed of crumpled tissue paper what appeared to be the perfectly modeled reproduction of a beautiful hand and wrist. The thumb and fingers, tipped with long, almond-shaped nails, were exquisitely slender and graceful, and the narrow palm, where it showed above the curling digits, was pink and soft-looking as the underside of a La France rose petal. Only the smear of collodion across the severed wrist told us we gazed on something which once pulsed with life instead of a marvelously exact reproduction.

"Is this not it?" he repeated, glancing from the lovely hand to Richards and Kinnan in turn.

Each nodded a mute confirmation, but each forbore to speak, as though the sight of the eerie, lifeless thing before him had put a seal of silence on his lips.

"*Très bon.*" He nodded vigorously. "Now, attend me, if you please: when Monsieur Kinnan told me of the hammer which broke his window, I decided the road by which to trace this bodiless burglar was mapped out on that hammer's handle. *Pourquoi?* Because this hand which frightens sick ladies to death and breaks windowpanes is one of three things. First"—he ticked off on his fingers—"it may be some mechanical device. In that case I shall find no traces. But then again it may be the ghost-hand of someone who once lived, in which case, again, it is one of two things: a ghost hand, *per se*, or the reanimated flesh of one who is dead. Or, perchance, it is the hand of someone who can make the rest of him invisible.

"Now, then, if it is a ghost hand, either true ghost or living-dead flesh, it is like other hands, it has ridges and valleys and loops and whorls, which can be traced and recognized by fingerprint experts. Or, if a man can, by some process all unknown to us, make all of him except his hand invisible, why, then, his hand, too, must leave fingerprints. *Hein?*

"'Now, Jules de Grandin,' I say to me, 'is it not highly probable that one who steals jewels and stocks and bonds and the cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette, has stolen things before, perhaps been apprehended and fingerprinted?'

"'*Parbleu*, it may be even as you say, Jules de Grandin,' I reply to me.

"Thereupon I take that hammer from Monsieur Kinnan's house and go with him to police headquarters. '*Monsieur le Prefet*,' I say to the commissioner, 'I would that you permit your identification experts to examine this hammer, and tell me, of their kindness, whose fingerprints appear thereon.'

"'*Bien.* He is an amiable gentleman, the commissioner, and he gives the order as requested. In due time comes the report. The handle of that hammer bears the manual autograph of one Katherine O'Brien, otherwise known to the police as Catherine Levoy, and also as Catherine Dunstan. The police have a *dossier* for her. She was in turn a shoplifter, a decoy woman for some badger-game gentlemen, a forger and the partner of one Professor

Mysterio, a theatrical hypnotist. Indeed, they tell me, she was married to this professor *à l'Italienne*, and with him she traveled the country, sometimes giving exhibitions, sometimes indulging in crime, as, for instance, burglary and pocket-picking.

"Now, about a year ago, while she and the professor were exhibiting themselves at Coney Island, this lady died. Her partner gave her a remarkable funeral; but the ceremonies were marred by one untoward incident—while her body lay in the mortuary some miscreant climbed through the window and removed one of her hands. In the dead of night he severed from the lovely body of that wicked woman the hand that had so often made away with others' property. He made away with it, nor could the efforts of the police trace him, or it, to his place of hiding.

"Meanwhile, this Professor Mysterio, he who was the woman's partner, has retired from the stage and lives here in New Jersey on the fortune he has amassed.

" 'New Jersey, New Jersey,' I say to me when I hear this. 'Why, this is New Jersey!'

"So the good Sergeant Costello and I make a survey. We find that this *ci-devant* professor lives out on the Andover Road where he does nothing for a livelihood but smoke a pipe and drink whiskey. 'Come, let us take him in,' the Sergeant says to me.

"Now, while we ride out to the professor's house I do much thinking. Hypnotism is thought, and thought is a thing—a thing which does not die. If this deceased woman had been habituated to obeying mental commands of this Professor Mysterio—had been accustomed to obey those orders with all parts of her body as soon as they were given—had she not formed a habit-pattern of obedience? Trowbridge, my friend, you are a physician, you have seen men die. You know that the suddenly killed man falls in an attitude which had been characteristic in life, is it not so?"

I nodded agreement.

"Very well, then. I ask me if it is not possible that the hand this professor had commanded so many times in life can not be made to do his bidding after death? *Mon Dieu*,

the idea is novel, but not impossible for that reason! Did not that so superb Monsieur Poe hint at some such thing in his story of the dying man who remained alive because he was hypnotized? Assuredly.

"So, when we get to the professor's house Costello points his pistol at the gentleman and says, 'I make you arrested,' and meanwhile I search the place.

"In it I find Monsieur Richards' jewelry and certificates, also the cup of Monsieur le Marquis de Lafayette. I also find much else, including this hand of a dead woman which is not itself dead. *Dieu de Dieu!* When I go to take it from its case it attack me like a living thing, and Costello have to promise he will punch Professor Mysterio in the nose before he order it to be quiet. And it obeyed his voice! *Mordieu*, when I see that I have the flesh of geese all over me!"

"Rot!" Richards flung the comment like a missile. "I don't know what sort o' hocus-pocus made that hand move, but if you expect me to believe any such nonsense as this stuff you've been telling you've got the wrong pig by the ear. I shouldn't be surprised if you and this Professor What's-His-Name were in cahoots, and you got cold feet and left him holding the bag!"

I stared aghast at the man. de Grandin's vanity was as colossal as his ability, and though he was as gentle as a woman in ordinary circumstances, like a woman he was capable of sudden flares of vixenish temper in which his regard for human life became no greater than his concern for a troublesome fly.

The little Frenchman turned to me, his face as pale as a dead man's, the muscles of his jaws working. "Friend Trowbridge you will act for me, of course?" he asked in a low, husky voice. "You will—*ha!*"

With the ejaculation he dodged suddenly, almost falling to the floor in his haste to avoid the flashing white object that dashed at his face.

Nor was his dodge a split-second too soon. Like the lid of a boiling kettle, the top of the shoe box had lifted, and the slim quiescent hand that lay within leaped through the opening and hurtled across intervening space like a quarrel from a crossbow. All delicate, firm-muscled fin-

gers outspread, it swooped like a hawk, missed de Grandin by the barest fraction of an inch, and fastened itself, snapping like a strong-springed steel trap, in the puffy flesh of Willis Richards' neck.

"Ah—ulp!" The startled financier gasped as he stumbled backward, tearing futilely at the eldritch thing which sank its long and pointed nails into his purpling skin. "Ah—God, it's choking me!"

Costello rushed to him and strove with all his strength to drag the clutching hand away. He might as well have tried to wrench apart the clasp of a chrome-steel handcuff.

"Non, non," de Grandin shouted, "not that way, Sergeant. It is useless!"

Leaping to my instrument case he jerked out an autopsy knife and dashed his shoulder against the burly detective, almost sending him sprawling. Next instant, with the speed and precision of an expert surgeon, he was dissecting the deadly white fingers fastened in Richards' dewlap.

"*C'est complet,*" he announced matter-of-factly as he finished his grisly task. "A restorative, if you please, Friend Trowbridge, and an antiseptic dressing for his wounds. The nails may not have been sterile."

Wheeling, he seized the telephone and dialed police headquarters. "*Allo, Monsieur le Geôlier,*" he greeted when his call was put through. "You have one Professor Mysterio in confinement there, yes? But certainly, he is booked upon the suspicion—the what you call him?—open charge? How is he, what is it he does?"

A pause, then: "Ah, you say so? I thought as much. Many thanks, Monsieur."

He put the telephone back in its cradle, and faced us again. "My friends," he announced, "the professor is no more. Two minutes ago he was heard to cry out in a loud, distinct voice, 'Katie, kill the Frenchman; I command you. Kill him!' When they rushed to his cell they found him hanging from the grating of the door by his waist-belt. The fall had snapped his neck, and he was dead as a herring.

"*Eh bien,*" he shook himself like a spaniel emerging

from the water, "it was a lucky thing for me I saw that box lid lift itself when the dead hand obeyed its dying master's last command. None of you would have thought of the knife, I fear, before the thing had strangled my life away. As it is, I acted none too soon for Monsieur Richards' good."

Still red in the face, but regaining his self-possession under my ministrations, Mr. Richards sat up in his chair. "If you'll give me my property I'll be getting out o' this hell-house," he announced gruffly, reaching for the jewels and securities de Grandin had placed on the desk.

"Assuredly, Monsieur," the Frenchman agreed. "But first you will comply with the law, *n'est-ce-pas*? You have offered a reward of five thousand dollars for your property's return. Make out two checks, if you will be so kind, one for half the amount to Sergeant Costello, the other half for me."

"I'm hanged if I do," Richards demurred. "Why should a man have to buy back his own stuff?"

Sergeant Costello rose ponderously to his feet and gathered the parcels containing Mr. Richards' belongings into his capacious hands. "Law's law," he announced decisively. "There'll be no bonds or jools returned till that reward is paid, sir."

"All right, all right," Richards agreed, reaching for his checkbook. "I'll pay it, but it's the damndest hold-up I've ever had pulled on me."

"H'm," growled Costello as the door banged to behind the banker, "if I ever catch that bird parkin' by a fireplug or exceedin' the speed limit, he'll see a hold-up that *is* a hold-up. I'll give him every summons in me book an' holler for a fresh pad."

"*Tenez*, my friends, think of the swine no more," de Grandin ordered. "In France, had a man so insulted me, I should have called him out and run him through the body. But that one? *Pouf!* Gold is his life's blood. I hurt him far more by forcing the reward from him than if I had punctured his fat skin a dozen times.

"Meanwhile, Friend Trowbridge"—his small blue eyes snapped with the heat-lightning of his sudden smile—"there waits in the pantry that delicious apple tart pre-

pared by your so amiable cook. Sergeant, Monsieur Kinan, will you not join us? A wedge of apple tart and a cold mug of beer—*morbleu*, it makes a feast fit for an emperor!”

The Man Who Cast No Shadow

“But no, my friend,” Jules de Grandin shook his sleek, blond head decidedly and grinned across the breakfast table at me, “we will go to this so kind Madame Norman’s tea, of a certainty. Yes.”

“But hang it all,” I replied, giving Mrs. Norman’s note an irritable shove with my coffee spoon, “I don’t want to go to a confounded tea party! I’m too old and too sensible to dress up in a tall hat and a long coat and listen to the vaporings of a flock of silly flappers. I—”

“*Mordieu*, hear the savage!” de Grandin chuckled delightedly. “Always does he find excuses for not giving pleasure to others, and always does he frame those excuses to make him more important in his own eyes. Enough of this, Friend Trowbridge; let us go to the kind Madame Norman’s party. Always there is something of interest to be seen if one but knows where to look for it.”

“H’m, maybe,” I replied grudgingly, “but you’ve better sight than I think you have if you can find anything worth seeing at an afternoon reception.”

The reception was in full blast when we arrived at the Norman mansion in Tuscarora Avenue that afternoon in 192—. The air was heavy with the commingled odors of half a hundred different perfumes and the scent of hot-poured jasmine tea, while the clatter of cup on saucer,

laughter, and buzzing conversation filled the wide hall and dining room. In the long double parlors the rugs had been rolled back and young men in frock coats glided over the polished parquetry in company with girls in provocatively short skirts to the belching melody of a saxophone and the drumming rhythm of a piano.

"*Pardieu*," de Grandin murmured as he viewed the dancers a moment, "your American youth take their pleasures with seriousness, Friend Trowbridge. Behold their faces. Never a smile, never a laugh. They might be recruits on their first parade for all the joy they show—ah!" He broke off abruptly, gazing with startled, almost horrified, eyes after a couple whirling in the mazes of a fox-trot at the farther end of the room. "*Nom d'un fromage*," he murmured softly to himself, "this matter will bear investigating, I think!"

"Eh, what's that?" I asked, piloting him toward our hostess.

"Nothing; nothing, I do assure you," he answered as we greeted Mrs. Norman and passed toward the dining room. But I noticed his round, blue eyes strayed more than once toward the parlors as we drank our tea and exchanged amiable nothings with a pair of elderly ladies.

"Pardon," de Grandin bowed stiffly from the hips to his conversational partner and turned toward the rear drawing room, "there is a gentleman here I desire to meet, if you do not mind—that tall, distinguished one, with the young girl in pink."

"Oh, I guess you mean Count Czerny," a young man laden with an ice in one hand and a glass of non-Volstead punch in the other paused on his way from the dining room. "He's a rare bird, all right. I knew him back in '13 when the Balkan Allies were polishing off the Turks. Queer-lookin' duck, ain't he? First-class fightin' man, though. Why, I saw him lead a bayonet charge right into the Turkish lines one day, and when he'd shot his pistol empty he went at the enemy with his teeth! Yes, sir, he grabbed a Turk with both hands and bit his throat out, hanged if he didn't."

"Czerny," de Grandin repeated musingly. "He is a Pole, perhaps?"

His informant laughed a bit shamefacedly. "Can't say," he confessed. "The Serbs weren't asking embarrassing questions about volunteers' nationalities those days, and it wasn't considered healthful for any of us to do so, either. I got the impression he was a Hungarian refugee from Austrian vengeance; but that's only hearsay. Come along, I'll introduce you, if you wish."

I saw de Grandin clasp hands with the foreigner and stand talking with him for a time, and, in spite of myself, I could not forbear a smile at the contrast they made.

The Frenchman was a bare five feet four inches in height, slender as a girl, and, like a girl, possessed of almost laughably small hands and feet. His light hair and fair skin, coupled with his trimly waxed diminutive blond mustache and round, unwinking blue eyes, gave him a curiously misleading appearance of mildness. His companion was at least six feet tall, swarthy-skinned and black-haired, with bristling black mustaches and fierce, slate-gray eyes set beneath beetling black brows. His large nose was like the predatory beak of some bird of prey, and the tilt of his long, pointed jaw bore out the uncompromising ferocity of the rest of his visage. Across his left cheek, extending upward over the temple and into his hair, was a knife- or saber-scar, a streak of white showing the trail of the steel in his scalp, and shining like silver inlaid in onyx against the blue-black of his smoothly pomaded locks.

What they said was, of course, beyond reach of my ears, but I saw de Grandin's quick, impish smile flicker across his keen face more than once, to be answered by a slow, languorous smile on the other's dark countenance.

At length the count bowed formally to my friend and whirled away with a wisp of a girl, while de Grandin returned to me. At the door he paused a moment, inclining his shoulders in a salute as a couple of debutantes brushed past him. Something—I know not what—drew my attention to the tall foreigner a moment, and a sudden chill rippled up my spine at what I saw. Above the georgette-clad shoulder of his dancing partner the count's slate-gray eyes were fixed on de Grandin's trim back, and in them I read all the cold, malevolent fury

with which a caged tiger regards its keeper as he passes the bars.

"What on earth did you say to that fellow?" I asked as the little Frenchman rejoined me. "He looked as if he would like to murder you."

"Ha?" he gave a questioning, single-syllabled laugh. "Did he so? Obey the noble Washington's injunction, and avoid foreign entanglements, Friend Trowbridge; it is better so, I think."

"But look here," I began, nettled by his manner, "what—"

"*Non, non,*" he interrupted, "you must be advised by me, my friend. I think it would be better if we dismissed the incident from our minds. But stay—perhaps you had better meet that gentleman, after all. I will have the good Madame Norman introduce you."

More puzzled than ever, I followed him to our hostess and waited while he requested her to present me to the count.

In a lull in the dancing she complied with his request, and the foreigner acknowledged the introduction with a brief handclasp and an almost churlish nod, then turned his back on me, continuing an animated conversation with the large-eyed young woman in an abbreviated party frock.

"And did you shake his hand?" de Grandin asked as we descended the Norman's steps to my waiting car.

"Yes, of course," I replied.

"Ah? Tell me, my friend, did you notice anything—ah—peculiar, in his grip?"

"H'm." I wrinkled my brow a moment in concentrated thought. "Yes, I believe I did."

"So? What was it?"

"Hanged if I can say, exactly," I admitted, "but—well, it seemed—this sounds absurd, I know—but it seemed as though his hand had two backs—no palm at all—if that means anything to you."

"It means much, my friend; it means a very great deal," he answered with such a solemn nod that I burst into a fit of laughter. "Believe me, it means much more than you suspect."

It must have been some two weeks later that I chanced to remark to de Grandin, "I saw your friend, Count Czerny, in New York yesterday."

"Indeed?" he answered with what seemed like more than necessary interest. "And how did he impress you at the time?"

"Oh, I just happened to pass him on Fifth Avenue," I replied. "I'd been up to see an acquaintance in Fifty-ninth street and was turning into the avenue when I saw him driving away from the Plaza. He was with some ladies."

"No doubt," de Grandin responded dryly. "Did you notice him particularly?"

"Can't say that I did, especially," I answered, "but it seems to me he looked older than the day we met him at Mrs. Norman's."

"Yes?" the Frenchman leaned forward eagerly. "Older, do you say? *Parbleu*, this is of interest; I suspected as much!"

"Why—" I began, but he turned away with an impatient shrug. "Pah!" he exclaimed petulantly. "Friend Trowbridge, I fear Jules de Grandin is a fool, he entertains all sorts of strange notions."

I had known the little Frenchman long enough to realize that he was as full of moods as a prima donna, but his erratic, unrelated remarks were getting on my nerves. "See here, de Grandin," I began testily, "what's all this nonsense—"

The sudden shrill clatter of my office telephone bell cut me short. "Dr. Trowbridge," an agitated voice asked over the wire, "can you come right over, please? This is Mrs. Norman speaking."

"Yes, of course," I answered, reaching for my medicine case; "what is it—who's ill?"

"It's—it's Guy Eckhart, he's been taken with a fainting fit, and we don't seem to be able to rouse him."

"Very well," I promised, "Dr. de Grandin and I will be right over."

"Come on, de Grandin," I called as I shoved my hat down over my ears and shrugged into my overcoat, "one of Mrs. Norman's house guests has been taken ill; I told her we were coming."

"*Mais oui*," he agreed, hurrying into his outdoors clothes. "Is it a man or a woman, this sick one?"

"It's a man," I replied, "Guy Eckhart."

"A man," he echoed incredulously. "A man, do you say? No, no, my friend, that is not likely."

"Likely or not," I rejoined sharply, "Mrs. Norman says he's been seized with a fainting fit, and I give the lady credit for knowing what she's talking about."

"*Eh bien*," he drummed nervously on the cushions of the automobile seat, "perhaps Jules de Grandin really is a fool. After all, it is not impossible."

"It certainly isn't," I agreed fervently to myself as I set the car in motion.

Young Eckhart had recovered consciousness when we arrived, but looked like a man just emerging from a lingering fever. Attempts to get a statement from him met with no response, for he replied slowly, almost incoherently, and seemed to have no idea concerning the cause of his illness.

Mrs. Norman was little more specific. "My son Ferdinand found him lying on the floor of his bath with the shower going and the window wide open, just before dinner," she explained. "He was totally unconscious, and remained so till just a few minutes ago."

"Ha, is it so?" de Grandin murmured half heedlessly, as he made a rapid inspection of the patient.

"Friend Trowbridge," he called me to the window, "what do you make of these objective symptoms: a soft, frequent pulse, a fluttering heart, suffused eyes, a hot, dry skin and a flushed, hectic face?"

"Sounds like an arterial hemorrhage," I answered promptly, "but there's been no trace of blood on the boy's floor, nor any evidence of a stain on his clothing. Sure you've checked the signs over?"

"Absolutely," he replied with a vigorous double nod. Then to the young man: "Now, *mon enfant*, we shall inspect you, if you please."

Quickly he examined the boy's face, scalp, throat, wrists and calves, finding no evidence of even a pinprick, let alone a wound capable of causing syncope.

"*Mon Dieu*, this is strange," he muttered; "of a surety, it has the queerness of the devil! Perhaps the bleeding is internal, but—ah, *regard-ez vous*, Friend Trowbridge!"

He had turned down the collar of the youngster's pajama jacket, more in idle routine than in hope of discovering anything tangible, but the livid spot to which he pointed seemed the key to our mystery's outer door. Against the smooth, white flesh of the young man's left breast there showed a red, angry patch, such as might have resulted from a vacuum cup being held some time against the skin, and in the center of the discoloration was a double row of tiny punctures scarcely larger than needle-pricks, arranged in horizontal divergent arcs, like a pair of parentheses laid sidewise.

"You see?" he asked simply, as though the queer, blood-infused spot explained everything.

"But he couldn't have bled much through that," I protested. "Why, the man seems almost drained dry, and these wounds wouldn't have yielded more than a cubic centimeter of blood, at most."

He nodded gravely. "Blood is not entirely colloidal, my friend," he responded. "It will penetrate the tissues to some extent, especially if sufficient force is applied."

"But it would have required a powerful suction—" I replied, when his rejoinder cut me short:

"Ha, you have said it, my friend. Suction—that is the word!"

"But what could have sucked a man's blood like this?" I was in a near-stupor of mystification.

"What, indeed?" he replied gravely. "That is for us to find out. Meantime, we are here as physicians. A quarter-grain morphine injection is indicated here, I think. You will administer the dose; I have no license in America."

When I returned from my round of afternoon calls next day I found de Grandin seated on my front steps in close conference with Indian John.

Indian John was a town character of doubtful lineage who performed odd jobs of snow shoveling, furnace tending and grass cutting, according to season, and inter-

persed his manual labors with brief incursions into the mercantile field when he peddled fresh vegetables from door to door. He also peddled neighborhood gossip and retailed local lore to all who would listen, his claim to being a hundred years old giving him the standing of an indisputable authority in all matters antedating living memory.

"*Pardieu*, but you have told me much, *mon vieux*," de Grandin declared as I came up the porch steps. He handed the old rascal a handful of silver and rose to accompany me into the house.

"Friend Trowbridge," he accused as we finished dinner that night, "you had not told me that this town grew up on the site of an early Swedish settlement."

"Never knew you wanted to know," I defended with a grin.

"You know the ancient Swedish church, perhaps," he persisted.

"Yes, that's old Christ Church," I answered. "It's down in the east end of town; don't suppose it has a hundred communicants today. Our population has made some big changes, both in complexion and creed, since the days when the Dutch and Swedes fought for possession of New Jersey."

"You will drive me to that church, right away, at once, immediately?" he demanded eagerly.

"I guess so," I agreed. "What's the matter now; Indian John been telling you a lot of fairy-tales?"

"Perhaps," he replied, regarding me with one of his steady, unwinking stares. "Not all fairy-tales are pleasant, you know. Do you recall those of *Chaperon Rouge*—how do you say it, Red Riding Hood?—and Bluebeard?"

"Huh!" I scoffed; "they're both as true as any of John's stories, I'll bet."

"Undoubtlessly," he agreed with a quick nod. "The story of Bluebeard, for instance, is unfortunately a very true tale indeed. But come, let us hasten; I would see that church tonight, if I may."

Christ Church, the old Swedish place of worship, was a combined demonstration of how firmly adzhewn pine and

walnut can resist the ravages of time and how nearly three hundred years of weather can demolish any structure erected by man. Its rough-painted walls and short, firm-based spire shone ghostly and pallid in the early spring moonlight, and the cluster of broken and weather-worn tombstones which staggered up from its unkempt burying ground were like soiled white chicks seeking shelter from a soiled white hen.

Dismounting from a car at the wicket gate of the churchyard, we made our way over the level graves, I in a maze of wonderment, de Grandin with an eagerness almost childish. Occasionally he flashed the beam from his electric torch on some monument of an early settler, bent to decipher the worn inscription, then turned away with a sigh of disappointment.

I paused to light a cigar, but dropped my half-burned match in astonishment as my companion gave vent to a cry of excited pleasure. "*Triomphe!*" he exclaimed delightedly. "Come and behold. Friend Trowbridge. Thus far your lying friend, the Indian man, has told the truth. *Regardez!*"

He was standing beside an old, weather-gnawed tombstone, once marble, perhaps, but appearing more like brown sandstone under the ray of his flashlight. Across its upper end was deeply cut the one word:

SARAH

while below the name appeared a verse of half-obliterated doggerel:

Let nonne difturb her deathleffe fleepe
Abote ye tombe wilde garlick keepe
For if fhee wake much woe will boaft
Prayfe Faither, Sonne & Holie Goaft.

"Did you bring me out here to study the orthographical eccentricities of the early settlers?" I demanded in disgust.

"Ah bah!" he returned. "Let us consult the *ecclesiastique*. He, perhaps, will ask no fool's questions."

"No, you'll do that," I answered tartly as we knocked at the rectory door.

"Pardon, Monsieur," de Grandin apologized as the white-haired old minister appeared in answer to our summons, "we do not wish to disturb you thus, but there is a matter of great import on which we would consult you. I would that you tell us what you can, if anything, concerning a certain grave in your churchyard. A grave marked 'Sarah' if you please."

"Why"—the elderly cleric was plainly taken aback—"I don't think there is anything I can tell you about it, sir. There is some mention in the early parish records, I believe, of a woman believed to have been a murderess being buried in that grave, but it seems the poor creature was more sinned against than sinning. Several children in the neighborhood died mysteriously—some epidemic the ignorant physicians failed to understand, no doubt—and Sarah, whatever the poor woman's surname may have been, was accused of killing them by witchcraft. At any rate, one of the bereft mothers took vengeance into her own hands, and strangled poor Sarah with a noose of well-rope. The witchcraft belief must have been quite prevalent, too, for there is some nonsense verse on the tombstone concerning her 'deathless sleep' and an allusion to her waking from it; also some mention of wild garlic being planted about her."

He laughed somewhat ruefully. "I wish they hadn't said that," he added, "for, do you know, there are garlic shoots growing about that grave to this very day. Old Christian, our sexton, declares that he can't get rid of it, no matter how much he grubs it up. It spreads to the surrounding lawn, too," he added sadly.

"*Cordieu!*" de Grandin gasped. "This is of the importance, sir!"

The old man smiled gently at the little Frenchman's impetuosity.

"It's an odd thing," he commented, "there was another gentleman asking about that same tomb a few weeks ago; a—pardon the expression—a foreigner."

"So?" de Grandin's little waxed mustache twitched like the whiskers of a nervous tom-cat. "A foreigner, do you

say? A tall, rawboned, fleshless living skeleton of a man with a scar on his face and a white streak in his hair?"

"I wouldn't be quite so severe in my description," the other answered with a smile. "He certainly was a thin gentleman, and I believe he had a scar on his face, too, though I can't be certain of that, he was so very wrinkled. No, his hair was entirely white, there was no white streak in it, sir. In fact, I should have said he was very advanced in age, judging from his hair and face and the manner in which he walked. He seemed very weak and feeble. It was really quite pitiable."

"*Sacre nom d'un fromage vert!*" de Grandin almost snarled. "Pitiable, do you say, Monsieur? *Pardieu*, it is damnable, nothing less!"

He bowed to the clergyman and turned to me. "Come, Friend Trowbridge, come away," he cried. "We must go to Madame Norman's at once, right away, immediately."

"What's behind all this mystery?" I demanded as we left the parsonage door.

He elevated his slender shoulders in an eloquent shrug. "I only wish I knew," he replied. "Someone is working the devil's business, of that I am sure; but what the game is, or what the next move will be, only the good God can tell, my friend."

I turned the car through Tunlaw Street to effect a short-cut, and as we drove past an Italian green grocer's, de Grandin seized my arm. "Stop a moment, Friend Trowbridge," he asked, "I would make a purchase at this shop."

"We desire some fresh garlic," he informed the proprietor as we entered the little store, "a considerable amount, if you have it."

The Italian spread his hands in a deprecating gesture. "We have it not, *Signor*," he declared. "It was only yesterday morning that we sold our entire supply." His little black eyes snapped happily at the memory of an unexpected bargain.

"Eh, what is this?" de Grandin demanded. "Do you say you sold your supply? How is that?"

"I know not," the other replied. "Yesterday morning a rich gentleman came to my shop in an automobile,

and called me from my store. He desired all the garlic I had in stock—at my own price, *Signor*, and at once. I was to deliver it to his address in Rupleysville the same day.”

“Ah?” de Grandin’s face assumed the expression of a cross-word fiend as he begins to see the solution of his puzzle. “And this liberal purchaser, what did he look like?”

The Italian showed his white, even teeth in a wide grin. “It was funny,” he confessed. “He did not look like one of our people, nor like one who would eat much garlic. He was old, very old and thin, with a much-wrinkled face and white hair, he—”

“*Nom d’un chat!*” the Frenchman cried, then burst into a flood of torrential Italian.

The shopkeeper listened at first with suspicion, then incredulity, finally in abject terror. “No, no,” he exclaimed. “No, *Signor*; *santissima Madonna*, you do make the joke!”

“Do I so?” de Grandin replied. “Wait and see, foolish one.”

“*Santo Dio* forbid!” The other crossed himself piously, then bent his thumb across his palm, circling it with his second and third fingers and extending the fore and little fingers in the form of a pair of horns.

The Frenchman turned toward the waiting car with a grunt of inarticulate disgust.

“What now?” I asked as we got under way once more; “what did that man make the sign of the evil eye for, de Grandin?”

“Later, my friend; I will tell you later,” he answered. “You would but laugh if I told you what I suspect. He is of the Latin blood, and can appreciate my fears.” Nor would he utter another word till we reached the Norman house.

“Dr. Trowbridge—Dr. de Grandin!” Mrs. Norman met us in the hall; “you must have heard my prayers; I’ve been phoning your office for the last hour, and they said you were out and couldn’t be reached.”

“What’s up?” I asked.

“It’s Mr. Eckhart again. He’s been seized with another

fainting fit. He seemed so well this afternoon, and I sent a big dinner up to him at 8 o'clock, but when the maid went in, she found him unconscious, and she declares she saw something in his room—"

"Ha?" de Grandin interrupted. "Where is she, this servant? I would speak with her."

"Wait a moment," Mrs. Norman answered; "I'll send for her."

The girl, an ungainly young Southern negress, came into the front hall, sullen dissatisfaction written large upon her black face.

"Now, then," de Grandin bent his steady, unwinking gaze on her, "what is it you say about seeing someone in the young Monsieur Eckhart's room, *hein?*"

"Ah, did see sumpin', too," the girl replied stubbornly. "Ah don' care who says Ah didn't see nothin', Ah says Ah did. Ah'd just toted a tray o' vittles up to Mistuh Eckhart's room, an' when Ah opened de do', dere wuz a woman—dere wuz a woman—yas, sar, a skinny, black-eyed white woman—a-bendin' ober 'um an'—an'—"

"And what, if you please?" de Grandin asked breathlessly.

"A-bitin' 'um!" the girl replied defiantly. "Ah don' car whut Mis' Norman says, she wuz a-bitin' 'um. Ah seen her. Ah knows whut she wuz. Ah done hyeah tell erbout dat ol' Sarah woman what come up out 'er grave wid a long rope erbout her neck and go 'round bitin' folks. Yas, sar; an' she wuz a-bitin' 'um, too. Ah seen her!"

"Nonsense," Mrs. Norman commented in an annoyed whisper over de Grandin's shoulder.

"*Grand Dieu*, is it so?" de Grandin explained, and turning abruptly, leaped up the stairs toward the sick man's room, two steps at a time.

"See, see, Friend Trowbridge," he ordered fiercely when I joined him at the patient's bedside. "Behold, it is the mark!" Turning back Eckhart's pajama collar, he displayed two incised horizontal arcs on the young man's flesh. There was no room for dispute, they were undoubtedly the marks of human teeth, and from the fresh wounds the blood was flowing freely.

As quickly as possible we staunched the flow and ap-

plied restoratives to the patient, both of us working in silence, for my brain was too much in a whirl to permit the formation of intelligent questions, while de Grandin remained dumb as an oyster.

"Now," he ordered as we completed our ministrations, "we must get back to that cemetery, Friend Trowbridge, and once there, we must do the thing which must be done!"

"What the devil's that?" I asked as we left the sick-room.

"*Non, non*, you shall see," he promised as we entered my car and drove down the street.

"Quick, the crank-handle," he demanded as we descended from the car at the cemetery gate, "it will make a serviceable hammer." He was prying a hemlock paling from the graveyard fence as he spoke.

We crossed the unkempt cemetery lawn again and finally paused beside the tombstone of the unknown Sarah.

"Attend me, Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin commanded, "hold the searchlight, if you please." He pressed his pocket flash into my hand. "Now—" He knelt beside the grave, pointing the stick he had wrenched from the fence straight downward into the turf. With the crank of my motor he began hammering the wood into the earth.

Farther and farther the rough stake sank into the sod, de Grandin's blows falling faster and faster as the wood drove home. Finally, when there was less than six inches of the wicket projecting from the grave's top, he raised the iron high over his head and drove downward with all his might.

The short hair at the back of my neck suddenly started upward, and little thrills of horripilation chased each other up my spine as the wood sank suddenly, as though driven from clay into sand, and a low hopeless moan, like the wailing of a frozen wind through an ice-cave, wafted up to us from the depths of the grave.

"Good God, what's that?" I asked, aghast.

For answer he leaned forward, seized the stake in both hands and drew suddenly up on it. At his second tug the wood came away. "See," he ordered curtly, flashing the

pocket lamp on the tip of the stave. For the distance of a foot or so from its pointed end the wood was stained a deep, dull red. It was wet with blood.

"And now forever," he hissed between his teeth, driving the wood into the grave once more, and sinking it a full foot below the surface of the grass by thrusting the crank-handle into the earth. "Come, Friend Trowbridge, we have done a good work this night. I doubt not the young Eckhart will soon recover from his malady."

His assumption was justified. Eckhart's condition improved steadily. Within a week, save for a slight pallor, he was, to all appearances, as well as ever.

The pressure of the usual early crop of influenza and pneumonia kept me busily on my rounds, and I gradually gave up hope of getting any information from de Grandin, for a shrug of the shoulders was all the answer he vouchsafed to my questions. I relegated Eckhart's inexplicable hemorrhages and the bloodstained stake to the limbo of never-to-be-solved mysteries. But—

2

"Good mornin', gentlemen," Detective Sergeant Costello greeted as he followed Nora, my household factotum, into the breakfast room, "it's sorry I am to be disturbin' your meal, but there's a little case puzzlin' th' department that I'd like to talk over with Dr. de Grandin, if you don't mind."

He looked expectantly at the little Frenchman as he finished speaking, his lips parted to launch open a detailed description of the case.

"*Parbleu*," de Grandin laughed, "it is fortunate for me that I have completed my breakfast, *cher Sergeant*, for a riddle of crime detection is to me like a red rag to a bull-frog—I must needs snap at it, whether I have been fed or no. Speak on, my friend, I beseech you; I am like Balaam's ass, all ears."

The big Irishman seated himself on the extreme edge of one of my Heppelwhite chairs and gazed deprecatingly at the derby he held firmly between his knees. "It's like this," he began. "'Tis one o' them mysterious disappear-

ance cases, gentlemen an' whilst I'm thinkin' th' young lady knows exactly where she's at an' why she's there, I hate to tell her folks about it.

"All th' high-hat folks ain't like you two gentlemen, askin' your pardon, sors—they mostly seems to think that a harness bull's unyform is sumpin' like a livery—like a shofur's or a footman's or sumpin', an' that a plainclothes man is just a sort o' inferior servant. They don't give th' police credit for no brains, y'see, an' when one o' their darters gits giddy an' runs off th' reservation, if we tells 'em th' gurrl's run away of her own free will an' accord they say we're a lot o' lazy, good-fer-nothin' bums who are tryin' to dodge our laygitimate jooties by castin' mud on th' young ladies' char-ac-ters, d'ye see? So, when this Miss Esther Norman disappears in broad daylight—leastwise, in th' twilight—o' th' day before her dance, we suspects right away that th' gurrl's gone her own ways into th' best o' intentions, y'see; but we dasn't tell her folks as much, or they'll be hollerin' to th' commissioner fer to git a bran' new set o' detectives down to headquarters, so they will.

"Now, mind ye, I'm not sayin' th' young lady *mightn't* o' been kidnaped, y'understand, gentlemen, but I do be sayin' 'tis most unlikely. I've been on th' force, man an' boy, in unyform and in plain clothes fer th' last twenty-five years, an' th' number of laygitimate kidnapin's o' young women over ten years of age I've seen can be counted on th' little finger o' me left hand, an' I ain't got none there, at all, at all."

He held the member up for our inspection, revealing the fact that the little finger had been amputated close to the knuckle.

de Grandin, elbows on the table, pointed chin cupped in his hands, was puffing furiously at a vile-smelling French cigarette, alternately sucking down great drafts of its acrid smoke and expelling clouds of fumes in double jets from his narrow, aristocratic nostrils.

"What is it you say?" he demanded, removing the cigarette from his lips. "Is it the so lovely Mademoiselle

Esther, daughter of that kind Madame Tuscarora Avenue Norman, who is missing?"

"Yes, sor," Costello answered, "'tis th' same young lady's flew the coop, accordin' to my way o' thinkin'."

"*Mordieu!*" The Frenchman gave the ends of his blond mustache a savage twist. "You intrigue me, my friend. Say on, how did it happen, and when?"

"'Twas about midnight last night th' alarm came into headquarters," the detective replied. "Accordin' to th' facts as we have 'em, th' young lady went downtown in th' Norman car to do some errands. We've checked her movements up, an' here they are."

He drew a black-leather memorandum book from his pocket and consulted it.

"At 2:45 or thereabouts, she left th' house, arrivin' at th' Ocean Trust Company at 2:55, five minutes before th' instytootion closed for th' day. She drew out three hundred an' thirty dollars an' sixty-five cents, an' left th' bank, goin' to Madame Gerard's, where she tried on a party dress for th' dance which was bein' given at her house that night.

"She left Madame Gerard's at 4:02, leavin' orders for th' dress to be delivered to her house immeejately, an' dismissed her sho-fur at th' corner o' Dean an' Tunlaw Streets, sayin' she was goin' to deliver some vegytables an' what-not to a pore family she an' some o' her friends was keepin' till their oldman gits let out o' jail—'twas meself an' Clancey, me buddy, that put him there when we caught him red-handed in a job o' housebreakin', too.

"Well, to return to th' young lady, she stoppèd at Pete Bacigalupo's store in Tunlaw Street an' bought a basket o' fruit an' canned things, at 4:30, an'—" He clamped his long-suffering derby between his knees and spread his hands emptily before us.

"Yes, 'and'—?" de Grandin prompted, dropping the glowing end of his cigarette into his coffee cup.

"An' that's all," responded the Irishman. "She just walked off, an' no one ain't seen her since, sor."

"But—*cordieu!*—such things do not occur, my friend," de Grandin protested. "Somewhere you have overlooked

a factor in this puzzle. You say no one saw her later? Have you nothing whatever to add to the tale?"

"Well"—the detective grinned at him—"there are one or two little incidents, but they ain't of any importance in th' case, as far as I can see. Just as she left Pete's store an old gink tried to 'make' her, but she give him th' air, an' he went off an' didn't bother her no more.

"I'd a' liked to seen th' old boy, at that. Day before yesterday there was an old felly hangin' 'round by the silk mills, annoyin' th' gurrles as they come off from work. Clancey, me mate, saw 'im an' started to take 'im up, an' darned if th' old rummy wasn't strong as a bull. D'ye know, he broke clean away from Clancey an' darn near broke his arm, in th' bargain? Belike 'twas th' same man accosted Miss Norman outside Pete's store."

"Ah?" de Grandin's slender, white fingers began beating a devil's tattoo on the tablecloth. "And who was it saw this old man annoy the lady, *hein*?"

Costello grinned widely, "'Twas Pete Bacigalupo himself, sor," he answered. "Pete swore he recognized th' old geezer as havin' come to his store a month or so ago in an autymobile an bought up all his entire stock o' garlic. Huh! Th' fool said he wouldn't a gone after th felly' for a hundred dollars—said he had th' pink-eye, or th' evil eye, or some such thing. That sure do burn me up!"

"*Dieu et le diable!*" de Grandin leaped up, oversetting his chair in his mad haste. "And we sit here like three *poissons d'avril*—like poor fish—while he works his devilish will on her! Quick, Sergeant! Quick, Friend Trowbridge! Your hats, your coats; the motor! Oh, make haste, my friends, fly, fly, I implore you; even now it may be too late!"

As though all the fiends of pandemonium were at his heels he raced from the breakfast room, up the stairs, three steps at a stride, and down the upper hall toward his bedroom. Nor did he cease his shouted demands for haste throughout his wild flight.

"Cuckoo?" The sergeant tapped his forehead significantly.

I shook my head as I hastened to the hall for my driving clothes. "No," I answered, shrugging into my topcoat,

"he's got a reason for everything he does; but you and I can't always see it, Sergeant."

"You said a mouthful that time, doc," he agreed, pulling his hat down over his ears. "He's the darndest, craziest Frog I ever seen, but, at that, he's got more sense than nine men out o'ten."

"To Rupleysville, Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin shouted as he leaped into the seat beside me. "Make haste, I do implore you. Oh, Jules de Grandin, your grandfather was an imbecile and all your ancestors were idiots, but you are the greatest zany in the family. Why, oh, why, do you require a sunstroke before you can see the light, foolish one?"

I swung the machine down the pike at highest legal speed, but the little Frenchman kept urging greater haste. "*Sang de Dieu, sang de Saint Denis, sang du diable!*" he wailed despairingly. "Can you not make this abominable car go faster, Friend Trowbridge? Oh, ah, *helas*, if we are too late! I shall hate myself, I shall loathe myself—*pardieu*, I shall become a Carmelite friar and eat fish and abstain from swearing!"

We took scarcely twenty minutes to cover the ten-mile stretch to the aggregation of tumbledown houses which was Rupleysville, but my companion was almost frothing at the mouth when I drew up before the local apology for a hotel.

"Tell me, Monsieur," de Grandin cried as he thrust the hostelry's door open with his foot and brandished his slender ebony cane before the astonished proprietor's eyes, "tell me of *un vieillard*—an old, old man with snow-white hair and an evil face, who has lately come to this so detestable place. I would know where to find him, right away, immediately, at once!"

"Say," the boniface demanded truculently, "where d'ye git that stuff? Who are you to be askin'—"

"That'll do"—Costello shouldered his way past de Grandin and displayed his badge—"you answer this gentleman's questions, an' answer 'em quick an' accurate, or I'll run you in, see?"

The innkeeper's defiant attitude melted before the de-

tective's show of authority like frost before the sunrise. "Guess you must mean Mr. Zerny," he replied sullenly. "He come here about a month ago an' rented the Hazelton house, down th' road about a mile. Comes up to town for provisions every day or two, and stops in here sometimes for a—" He halted abruptly, his face suffused with a dull flush.

"Yeah?" Costello replied. "Go on an' say it; we all know what he stops here for. Now listen, buddy"—he stabbed the air two inches before the man's face with a blunt forefinger—"I don't know whether this here Zerny felly's got a tellyphone or not, but if he has, you just lay off tellin' 'im we're comin'; git me? If anyone's tipped him off when we git to his place I'm comin' back here and plaster more padlocks on this place o' yours than Sousa's got medals on his blouse. Savvy?"

"Come away, *Sergeant*; come away, Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin besought almost tearfully. "Bandy not words with the *cancre*; we have work to do!"

Down the road we raced in the direction indicated by the hotelkeeper, till the picket fence and broken shutters of the Hazelton house showed among a rank copse of second-growth pines at the bend of the highway.

The shrewd wind of early spring was moaning and soughing among the black boughs of the pine trees as we ran toward the house, and though it was bright with sunshine on the road, there was chill and shadow about us as we climbed the sagging steps of the old building's ruined piazza and paused breathlessly before the paintless front door.

"Shall I knock?" Costello asked dubiously, involuntarily sinking his voice to a whisper.

"But no," de Grandin answered in a low voice, "what we have to do here must be done quietly, my friends."

He leaned forward and tried the doorknob with a light, tentative touch. The door gave under his hand, swinging inward on protesting hinges, and we tiptoed into a dark, dust-carpeted hall. A shaft of sunlight, slanting downward from a chink in one of the window shutters, showed innumerable dust-motes flying lazily in the air, and laid a bright oval of light against the warped floor-boards.

"Huh, empty as a pork-butcher's in Jerusalem," Costello commented disgustedly, looking about the unfurnished rooms, but de Grandin seized him by the elbow with one hand while he pointed toward the floor with the ferrule of his slender ebony walking stick.

"Empty, perhaps," he conceded in a low, vibrant whisper, "but not recently, *mon ami*." Where the sunbeam splashed on the uneven floor there showed distinctly the mark of a booted foot, two marks—a trail of them leading toward the rear of the house.

"Right y'are," the detective agreed. "Someone's left his track here, an' no mistake."

"Ha!" de Grandin bent forward till it seemed the tip of his highbridged nose would impinge on the tracks. "Gentlemen," he rose and pointed forward into the gloom with a dramatic flourish of his cane, "they are here! Let us go!"

Through the gloomy hall we followed the trail by the aid of Costello's flashlight, stepping carefully to avoid creaking boards as much as possible. At length the marks stopped abruptly in the center of what had formerly been the kitchen. A disturbance in the dust told where the walker had doubled on his tracks in a short circle, and a ringbolt in the floor gave notice that we stood above a trap-door of some sort.

"Careful, Friend Costello," de Grandin warned, "have ready your flashlight when I fling back the trap. Ready? *Un—deux—trois!*"

He bent, seized the rusty ringbolt and heaved the trap-door back so violently that it flew back with a thundering crash on the floor beyond.

The cavern had originally been a cellar for the storage of food, it seemed, and was brick-walled and earth-floored, without window or ventilation opening of any sort. A dank, musty odor assaulted our nostrils as we leaned forward, but further impressions were blotted out by the sight directly beneath us.

White as a figurine of carven alabaster, the slender, bare body of a girl lay in sharp reverse silhouette against the darkness of the cavern floor, her ankles crossed and firmly lashed to a stake in the earth, one hand doubled behind her back in the position of a wrestler's hammer-

lock grip, and made firm to a peg in the floor, while the left arm was extended straight outward, its wrist pinioned to another stake. Her luxuriant fair hair had been knotted together at the ends, then staked to the ground, so that her head was drawn far back, exposing her rounded throat to its fullest extent, and on the earth beneath her left breast and beside her throat stood two porcelain bowls.

Crouched over her was the relic of a man, an old, old, hideously wrinkled witch-husband, with matted white hair and beard. In one hand he held a long, gleaming, double-edged dirk while with the other he caressed the girl's smooth throat with gloating strokes of his skeleton fingers.

"Howly Mither!" Costello's County Galway brogue broke through his American accent at the horrid sight below us.

"My God!" I exclaimed, all the breath in my lungs suddenly seeming to freeze in my throat.

"*Bonjour, Monsieur le Vampire!*" Jules de Grandin greeted nonchalantly, leaping to the earth beside the pinioned girl and waving his walking stick airily. "By the horns of the devil, but you have led us a merry chase, Baron Lajos Czuczron of Transylvania!"

The crouching creature emitted a bellow of fury and leaped toward de Grandin, brandishing his knife.

The Frenchman gave ground with a quick, catlike leap and grasped his slender cane in both hands near the top. Next instant he had ripped the lower part of the stick away, displaying a fine, three-edged blade set in the cane's handle, and swung his point toward the frothing-mouthed thing which mouthed and gibbered like a beast at bay. "A-ah?" he cried with a mocking, upward-tilting accent. "You did not expect this, eh, Friend Blood-drinker? I give you the party-of-surprise, *n'est-ce-pas?* The centuries have been long, *mon vieux*; but the reckoning has come at last. Say, now will you die by the steel, or by starvation?"

The aged monster fairly champed his gleaming teeth in fury. His eyes seemed larger, rounder, to gleam like the eyes of a dog in the firelight, as he launched himself toward the little Frenchman.

"*Sa-ha!*" the Frenchman sank backward on one foot, then straightened suddenly forward, stiffening his sword-arm and plunging his point directly into the charging beastman's distended, red mouth. A scream of mingled rage and pain filled the cavern with deafening shrillness, and the monster half turned, as though on an invisible pivot, clawed with horrid impotence at the wire-fine blade of de Grandin's rapier, then sank slowly to the earth, his death cry stilled to a sickening gurgle as his throat filled with blood.

"*Fini!*" de Grandin commented laconically, drawing out his handkerchief and wiping his blade with meticulous care, then cutting the unconscious girl's bonds with his pocket-knife. "Drop down your overcoat, Friend Trowbridge," he added, "that we may cover the poor child's nudity until we can piece out a wardrobe for her.

"Now, then"—as he raised her to meet the hands Costello and I extended into the pit—"if we clothe her in the motor rug, your jacket, *Sergeant*, Friend Trowbridge's top-coat and my shoes, she will be safe from the chill. Parbleu, I have seen women refugees from the *Boche* who could not boast so complete a toilette!"

With Esther Norman, hastily clothed in her patchwork assortment of garments, wedged in the front seat between de Grandin and me, we began our triumphant journey home.

"An' would ye mind tellin' me how ye knew where to look for th' young lady, Dr. de Grandin, sor?" Detective Sergeant Costello asked respectfully, leaning forward from the rear seat of the car.

"Wait, wait, my friend," de Grandin replied with a smile. "When our duties are all performed I shall tell you such a tale as shall make your two eyes to pop outward like a snail's. First, however, you must go with us to restore this *pauvre enfant* to her mother's arms; then to the headquarters to report the death of that *sale bête*. Friend Trowbridge will stay with the young lady for so long as he deems necessary, and I shall remain with him to help. Then, this evening—with your consent, Friend Trowbridge—you will dine with us, *Sergeant*, and I shall tell you all, everything, in total. Death of my life, what a tale

it is! *Parbleu*, but you shall call me a liar many times before it is finished!"

Jules de Grandin placed his demitasse on the tabouret and refilled his liqueur glass. "My friends," he began, turning his quick, elfish smile first on Costello, then on me, "I have promised you a remarkable tale. Very well, then, to begin."

He flicked a wholly imaginary fleck of dust from his dinner jacket sleeve and crossed his slender, womanishly small feet on the hearth rug.

"Do you recall, Friend Trowbridge, how we went, you and I, to the tea given by the good Madame Norman? Yes? Perhaps, then, you will recall how at the entrance of the ballroom I stopped with a look of astonishment on my face. Very good. At that moment I saw that which made me disbelieve the evidence of my own two eyes. As the gentleman we later met as Count Czerny danced past a mirror on the wall I beheld—*parbleu!* what do you suppose?—the reflection only of his dancing partner! It was as if the man had been non-existent, and the young lady had danced past the mirror by herself.

"Now, such a thing was not likely, I admit; you, *Sergeant*, and you, too, Friend Trowbridge, will say it was not possible; but such is not the case. In certain circumstances it is possible for that which we see with our eyes to cast no shadow in a mirror. Let that point wait a moment; we have other evidence to consider first.

"When the young man told us of the count's prowess in battle, of his incomparable ferocity, I began to believe that which I had at first disbelieved, and when he told us the count was a Hungarian, I began to believe more than ever.

"I met the count, as you will remember, and I took his hand in mine. *Parbleu*, it was like a hand with no palm—it had hairs on both sides of it! You, too, Friend Trowbridge, remarked on that phenomenon.

"While I talked with him I managed to maneuver him before a mirror. *Morbleu*, the man was as if he had not been; I could see my own face smiling at me where I knew I should have seen the reflection of his shoulder!

"Now, attend me; The *Sûreté General*—what you call

the Police Headquarters—of Paris is not like your English and American bureaus. All facts, no matter however seemingly absurd, which come to that office are carefully noted down for future reference. Among other histories I have read in the archives of that office was that of one Baron Lajos Czuczron of Transylvania, whose actions had once been watched by our secret agents.

“This man was rich and favored beyond the common run of Hungarian petty nobles, but he was far from beloved by his peasantry. He was known as cruel, wicked and implacable, and no one could be found who had ever one kind word to say for him.

“Half the countryside suspected him of being a *loup-garou*, or werewolf, the others credited a local legend that a woman of his family had once in the olden days taken a demon to husband and that he was the offspring of that unholy union. According to the story, the progeny of this wicked woman lived like an ordinary man for one hundred years, then died on the stroke of the century *unless his vitality was renewed by drinking the blood of a slaughtered virgin!*

“Absurd? Possibly. An English intelligence office would have said ‘bally nonsense’ if one of its agents had sent in such a report. An American bureau would have labeled the report as being the sauce-of-the apple; but consider this fact: in six hundred years there was no single record of a Baron Czuczron having died. Barons grew old—old to the point of death—but always there came along a new baron, a man in the prime of life, not a youth, to take the old baron’s place, nor could any say when the old baron had died or where his body had been laid.

“Now, I had been told that a man under a curse—the werewolf, the vampire, or any other thing in man’s shape who lives more than his allotted time by virtue of wickedness—can not cast a shadow in a mirror; also that those accursed ones have hair in the palms of their hands. *Eh bien*, with this foreknowledge, I engaged this man who called himself Count Czerny in conversation concerning Transylvania. *Parbleu*, the fellow denied all knowledge of the country. He denied it with more force than was

necessary. 'You are a liar, *Monsieur le Comte*,' I tell him, but I say it to myself. Even yet, however, I do not think what I think later.

"Then came the case of the young Eckhart. He loses blood, he can not say how or why, but Friend Trowbridge and I find a queer mark on his body. I think to me, 'if, perhaps, a vampire—a member of that accursed tribe who leave their graves by night and suck the blood of the living—were here, that would account for this young man's condition. But where would such a being come from? It is not likely.'

"Then I meet that old man, the one you call Indian John. He tells me much of the history of this town in the early days, and he tells me something more. He tells of a man, an old, old man, who has paid him much money to go to a certain grave—the grave of a reputed witch—in the old cemetery and dig from about it a growth of wild garlic. Garlic, I know, is a plant intolerable to the vampire. He can not abide it. If it is planted on his grave he can not pass it.

"I ask myself, 'Who would want such a thing to be, and why?' But I have no answer; only, I know, if a vampire have been confined to that grave by planted garlic, then liberated when that garlic is taken away, it would account for the young Eckhart's strange sickness.

"*Tiens*, Friend Trowbridge and I visit that grave, and on its tombstone we read a verse which makes me believe the tenant of that grave may be a vampire. We interview the good minister of the church and learn that another man, an old, old man, have also inquired about that strange grave. 'Who have done this?' I ask me; but even yet I have no definite answer to my question.

"As we rush to the Norman house to see young Eckhart I stop at an Italian green grocer's and ask for fresh garlic, for I think perhaps we can use it to protect the young Eckhart if it really is a vampire which is troubling him. *Parbleu*, some man, an old, old man, have what you Americans call 'cornered' the available supply of garlic. '*Cordieu*,' I tell me, 'this old man, he constantly crosses our trail! Also he is a very great nuisance.'

"The Italian tell me the garlic was sent to a house in

Rupleysville, so I have an idea where this interfering old rascal may abide. But at that moment I have greater need to see our friend Eckhart than to ask further questions of the Italian. Before I go, however, I tell that shopkeeper that his garlic customer has the evil eye. *Parbleu*, Monsieur Garlic-Buyer you will have no more dealings with that Italian! He knows what he knows.

"When we arrive at the Norman house we find young Eckhart in great trouble, and a black serving maid tells of a strange-looking woman who bit him. Also, we find toothmarks on his breast. 'The vampire woman, Sarah, is, in very truth, at large,' I tell me, and so I hasten to the cemetery to make her fast to her grave with a wooden stake, for, once he is staked down, the vampire can no longer roam. He is finished.

"Friend Trowbridge will testify he saw blood on the stake driven into a grave dug nearly three hundred years ago. Is it not so, *mon ami*?"

I nodded assent, and he took up his narrative:

"Why this old man should wish to liberate the vampire-woman, I know not; certain it is, one of that grisly guild, or one closely associated with it, as this 'Count Czerny' undoubtedly was, can tell when another of the company is in the vicinity, and I doubt not he did this deed for pure malice and deviltry.

"However that may be, Friend Trowbridge tells me he have seen the count, and that he seems to have aged greatly. The man who visited the clergyman and the man who bought the garlic was also much older than the count as we knew him. 'Ah ha, he is coming to the end of his century,' I tell me; 'now look out for devilment, Jules de Grandin. Certainly, it is sure to come.'

"And then, my Sergeant, come you with your tale of Mademoiselle Norman's disappearance, and I, too, think perhaps she has run away from home voluntarily, of her own free will, until you say the Italian shopkeeper recognized the old man who accosted her as one who has the evil eye. Now what old man, save the one who bought the garlic and who lives at Rupleysville, would that Italian accuse of the evil eye? *Pardieu*, has he not already told

you the same man once bought his garlic? But yes. The case is complete.

"The girl has disappeared, an old, old man has accosted her; an old, old man who was so strong he could overcome a policeman; the count is nearing his century mark when he must die like other men unless he can secure the blood of a virgin to revivify him. I am more than certain that the count and baron are one and the same and that they both dwell at Rupleysville. *Voilà*, we go to Rupleysville, and we arrive there not one little minute too soon. *N'est-ce-pas, mes amis?*"

"Sure," Costello agreed, rising and holding out his hand in farewell, "you've got th' goods, doc. No mistake about it."

To me, as I helped him with his coat in the hall, the detective confided, "An' he only had one shot o' licker all evenin'! Gosh, doc, if one drink could fix me up like that I wouldn't care how much prohibition we had!"

The Blood-Flower

"*Allo*," Jules de Grandin seized the receiver from the office telephone before the echo of the tinkling bell had ceased, "who is it, please? But of course, Mademoiselle, you may speak with Dr. Trowbridge." He passed the instrument to me and busied himself with a third unsuccessful attempt to ignite the evil-smelling French cigarette with which he insisted on fumigating the room.

"Yes?" I queried, placing the receiver to my ear.

"This is Miss Ostrander, Dr. Trowbridge," a well modulated voice informed me. "Mrs. Evander's nurse, you know."

"Yes?" I repeated, a little sharply, annoyed at being

called by an ordinary case after an onerous day. "What is it?"

"I—I don't quite know, sir." She laughed the short, semi-hysterical laugh of an embarrassed woman. "She's acting very queerly. She—she's—oh, my, there it goes again, sir! Please come over right away; I'm afraid she's becoming delirious!" And with that she hung up, leaving me in a state of astounded impatience.

"Confound the woman!" I scolded as I prepared to slip into my overcoat. "Why couldn't she have hung on thirty seconds more and told me what the matter was?"

"Eh, what is it, my friend?" de Grandin gave up his attempt to make the cigarette burn and regarded me with one of his fixed, unwinking stares. "You are puzzled, you are in trouble; can I assist you?"

"Perhaps," I replied. "There's a patient of mine, a Mrs. Evander, who's been suffering from a threatened leukemia—I've administered Fowler's solution and arsenic tri-oxid and given her bed-rest treatment for the past week. It looked as if we had the situation pretty well in hand, but . . ." I repeated Miss Ostrander's message.

"Ah?" he murmured, musingly. "'There it goes again,' she did say? What, I wonder, was 'it'; a cough, a convulsion, or—who can say? Let us hasten, my friend. *Parbleu*, she does intrigue me, that Mademoiselle Ostrander with her so cryptic 'There it goes again!' "

Lights were gleaming through the storm from the windows of the Evander house as we came to a stop before its wide veranda. A servant, half clothed and badly frightened, let us in and ushered us on tiptoe to the upper story chamber where the mistress of the establishment lay sick.

"What's wrong?" I demanded as I entered the sick-room, de Grandin at my heels.

A glance at the patient reassured me. She lay back on a little pile of infant pillows, her pretty blonde hair trickling in stray rivulets of gold from the confines of her lace sleeping cap, her hand, almost as white as the linen itself, spread restfully on the Madeira counterpane.

"Humph!" I exclaimed, turning angrily to Miss Ostrander. "Is this what you called me out in the rain to see?"

The nurse raised a forefinger quickly to her lips and motioned toward the hall with her eyes. "Doctor," she said in a whisper when we stood outside the sickroom door, "I know you'll think me silly, but—but it was positively ghastly!"

"*Tiens, Mademoiselle,*" de Grandin cut in, "I pray you be more explicit: first you tell Friend Trowbridge that something—we know not what—goes again, now you do inform us that something is ghastly. *Pardieu*, you have my sheep—*non, non*, how do you say?—my goat!"

In spite of herself the girl laughed at the tragic face he turned to her, but she recovered her gravity quickly.

"Last night," she went on, still in a whisper, "and the night before, just at 12, a dog howled somewhere in the neighborhood. I couldn't place the sound, but it was one of those long, quavering howls, almost human. Positively, you might have mistaken it for the cry of a little child in pain, at first."

de Grandin tweaked first one, then the other end of his trimly waxed blond mustache. "And it was the sleepless dog's lament which went again, and which was so ghastly, *Mademoiselle?*" he inquired solicitously.

"No!" the nurse exploded with suppressed vehemence and heightened color. "It was Mrs. Evander, sir. Night before last, when the beast began baying, she stirred in her sleep—turned restlessly for a moment, then went back to sleep. When it howled the second time, a little nearer the house, she half sat up, and made a queer little growling noise in her throat. Then she slept. Last night the animal was howling louder and longer, and Mrs. Evander seemed more restless and made odd noises more distinctly. I thought the dog was annoying her, or that she might be having a nightmare, so I got her a drink of water; but when I tried to give it to her, *she snarled at me!*"

"*Eh bien*, but this is of interest," de Grandin commented. "She did snarl at you, you say?"

"Yes, sir. She didn't wake up when I touched her on the shoulder; just turned her head toward me and showed

her teeth and growled. Growled like a bad-tempered dog."

"Yes? And then?"

"Tonight the dog began howling a few minutes earlier, five or ten minutes before midnight, perhaps, and it seemed to me his voice was much stronger. Mrs. Evander had the same reaction she had the other two nights at first, but suddenly she sat bolt-upright in bed, rolled her head from side to side, and drew back her lips and growled, then she began snapping at the air, like a dog annoyed by a fly. I did my best to quiet her, but I didn't like to go too near—I was afraid, really—and all at once the dog began howling again, right in the next yard, it seemed, and Mrs. Evander threw back her bedclothes, knelt up in bed *and answered him!*"

"Answered him?" I echoed in stupefaction.

"Yes, doctor, she threw back her head and howled—long, quavering howls, just like his. At first they were low, but they grew louder and higher till the servants heard them, and James, the butler, came to the door to see what the matter was. Poor fellow, he was nearly scared out of his wits when he saw her."

"And then . . . ?" I began.

"Then I called you. Right while I was talking to you, the dog began baying again, and Mrs. Evander answered him. That was what I meant"—she turned to de Grandin—"when I said 'There it goes again.' I had to hang up before I could explain to you, Dr. Trowbridge, for she had started to crawl out of bed toward the window, and I had to run and stop her."

"But why didn't you tell me this yesterday, or this afternoon when I was here?" I demanded.

"I didn't like to, sir. It all seemed so crazy, so utterly impossible, especially in the daytime, that I was afraid you'd think I'd been asleep on duty and dreamed it all; but now that James has seen it, too . . ."

Outside in the rain-drenched night there suddenly rose a wail, long-drawn, pulsating, doleful as the cry of an abandoned soul. "*O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!*" it rose and fell, quavered and almost died away, then re-

surged with increased force. "O-o-o—o-o-o-o—o-o-o—o-o-o—o!"

"Hear it?" the nurse cried, her voice thin-edged with excitement and fear.

Again, "O-o-o—o-o-o-o—o-o-o—o-o-o-o!" like the echo of the howls outside came an answering cry from the sickroom beyond the door.

Miss Ostrander dashed into the room, de Grandin and I close behind her.

The dainty white counterpane had been thrown back. Mrs. Evander, clad only in her Georgette nightrobe and bedcap, had crossed the floor to the window and flung up the sash. Already, the wind-whipped rain was beating in upon her as she leaned across the sill, one pink sole toward us, one little white foot on the window-ledge, preparatory to jumping.

"*Mon Dieu*, seize her!" de Grandin shrieked, and, matching command with performance leaped across the room, grasped her shoulders in his small, strong hands, and bore her backward as she flexed the muscles of her legs to hurl herself into the yard below.

For a moment she fought like a tigress, snarling, scratching, even snapping at us with her teeth, but Miss Ostrander and I overbore her and thrust her into bed, drawing the covers over her and holding them down like a strait-jacket against her furious struggles.

de Grandin leaned across the window-sill, peering out into the stormy darkness. "Aroint thee, accursed of God!" I heard him shout into the wind as he drew the sash down, snapped the catch fast and turned again to the room.

"Ah?" he approached the struggling patient and bent over her, staring intently. "A grain and a half of morphine in her arm, if you please, Friend Trowbridge. The dose is heavy for a non-addict, but"—he shrugged his shoulders—"it is *necessaire* that she sleep, this poor one. So! That is better.

"Mademoiselle," he regarded Miss Ostrander with his wide-eyed stare, "I do not think she will be thus disturbed in the day, but I most strongly urge that hereafter you administer a dose of one-half grain of codein dis-

solved in eighty parts of water each night not later than half-past 10. Dr. Trowbridge will write the prescription.

"Friend Trowbridge," he interrupted himself, "where, if at all, is Madame's husband, Monsieur Evander?"

"He's gone to Atlanta on a business trip," Miss Ostrander supplied. "We expect him back tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? *Zut*, that is too bad!" de Grandin exclaimed. "*Eh bien*, with you Americans it is always the business. Business before happiness; *cordieu*, business before the safety of those you love!

"Mademoiselle, you will please keep in touch with Dr. Trowbridge and me at all times, and when that Monsieur Evander does return from his business trip, please tell him that we desire to see him soon—at once, right away, immediately.

"Come, Friend Trowbridge—*bonne nuit*, Mademoiselle."

"I say, Dr. Trowbridge," Niles Evander flung angrily into my consulting room, "what's the idea of keeping my wife doped like this? Here I just got back from a trip to the South last night and rushed out to the house to see her before she went to sleep, and that dam' nurse said she'd given her a sleepin' powder and couldn't waken her. I don't like it, I tell you, and I won't have it! I told the nurse that if she gave her any dope tonight she was through, and that goes for you, too!" He glared defiantly at me.

de Grandin, sunk in the depths of a great chair with a copy of de Gobineau's melancholy *Lovers of Kandahar*, glanced up sharply, then consulted the watch strapped to his wrist. "It is a quarter of 11," he announced apropos of nothing, laying down the elegant blue-and-gold volume and rising from his seat.

Evander turned on him, eyes ablaze. "You're Dr. de Grandin," he accused. "I've heard of you from the nurse. It was you who persuaded Trowbridge to dope my wife—buttin' in on a case that didn't concern you. I know all about you," he went on furiously as the Frenchman gave him a cold stare. "You're some sort of charlatan from Paris, a dabbler in criminology and spiritualism and that

sort of rot. Well, sir, I want to warn you to keep your hands off my wife. American doctors and American methods are good enough for me!"

"Your patriotism is most admirable, Monsieur," de Grandin murmured with a suspicious mildness. "If you . . ."

The jangle of the telephone bell cut through his words. "Yes?" he asked sharply, raising the receiver, but keeping his cold eyes fixed on Evander's face. "Yes, Mademoiselle Ostrander, this is—*grand Dieu!* What? how long? Eh, do you say so? *Dix million diables!* But of course, we come, we hasten—*morbleu*, but we shall fly.

"Gentlemen," he hung up the receiver, then turned to us, inclining his shoulders ceremoniously to each of us in turn, his gaze as expressionless as the eyes of a graven image, "that was Mademoiselle Ostrander on the 'phone. Madame Evander is gone—disappeared."

"Gone? Disappeared?" Evander echoed stupidly, looking helplessly from de Grandin to me and back again. He slumped down in the nearest chair, gazing straight before him unseeing. "Great God!" he murmured.

"Precisely, Monsieur," de Grandin agreed in an even, emotionless voice. "That is exactly what I said. Meantime"—he gave me a significant glance—"let us go, *cher* Trowbridge. I doubt not that Mademoiselle Ostrander will have much of interest to relate.

"Monsieur"—his eyes and voice again became cold, hard, stonily expressionless—"if you can so far discommode yourself as to travel in the company of one whose nationality and methods you disapprove, I suggest you accompany us."

Niles Evander rose like a sleep-walker and followed us to my waiting car.

The previous day's rain had turned to snow with a shifting of the wind to the northeast, and we made slow progress through the suburban roads. It was nearly midnight when we trooped up the steps to the Evander porch and pushed vigorously at the bell-button.

"Yes, sir," Miss Ostrander replied to my question, "Mr. Evander came home last night and positively forbade my

giving Mrs. Evander any more codein. I told him you wanted to see him right away, and that Dr. de Grandin had ordered the narcotic, but he said . . .”

“Forbear, if you please, Mademoiselle,” de Grandin interrupted. “Monsieur Evander has already been at pains to say as much—and more—to us in person. Now, when did Madame disappear, if you please?”

“I’d already given her her medicine last night,” the nurse took up her story at the point of interruption, “so there was no need of calling you to tell you of Mr. Evander’s orders. I thought perhaps I could avoid any unpleasantness by pretending to obey him and giving her the codein on the sly this evening, but about 9 o’clock he came into the sickroom and snatched up the box of powders and put them in his pocket. Then he said he was going to drive over to have it out with you. I tried to telephone you about it, but the storm had put the wires out of commission, and I’ve been trying to get a message through ever since.”

“And the dog, Mademoiselle, the animal who did howl outside the window, has he been active?”

“Yes! Last night he screamed and howled so I was frightened. Positively, it seemed as though he were trying to jump up from the ground to the window. Mrs. Evander slept through it all, though, thanks to the drug.”

“And tonight?” de Grandin prompted.

“Tonight!” The nurse shuddered. “The howling began about half-past nine, just a few minutes after Mr. Evander left for the city. Mrs. Evander was terrible. She seemed like a woman possessed. I fought and struggled with her, but nothing I could do had the slightest effect. She was savage as a maniac. I called James to help me hold her in bed once, and then, for a while, she lay quietly, for the thing outside seemed to have left.

“Sometime later the howling began again, louder and more furious, and Mrs. Evander was twice as hard to manage. She fought and bit so that I was beginning to lose control of her, and I screamed for James again. He must have been somewhere downstairs, though, for he didn’t hear my call. I ran out into the hall and leaned over the balustrade to call again, and when I ran back—I

wasn't out there more than a minute—the window was up and Mrs. Evander was gone.”

“And didn't you do anything?—didn't you look for her?” Evander cut in passionately.

“Yes, sir. James and I ran outside and called and searched all through the grounds, but we couldn't find a trace of her. The wind is blowing so and the snow falling so rapidly, any tracks she might have made would have been wiped out almost immediately.”

de Grandin took his little pointed chin between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand and bowed his head in silent meditation. “Horns of the devil!” I heard him mutter to himself. “This is queer—those cries, that delirium, that attempted flight, now this disappearance. *Pardieu*, the trail seems clear. But why? *Mille cochons*, why?”

“See here,” Evander broke in frantically, “can't you do something? Call the police, call the neighbors, call . . .”

“Monsieur,” de Grandin interrupted in a frigid voice, “may I inquire your vocation?”

“Eh?” Evander was taken aback. “Why—er—I'm an engineer.”

“Precisely, exactly. Dr. Trowbridge and I are medical men. We do not attempt to build bridges or sink tunnels. We should make sorry work of it. You, Monsieur have already once tried your hand at medicine by forbidding the administration of a drug we considered necessary. Your results were most deplorable. Kindly permit us to follow our profession in our own way. The thing we most of all do not desire in this case is the police force. Later, perhaps. Now, it would be more than ruinous.”

“But . . .”

“There are no buts, Monsieur. It is my belief that your wife, Madame Evander, is in no immediate danger. However, Dr. Trowbridge and I shall institute such search as may be practicable, and do you meantime keep in such communication with us as the storm will permit.” He bowed formally. “A very good night to you, Monsieur.”

Miss Ostrander looked at him questioningly. "Shall I go with you, doctor?" she asked.

"*Mais non*," he replied. "You will please remain here, *ma nourice*, and attend the homecoming of Madame Evander."

"Then you think she will return?"

"Most doubtlessly. Unless I am more badly mistaken than I think I am, she will be back to you before another day."

"Say," Evander, almost beside himself burst out, "what makes you so cocksure she'll be back? Good Lord, man, do you realize she's out in this howling blizzard with only her nightclothes on?"

"Perfectly. But I do declare she will return."

"But you've nothing to base your absurd. . . ."

"Monsieur!" de Grandin's sharp, whiplike reply cut in. "Me, I am Jules de Grandin. When I say she will return, I mean she will return. I do not make mistakes."

"Where shall we begin the search?" I asked as we entered my car.

He settled himself snugly in the cushions and lighted a cigarette. "We need not search, *cher ami*," he replied. "She will return of her own free will and accord."

"But, man," I argued, "Evander was right; she's out in this storm with nothing put a Georgette nightdress on."

"I doubt it," he answered casually.

"You doubt it? Why . . . ?"

"Unless the almost unmistakable signs fail, my friend, this Madame Evander, thanks to her husband's pig-ignorance, is this moment clothed in fur."

"Fur?" I echoed.

"Perfectly. Come, my friend, tread upon the gas. Let us snatch what sleep we can tonight—*eh bien*, tomorrow is another day."

He was up and waiting for me as I entered the office next morning. "Tell me, Friend Trowbridge," he demanded, "this Madame Evander's leukemia, upon what did you base your diagnosis?"

"Well," I replied, referring to my clinical cards, "a physi-

cal examination showed the axillary glands slightly enlarged, the red corpuscles reduced to little more than a million to the count, the white cells stood at about four hundred thousand, and the patient complained of weakness, drowsiness and a general feeling of malaise."

"U'm?" he commented noncommittally. "That could easily be so. Yes; such signs would undoubtedly be shown. Now . . ." The telephone bell broke off his remarks half uttered.

"Ah?" his little blue eyes snapped triumphantly, as he listened to the voice on the wire. "I did think so. But yes; right away, at once, immediately.

"Trowbridge, my old one, she has returned. That was Mademoiselle Ostrander informing me of Madame Evander's reappearance. Let us hasten. There is much I would do this day."

"After you went last night," Miss Ostrander told us, "I lay down on the chaise longue in the bedroom and tried to sleep. I suppose I must have napped by fits and starts, but it seemed to me I could hear the faint howling of dogs, sometimes mingled with yelps and cries, all through the night. This morning, just after 6 o'clock, I got up to prepare myself a piece of toast and a cup of tea before the servants were stirring, and as I came downstairs I found Mrs. Evander lying on the rug in the front hall."

She paused a moment, and her color mounted slightly as she went on. "She was lying on that gray wolfskin rug before the fireplace, sir, and was quite nude. Her sleeping cap and nightgown were crumpled up on the floor beside her."

"Ah?" de Grandin commented. "And . . . ?"

"I got her to her feet and helped her upstairs, where I dressed her for bed and tucked her in. She didn't seem to show any evil effects from being out in the storm. Indeed, she seems much better this morning, and is sleeping so soundly I could hardly wake her for breakfast, and when I did, she wouldn't eat. Just went back to sleep."

"Ah?" de Grandin repeated. "And you bathed her, Mademoiselle, before she was put to bed?"

The girl looked slightly startled. "No sir, not entirely; but I did wash her hands. They were discolored, especially about the fingertips, with some red substance, almost as if she had been scratching something, and gotten blood under her nails."

"*Parbleu!*" the Frenchman exploded. "I did know it, Friend Trowbridge. Jules de Grandin, he is never mistaken."

"Mademoiselle," he turned feverishly to the nurse, "did you, by any happy chance, save the water in which you laved Madame Evander's hands?"

"Why, no, I didn't, but—oh I see—yes, I think perhaps some of the stain may be on the washcloth and the orange stick I cleaned her nails with. I really had quite a time cleaning them, too."

"*Bien, très bien!*" he ejaculated. "Let us have these cloths, these sticks, at once, please. Trowbridge, do you withdraw some blood from Madame's arm for a test, then we must hasten to the laboratory. *Cordieu*, I burn with impatience!"

An hour later we faced each other in the office. "I can't understand it," I confessed. "By all the canons of the profession, Mrs. Evander ought to be dead after last night's experience, but there's no doubt she's better. Her pulse was firmer, her temperature right, and her blood count practically normal today."

"Me, I understand perfectly, up to a point," he replied. "Beyond that, all is dark as the cave of Erebus. Behold, I have tested the stains from Madame's fingers. They are—what do you think?"

"Blood?" I hazarded.

"*Parbleu*, yes, but not of humanity. *Mais non*, they are blood of a dog, my friend."

"Of a dog?"

"Perfectly. I, myself, did greatly fear they might prove human, but *grace à Dieu*, they are not. Now, if you will excuse, I go to make certain investigations, and will meet you at the *maison* Evander this evening. Come prepared to be surprised, my friend. *Parbleu*, I shall be surprised if I do not astonish myself!"

Four of us, de Grandin, Miss Ostrander, Niles Evander and I, sat in the dimly lighted room, looking alternately toward the bed where the mistress of the house lay in a drugged sleep, into the still-burning fire of coals in the fireplace grate, and at each other's faces. Three of us were puzzled almost to the point of hysteria, and de Grandin seemed on pins and needles with excitement and expectation. Occasionally he would rise and walk to the bed with that quick soundless tread of his which always made me think of a cat. Again he would dart into the hall, nervously light a cigarette, draw a few quick puffs from it, then glide noiselessly into the sickroom once more. None of us spoke above a whisper, and our conversation was limited to inconsequential things. Throughout our group there was the tense expectancy and solemn, taut-nerved air of medical witnesses in the prison death chamber awaiting the advent of the condemned.

Subconsciously, I think, we all realized what we waited for, but my nerves nearly snapped when it came.

With the suddenness of a shot, unheralded by any preliminary, the wild, vibrating howl of a beast sounded beneath the sickroom window, its sharp, poignant wail seeming to split the frigid, moonlit air of the night.

"O-o-o—o-o-o-o—o-o-o—o-o-o-o!" it rose against the winter stillness, diminished to a moan of heart-rending melancholy, then suddenly crescendoed upward, from a moan to a wail, from a wail to a howl, despairing, passionate, longing as the lament of a damned spirit, wild and fierce as the rallying call of the fiends of hell.

"Oh!" Miss Ostrander exclaimed involuntarily.

"Let be!" Jules de Grandin ordered tensely, his whisper seeming to carry more because of its sharpness than from any actual sound it made.

"O-o-o—o-o-o-o—o-o-o—o-o-o-o!" again the cry shuddered through the air, again it rose to a pitch of intolerable shrillness and evil, then died away, and, as we sat stone-still in the shadowy chamber, a new sound, a sinister, scraping sound, intensified by the ice-hard coldness of the night, came to us. Someone, some *thing*, was swarming up the rose-trellis outside the house!

Scrape, scratch, scrape, the alternate hand- and foot-

holds sounded on the cross-bars of the lattice. A pair of hands, long, slender, corded hands like hands of a cadaver long dead, and armed with talons, blood-stained and hooked, grasped the window-ledge, and a face—God of Mercy, such a face!—was silhouetted against the background of the night.

Not human, nor yet wholly bestial it was, but partook grotesquely of both, so that it was at once a foul caricature of each. The forehead was low and narrow, and sloped back to a thatch of short, nondescript-colored hair resembling an animal's fur. The nose was elongated out of all semblance to a human feature and resembled the pointed snout of some animal of the canine tribe except that it curved sharply down at the tip like the beak of some unclean bird of prey. Thin, cruel lips were drawn sneeringly back from a double row of tusklike teeth which gleamed horridly in the dim reflection of the open fire, and a pair of round, baleful eyes, green as the luminescence from a rotting carcass in a midnight swamp, glared at us across the windowsill. On each of us in turn the basilisk glance dwelt momentarily, then fastened itself on the sleeping sick woman like a falcon's talons on a dove.

Miss Ostrander gave a single choking sob and slid forward from her chair unconscious. Evander and I sat stupefied with horror, unable to do more than gaze in terror-stricken silence at the apparition, but Jules de Grandin was out of his seat and across the room with a single bound of feline grace and ferocity.

"Aroint thee, accursed of God!" he screamed, showering a barrage of blows from a slender wand on the creature's face. "Back, spawn of Satan! To thy kennel, hound of hell! I, Jules de Grandin, command it!"

The suddenness of his attack took the thing by surprise. For a moment it snarled and cowered under the hailstorm of blows from de Grandin's stick, then, as suddenly as it had come into view, it loosed its hold on the windowsill and dropped from sight.

"*Sang de Dieu, sang du diable; sang des tous les saints de cie!*" de Grandin roared, hurling himself out the window in the wake of the fleeing monster. "I have you, vile

wretch. *Paràieu, Monsieur Loup-garou*, but I shall surely crush you!"

Rushing to the window, I saw the tall, skeleton-thin form of the enormity leaping across the moonlit snow with great, space-devouring bounds, and after it, brandishing his wand, ran Jules de Grandin, shouting triumphant invectives in mingled French and English.

By the shadow of a copse of evergreens the thing made a stand. Wheeling in its tracks, it bent nearly double, extending its cadaverous claws like a wrestler searching for a hold, and baring its glistening tusks in a snarl of fury.

de Grandin never slackened pace. Charging full tilt upon the waiting monstrosity, he reached his free hand into his jacket pocket. There was a gleam of blue metal in the moonlight. Then eight quick, pitiless spurts of flame stabbed through the shadow where the monster lurked, eight whiplike crackling reports echoed and re-echoed in the midnight stillness—and the voice of Jules de Grandin:

"Trowbridge, *mon vieux*, *ohé*, Friend Trowbridge, bring a light quickly! I would that you see what I see!"

Weltering in a patch of blood-stained snow at de Grandin's feet we found an elderly man, ruddy-faced, gray-haired, and, doubtless, in life, of a dignified, even benign aspect. Now, however, he lay in the snow as naked as the day his mother first saw him, and eight gaping gunshot wounds told where de Grandin's missiles had found their mark. The winter cold was already stiffening his limbs and setting his face in a mask of death.

"Good heavens," Evander ejaculated as he bent over the lifeless form, "it's Uncle Friedrich—my wife's uncle! He disappeared just before I went south.

"*Eh bien*," de Grandin regarded the body with no more emotion than if it had been an effigy molded in snow, "we shall know where to find your uncle henceforth, Monsieur. Will some of you pick him up? Me—*pardieu* I would no more touch him than I would handle a hyena!

"Now, Monsieur," de Grandin faced Evander across the living room table, "your statement that the gentleman

at whose happy dispatch I so fortunately officiated was your wife's uncle, and that he disappeared before your southern trip, does interest me. Say on, tell me all concerning this Uncle Friedrich of your wife's. When did he disappear, and what led up to his disappearance? Omit nothing, I pray you, for trifles which you may consider of no account may be of the greatest importance. Proceed, Monsieur. I listen."

Evander squirmed uncomfortably in his chair like a small boy undergoing catechism. "He wasn't really her uncle," he responded. "Her father and he were schoolmates in Germany—Heidelberg—years ago. Mr. Hoffmeister—Uncle Friedrich—immigrated to this country shortly after my father-in-law came back, and they were in business together for years. Mr. Hoffmeister lived with my wife's people—all the children called him Uncle Friedrich—and was just like one of the family.

"My mother-in-law died a few years ago, and her husband died shortly after, and Mr. Hoffmeister disposed of his share of the business and went to Germany on a long visit. He was caught there in the war and didn't return to America until '21. Since that time he lived with us."

Evander paused a moment, as though debating mentally whether he should proceed, then smiled in a half shamefaced manner. "To tell you the truth," he continued, "I wasn't very keen on having him here. There were times when I didn't like the way he looked at my wife a dam' bit."

"Eh," de Grandin asked, "how was that, Monsieur?"

"Well, I can't quite put a handle to it in words, but more than once I'd glance up and see him with his eyes fastened on Edith in a most peculiar way. It would have angered me in a young man, but in an old man, it both angered and disgusted me. I was on the point of asking him to leave when he disappeared and saved me the trouble."

"Yes?" de Grandin encouraged. "And his disappearance, what of that?"

"The old fellow was always an enthusiastic amateur botanist," Evander replied, "and he brought a great many specimens for his herbarium back from Europe with him.

Off and on he's been messing around with plants since his return, and about a month ago he received a tin of dried flowers from Kerovitch, Rumania, and they seemed to set him almost wild."

"Kerovitch? *Mordieu!*" de Grandin exclaimed. "Say on, Monsieur; I burn with curiosity. Describe these flowers in detail, if you please."

"H'm," Evander took his chin in his hand and studied in silence a moment. "There wasn't anything especially remarkable about them that I could see. There were a dozen of them, all told, perhaps, and they resembled our ox-eyed daisies a good deal, except that their petals were red instead of yellow. Had a queer sort of odor, too. Even though they were dried, they exuded a sort of sickly-sweet smell, yet not quite sweet either. It was a sort of mixture of perfume and stench, if that means anything to you."

"*Pardieu*, it means much!" de Grandin assured him. "And their sap, where it had dried, did it not resemble that of the milkweed plant?"

"Yes! How did you know?"

"No matter. Proceed, if you please. Your Uncle Friedrich did take these so accursed flowers out and . . ."

"And tried an experiment with them," Evander supplied. "He put them in a bowl of water, and they freshened up as though they had not been plucked an hour."

"Yes—and his disappearance—name of a little green man!—his disappearance?"

"That happened just before I went south. All three of us went to the theater one evening, and Uncle Friedrich wore one of the red flowers in his buttonhole. My wife wore a spray of them in her corsage. He tried to get me to put one of the things in my coat, too, but I hated their smell so much I wouldn't do it."

"Lucky you!" de Grandin murmured so low the narrator failed to hear him.

"Uncle Friedrich was very restless and queer all evening," Evander proceeded, "but the old fellow had been getting rather childish lately, so we didn't pay any particular attention to his actions. Next morning he was gone."

"And did you make inquiry?"

"No, he often went away on little trips without warning us beforehand, and, besides, I was glad enough to see him get out. I didn't try to find him. It was just after this that my wife's health became bad, but I had to make this trip for our firm, so I called in Dr. Trowbridge, and there you are."

"Yes, *parbleu*, here we are, indeed!" de Grandin nodded emphatically. "Listen carefully, my friends; what I am about to say is the truth:

"When first I came to visit Madame Evander with Friend Trowbridge, and heard the strange story Mademoiselle Ostrander told, I was amazed. 'Why,' I ask me, 'does this lady answer the howling of a dog beneath her window?' *Parbleu*, it was most curious!

"Then while we three—Friend Trowbridge, Mademoiselle Ostrander and I—did talk of Madame's so strange malady, I did hear the call of that dog beneath the window with my own two ears, and did observe Madame Evander's reaction to it.

"Out the window I did put my head, and in the storm I saw no dog at all, but what I thought might be a human man—a tall, thin man. Yet a dog had howled beneath that window and had been answered by Madame but a moment before. Me, I do not like that.

"I call upon that man, if such he be, to begone. Also I do request Mademoiselle Ostrander to place her patient under an opiate each night, that the howls beneath her window may not awaken Madame Evander.

"*Eh bien*, thus far, thus good. But you do come along, Monsieur, and countermand my order. While Madame is not under the drug that unholy thing beneath her window does howl once more, and Madame disappears. Yes.

"Now, there was no ordinary medical diagnosis for such a case as this, so I search my memory and my knowledge for an extraordinary one. What do I find in that storehouse of my mind?

"In parts of Europe, my friends—believe me, I know whereof I speak!—there are known such things as werewolves, or wolf-men. In France we know them as *les loups-garoux*; in Wales they call them the bug-wolves, or

bogie-wolves; in the days of old the Greeks did know them under the style of *lukanthropos*. Yes.

"What he is no one knows well. Sometimes he is said to be a wolf—a magical wolf—who can become a man. Sometimes, more often, he is said to be a man who can, or must, become a wolf. No one knows accurately. But this we know: The man who is also a wolf is ten times more terrible than the wolf who is only a wolf. At night he quests and kills his prey, which is most often his fellow man, but sometimes his ancient enemy, the dog. By day he hides his villainy under the guise of a man's form. Sometimes he changes entirely to a wolf's shape, sometimes he becomes a fearful mixture of man and beast, but always he is a devil incarnate. If he be killed while in the wolf shape, he at once reverts to human form, so by that sign we know we have slain a werewolf and not a true wolf. Certainly.

"Now, some werewolves become such by the aid of Satan; some become so as the result of a curse; a few are so through accident. In Transylvania, that devil-ridden land, the very soil does seem to favor the transformation of man into beast. There are springs from which the water, once drunk, will make its drinker into a savage beast, and there are flowers—*cordieu*, have I not seen them?—which, if worn by a man at night during the full of the moon, will do the same. Among the most potent of these blooms of hell is *la fleur de sang*, or blood-flower, which is exactly the accursed weed you have described to us, Monsieur Evander—the flower your Uncle Friedrich and your lady did wear to the theater that night of the full moon. When you mentioned the village of Kerovitch, I did see it all at once, immediately, for that place is on the Rumanian side of the Transylvanian Alps, and there the blood-flowers are found in greater numbers than anywhere else in the world. The very mountain soil does seem cursed with lycanthropy.

"Very well. I did not know of the flower when first I came into this case, but I did suspect something evil had cast a spell on Madame. She did exhibit all the symptoms

of a lycanthrope about to be transformed, and beneath her window there did howl what was undoubtedly a wolf-thing.

“‘He has put his cursed sign upon her and does even now seek her for his mate,’ I tell me after I order him away in the name of the good God.

“When Madame disappeared I was not surprised. When she returned after a night in the snow, I was less surprised. But the blood on her hands did perturb me. Was it human? Was she an all-unconscious murderess, or was it, happily, the blood of animals? I did not know. I analyzed it and discovered it were dog’s blood. ‘Very well,’ I tell me. ‘Let us see where a dog has been mauled in that vicinity.’

“This afternoon I made guarded inquiries. I find many dogs have been strangely killed in this neighborhood of late. No dog, no matter how big, was safe out of doors after nightfall.

“Also I meet a man, an *ivrogne*—what you call a drunkard—one who patronizes the leggers-of-the-boot not with wisdom, but with too great frequency. He is no more so. He have made the oath to remain sober. *Pourquoi?* Because three nights ago, as he passed through the park he were set upon by a horror so terrible that he thought he was in alcoholic delirium. It were like a man, yet not like a man. It had a long nose, and terrible eyes, and great, flashing teeth, and it did seek to kill and devour him. My friends, in his way, that former drunkard did describe the thing which tried to enter this house tonight. It were the same.

“Fortunately for the poor drunken man, he were carrying a walking cane of ash wood, and when he raised it to defend himself, the terror did shrink from him. ‘Ah ha,’ I tell me when I hear that, ‘now we know it were truly *le loup-garou*,’ for it is notorious that the wood of the ash tree is as intolerable to the werewolf as the bloom of the garlic is unpleasant to the vampire.

“What do I do? I go to the woods and cut a bundle of ash switches. Then I come here. Tonight the wolf-thing come crying for the mate who ranged the snows with him

last night. He is lonely, he is mad for another of his kind. Tonight, perhaps, they will attack nobler game than dogs. Very well, I am ready.

"When Madame Evander, being drugged, did not answer his call, he was emboldened to enter the house. *Pardieu*, he did not know Jules de Grandin awaited him! Had I not been here it might well have gone hard with Mademoiselle Ostrander. As it was"—he spread his slender hands—"there is one less man-monster in the world this night."

Evander stared at him in round-eyed wonder. "I can't believe it," he muttered, "but you've proved your case. Poor Uncle Friedrich! The curse of the blood-flower . . ." He broke off, an expression of mingled horror and despair on his face. "My wife!" he gasped. "Will she become a thing like that? Will . . . ?"

"Monsieur," de Grandin interrupted gently, "she *has* become one. Only the drug holds her bound in human form at this minute."

"Oh," Evander cried, tears of grief streaming down his face, "save her! For the love of heaven, save her! Can't you do anything to bring her back to me?"

"You do not approve my methods," de Grandin reminded him.

Evander was like a pleading child. "I apologize," he whimpered. "I'll give you anything you ask if you'll only save her. I'm not rich, but I think I can raise fifty thousand dollars. I'll give it to you if you'll cure her!"

The Frenchman twisted his little blond mustache furiously. "The fee you name is attractive, Monsieur," he remarked.

"I'll pay it; I'll pay it!" Evander burst out hysterically. Then, unable to control himself, he put his folded arms on the table, sank his head upon them, and shook with sobs.

"Very well," de Grandin agreed, casting me the flicker of a wink. "Tomorrow night I shall undertake your lady's case. Tomorrow night we attempt the cure. *Au revoir*, Monsieur. Come away, Friend Trowbridge, we must rest well before tomorrow night."

De Grandin was silent to the point of moodiness all next morning. Toward noon he put on his outdoor clothing and left without luncheon, saying he would meet me at Evander's that night.

He was there when I arrived and greeted me, saying that the main business would start soon.

"Meantime, Trowbridge, *mon vieux*, I beg you will assist me in the kitchen. There is much to do and little time in which to do it."

Opening a large valise he produced a bundle of slender sticks which he began splitting into strips like basket-withes, explaining that they were from a mountain ash tree. When some twenty-five of these had been prepared, he selected a number of bottles from the bottom of the satchel, and, taking a large aluminum kettle, began scouring it with a clean cloth.

"Attend me carefully, Friend Trowbridge," he commanded; "do you keep close tally as I compound the draft, for much depends on the formula being correct. To begin."

Arranging a pair of apothecary's scales and a graduate glass before him on the table, he handed me this memorandum.

R

3 pints pure spring water
2 drachms sulfur
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. castorium
6 drachms opium
3 drachms asafoetida
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. hypericum
 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. aromatic ammonia
 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. gum camphor

As he busied himself with scales and graduate I checked the amounts he poured into the kettle. "*Voilà*," he announced, "we are prepared!"

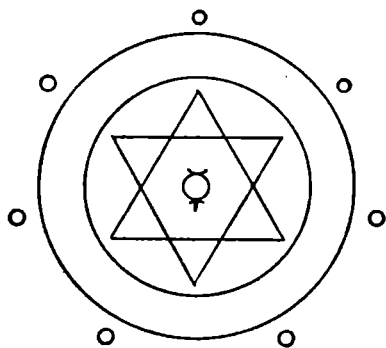
Quickly he thrust the ash withes into a pailful of boiling water and proceeded to bind together a three-stranded hyssop of ash, poplar and birch twigs.

"And now, my friend, if you will assist me, we shall

proceed," he asserted, thrusting a large washpan into my hands and preparing to follow me into the dining room with the kettle of liquor he had prepared, his little brush-broom thrust under his arm.

We moved the dining room furniture against the walls, and de Grandin put the kettle of liquid in the dishpan I had brought in, piling a number of light wood chips about it, and starting a small fire. As the liquid in the kettle began bubbling and seething over the flame, he knelt and began tracing a circle about seven feet in diameter with a bit of white chalk. Inside the first circle he drew a second ring some three feet in diameter, and within this traced a star composed of two interlaced triangles. At the very center he marked down an odd-looking figure composed of a circle surmounted by a crescent and supported by a cross. "This is the Druid's foot, or pentagram," he explained, indicating the star. "The powers of evil are powerless to pass it, either from without or within. This," he pointed to the central figure, "is the sign of Mercury. It is also the sign of the Holy Angels, my friend, and the *bon Dieu* knows we shall need their kind offices this night. Compare, Friend Trowbridge, if you please, the chart I have drawn with the exemplar which I did most carefully prepare from the occult books today. I would have the testimony of both of us that I have left nothing undone."

Into my hand he thrust the following chart:



Quickly, working like one possessed, he arranged seven small silver lamps about the outer circle where the seven little rings on the chart indicated, ignited their wicks, snapped off the electric light and, rushing into the kitchen, returned with the boiled ash withes dangling from his hand.

Fast as he had worked, there was not a moment to spare, for Miss Ostrander's hysterical call, "Dr. de Grandin, oh, Dr. de Grandin!" came down the stairs as he returned from the kitchen.

On the bed Mrs. Evander lay writhing like a person in convulsions. As we approached, she turned her face toward us, and I stopped in my tracks, speechless with the spectacle before me.

It was as if the young woman's pretty face were twisted into a grimace, only the muscles, instead of resuming their wonted positions again, seemed to stretch steadily out of place. Her mouth widened gradually till it was nearly twice its normal size, her nose seemed lengthening, becoming more pointed, and crooking sharply at the end. Her eyes, of sweet cornflower blue, were widening, becoming at once round and prominent, and changing to a wicked, phosphorescent green. I stared and stared, unable to believe the evidence of my eyes, and as I looked she raised her hands from beneath the covers, and I went sick with the horror of it. The dainty, flowerlike pink-and-white hands with their well-manicured nails were transformed into a pair of withered, corded talons armed with long, hornlike, curved claws, saber-sharp and hooked like the nails of some predatory bird. Before my eyes a sweet, gently bred woman was being transfigured into a foul hell-hag, a loathsome, hideous parody of herself.

"Quickly, Friend Trowbridge, seize her, bind her!" de Grandin called, thrusting a handful of the limber withes into my grasp and hurling himself upon the monstrous thing which lay in Edith Evander's place.

The hag fought like a true member of the wolf pack. Howling, clawing, growling and snarling, she opposed tooth and nail to our efforts, but at last we lashed her wrists and ankles firmly with the wooden cords and bore

her struggling frantically, down the stairs and placed her within the mystic circle de Grandin had drawn on the dining room floor.

"Inside, Friend Trowbridge, quickly!" the Frenchman ordered as he dipped the hyssop into the boiling liquid in the kettle and leaped over the chalk marks. "Mademoiselle Ostrander, Monsieur Evander, for your lives, leave the house!"

Reluctantly the husband and nurse left us and de Grandin began showering the contorting, howling thing on the floor with liquid from the boiling kettle.

Swinging his hyssop in the form of a cross above the hideous changeling's head, he uttered some invocation so rapidly that I failed to catch the words, then, striking the wolf-woman's feet, hands, heart and head in turn with his bundle of twigs, he drew forth a small black book and began reading in a firm, clear voice: "*Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord hear my voice. . . .*"

And at the end he finished with a great shout: "*I know that my redeemer liveth . . . I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!*"

As the words sounded through the room it seemed to me that a great cloud of shadow, like a billow of black vapor, rose from the dark corners of the apartment, eddied toward the circle of lamps, swaying their flames lambently, then suddenly gave back, evaporated and disappeared with a noise like steam escaping from a boiling kettle.

"Behold, Trowbridge, my friend," de Grandin ordered, pointing to the still figure which lay over the sign of Mercury at his feet.

I bent forward, stifling my repugnance, then sighed with mingled relief and surprise. Calm as a sleeping child, Edith Evander, freed from all the hideous stigmata of the wolf-people, lay before us, her slender hands, still bound in the wooden ropes, crossed on her breast, her sweet, delicate features as though they had never been disfigured by the curse of the blood-flower.

Loosing the bonds from her wrists and feet the Frenchman picked the sleeping woman up in his arms and bore her to her bedroom above stairs.

"Do you summon her husband and the nurse, my friend," he called from the turn in the stairway. "She will have need of both anon."

"Wh—why, she's herself again!" Evander exclaimed joyfully as he leaned solicitously above his wife's bed.

"But of course!" de Grandin agreed. "The spell of evil was strong upon her, Monsieur, but the charm of good was mightier. She is released from her bondage for all time."

"I'll have your fee ready tomorrow," Evander promised diffidently. "I could not arrange the mortgages today—it was rather short notice, you know."

Laughter twinkled in de Grandin's little blue eyes like the reflection of moonlight on flowing water. "My friend," he replied, "I did make the good joke on you last night. *Parbleu*, to hear you agree to anything, and to announce that you did trust to my methods, as well, was payment enough for me. I want not your money. If you would repay Jules de Grandin for his services, continue to love and cherish your wife as you did last night when you feared you were about to lose her. Me, *morbleu!* but I shall make the eyes of my *confrères* pop with jealousy when I tell them what I have accomplished this night. *Sang d'un poisson*, I am one very clever man, Monsieur!"

"It's all a mystery to me, de Grandin," I confessed as we drove home, "but I'm hanged if I can understand how it was that the man was transformed into a monster almost as soon as he wore those flowers, and the woman resisted the influence of the things for a week or more."

"Yes," he agreed, "that is strange. Myself, I think it was because werewolfism is an outward and visible sign of the power of evil, and the man was already steeped in sin, while the woman was pure in heart. She had what we might call a higher immunity from the virus of the blood-flower."

"And wasn't there some old legend to the effect that a werewolf could only be killed with a silver bullet?"

"Ah bah," he replied with a laugh. "What did those old legend-mongers know of the power of modern firearms? *Parbleu*, had the good St. George possessed a military rifle of today, he might have slain the dragon without approaching nearer than a mile! When I did shoot that wolfman, my friend, I had something more powerful than superstition in my hand. *Morbleu*, but I did shoot a hole in him large enough for him to have walked through!"

"That reminds me," I added, "how are we going to explain his body to the police?"

"Explain?" he echoed with a chuckle. "*Nom d'un bouc*, we shall not explain: I, myself, did dispose of him this very afternoon. He lies buried beneath the roots of an ash tree, with a stake of ash through his heart to hold him to the earth. His sinful body will rise again no more to plague us, I do assure you. He was known to have a habit of disappearing. Very good. This time there will be no reappearance. We are through, finished, done with him for good."

We drove another mile or so in silence; then my companion nudged me sharply in the ribs. "This curing of werewolf ladies, my friend," he confided, "it is dry work. Are you sure there is a full bottle of brandy in the cellar?"

The Curse of Everard Maundy

"*Mort d'un chat!* I do not like this!" Jules de Grandin slammed the evening paper down upon the table and stared ferociously at me through the lamplight.

"What's up now?" I asked, wondering vaguely what

the cause of his latest grievance was. "Some reporter say something personal about you?"

"*Parbleu, non*, he would better try," the little Frenchman replied, his round blue eyes flashing ominously. "Me, I would pull his nose and tweak his ears. But it is not of the reporter's insolence I speak, my friend; I do not like these suicides; there are too many of them."

"Of course there are," I conceded soothingly, "one suicide is that much too many; people have no right to—"

"Ah bah!" he cut in. "You do misapprehend me, *mon vieux*. Excuse me one moment, if you please." He rose hurriedly from his chair and left the room. A moment later I heard him rummaging about in the cellar.

In a few minutes he returned, the week's supply of discarded newspapers salvaged from the dust bin in his arms.

"Now, attend me," he ordered as he spread the sheets out before him and began scanning the columns hastily. "Here is an item from Monday's *Journal*:

Two Motorists Die While Driving Cars

The impulse to end their lives apparently attacked two automobile drivers on the Albemarle turnpike near Lonesome Swamp, two miles out of Harrisonville, last night. Carl Planz, thirty-one years old, of Martins Falls, took his own life by shooting himself in the head with a shotgun while seated in his automobile, which he had parked at the roadside where the pike passes nearest the swamp. His remains were identified by two letters, one addressed to his wife, the other to his father, Joseph Planz, with whom he was associated in the real estate business at Martins Falls. A check for three hundred dollars and several other papers found in his pockets completed identification. The letters, which merely declared his intention to kill himself, failed to establish any motive for the act.

Almost at the same time, and within a hundred yards of the spot where Planz's body was found by State Trooper Henry Anderson this morning, the body of Henry William Nixon, of New Rochelle, N.Y., was

discovered partly sitting, partly lying on the rear seat of his automobile, an empty bottle of windshield cleaner lying on the floor beside him. It is thought this liquid, which contained a small amount of cyanide of potassium, was used to inflict death. Police Surgeon Stevens, who examined both bodies, declared that the men had been dead approximately the same length of time when brought to the station house.

"What think you of that, my friend, *hein?*" de Grandin demanded, looking up from the paper with one of his direct, challenging stares.

"Why—er—" I began, but he interrupted.

"Hear this," he commanded, taking up a second paper, "this is from the *News* of Tuesday:

Mother and Daughters Die in Death Pact

Police and heartbroken relatives are today trying to trace a motive for the triple suicide of Mrs. Ruby Westerfelt and her daughters, Joan and Elizabeth, who perished by leaping from the eighth floor of the Hotel Dolores, Newark, late yesterday afternoon. The women registered at the hotel under assumed names, went immediately to the room assigned them, and ten minutes later Miss Gladys Walsh, who occupied a room on the fourth floor, was startled to see a dark form hurtle past her window. A moment later a second body flashed past on its downward flight, and as Miss Walsh, horrified, rushed toward the window, a loud crash sounded outside. Looking out, Miss Walsh saw the body of a third woman partly impaled on the spikes of a balcony rail.

Miss Walsh sought to aid the woman. As she leaned from her window and reached out with a trembling arm she was greeted by a scream: "Don't try! I won't be saved; I must go with Mother and Sister!" A moment later the woman had managed to free herself from the restraining iron spikes and fell to the cement area-way four floors below.

"And here is still another account, this one from to-

night's paper," he continued, unfolding the sheet which had caused his original protest:

High School Co-ed Takes Life in Attic

The family and friends of Edna May McCarty, fifteen-year-old co-ed of Harrisonville High School, are at a loss to assign a cause for her suicide early this morning. The girl had no love affairs, as far as is known, and had not failed in her examinations. On the contrary, she had passed the school's latest test with flying colors. Her mother told investigating police officials that overstudy might have temporarily unbalanced the child's mind. Miss McCarty's body was found suspended from the rafters of her father's attic by her mother this morning when the young woman did not respond to a call for breakfast and could not be found in her room on the second floor of the house. A clothes line, used to hang clothes which were dried inside the house in rainy weather, was used to form the fatal noose.

"Now then, my friend," de Grandin reseated himself and lighted a vile-smelling French cigarette, puffing furiously, till the smoke surrounded his sleek, blond head like a mephitic nimbus, "what have you to say to those reports? Am I not right! Are there not too many—*mordieu* entirely too many!—suicides in our city?"

"All of them weren't committed here," I objected practically, "and besides, there couldn't very well be any connection between them. Mrs. Westerfelt and her daughters carried out a suicide pact, it appears, but they certainly could have had no understanding with the two men and the young girl—"

"Perhaps, maybe, possibly," he agreed, nodding his head so vigorously that a little column of ash detached itself from his cigarette and dropped unnoticed on the bosom of his stiffly starched evening shirt. "You may be right, Friend Trowbridge, but then, as is so often the case, you may be entirely wrong. One thing I know: I, Jules de Grandin, shall investigate these cases myself per-

sonally. *Cordieu*, they do interest me! I shall ascertain what is the what here."

"Go ahead," I encouraged. "The investigation will keep you out of mischief," and I returned to the second chapter of Haggard's *The Wanderer's Necklace*, a book which I have read at least half a dozen times, yet find as fascinating at each rereading as when I first perused its pages.

The matter of the six suicides still bothered him next morning. "Trowbridge, my friend," he asked abruptly as he disposed of his second helping of coffee and passed his cup for replenishment, "why is it that people destroy themselves?"

"Oh," I answered evasively, "different reasons, I suppose. Some are crossed in love, some meet financial reverses and some do it while temporarily deranged."

"Yes," he agreed thoughtfully, "yet every self-murderer has a real or fancied reason for quitting the world, and there is apparently no reason why any of these six poor ones who hurled themselves into outer darkness during the past week should have done so. All, apparently, were well provided for, none of them, as far as is known, had any reason to regret the past or fear the future; yet"—he shrugged his narrow shoulders significantly—"voilà, they are gone!

"Another thing: At the *Faculté de Médecine Légal* and the *Sûreté* in Paris we keep most careful statistics, not only on the number, but on the manner of suicides. I do not think your Frenchman differs radically from your American when it comes to taking his life, so the figures for one nation may well be a signpost for the other. These self-inflicted deaths, they are not right. They do not follow the rules. Men prefer to hang, slash or shoot themselves; women favor drowning, poison or gas; yet here we have one of the men taking poison, one of the women hanging herself, and three of them jumping to death. *Nom d'un canard*, I am not satisfied with it!"

"H'm, neither are the unfortunate parties who killed themselves, if the theologians are to be believed," I returned.

"You speak right," he returned, then muttered dream-

ily to himself: "Destruction—destruction of body and imperilment of soul—*mordieu*, it is strange, 'it is not righteous!" He disposed of his coffee at a gulp and leaped from his chair. "I go!" he declared dramatically, turning toward the door.

"Where?"

"Where? Where should I go, if not to secure the history of these so puzzling cases? I shall not rest nor sleep nor eat until I have the string of the mystery's skein in my hands." He paused at the door, a quick, elfin smile playing across his usually stern features. "And should I return before my work is complete," he suggested, "I pray you, have the excellent Nora prepare another of her so magnificent apple pies for dinner."

Forty seconds later the front door clicked shut, and from the dining room's oriel window I saw his neat little figure, trimly encased in blue chinchilla and gray worsted, pass quickly down the sidewalk, his ebony cane hammering a rapid tattoo on the stones as it kept time to the thoughts racing through his active brain.

"I am desolated that my capacity is exhausted," he announced that evening as he finished his third portion of deep-dish apple pie smothered in pungent rum sauce and regarded his empty plate sadly. "*Eh bien*, perhaps it is as well. Did I eat more I might not be able to think clearly, and clear thought is what I shall need this night, my friend. Come; we must be going."

"Going where?" I demanded.

"To hear the reverend and estimable Monsieur Maundy deliver his sermon."

"Who? Everard Maundy?"

"But of course, who else?"

"But—but," I stammered, looking at him incredulously, "why should we go to the tabernacle to hear this man? I can't say I'm particularly impressed with his system, and—aren't you a Catholic, de Grandin?"

"Who can say?" he replied as he lighted a cigarette and stared thoughtfully at his coffee cup. "My father was a Huguenot of the Huguenots; a several times great-grand-sire of his cut his way to freedom through the Paris

streets on the fateful night of August 24, 1572. My mother was convent-bred, and as pious as anyone with a sense of humor and the gift of thinking for herself could well be. One of my uncles—he for whom I am named—was like a blood brother to Darwin the magnificent, and Huxley the scarcely less magnificent, also. Me, I am”—he elevated his eyebrows and shoulders at once and pursed his lips comically—“what should a man with such a heritage be, my friend? But come, we delay, we tarry, we lose time. Let us hasten. I have a fancy to hear what this Monsieur Maundy has to say, and to observe him. See, I have here tickets for the fourth row of the hall.”

Very much puzzled, but never doubting that something more than the idle wish to hear a sensational evangelist urged the little Frenchman toward the tabernacle, I rose and accompanied him.

“*Parbleu*, what a day!” he sighed as I turned my car toward the downtown section. “From coroner’s office to undertakers’ I have run; and from undertakers’ to hospitals. I have interviewed everyone who could shed the smallest light on these strange deaths, yet I seem no further advanced than when I began. What I have found out serves only to whet my curiosity; what I have not discovered—” He spread his hands in a world-embracing gesture and lapsed into silence.

The Jachin Tabernacle, where the Rev. Everard Maundy was holding his series of non-sectarian revival meetings, was crowded to overflowing when we arrived, but our tickets passed us through the jostling crowd of half-skeptical, half-believing people who thronged the lobby, and we were soon ensconced in seats where every word the preacher uttered could be heard with ease.

Before the introductory hymn had been finished, de Grandin mumbled a wholly unintelligible excuse in my ear and disappeared up the aisle, and I settled myself in my seat to enjoy the service as best I might.

The Rev. Mr. Maundy was a tall, hatchet-faced man in early middle life, a little inclined to rant and make use of worked-over platitudes, but obviously sincere in the message he had for his congregation. From the half-cynical attitude of a regularly enrolled church member who

looks on revivals with a certain disdain, I found myself taking keener and keener interest in the story of regeneration the preacher had to tell, my attention compelled not so much by his words as by the earnestness of his manner and the wonderful stage presence the man possessed. When the ushers had taken up the collection and the final hymn was sung, I was surprised to find we had been two hours in the tabernacle. If anyone had asked me, I should have said half an hour would have been nearer the time consumed by the service.

"Eh, my friend, did you find it interesting?" de Grandin asked as he joined me in the lobby and linked his arm in mine.

"Yes, very," I admitted, then, somewhat sulkily: "I thought you wanted to hear him, too—it was your idea that we came here—what made you run away?"

"I am sorry," he replied with a chuckle which belied his words, "but it was *necessaire* that I fry other fish while you listened to the reverend gentleman's discourse. Will you drive me home?"

The March wind cut shrewdly through my overcoat after the superheated atmosphere of the tabernacle, and I felt myself shivering involuntarily more than once as we drove through the quiet streets. Strangely, too, I felt rather sleepy and ill at ease. By the time we reached the wide, tree-bordered avenue before my house I was conscious of a distinctly unpleasant sensation, a constantly-growing feeling of malaise, a sort of baseless, irritating uneasiness. Thoughts of years long forgotten seemed summoned to my memory without rime or reason. An incident of an unfair advantage I had taken of a younger boy while at public school, recollections of petty, useless lies and bits of naughtiness committed when I could not have been more than three came flooding back on my consciousness, finally an episode of my early youth which I had forgotten some forty years.

My father had brought a little stray kitten into the house, and I, with the tiny lad's unconscious cruelty, had fallen to teasing the wretched bundle of bedraggled fur, finally tossing it nearly to the ceiling to test the tale I had so often heard that a cat always lands on its feet.

My experiment was the exception which demonstrated the rule, it seemed, for the poor, half-starved feline hit the hardwood floor squarely on its back, struggled feebly a moment, then yielded up its entire ninefold expectancy of life.

Long after the smart of the whipping I received in consequence had been forgotten, the memory of that unintentional murder had plagued my boyish conscience, and many were the times I had awakened at dead of night, weeping bitter repentance out upon my pillow.

Now, some forty years later, the thought of that kitten's death came back as clearly as the night the unkempt little thing thrashed out its life upon our kitchen floor. Strive as I would, I could not drive the memory from me, and it seemed as though the unwitting crime of my childhood was assuming an enormity out of all proportion to its true importance.

I shook my head and passed my hand across my brow, as a sleeper suddenly wakened does to drive away the lingering memory of an unpleasant dream, but the kitten's ghost, like Banquo's, would not down.

"What is it, Friend Trowbridge?" de Grandin asked as he eyed me shrewdly.

"Oh, nothing," I replied as I parked the car before our door and leaped to the curb, "I was just thinking."

"Ah?" he responded on a rising accent. "And of what do you think, my friend? Something unpleasant?"

"Oh, no; nothing important enough to dignify by that term," I answered shortly, and led the way to the house, keeping well ahead of him, lest he push his inquiries farther.

In this, however, I did him wrong. Tactful women and Jules de Grandin have the talent of feeling without being told when conversation is unwelcome, and besides wishing me a pleasant good-night, he spoke not a word until we had gone upstairs to bed. As I was opening my door, he called down the hall, "Should you want me, remember, you have but to call."

"Humph!" I muttered ungraciously as I shut the door. "Want him? What the devil should I want him for?" And so I pulled off my clothes and climbed into bed, the

thought of the murdered kitten still with me and annoying me more by its persistence than by the faint sting of remorse it evoked.

How long I had slept I do not know, but I do know I was wide awake in a single second, sitting up in bed and staring through the darkened chamber with eyes which strove desperately to pierce the gloom.

Somewhere—whether far or near I could not tell—a cat had raised its voice in a long-drawn, wailing cry, kept silence a moment, then given tongue again with increased volume.

There are few sounds more eery to hear in the dead of night than the cry of a prowling feline, and this one was of a particularly sad, almost reproachful tone.

“Confound the beast!” I exclaimed angrily, and lay back on my pillow, striving vainly to recapture my broken sleep.

Again the wail sounded, indefinite as to location, but louder, more prolonged, even, it seemed, fiercer in its timbre than when I first heard it in my sleep.

I glanced toward the window with the vague thought of hurling a book or boot or other handy missile at the disturber, then held my breath in sudden affright. Staring through the aperture between the scrim curtains was the biggest, most ferocious-looking tom-cat I had ever seen. Its eyes, seemingly as large as butter dishes, glared at me with the green phosphorescence of its tribe, and with an added demoniacal glow the like of which I had never seen. Its red mouth, opened to full compass in a venomous, soundless “spit,” seemed almost as large as that of a lion, and the wicked, pointed ears above its rounded face were laid back against its head, as though it were crouching for combat.

“Get out! Scat!” I called feebly, but making no move toward the thing.

“S-s-s-sssh!” a hiss of incomparable fury answered me, and the creature put one heavy, padded paw tentatively over the window-sill, still regarding me with its unchanging, hateful stare.

“Get!” I repeated, and stopped abruptly. Before my

eyes the great beast was *growing*, increasing in size till its chest and shoulders completely blocked the window. Should it attack me I would be as helpless in its claws as a Hindoo under the paws of a Bengal tiger.

Slowly, stealthily, its cushioned feet making no sound as it set them down daintily, the monstrous creature advanced into the room, crouched on its haunches and regarded me steadily, wickedly, malevolently.

I rose a little higher on my elbow. The great brute twitched the tip of its sable tail warningly, half lifted one of its forepaws from the floor, and set it down again, never shifting its sulfurous eyes from my face.

Inch by inch I moved my farther foot from the bed, felt the floor beneath it, and pivoted slowly in a sitting position until my other foot was free of the bedclothes. Apparently the cat did not notice my strategy, for it made no menacing move till I flexed my muscles for a leap, suddenly flung myself from the bedstead, and leaped toward the door.

With a snarl, white teeth flashing, green eyes glaring, ears laid back, the beast moved between me and the exit, and began slowly advancing on me, hate and menace in every line of its giant body.

I gave ground before it, retreating step by step and striving desperately to hold its eyes with mine, as I had heard hunters sometimes do when suddenly confronted by wild animals.

Back, back I crept, the ogreish visitant keeping pace with my retreat, never suffering me to increase the distance between us.

I felt the cold draft of the window on my back; the pressure of the sill against me; behind me, from the waist up, was the open night, before me the slowly advancing monster.

It was a thirty-foot drop to a cemented roadway, but death on the pavement was preferable to the slashing claws and grinding teeth of the terrible thing creeping toward me.

I threw one leg over the sill, watching constantly, lest the cat-thing leap on me before I could cheat it by dashing myself to the ground—

"Trowbridge, *mon Dieu*, Trowbridge, my friend! What is it you would do?" The frenzied hail of Jules de Grandin cut through the dark and a flood of light from the hallway swept into the room as he flung the door violently open and raced across the room, seizing my arm in both hands and dragging me from the window.

"Look out, de Grandin!" I screamed. "The cat! It'll get you!"

"Cat?" he echoed, looking about him uncomprehendingly. "Do you say 'cat', my friend? A cat will get me? *Mort d'un chou*, the cat which can make a mouse of Jules de Grandin is not yet whelped! Where is it, this cat of yours?"

"There! Th—" I began, then stopped, rubbing my eyes. The room was empty. Save for de Grandin and me there was nothing animate in the place.

"But it *was* here," I insisted. "I tell you, I saw it; a great, black cat, as big as a lion. It came in the window and crouched right over there, and was driving me to jump to the ground when you came—"

"*Nom d'un porc!* Do you say so?" he exclaimed, seizing my arm again and shaking me. "Tell me of this cat, my friend. I would learn more of this puss-puss who comes into Friend Trowbridge's house, grows great as a lion and drives him to his death on the stones below. Ha, I think maybe the trail of these mysterious deaths is not altogether lost! Tell me more, *mon ami*; I would know all—all!"

"Of course, it was just a bad dream," I concluded as I finished the recital of my midnight visitation, "but it seemed terribly real to me while it lasted."

"I doubt it not," he agreed with a quick, nervous nod. "And on our way from the tabernacle tonight, my friend, I noticed you were much *distract*. Were you, perhaps, feeling ill at the time?"

"Not at all," I replied. "The truth is, I was remembering something which occurred when I was a lad four or five years old; something which had to do with a kitten I killed," and I told him the whole wretched business.

"U'm?" he commented when I had done. "You are a good man, Trowbridge, my friend. In all your life, since

you attained to years of discretion, I do not believe you have done a wicked or ignoble act."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," I returned, "we all—"

"*Parbleu*, I have said it. That kitten incident, now, is probably the single tiny skeleton in the entire closet of your existence, yet sustained thought upon it will magnify it even as the cat of your dream grew from cat's to lion's size. *Pardieu*, my friend, I am not so sure you did dream of that abomination in the shape of a cat which visited you. Suppose—" he broke off, staring intently before him, twisting first one, then the other end of his trimly waxed mustache.

"Suppose what?" I prompted.

"*Non*, we will suppose nothing tonight," he replied. "You will please go to sleep once more, my friend, and I shall remain in the room to frighten away any more dream-demons which may come to plague you. Come, let us sleep. Here I do remain." He leaped into the wide bed beside me and pulled the down comforter snugly up about his pointed chin.

". . . and I'd like very much to have you come right over to see her, if you will," Mrs. Weaver finished. "I can't imagine whatever made her attempt such a thing—she's never shown any signs of it before."

I hung up the telephone receiver and turned to de Grandin. "Here's another suicide, or almost-suicide, for you," I told him half teasingly. "The daughter of one of my patients attempted her life by hanging in the bathroom this morning."

"*Par la tête bleu*, do you tell me so?" he exclaimed eagerly. "I go with you, *cher ami*. I see this young woman; I examine her. Perhaps I shall find some key to the riddle there. *Parbleu*, me, I itch, I burn, I am all on fire with this mystery! Certainly, there must be an answer to it; but it remains hidden like a peasant's pig when the tax collector arrives."

"Well, young lady, what's this I hear about you?" I demanded severely as we entered Grace Weaver's bed-

room a few minutes later. "What on earth have you to die for?"

"I—I don't know what made me want to do it, Doctor," the girl replied with a wan smile. "I hadn't thought of it before—ever. But I just got to—oh, you know, sort of brooding over things last night, and when I went into the bathroom this morning, something—something inside my head, like those ringing noises you hear when you have a head-cold, you know—seemed to be whispering, 'Go on, kill yourself; you've nothing to live for. Go on, do it!' So I just stood on the scales and took the cord from my bathrobe and tied it over the transom, then knotted the other end about my neck. Then I kicked the scales away and"—she gave another faint smile—"I'm glad I hadn't locked the door before I did it," she admitted.

de Grandin had been staring unwinkingly at her with his curiously level glance throughout her recital. As she concluded he bent forward and asked: "This voice which you heard bidding you commit an unpardonable sin, Mademoiselle, did you, perhaps, recognize it?"

The girl shuddered. "No!" she replied, but a sudden paling of her face about the lips gave the lie to her word.

"*Pardonnez-moi*, Mademoiselle," the Frenchman returned. "I think you do not tell the truth. Now, whose voice was it, if you please?"

A sullen, stubborn look spread over the girl's features, to be replaced a moment later by the muscular spasm which preludes weeping. "It—it sounded like Fanny's," she cried, and turning her face to the pillow, fell to sobbing bitterly.

"And Fanny, who is she?" de Grandin began, but Mrs. Weaver motioned him to silence with an imploring gesture.

I prescribed a mild bromide and left the patient, wondering what mad impulse could have led a girl in the first flush of young womanhood, happily situated in the home of parents who idolized her, engaged to a fine young man, and without bodily or spiritual ill of any sort, to attempt her life. Outside, de Grandin seized the mother's arm and whispered fiercely: "Who is this Fanny,

Madame Weaver? Believe me, I ask not from idle curiosity, but because I seek vital information!"

"Fanny Briggs was Grace's chum two years ago," Mrs. Weaver answered. "My husband and I never quite approved of her, for she was several years older than Grace, and had such pronounced modern ideas that we didn't think her a suitable companion for our daughter, but you know how girls are with their 'crushes'. The more we objected to her going with Fanny, the more she used to seek her company, and we were both at our wits' ends when the Briggs girl was drowned while swimming at Asbury Park. I hate to say it, but it was almost a positive relief to us when the news came. Grace was almost broken-hearted about it at first, but she met Charley this summer, and I haven't heard her mention Fanny's name since her engagement until just now."

"Ah?" de Grandin tweaked the tip of his mustache meditatively. "And perhaps Mademoiselle Grace was somewhere to be reminded of Mademoiselle Fanny last night?"

"No," Mrs. Weaver replied, "she went with a crowd of young folks to hear Maundy preach. There was a big party of them at the tabernacle—I'm afraid they went more to make fun than in a religious frame of mind, but he made quite an impression on Grace, she told us."

"*Feu de Dieu!*" de Grandin exploded, twisting his mustache furiously. "Do you tell me so, *Madame*? This is of the interest. *Madame*, I salute you," he bowed formally to Mrs. Weaver, then seized me by the arm and fairly dragged me away.

"Trowbridge, my friend," he informed me as we descended the steps of the Weaver portico, "this business, it has *l'odeur du poisson*—how is it you say?—the fishy smell."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"*Parbleu*, what should I mean except that we go to interview this Monsieur Everard Maundy immediately, right away, at once? *Mordieu*, I damn think I have the tail of this mystery in my hand, and may the blight of prohibition fall upon France if I do not twist it!"

The Rev. Everard Maundy's rooms in the Tremont Hotel were not hard to locate, for a constant stream of visitors went to and from them.

"Have you an appointment with Mr. Maundy?" the secretary asked as we were ushered into the anteroom.

"Not we," de Grandin denied, "but if you will be so kind as to tell him that Dr. Jules de Grandin, of the Paris *Sûreté*, desires to speak with him for five small minutes, I shall be in your debt."

The young man looked doubtful, but de Grandin's steady, catlike stare never wavered, and he finally rose and took our message to his employer.

In a few minutes he returned and admitted us to the big room where the evangelist received his callers behind a wide, flat-topped desk.

"Ah, Mr. de Grandin," the exhorter began with a professionally bland smile as we entered, "you are from France, are you not, sir? What can I do to help you toward the light?"

"*Cordieu*, Monsieur," de Grandin barked, for once forgetting his courtesy and ignoring the preacher's outstretched hand, "you can do much. You can explain these so unexplainable suicides which have taken place during the past week—the time you have preached here. That is the light we do desire to see."

Maundy's face went masklike and expressionless. "Suicides? Suicides?" he echoed. "What should I know of—"

The Frenchman shrugged his narrow shoulders impatiently. "We do fence with words, Monsieur," he interrupted testily. "Behold the facts: Messieurs Planz and Nixon, young men with no reason for such desperate deeds, did kill themselves by violence; Madame Westerfelt and her two daughters, who were happy in their home, as everyone thought, did hurl themselves from an hotel window; a little schoolgirl hanged herself; last night my good friend Trowbridge, who never understandingly harmed man or beast, and whose life is dedicated to the healing of the sick, did almost take his life; and this very morning a young girl, wealthy, beloved, with every reason to be happy, did almost succeed in dispatching herself.

"Now, Monsieur *le prédicateur*, the only thing this miscellaneous assortment of persons had in common is the fact that *each of them did hear you preach the night before, or the same night, he attempted self-destruction.* That is the light we seek. Explain us the mystery, if you please."

Maundy's lean, rugged face had undergone a strange transformation while the little Frenchman spoke. Gone was his smug, professional smirk, gone the forced and meaningless expression of benignity, and in their place a look of such anguish and horror as might rest on the face of one who hears his sentence of damnation read.

"Don't—don't!" he besought, covering his writhing face with his hands and bowing his head upon his desk while his shoulders shook with deep, soul-racking sobs. "Oh, miserable me! My sin has found me out!"

For a moment he wrestled in spiritual anguish, then raised his stricken countenance and regarded us with tear-dimmed eyes. "I am the greatest sinner in the world," he announced sorrowfully. "There is no hope for me on earth or yet in heaven!"

de Grandin tweaked the ends of his mustache alternately as he gazed curiously at the man before us. "Monsieur," he replied at length. "I think you do exaggerate. There are surely greater sinners than you. But if you would shrive you of the sin which gnaws your heart, I pray you shed what light you can upon these deaths, for there may be more to follow, and who knows that I shall not be able to stop them if you will but tell me all?"

"*Mea culpa!*" Maundy exclaimed, and struck his chest with his clenched fists like a Hebrew prophet of old. "In my younger days, gentlemen, before I dedicated myself to the salvaging of souls, I was a scoffer. What I could not feel or weigh or measure, I disbelieved. I mocked at all religion and sneered at all the things which others held sacred.

"One night I went to a Spiritualistic seance, intent on scoffing, and forced my young wife to accompany me. The medium was an old colored woman, wrinkled, half-blind, and unbelievably ignorant, but she had something

—some secret power—which was denied the rest of us. Even I, atheist and derider of the truth that I was, could see that.

“As the old woman called on the spirits of the departed, I laughed out loud, and told her it was a fake. The negress came out of her trance and turned her deep-set, burning old eyes on me. ‘White man,’ she said, ‘yuh is gwine ter feel mighty sorry fo’ dem words. Ah tells you de speerits can heah whut yuh says, an dey will take deir revenge on you an’ yours—yas, an’ on dem as foller yuh—till yuh wishes yo’ tongue had been cut out befo’ yuh said dem words dis yere night.’

“I tried to laugh at her—to curse her for a sniveling old faker—but there was something so terrible in her wrinkled old face that the words froze on my lips, and I hurried away.

“The next night my wife—my young, lovely bride—drowned herself in the river, and I have been a marked man ever since. Wherever I go it is the same. God has seen fit to open my eyes to the light of Truth and give me words to place His message before His people, and many who come to sneer at me go away believers; but wherever throngs gather to hear me bear my testimony there are always these tragedies. Tell me, gentlemen”—he threw out his hands in a gesture of surrender—“must I forever cease to preach the message of the Lord to His people? I have told myself that these self-murders would have occurred whether I came to town or not, but—is this a judgment which pursues me forever?”

Jules de Grandin regarded him thoughtfully. “Monsieur,” he murmured, “I fear you make the mistakes we are all too prone to make. You do saddle *le bon Dieu* with all the sins with which the face of man is blackened. What if this were no judgment of heaven, but a curse of a very different sort, *hein?*”

“You mean the devil might be driving to overthrow the effects of my work?” the other asked, a light of hope breaking over his haggard face.

“U’m, perhaps; let us take that for our working hypothesis,” de Grandin replied. “At present we may not say whether it be devil or devilkin which dogs your footsteps;

but at the least we are greatly indebted to you for what you have told. Go my friend; continue to preach the Truth as you conceive the Truth to be, and may the God of all peoples uphold your hands. Me, I have other work to do, but it may be scarcely less important." He bowed formally and, turning on his heel, strode quickly from the room.

"That's the most fantastic story I ever heard!" I declared as we entered the hotel elevator. "The idea! As if an ignorant old negress could put a curse on—"

"Zut!" de Grandin shut me off. "You are a most excellent physician in the State of New Jersey, Friend Trowbridge, but have you ever been in Martinique, or Haiti, or in the jungles of the Congo Belgique?"

"Of course not," I admitted, "but—"

"I have. I have seen things so strange among the *Voudois* people that you would wish to have me committed to a madhouse did I but relate them to you. However, as that Monsieur Kipling says, 'that is another story.' At the present we are pledged to the solving of another mystery. Let us go to your house. I would think, I would consider all this business-of-the-monkey. *Pardieu*, it has as many angles as a diamond cut in Amsterdam!"

"Tell me, Friend Trowbridge," he demanded as we concluded our evening meal, "have you perhaps among your patients some young man who has met with a great sorrow recently; someone who has sustained a loss of wife or child or parents?"

I looked at him in amazement, but the serious expression on his little heart-shaped face told me he was in earnest, not making some ill-timed jest at my expense.

"Why, yes," I responded. "There is young Alvin Spence. His wife died in childbirth last June, and the poor chap has been half beside himself ever since. Thank God I was out of town at the time and didn't have the responsibility of the case."

"Thank God, indeed," de Grandin nodded gravely. "It is not easy for us, though we do ply our trade among the dying, to tell those who remain behind of their bereave-

ment. But this Monsieur Spence; will you call on him this evening? Will you give him a ticket to the lecture of Monsieur Maundy?"

"No!" I blazed, half rising from my chair. "I've known that boy since he was a little toddler—knew his dead wife from childhood, too; and if you're figuring on making him the subject of some experiment—"

"Softly, my friend," he besought. "There is a terrible Thing loose among us. Remember the noble martyrs of science, those so magnificent men who risked their lives that yellow fever and malaria should be no more. Was not their work a holy one? Certainly. I do but wish that this young man may attend the lecture tonight, and on my honor, I shall guard him until all danger of attempted self-murder is passed. You will do what I say?"

He was so earnest in his plea that, though I felt like an accessory before the fact in a murder, I agreed.

Meantime, his little blue eyes snapping and sparkling with the zest of the chase, de Grandin had busied himself with the telephone directory, looking up a number of addresses, culling through them, discarding some, adding others, until he had obtained a list of some five or six. "Now, *mon vieux*," he begged as I made ready to visit Alvin Spence on my treacherous errand, "I would that you convey me to the rectory of St. Benedict's Church. The priest in charge there is Irish, and the Irish have the gift of seeing things which you colder-blooded Saxons may not. I must have a confab with this good Father O'Brien before I can permit that you interview the young Monsieur Spence. *Mordieu*, me, I am a scientist; no murderer!"

I drove him past the rectory and parked my motor at the curb, waiting impatiently while he thundered at the door with the handle of his ebony walking stick. His knock was answered by a little old man in clerical garb and a face as round and ruddy as a winter apple.

de Grandin spoke hurriedly to him in a low voice, waving his hands, shaking his head, shrugging his shoulders, as was his wont when the earnestness of his argument bore him before it. The priest's round face showed first incredulity, then mild skepticism, finally absorbed inter-

est. In a moment the pair of them had vanished inside the house, leaving me to cool my heels in the bitter March air.

"You were long enough," I grumbled as he emerged from the rectory.

"*Pardieu*, yes, just long enough," he agreed. "I did accomplish my purpose, and no visit is either too long or too short when you can say that. Now to the house of the good Monsieur Spence, if you will. *Mordieu*, but we shall see what we shall see this night!"

Six hours later de Grandin and I crouched shivering at the roadside where the winding, serpentine Albemarle Pike dips into the hollow beside the Lonesome Swamp. The wind which had been trenchant as a shrew's tongue earlier in the evening had died away, and a hard, dull bitterness of cold hung over the hills and hollows of the rolling countryside. From the wide salt marshes where the bay's tide crept up to mingle with the swamp's brackish waters twice a day there came great sheets of brumous, impenetrable vapor which shrouded the landscape and distorted commonplace objects into hideous, gigantic monstrosities.

"*Mort d'un petit bonhomme*, my friend," de Grandin commented between chattering teeth, "I do not like this place; it has an evil air. There are spots where the very earth does breathe of unholy deeds, and by the sacred name of a rooster, this is one such. Look you at this accursed fog. Is it not as if the specters of those drowned at sea were marching up the shore this night?"

"Umph!" I replied, sinking my neck lower in the collar of my ulster and silently cursing myself for a fool.

A moment's silence, then: "You are sure Monsieur Spence must come this way? There is no other road by which he can reach his home?"

"Of course not," I answered shortly. "He lives out in the new Weiss development with his mother and sister—you were there this evening—and this is the only direct motor route to the subdivision from the city."

"Ah, that is well," he replied, hitching the collar of his

greatcoat higher about his ears. "You will recognize his car—surely?"

"I'll try to," I promised, "but you can't be sure of anything on a night like this. I'd not guarantee to pick out my own—there's somebody pulling up beside the road now," I interrupted myself as a roadster came to an abrupt halt and stood panting, its headlights forming vague, luminous spots in the haze.

"*Mais oui*," he agreed, "and no one stops at this spot for any good until *It* has been conquered. Come, let us investigate." He started forward, body bent, head advanced, like a motion picture conception of an Indian on the warpath.

Half a hundred stealthy steps brought us abreast of the parked car. Its occupant was sitting back on the driving seat, his hands resting listlessly on the steering wheel, his eyes upturned, as though he saw a vision in the trailing wisps of fog before him. I needed no second glance to recognize Alvin Spence, though the rapt look upon his white, set face transfigured it almost beyond recognition. He was like a poet beholding the beatific vision of his mistress or a medieval eremite gazing through the opened portals of Paradise.

"A-a-ah!" de Grandin's whisper cut like a wire-edged knife through the silence of the fog-bound air, "do you behold it, Friend Trowbridge?"

"Wha—" I whispered back, but broke the syllable half uttered. Thin, tenuous, scarcely to be distinguished from the lazily drifting festoons of the fog itself, there was a *something* in midair before the car where Alvin Spence sat with his yearning soul looking from his eyes. I seemed to see clear through the thing, yet its outlines were plainly perceptible, and as I looked and looked again, I recognized the unmistakable features of Dorothy Spence, the young man's dead wife. Her body—if the tenuous, ethereal mass of static vapor could be called such—was bare of clothing, and seemed imbued with a voluptuous grace and allure the living woman had never possessed, but her face was that of the young woman who had lain in Rosedale Cemetery for three-quarters of a year. If ever living man beheld the simulacrum of the

dead, we three gazed on the wraith of Dorothy Spence that moment.

"Dorothy—my beloved, my dear, my dear!" the man half whispered, half sobbed, stretching forth his hands to the spirit-woman, then falling back on the seat as the vision seemed to elude his grasp when a sudden puff of breeze stirred the fog.

We could not catch the answer he received, close as we stood, but we could see the pale, curving lips frame the single word "Come!" and saw the transparent arms stretched out to beckon him forward.

The man half rose from his seat, then sank back, set his face in sudden resolution and plunged his hand into the pocket of his overcoat.

Beside me de Grandin had been fumbling with something in his inside pocket. As Alvin Spence drew forth his hand and the dull gleam of a polished revolver shone in the light from his dashboard lamp, the Frenchman leaped forward like a panther. "Stop him, Friend Trowbridge!" he called shrilly, and to the hovering vision:

"Avaunt, accursed one! Begone, thou exile from heaven! Away, snake-spawn!"

As he shouted he drew a tiny pellet from his inner pocket and hurled it point-blank through the vaporous body of the specter.

Even as I seized Spence's hand and fought with him for possession of the pistol, I saw the transformation from the tail of my eye. As de Grandin's missile tore through its unsubstantial substance, the vision-woman seemed to shrink in upon herself, to become suddenly more compact, thinner, scrawny. Her rounded bosom flattened to mere folds of leatherlike skin stretched drum-tight above staring ribs, her slender graceful hands were horrid, claw-tipped talons, and the yearning, enticing face of Dorothy Spence became a mask of hideous, implacable hate, great-eyed, thin-lipped, beak-nosed—such a face as the demons of hell might show after a million million years of burning in the infernal fires. A screech like the keening of all the owls in the world together split the fog-wrapped stillness of the night, and the monstrous thing before us seemed suddenly to shrivel, shrink to a mere

spot of baleful, phosphorescent fire, and disappear like a snuffed-out candle's flame.

Spence saw it, too. The pistol dropped from his nerveless fingers to the car's floor with a soft thud, and his arm went limp in my grasp as he fell forward in a dead faint.

"*Parbleu*," de Grandin swore softly as he climbed into the unconscious lad's car. "Let us drive forward, Friend Trowbridge. We will take him home and administer a soporific. He must sleep, this poor one, or the memory of what we have shown him will rob him of his reason."

So we carried Alvin Spence to his home, administered a hypnotic and left him in the care of his wondering mother with instructions to repeat the dose if he should wake.

It was a mile or more to the nearest bus station, and we set out at a brisk walk, our heels hitting sharply against the frosty concrete of the road.

"What in the world was it, de Grandin?" I asked as we marched in step down the darkened highway. "It was the most horrible—"

"*Parbleu*," he interrupted, "someone comes this way in a monstrous hurry!"

His remark was no exaggeration. Driven as though pursued by all the furies from pandemonium, came a light motor car with plain black sides and a curving top. "Look out!" the driver warned as he recognized me and came to a bumping halt. "Look out, Dr. Trowbridge, it's walking! It got out and walked!"

De Grandin regarded him with an expression of comic bewilderment. "Now what is it that walks, *mon brave*?" he demanded. "*Mordieu*, you chatter like a monkey with a handful of hot chestnuts! What is it that walks, and why must we look out for it, *hein*?"

"Sile Gregory," the young man answered. "He died this mornin' an' Mr. Johnson took him to th' parlors to fix 'im up, an' sent me and Joe Williams out with him this evenin'. I was just drivin' up to th' house, an' Joe hopped out to give me a lift with th' casket, an' old Silas *got up*

an' walked away! An' Mr. Johnson embalmed 'im this mornin' I tell you!"

"*Nom d'un chou-fleur!*" de Grandin shot back. "And where did this so remarkable demonstration take place, *mon vieux*? Also, what of the excellent Williams, your partner?"

"I don't know, an' I don't care," the other replied. "When a dead corpse I saw embalmed this mornin' gets outa its casket an' walks, I ain't gonna wait for nobody. Jump up here, if you want to go with me; I ain't gonna stay here no longer!"

"*Bien,*" de Grandin acquiesced. "Go your way, my excellent one. Should we encounter your truant corpse, we will direct him to his waiting *bière*."

The young man waited no second invitation, but started his car down the road at a speed which would bring him into certain trouble if observed by a state trooper.

"Now, what the devil do you make of that?" I asked. "I know Johnson, the funeral director, well, and I always thought he had a pretty levelheaded crowd of boys about his place, but if that lad hasn't been drinking some powerful liquor, I'll be—"

"Not necessarily, my friend," de Grandin interrupted. "I think it not at all impossible that he tells but the sober truth. It may well be that the dead do walk this road to-night."

I shivered with something other than the night's chill as he made the matter-of-fact assertion, but forbore pressing him for an explanation. There are times when ignorance is a happier portion than knowledge.

We had marched perhaps another quarter-mile in silence when de Grandin suddenly plucked my sleeve. "Have you noticed nothing, my friend?" he asked.

"What d'ye mean?" I demanded sharply, for my nerves were worn tender by the night's events.

"I am not certain, but it seems to me we are followed."

"Followed? Nonsense! *Who* would be following us?" I returned, unconsciously stressing the personal pronoun, for I had almost said, "What would follow us," and the

implication raised by the impersonal form sent tiny shivers racing along my back and neck.

de Grandin cast me a quick, appraising glance, and I saw the ends of his spiked mustache lift suddenly as his lips framed a sardonic smile, but instead of answering he swung round on his heel and faced the shadows behind us.

"*Holà, Monsieur le Cadavre!*" he called sharply. "Here we are, and—*sang du diable!*—here we shall stand."

I looked at him in open-mouthed amazement, but his gaze was turned steadfastly on something half seen in the mist which lay along the road.

Next instant my heart seemed pounding through my ribs and my breath came hot and choking in my throat, for a tall, gangling man suddenly emerged from the fog and made for us at a shambling gait.

He was clothed in a long, old-fashioned double-breasted frock coat and stiffly starched shirt topped by a standing collar and white, ministerial tie. His hair was neatly, though somewhat unnaturally, arranged in a central part above a face the color and smoothness of wax, and little flecks of talcum powder still clung here and there to his eyebrows. No mistaking it! Johnson, artist that he was, had arrayed the dead farmer in the manner of all his kind for their last public appearance before relatives and friends. One look told me the horrible, incredible truth. It was the body of old Silas Gregory which stumbled toward us through the fog. Dressed, greased and powdered for its last, long rest, the thing came toward us with faltering, uncertain strides, and I noticed, with the sudden ability for minute inventory fear sometimes lends our senses, that his old, sunburned skin showed more than one brand where the formaldehyde embalming fluid had burned it.

In one long, thin hand the horrible thing grasped the helve of a farmyard ax; the other hand lay stiffly folded across the midriff as the embalmer had placed it when his professional ministrations were finished that morning.

"My God!" I cried, shrinking back toward the roadside. But de Grandin ran forward to meet the charging horror with a cry which was almost like a welcome.

"Stand clear, Friend Trowbridge," he warned, "we will fight this to a finish, I and It!" His little, round eyes were flashing with the zest of combat, his mouth was set in a straight, uncompromising line beneath the sharply waxed ends of his diminutive mustache, and his shoulders hunched forward like those of a practised wrestler before he comes to grips with his opponent.

With a quick, whipping motion, he ripped the razor-sharp blade of his sword-cane from its ebony sheath and swung the flashing steel in a whirring circle about his head, then sank to a defensive posture, one foot advanced, one retracted, the leg bent at the knee, the triple-edged sword dancing before him like the darting tongue of an angry serpent.

The dead thing never faltered in its stride. Three feet or so from Jules de Grandin it swung the heavy, rust-encrusted ax above its shoulder and brought it downward, its dull, lack-luster eyes staring straight before it with an impassivity more terrible than any glare of hate.

"*Sa ha!*" de Grandin's blade flickered forward like a streak of storm lightning, and fleshed itself to the hilt in the corpse's shoulder.

He might as well have struck his steel into a bag of meal.

The ax descended with a crushing, devastating blow. de Grandin leaped nimbly aside, disengaging his blade and swinging it again before him, but an expression of surprise—almost of consternation—was on his face.

I felt my mouth go dry with excitement, and a queer, weak feeling hit me at the pit of the stomach. The Frenchman had driven his sword home with the skill of a practised fencer and the precision of a skilled anatomist. His blade had pierced the dead man's body at the junction of the short head of the biceps and the great pectoral muscle, at the coracoid process, inflicting a wound which should have paralyzed the arm—yet the terrible ax rose for a second blow as though de Grandin's steel had struck wide of the mark.

"Ah?" de Grandin nodded understandingly as he leaped backward, avoiding the ax-blade by the breadth of a hair. "*Bien. À la fin!*"

His defensive tactics changed instantly. Flickeringly his sword lashed forward, then came down and back with a sharp, whipping motion. The keen edge of the angular blade bit deeply into the corpse's wrist, laying bare the bone. Still the ax rose and fell and rose again.

Slash after slash de Grandin gave, his slicing cuts falling with almost mathematical precision in the same spot, shearing deeper and deeper into his dreadful opponent's wrist. At last, with a short, clucking exclamation, he drew his blade sharply back for the last time, severing the ax-hand from the arm.

The dead thing collapsed like a deflated balloon at his feet as hand and ax fell together to the cement roadway.

Quick as a mink, de Grandin thrust his left hand within his coat, drew forth a pellet similar to that with which he had transformed the counterfeit of Dorothy Spence, and hurled it straight into the upturned ghastly-calm face of the mutilated body before him.

The dead lips did not part, for the embalmer's sutures had closed them forever that morning, but the body writhed upward from the road, and a groan which was a muted scream came from its flat chest. It twisted back and forth a moment, like a mortally stricken serpent in its death agony, then lay still.

Seizing the corpse by its graveclothes, de Grandin dragged it through the line of roadside hazel bushes to the rim of the swamp, and busied himself cutting long, straight withes from the brushwood, then disappeared again behind the tangled branches. At last:

"It is finished," he remarked, stepping back to the road. "Let us go."

"Wha—what did you do?" I faltered.

"I did the needful, my friend. *Morbleu*, we had an evil, a very evil thing imprisoned in that dead man, and I took such precautions as were necessary to fix it in its prison. A stake through the heart, a severed head, and the whole firmly thrust into the ooze of the swamp—*voilà*. It will be long before other innocent ones are induced to destroy themselves by *that*."

"But—" I began.

"*Non, non*," he replied, half laughing. "*En avant, mon*

ami! I would that we return home as quickly as possible, Much work creates much appetite, and I make small doubt that I shall consume the remainder of that so delicious apple pie which I could not eat at dinner."

Jules de Grandin regarded the empty plate before him with a look of comic tragedy. "May endless benisons rest upon your amiable cook, Friend Trowbridge," he pronounced, "but may the curse of heaven forever pursue the villain who manufactures the woefully inadequate pans in which she bakes her pies."

"Hang the pies, and the plate-makers, too!" I burst out. "You promised to explain all this hocus-pocus, and I've been patient long enough. Stop sitting there like a glutton, wailing for more pie, and tell me about it."

"Oh, the mystery?" he replied, stifling a yawn and lighting a cigarette. "That is simple, my friend, but these so delicious pies—however, I do digress:

"When first I saw the accounts of so many strange suicides within one little week I was interested, but not greatly puzzled. People have slain themselves since the beginning of time, and yet"—he shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly—"what is it that makes the hound scent his quarry, the war-horse sniff the battle afar off? Who can tell?

"I said to me: 'There is undoubtedly more to these deaths than the newspapers have said. I shall investigate.'

"From the coroner's to the undertakers', and from the undertakers' to the physicians', yes, *parbleu!* and to the family residences, as well, I did go, gleaning here a bit and there a bit of information which seemed to mean nothing, but which might mean much did I but have other information to add to it.

"One thing I ascertained early: In each instance the suicides had been to hear this Reverend Maundy the night before or the same night they did away with themselves. This was perhaps insignificant; perhaps it meant much. I determined to hear this Monsieur Maundy with my own two ears; but I would not hear him too close by.

"Forgive me, my friend, for I did make of you the guinea-pig for my laboratory experiment. You I left in a

forward seat while the reverend gentleman preached; me, I stayed in the rear of the hall and used my eyes as well as my ears.

"What happened that night? Why, my good, kind Friend Trowbridge, who in all his life had done no greater wrong than thoughtlessly to kill a little, so harmless kitten, did almost *seemingly* commit suicide. But I was not asleep by the switch, my friend. Not Jules de Grandin! All the way home I saw you were *distract*, and I did fear something would happen, and I did therefore watch beside your door with my eye and ear alternately glued to the keyhole. *Parbleu*, I entered the chamber not one little second too soon, either!

" 'This is truly strange,' I tell me. 'My friend hears this preacher and nearly destroys himself. Six others have heard him, and have quite killed themselves. If Friend Trowbridge were haunted by the ghost of a dead kitten, why should not those others, who also undoubtedly possessed distressing memories, have been hounded to their graves by them?'

" 'There is no reason why they should not,' I tell me.

"Next morning comes the summons to attend the young Mademoiselle Weaver. She, too, have heard the preacher; she, too, have attempted her life. And what does she tell us? That she fancied the voice of her dead friend urged her to kill herself.

" 'Ah, ha!' I say to me. 'This whatever-it-is which causes so much suicide may appeal by fear, or perhaps by love, or by whatever will most strongly affect the person who dies by his own hand. We must see this Monsieur Maundy. It is perhaps possible he can tell us much.'

"As yet I can see no light—I am still in darkness—but far ahead I already see the gleam of a promise of information. When we see Monsieur Everard Maundy and he tells us of his experience at that *séance* so many years ago—*parbleu*, I see it all, or almost all.

"Now, what was it acted as agent for that aged sorceress' curse?"

He elevated one shoulder and looked questioningly at me.

"How should I know?" I answered.

"Correct," he nodded, "how, indeed? Beyond doubt it were a spirit of some sort; what sort we do not know. Perhaps it were the spirit of some unfortunate who had destroyed himself and was earthbound as a consequence. There are such. And, as misery loves company in the proverb, so do these wretched ones seek to lure others to join them in their unhappy state. Or, maybe, it were an Elemental."

"A *what*?" I demanded.

"An Elemental—a Neutrarian."

"What the deuce is that?"

For answer he left the table and entered the library, returning with a small red-leather bound volume in his hand. "You have read the works of Monsieur Rossetti?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You recall his poem, *Eden Bowers*, perhaps?"

"H'm; yes, I've read it, but I never could make anything of it."

"Quite likely," he agreed, "its meaning is most obscure, but I shall enlighten you. *Attendez-moi!*"

Thumbing through the thin pages he began reading at random:

It was Lilith, the wife of Adam,
Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft, sweet woman . . .

Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden.
She was the first that thence was driven,
With her was hell and with Eve was heaven . . .

What bright babes had Lilith and Adam,
Shapes that coiled in the woods and waters,
Glittering sons and radiant daughters

"You see, my friend?"

"No, I'm hanged if I do."

"Very well, then, according to the rabbinical lore, before Eve was created, Adam, our first father, had a

demon wife named Lilith. And by her he had many children, not human, nor yet wholly demon.

"For her sins Lilith was expelled from Eden's bowers, and Adam was given Eve to wife. With Lilith was driven out all her progeny by Adam, and Lilith and her half-man, half-demon brood declared war on Adam and Eve and their descendants forever. These descendants of Lilith and Adam have ever since roamed the earth and air, incorporeal, having no bodies like men, yet having always a hatred for flesh and blood. Because they were the first, or elder race: they are sometimes called Elementals in the ancient lore; sometimes they are called Neutrarians, because they are neither wholly men nor wholly devils. Me, I do not take odds in the controversy; I care not what they are called, but I know what I have seen. I think it is highly possible those ancient Hebrews, misinterpreting the manifestations they observed, accounted for them by their so fantastic legends. We are told these Neutrarians or Elementals are immaterial beings. Absurd? Not necessarily. What is matter—material. Electricity, perhaps—a great system of law and order throughout the universe and all the millions of worlds extending throughout infinity.

"Very good, so far; but when we have said matter is electricity, what are we to say if asked, 'What is electricity?' Me, I think it a modification of the ether.

"'Very good,' you say; 'but what is ether?'

"*Parbleu*, I do not know. The matter—or material—of the universe is little, if anything, more than electrons, flowing about in all directions. For here, now there, the electrons balance and form what we call solids—rocks and trees and men and women. But may they not coalesce at a different rate of speed, or vibration, to form beings which are real, with ambitions and loves and hates similar to ours, yet for the most part invisible to us, as is the air? Why not? No man can truthfully say, 'I have seen the air,' yet no one is so great a fool as to doubt its existence for that reason."

"Yes, but we can see the effects of air," I objected. "Air in motion, for instance, becomes wind, and—"

"*Mort d'un crapaud!*" he burst out. "And have we not

observed the effects of these Elementals—these Neutrarians, or whatsoever their name may be? How of the six suicides; how of that which tempted the young Mademoiselle Weaver and the young Monsieur Spence to self-murder? How of the cat which entered your room? Did we see no effects there, *hein?*”

“But the thing we saw with young Spence, and the cat, were visible,” I objected.

“But of course. When you fancied you saw the cat, you were influenced from within, even as Mademoiselle Weaver was when she heard the voice of her dead friend. What we saw with the young Spence was the shadow of his desire—the intensified love and longing for his dead wife, plus the evil entity which urged him to unpardonable sin.”

“Oh, all right,” I conceded. “Go on with your theory.”

He stared thoughtfully at the glowing tip of his cigarette a moment, then: “It has been observed, my friend, that he who goes to a Spiritualistic séance may come away with some evil spirit attached to him—whether it be a spirit which once inhabited human form or an Elemental, it is no matter; the evil ones swarm about the lowered lights of the Spiritualistic meeting as flies congregate at the honey-pot in summer. It appears such a one fastened to Everard Maundy. His wife was its first victim, afterward those who heard him preach were attacked.

“Consider the scene at the tabernacle when Monsieur Maundy preaches: Emotion, emotion—all is emotion; reason is lulled to sleep by the power of his words; and the minds of his hearer’s are not on their guard against the entrance of evil spirits; they are too intent on what he is saying. Their consciouness is absent. *Pouf!* The evil one fastens firmly on some unwary person, explores his innermost mind, finds out his weakest point of defense. With you, it was the kitten; with young Mademoiselle Weaver, her dead friend; with Monsieur Spence, his lost wife. Even love can be turned to evil purposes by such an one.

“These things I did consider most carefully, and then I did enlist the services of young Monsieur Spence. You saw what you saw on the lonely road this night. Appear-

ing to him in the form of his dead beloved, this wicked one had all but persuaded him to destroy himself when we intervened.

"*Très bien*. We triumphed then; the night before I had prevented your death. The evil one was angry with me; also it was frightened. If I continued, I would rob it of much prey, so it sought to do me harm. Me, I am ever on guard, for knowledge is power. It could not lead me to my death, and, being spirit, it could not directly attack me. It had to recourse to its last resort. While the young undertaker's assistant was about to deliver the body of the old Monsieur Gregory, the spirit seized the corpse and animated it, then pursued me.

"Ha, almost I thought, it had done for me at one time, for I forgot it was no living thing I fought, and attacked it as if it could be killed. But when I found my sword could not kill that which was already dead, I did cut off its so abominable hand. I am very clever, my friend. The evil spirit reaped small profits from fighting with me."

He made the boastful admission in all seriousness, entirely unaware of its sound, for to him it was but a straightforward statement of undisputed fact. I grinned in spite of myself, then curiosity got the better of amusement. "What were those little pellets you threw at the spirit when it was luring young Spence to commit suicide, and later at the corpse of Silas Gregory?" I asked.

"Ah"—his elfish smile flickered across his lips then disappeared as quickly as it came—"it is better you do not ask me that, *mon cher*. Let it suffice when I tell you I convinced the good *Père* O'Brien that he should let me have what no layman is supposed to touch, that I might use the ammunition of heaven against the forces of hell."

"But how do we know this Elemental, or whatever it was, won't come back again?" I persisted.

"Little fear," he encouraged. "The resort to the dead man's body was its last desperate chance. Having elected to fight me physically, it must stand or fall by the result of the fight. Once inside the body, it could not quickly extricate itself. Half an hour, at least, must elapse before it could withdraw, and before that time had passed I had fixed it there for all time. The stake through the heart

and the severed head makes that body as harmless as any other, and the wicked spirit which animated it must remain with the flesh it sought to pervert to its own evil ends henceforth and forever."

"But—"

"*Ah bah!*" He dropped his cigarette end into his empty coffee cup and yawned frankly. "We dally too much, my friend. This night's work has made me heavy with sleep. Let us take a tiny sip of cognac so the pie may not give us unhappy dreams and then to bed. Tomorrow is another day, and who knows what new task lies before us?"

AFTERWORD

by Robert Weinberg

The first adventure of Jules de Grandin appeared in the October 1925 issue of *Weird Tales* magazine. The story, titled "Terror on the Links," was billed second lead in the publication and was illustrated by one poorly executed picture by Andrew Brosnatch.

Quinn was a familiar name to fans of the magazine. He had been writing for *Weird Tales* for almost two years. He was the author of two non-fiction series, *Weird Crimes* (1923-24) and *Servants of Satan* (1925). Quinn also had contributed several short stories to the magazine before the appearance of de Grandin. The most notable of these was "The Phantom Farmhouse", a werewolf story that was among the most popular stories published in the first few years of *Weird Tales'* existence.

It was with the excitable Frenchman, however, that Quinn made his mark on the weird fiction field. Even before the publication of "The Horror on the Links," Farnsworth Wright, editor of *Weird Tales*, realized the possible popularity of the occult detective and had Quinn compose a sequel to the first story. The second story in

the series, "The Tenants of Broussac" was advertised at the end of the first adventure. And further adventures were promised. Quinn might have written the first story to fill an editorial blank, but all future stories were done on demand. As Quinn later stated, "I never had a de Grandin adventure rejected and, if anything, the editor was asking for more."

Dr. Trowbridge had appeared in "The Stone Image," a Quinn story published in 1919, but de Grandin sprang full blown into being in the first published narrative. Throughout his many adventures, the French detective changed little. His personality remained the same, as did his tastes. From time to time, some new skill or bit of knowledge was revealed but in all other respects, the Jules de Grandin of "The Horror on the Links" was the same person as the hero of the last story in the series, twenty-five years later.

"The Horror on the Links" took place in Harrisonville, New Jersey, home of Dr. Trowbridge. "The Tenants of Broussac" changed in locale to France, where de Grandin battled the ghost of an evil nobleman in a haunted estate. Where the first adventure was the second story in the monthly magazine, the second tale was the lead story and rated the cover picture by Joseph Doolin. The little Frenchman's popularity was already beginning to make itself felt. In 1933, Farnsworth Wright listed the most popular stories published in *Weird Tales* up to that time. In direct competition with such authors as H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and August Derleth, Seabury Quinn scored high, as "The Tenants of Broussac" was listed as one of the seven most popular stories published in the fantasy periodical.

February 1926 saw publication of "The Isle of Missing Ships." In this adventure, de Grandin and Trowbridge battle a madman in the South Pacific. The story made clear one of the series' strongest points. Every narrative was different. The de Grandin tales never followed some staid pulp formula. One month the occult detective would battle a mad scientist. The next might bring a ghost or a werewolf. The next, a diabolical inventor. Not all of the stories were supernatural thrillers. Many of the most

memorable adventures contained no trace of fantasy. Yet each story was an excursion into the world of the bizarre and the unusual. It was this variety of menaces that made the series so popular.

The fourth story of the series, "The Dead Hand" appeared in the May 1926 issue of *Weird Tales*. Trowbridge was back in Harrisonville with de Grandin as a house guest. Quinn, by this time, could see that the series was due for a long run and continued globe-trotting by his two heroes would make the stories unwieldy. A familiar setting which needed no long pages of descriptive scenery was necessary so that the main focus of the tale would be on the events. Harrisonville, a medium-sized town outside of New York, was that location. The town was completely imaginary, though Quinn did base much of it on typical Jersey towns of the time. Living in Brooklyn, the author knew well the area about which he wrote.

By the next few adventures, any mention of de Grandin just visiting Trowbridge was already being forgotten. The Frenchman had settled with the Doctor for a long stay. de Grandin was not licensed to practice medicine in the United States, so instead, he worked as a psychic investigator and general sleuth. His fame became quite widespread and in latter years, people came seeking his aid from all over the world.

Quinn stopped writing any other type of story for *Weird Tales*. The de Grandin adventures were so popular that any other fiction would have met with howls of outrage from the readers. Instead, Quinn began to relate adventure after adventure of his petite Frenchman. In 1927, seven adventures of the occult sleuth were published in *Weird Tales*. In 1928, Quinn had another seven stories published. A span of more than two months without de Grandin brought dozens of queries from the readership asking what had happened to the Frenchman. de Grandin was a regular feature of the publication and appeared almost every other month for the rest of the decade.

"The Man Who Cast No Shadow" was the cover story for the February 1927 issue of *Weird Tales*. The effective painting by C. Barker Petrie, Jr., depicted the climactic

scene of the story, where de Grandin had just flung back the trap door and confronted Baron Czuczron just as he was about to cut the throat of Esther Norman.

The adventure, de Grandin's first encounter with a vampire, spelled out another facet of the series that raised it above the level of common horror stories. Quinn did not restrict himself to accepted beliefs or legends to the point of slavishly copying everything stated in earlier stories. The evil vampire of the story shared with his brother monsters the trait of casting no reflection in the mirror but it was there that his resemblance to other vampires ceased. He did not remain the same ageless being throughout the story. Nor was he restricted from movement during the daylight hours. Perhaps, most importantly, he proved vulnerable to the cold steel of de Grandin's sword cane. No stake or other device proved necessary to kill the diabolical Baron. Quinn refused to be held by the bounds of other stories, or even old legends on which other stories were based.

In "The Blood Flower," another example of this same attitude occurred in de Grandin's battle with Uncle Friedrich—the werewolf in the story. At the end of the story, Trowbridge asked, puzzled:

"And wasn't there some old legend to the effect that a werewolf could only be killed with a silver bullet?"

de Grandin answered, but it was Quinn who was speaking:

"Ah, bah," he replied with a laugh. "*What did those old legend-mongers know of the power of modern firearms? . . . When I did shoot that wolfman, my friend, I had something more powerful than superstition in my hand. Morbleu, but I did shoot a hole in him large enough for him to have walked through!*"

It was this concept—using modern weaponry and ideas to battle ancient sorceries and monsters that helped make de Grandin adventures something more than mere weird tales. Other psychic detectives rarely ventured into rationalizing their enemies and using scientific devices to fight them. de Grandin relied on such methods.

The de Grandin canon consisted of ninety-three stories published over a span of twenty-five years. Most of the

stories appeared in early issues of *Weird Tales* magazine which are virtually impossible to find. Only one hard-cover collection of ten of the stories was ever published in a limited edition of 3000 copies, and that book is out of print. Thus, up to now, it has been impossible for most fans of the fantastic or detective fiction to read the adventures of the most popular psychic sleuth ever set to paper. This collection is the first of several which will remedy this major oversight. de Grandin has been called "the Sherlock Holmes of weird fiction." This and future collections will serve to solidify that claim.

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