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Golden Bars by Courtney Ryley Cooper

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CHAPTER I.

THE ARREST.



MOST patronly manner Mrs. Carrington Phelps had adopted. She sighed in the most approved fashion, and with becoming resignation folded her hands before her, allowing her eyes to rest languidly upon the features of her son, sprawled in the big chair of his room in the Phelps mansion at Lawn Moor. She had just entered the door, and with one glance the son evidently divined what was coming. He groaned slightly, then slumped more than ever in his chair, while the already dejected appearance of his features became deeper and more doleful. Mrs. Phelps pursed her lips.

"Lawrence," she began, and the young man rumbled his hair.

"Yes, moms," came in drawling tones. "What is it?"

"I've been intending to talk to you for some time. You're thinking of marriage?"

"Uh-huh." He said it tonelessly and

without explanation. For Larry Phelps was thinking of marriage in an entirely different manner from that indicated by the resigned Mrs. Carrington Phelps. He was thinking of marriage to a dark-eyed, tip-nosed, pretty-lipped girl who barely had spoken to him when he last had seen her three days ago, who promised faithfully to be at the end of the telephone whenever he should call, and who since consistently had refused to answer every summons! Larry was thinking of marriage in the light of the fact that the contemplated action was just two days away, and that he was unable even to hear the voice or learn the whereabouts of the girl he was to wed! But he explained none of this to his stately-appearing mother, austere framed in the doorway. She sighed again and went on.

"I knew it, Lawrence. I could just tell it by the way you've been acting. Don't you think you should consult your mother on such things?" An appropriate tear came then, and Larry jumped to his feet.

"There, moms!" he begged. "I didn't

think you'd make a tragedy out of it! Sorry! Didn't mean any harm at all, honestly!"

"But you've said nothing to me. You've——"

"I thought you could guess it easy enough. You know I think more of her than any girl——"

"You're referring to this detective person?"

Larry Phelps straightened.

"Just a minute, moms. She isn't a person. She's the niece of the chief of the United States secret service and she doesn't wear a star or carry a club or ring up the box to report at headquarters. Besides," and there was a bit of asperity in the son's voice, "if it hadn't been for her we might——"

"Yes, I know, Lawrence," Mrs. Phelps bowed with the regulation gravity necessary to one who could trace her ancestry back on one side to the Cecil Calverts, first Lords of Baltimore, and on the other to the first brick house ever built west of New York City. "The young lady may be estimable from that point, and I am sure that we owe her a deep debt of gratitude. But is that any reason you should give her your hand in marriage?"

"Give her my what?" Larry Phelps repeated. "I'm not giving her anything. I had to argue with her like a Dutch uncle to get her to accept me. Besides——"

"Then it has gone that far?"

"Farther than that!" muttered the son as he slumped back in his chair. "It's gone so far I—I—don't know where it's gone!"

"You don't mean that you've married her?"

"Nope, not yet."

"Thank goodness I still have time to talk to you."

"But, moms, I don't want to be talked to!"

"Why, Lawrence!" Mrs. Carrington Phelps set her lips and took a step for-

ward. "This is a serious matter. I—I never heard of such a thing. What will your father say? What will our friends say? What will——"

"What do I care what they say?" Larry said carelessly. "I'm doing the marrying—not they. Besides, Mary Martin's ten thousand times better in a minute than half of our family is in a year, anyway. How about a few of dad's brothers and sisters? What have they done to uplift the universe? And how about some of our cousins and other——"

"Misfortunes cannot be helped, Lawrence. But we at least know their breeding and their aristocracy."

"Yeh. Same as a bunch of horses—all thoroughbreds. But a race horse doesn't look any different to me from a scrub when it's hauling an ash cart. Now, moms, let me do a little talking"—and the son straightened in his chair. "I'm in love with Mary Martin. She's been good enough to say that she's in love with me. You're highbrow. So is dad. I'm—well, I feel better when I'm not discussing art or opera. It isn't in my line. I guess—I'm just plain American. Mary's the same way. We're going to get married. You can kick us out if you want to—and dad can get somebody else to run his business for him. I'll get a job somewhere else, and maybe at more money than dad's paying me. I've been offered it. We won't starve. Fact is, we'll live pretty well, and we'll love you as we should, and in a year or so we'll come around and ask you if you don't love us. And if you don't, we'll wait another year. And a year or so after that. But the fact is, moms, we're going to get married. That is, if——"

"What?"

Larry Phelps blinked.

"Noth—nothing," he answered at last. Mrs. Phelps dabbed at her eyes and was silent. The son resumed his sprawling position, his eyes seeking the

design of the Oriental rug, his mind striving to find some loophole, some means of overcoming the objections of the teary-eyed person in the door. But there was none—for Larry knew there were certain things which no ordinary argument could overcome.

It all dated back to a time when a mysterious chain of happenings had begun in the cashier's offices of the Phelps Manufacturing Co., of which Larry now formed the mainspring, owing to an extended vacation in California on the part of his father, a vacation which must last until his health improved. One day Larry Phelps had awakened to find that he had been paying his employees in counterfeit twenty-dollar bills—nor was the mystery of their source to be solved. Then he had met a piquant little person at a masquerade, who neither would show her features nor give her name, but who neglected to remove a ring by which Larry later identified her—as the new maid in his own home! Following this many things had happened, principally that he landed one day in the office of the chief of the United States secret service, while across the table sat a piquant little dark-eyed person who smiled in a tantalizing fashion and asked Larry Phelps if she really had made a good lady's maid during the month in which she had been running down one of the cleverest gangs of counterfeiters in America, which had selected the home of Larry Phelps as its factory, headquarters, and general distributing center. After that—especially remembering the fact that she was young, that she was pretty, that she danced with the lightness of a summer cloud, that she could twit him and tease him and tantalize him—was it any wonder that Larry Phelps bought many dinners and show tickets for a certain Miss Mary Martin, niece of the chief of the secret service, that he had asked Mary again and again, until she had set the day

after to-morrow as the date for a quiet little visitation to an unobtrusive minister?

But Larry Phelps brought himself up with a jerk. Again he remembered that he had not heard from her for the last three days, that his notes had not been answered, and that his frantic appeals at the office of the grinning, yet gruff-toned old chief brought him no information. When a marriage is only forty-eight hours away, one rather likes to know the whereabouts of the other half of the contract. And, besides, she had acted queerly!

The more Larry thought of it, the more he remembered how terribly out of the ordinary she had acted. She had said "yes" to him when she had meant "no," and "no" when she had meant "yes;" she merely had toyed with the food in the Café de Hudson, and barely taken notice of the fact that the head waiter, in response to the urge of a ten-dollar bill, had given them the best table in the whole place, where she could watch the sunset on the river and the play of the various craft darting here and there—all of which Larry remembered now was ten dollars gone for nothing, since she evidently had seen none of it. Instead, as he repictured it all, her gaze had been more blank than otherwise, her conversation more occupied with some subject a million or so miles away than with the fact that her wedding was approaching. And the play hadn't interested her. What was more—Larry blinked with the sudden realization that her good-night kiss was, well, just a kiss, such as one would bestow on a third or fourth cousin. Certainly it hadn't possessed the verve of a girl who was parting from her almost husband for a space of twelve or fourteen perfectly long hours. Besides, the parting had been more than that. It had been—but Larry vaguely realized that his mother was speaking again with a tearful ultimatum.

"I just can't understand your attitude, Lawrence, I really can't," she was saying. "Of course, I know how deeply we are indebted to Miss Martin for unraveling that mystery. But suppose it had been a man detective? You wouldn't want me to divorce your father and marry him, simply because he'd saved us some money, would you, and eliminated some dangerous characters from our household? You——"

"But——"

"No, there isn't any difference. It's just gratitude on your part, Lawrence, and good-heartedness. You're impulsive. She isn't the girl——"

"I suppose you want to pick me out another one." Larry couldn't help sending home the thrust. "A fine, high-minded girl like Elizabeth Manning, who knows all about Lepidoptera and bug life, and when the plants bloom—especially counterfeiting plants."

"Lawrence!"

"Of course, moms, I realize. She was a fine girl—until she turned out to be 'Cincinnati Kate,' the counterfeiting lady. But then——"

"Please, Lawrence." The tears had been turned on again and the son hurried to take his mother in his arms.

"There," he soothed, "didn't mean to rub salt in open wounds. But it was rather funny at that, moms, to have your special candidate turn out to be such a fake. I won't mention it again. Now about this other——"

"Promise me," Mrs. Carrington Phelps was taking quick advantage of an opportunity, "that you won't do anything rash until your father can get home. I'll send for him to-night and then——"

"But, moms, I can't!"

"You must, Lawrence. Think of what it would mean——"

"Beg pardon, Mrs. Phelps, but I thought this was urgent." A smooth, servile voice sounded at the woman's elbow, and she turned to gaze rather

austerely upon the butler. He swallowed apologetically, then, with expressive eyes, indicated the tray he held extended. A yellow envelope rested there. "It's a telegram, Mrs. Phelps. I thought——"

"Oh! A telegram for me?"

"But who"—she had picked up the envelope and held it before her—"who on earth could be sending me a telegram? I hope nobody's dead. I know that——"

"Well, open it, moms! It might be from dad—maybe he's coming home or maybe——"

Larry Phelps didn't finish the sentence. His mother slit the envelope and with trembling fingers unfolded the yellow sheet therein. Then she turned several colors in rotation, finally to wave her arms somewhat after the fashion of a swimmer coming out of deep water, and staggered toward the big chair.

"I'm going to faint!" she gasped.

"Don't do it! Don't—moms, please don't. What's happened?"

"Willie!"

"Willie—Willie who?"

"Brother Willie!" murmured Mrs. Phelps. "Carrington's brother Willie! He's disgraced the name of Phelps forever!"

"What's he done?"

Mrs. Carrington Phelps sighed with the rattling intonation of a dying owl. She rolled her eyes tragically. The telegram sailed to the floor.

"Arrested!" came in fatal tones. "Arrested—for stealing his weight in gold!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

LARRY'S mind could only assimilate the one fact for a moment.

"How—how much does Uncle Willie weigh?" he asked.

"Three hundred and fifty pounds!"

replied Mrs. Phelps wailingly. "And he's stolen a pound for every——"

"How do you know he's stolen it? Has he confessed? Has he——" Mrs. Phelps weakly waved a hand toward the telegram and Larry read:

William arrested to-day complaint mint authorities stealing three hundred fifty pounds gold bullion. Being held under fifty thousand dollars' bond. Can you aid us?

"Wonder she couldn't have parted with a little information while she was sending this telegram," muttered Larry as he flipped the yellow missive toward his mother. "Aunt Margaret doesn't say whether he's guilty, or innocent, or what she wants done, or—guess I'd better catch the next train to Philadelphia."

"Yes. That's it—go to Philadelphia." Mrs. Phelps had come to life with a sudden inspiration. "See what you can do about keeping it out of the papers. Oh, Lawrence, this is terrible! Terrible, I tell you! Suppose the papers should get hold of it—I can just see the headlines! Oh, it just can't be! You've got to do something——"

"But how about Uncle Willie?"

"It's his own fault!" cried Mrs. Phelps. "I knew that he'd be tempted if he kept on working there at the mint. I've told him as much myself. But," and the voice weakened again, "I—I suppose he couldn't do anything else. Poor Willie! He's always been so unfortunate—it's been his fat, you know, Lawrence. He couldn't be expected to have as much virility as Carrington, with so much weight to carry around. Carrington has always had to help him, you know—and I suppose it weighed on his conscience. And with all that money around him, he just couldn't resist the temptation."

"But how do you know he's guilty? They might have arrested the wrong man."

"Oh, but Willie's always been naturally weak."

"I'd be weak, too, carrying around three hundred and fifty pounds," grunted Larry. "Gosh, I wonder how much he's worth in dollars?" He halted for a quick series of calculations. "Huh, if he did take that money, he certainly didn't play piker. That's more than a hundred thousand!"

"Awk!" Mrs. Phelps waved her hands feebly and dropped back into the chair. "That settles it—that's always been Willie's hobby—to have a hundred thousand dollars. Now, I know he took it! Lawrence, you simply can't waste another minute. Go pack your bag and get to Philadelphia to-night. Keep it out of the papers! You simply must! Think of your standing, and——"

The extension phone interrupted the conversation. Larry answered it, only to gulp at the information which came over the wire.

"City news bureau talking. This the Phelps residence?"

"Yes."

"We've got a story from Philadelphia saying that William Phelps, an employee of the United States mint there has been arrested, charged with stealing something like a hundred thousand dollars in gold bullion. He claims to be——"

"Claims!" Larry's eyes goggled.

"Yeh. Claims to be a brother of Carrington Phelps. We'd like to know if——"

"Never heard of him!" exclaimed Larry and hung up the receiver. Then he turned to his mother. "No chance to keep it quiet," came hurriedly. "They've gotten on to it already. That was the news bureau of New York. Only one thing for you to do—pack some things, lock up the house, tell the servants not to answer the telephone, and hike into the city and lose yourself somewhere. I'm going to Philadelphia."

"And you'll take care of Willie?" Her one chance gone, Mrs. Phelps had

reverted to the thought of her unfortunate adipose brother-in-law. "I—I suppose we've got to do everything that can be done for him. Carrington would want it so."

"Sure."

"And if he has to stay in jail, do see that he gets the right things to eat. Willie's not well, Lawrence, and he can't eat everything. Oh, it must be horrible to be in jail like that and think of what it means to us! Carrington Phelps, the brother of a jail bird! I'll never get over it as long as I live!"

"Yes, you will, moms. You've got to. Now clear out to your own room and pack some things, so that I can take you into New York. If I'm going to catch that last train to Philadelphia I'd better be hurrying."

Willingly she assented, and Larry turned to the business of packing, vaguely wondering whether the relief of Uncle Willie from the bars and keys of jail would prevent him from returning for a certain event scheduled forty-eight hours hence. He escorted his mother into New York, established her in a quiet hotel, then hurried for the station. Two hours after midnight found him in Philadelphia, urging a taxi-driver toward the great, gloomy jail and toward the waiting Uncle Willie. But there was disappointment.

"Sorry, son," announced the desk sergeant. "Nothing doing on seeing him—to-night. Federal prisoner. Can't be seen without an order from the local head of the United States secret service."

"But when——"

"Can you get that? In the morning, I guess. 'Long about ten o'clock."

Disconsolately Larry turned toward a hotel and sent a telegram to Miss Mary Martin, at The Elms, Montview, Long Island. It told of love and kisses and a certain return by four o'clock on the afternoon of July 13—and there Larry halted wide-eyed.

"Fine day to pick for a marriage!" he muttered disgustedly. "Why didn't one of us remember that it would be the thirteenth! That's what comes of letting a woman have her way when she wants to pick out a certain day of the week. It had to be Wednesday—three weeks from Wednesday, she said. And neither of us looked at the date! The thirteenth!"

More gloomily than ever he turned the telegram over to a bell boy for transmission, then sought bed. At ten o'clock the next morning he rapped on the blank door of the secret service office of the Federal building, to wait for hours, it seemed. Then at last he found himself peering through a small brass-barred wicket in the center of the doorway at an expressionless face.

"Is the chief agent in?" he asked.

"You mean the agent in charge?"

"Something like that. Phelps is my name. I want to get an order to see a man named William Phelps, down at the city jail——"

"You mean the bird who copped the bullion?"

"He's accused of it. I'm his nephew. I'm here to furnish his bond and——"

But the waxy person shook his head.

"Can't be done. Mr. Godaire's out of town. Won't be back until Thursday."

"But——"

"He's the only person who can sign an order. Besides, he's going to resist that bond. It isn't large enough. Hearing's set for three o'clock Thursday afternoon. It'll be time enough to see your prisoner Thursday morning."

"But I've got to see him now! I've got to find out if he has a lawyer and talk to him about his case and——"

The waxy gentleman stared through the wicket toward the emblazoned eagles which decorated the center of the ceiling in the little waiting room.

"Sorry; can't see him without an order."

"But you say I can't get an order!"

"That's right. You can't. Not until Mr. Godaire gets back into town. He's handling the case, you know, and it's his prisoner. He'd be the one who'd have to write the order and——"

"Suppose he should die while he's out of town," Larry asked caustically. "I suppose the prisoner'd lie in there until he rotted!"

"I really don't know," came the sincere answer of Mr. Wax. "I never had that kind of a situation come up. But I suppose something'd be done about it. I——"

"Oh, go chase yourself!" said Larry angrily and flounced out of the tiny waiting room. "Secret service is right! They even keep secrets from themselves!"

At the elevator he stopped to consider the situation. He might go back to New York and get an order from the old chief himself. The temptation was strong, for the chief was the uncle of the girl he intended marrying, that might mean some information as to what had become of her—Larry halted with the sudden knowledge that the thirteenth, the day of his marriage, was just one day off.

"Guess I'd better clean up everything I can before I go back," he mused at last and punched the elevator bell. "I don't want anything to hold me here tomorrow. Maybe I'd better go out and see Aunt Margaret."

Here he found the tearful household of a missing Uncle Willie, all apparently waiting for the arrival of the mystic messenger from the Phelps mansion, to unlock the doors of jail and allow the hefty provider to come home again. In the old parlor, the three children having at last shunted out of the way, Larry told his aunt the doleful news regarding the absence of the secret service agent from the city, and the certainty that Uncle Willie must remain in the bastille for at least another

forty-eight hours. Then his aunt hunched her chair closer, and, with a long sigh, said confidently:

"But he must be gotten out of there! If he isn't——" She rolled her eyes.

Larry cocked his head.

"What?"

"He'll confess!" came in a whisper.

"Aunt Margaret! You don't mean that he's guilty!"

"Just what I mean!" was the answer. "I—I—suppose I ought to stick to him Larry, seeing that he is my husband and the father of my children. But what am I to do when the evidence is all against him. It's certain!"

"But what——"

"This. He hasn't been acting the same lately. He's been staying out nights, and that isn't like William. In the first place he can't stand it, owing to his asthma; and, besides, by the time night comes, he's usually so tired from having that weight on his feet all day that he wants to come home, take off his shoes, and sit around in his slippers. But lately he's been staying out. And he's been bringing home money!"

"How much?"

"Lots of it. Twice he brought home fifty dollars—and once a hundred. He's told me that he's been winning it gambling."

"Maybe he's just kidding you—bringing home the same money every night or something like that!"

"Nothing of the kind. I've taken it away from him and started him out in the morning with his usual dollar for car fare and lunch. It's different money every time—I've got it all upstairs in the trunk. I was going to bank it. But I don't know what to do with it—now!"

"However, that's no certainty that he's guilty. Has he ever gambled before?"

"No. He never played anything stronger than penny ante in his life before the last two weeks. And he hardly

knows one card from another. But that's not all. When they arrested him—they found gold shavings inside his old work coat."

"You mean the one he wears in the mint?"

"Yes. There was a hole in the lining near the lapel. He must have shaved the gold from the bars and dropped the slivers in there. Isn't it awful?" Then with a sort of whooping intake of breath, Aunt Margaret displayed her feelings in the inevitable tears, while Larry fidgeted. At last, mouth drawn at the corners, eyes Niagara-like, she half subsided, and Larry rose.

"Who's his lawyer?"

"We haven't got one. We were waiting for you."

"Well, why didn't you say so an hour ago?" inquired the nephew. "I don't mind helping out in this thing, but I'm no mind reader! I——"

Another whooping wail was his only answer, and Larry Phelps hurried forth to skirmish about the windy cañons of Philadelphia's downtown district, and at last to find the sort of man he wanted. There, in the big office, he poured forth the troubles of the elephantlike Uncle Willie, and the evidence against him. Following which, in company with the attorney, he strove again to pass the heavy steel gates which sheltered the inmates of the jail. Impossible. Night brought him to the home of Aunt Margaret again in company with the attorney, who made an ineffectual attempt to learn something of the workings of the job upon which Uncle Willie had been employed, the portion of the mint in which he worked, and the possibility of other evidence that might be used against him. But Aunt Margaret evidently had been more impressed with what Uncle Willie brought home in his monthly pay check than the manner in which he obtained it. She knew nothing of his job, nothing of his temptation, nothing of the

possibilities for mistakes of evidence, bad or favorable. The next morning they sought again the office of the secret service only to find the waxy-faced individual in full control and the operative in charge still missing. Then Larry turned for New York.

It was three o'clock when he alighted from the suburban train at the Lawn Moor station and hurriedly summoned a taxicab for The Elms. There he approached the telephone girl with a strange thumping in his chest and asked in rather shaky tones:

"Miss Martin, please."

The girl raised the plug, then with an afterthought, dangled it in tantalizing fashion.

"Miss Martin's not in now."

"She—she isn't?" Larry looked at his watch. It was just forty minutes until time for the marriage. "Do—do you know when she will be?"

"No, I don't," came in singsong fashion. "She's out of town."

"She's what?"

"Out of town. Perhaps the clerk might be able to tell you when she's expected back."

Hastily Larry went to the desk and summoned the clerk. That person, recognizing him, leaned forward with a patronizing smile, at the same time doing a back-hand movement toward the "P's" of the letter rack.

"How are you, Mr. Phelps. Looking for Miss Martin?"

"Y—yes. The girl said she was out of town——"

"Yes. She's been gone three or four days. She——"

A strange, choking sound on the part of Larry Phelps had caused the clerk to desist. His eyes had caught sight of a yellow envelope in Mary Martin's box—his telegram announcing the fact that he surely would be there for the wedding. And here he was. But where, oh, where was she? Weakly he leaned

against the desk and waved one hand listlessly.

"Didn't leave any word for me?"

"Just what I was looking for. It's been here three or four days, so I guess it's at the bottom of the—oh, here we are!"

Larry stumbled away to find a convenient pillar, leaned against it, then opened the letter. He blinked. He coughed—then choked.

"Ditched!" he gasped at last. "Ditched at the altar!"

CHAPTER III. COMPLICATIONS.

LARRY vaguely realized that to be turned down at the last moment was quite disconcerting—to say nothing of the fact that it was out of the ordinary. Here he was waiting at the hotel, with a marriage license in one pocket and a ring in another, staring dully at the fact that his bride-to-be was terribly sorry, but other things had intervened, things too important to be set aside for a trivial thing like marriage. At least, that's the interpretation Larry made of the brief, hastily written note. The real words were somewhat different:

DEAREST LARRY: Sorriest sorry, but can't be here for the wedding. Can't tell you why. Tried to get you on the phone, but hung up because I realized I couldn't tell you, anyway. Am called out of town. Something urgent. Please forgive me. Can't tell when I'll be back. Lots of love. MARY.

Larry read it again in dazed fashion, mumbling meanwhile.

"Lots of love—but she isn't here for the wedding. And she—where is she?" he asked himself blankly. "Where——"

He started then with a sudden inspiration. If he hurried, he could reach the Customs building before six o'clock, with a possible chance of learning something of the mystery which confronted him. An hour and a half later he was hurrying through the dim hall-

way toward the mysterious office of Chief Leland of the secret service, there to paw wildly at the wicket, to watch with anxious eyes the shuffling form of the aged office man and at last to receive permission to enter the inner office. The chief, fat, busy, and pleasantly taciturn, was hunched as usual over his desk.

"Well, mission's a little different this time from last, isn't it?" he inquired, smiling. "What's on your mind?"

"I wanted to find out——"

"About the Philadelphia case? Sorry, son——"

"No, not that." Larry eased into a chair. "I wanted to know if——"

"Of course, I can tell you this," the chief interrupted. "It's a pretty good case. That fellow's some relative of yours, isn't he?"

"Who? Mr. Phelps? Yes, he's a relative. But——"

"Thought so. That's the dope they sent me from Philadelphia. Rather figured you'd be in to see me about him. But"—with a grin—"I'm on the other side of the fence this time. When you were coming to see me before, we were working together. But now it's a horse of a different color. Rather looks like we'll have to put him over. A hundred thousand dollars in bullion's a lot of money."

"But, please——"

"Sorry, I can't do a thing." The chief held up a restraining hand. "I'd like to—but you know how it is. Sorry, he's your uncle, but——"

"Oh, hang my uncle!" exclaimed Larry. "I want to find out——"

"Of course. Now, if that uncle of yours had worked in any other part of the mint, he'd never had a chance to get away with a bunch of gold like this. He's in the refining room, you know. Or at least he was."

"Is, was he?" Just at that moment, Larry was wishing him somewhere else. "But, I want to see you about some-

thing else, chief. I think that I have a right——”

“Sure. And I like you, Phelps. So I’ll part with every bit of information that I can—without hurting the case. Now, the whole thing is simply——”

“Where’s Mary?” Larry blurted in. The chief evidently neglected to hear.

“You see, in the refining room, conditions are a bit different from the rest of the mint. There can’t be the accurate check-ups that there are, for instance, in the coining department. There they can tell at the end of the day if even a ten-cent piece is missing, but in the refinery——”

“Chief, won’t you——”

“Just what I was coming to. The refinery is the place where all the gold bullion is reduced to pure gold for the purpose of coinage. The gold is sent in bars from the smelter and weighed in. Then it is placed under heavy rollers and flattened into thin strips. These are placed in large tanks of acid which separate the various foreign metals from the pure gold, such as the silver, platinum, zinc, or whatever other impurities are present. You can see what a devil of a job it would be to check up on that place daily or even weekly or monthly. So, about every six months they have what they call the clean-up. All the metals are then assayed, figured out, and weighed up, the records are gone over, and a check is made to balance up the amount of gold, plus the amount of foreign substances, to make a grand total equal that of the weight of the bullion bars as they come from the smelter. Now——”

“It’s all very interesting, chief, but what I want to know——”

“Exactly. I’m going to explain it—and it’s a lot more than I’d do for the usual person trying to get somebody out of trouble. But I liked the way you handled yourself in that counterfeiting case, Phelps; and, I don’t mind telling you, I hate to see anybody connected

with you in trouble. Now, your uncle, was employed in that refinery. When we made the clean-up we found the balance off about three hundred and fifty troy pounds, something more than a hundred thousand dollars. Naturally, we suspected everybody who worked there—about eight men, and put operatives on the job to check them up. About the first thing they ran into was the fact that your aunt had been talking about how much money your uncle had been winning lately——”

“But, chief, that isn’t——”

“Of course, it isn’t. Nobody would convict a man simply on that evidence. That isn’t what we arrested him on.”

Larry fidgeted. For fifteen minutes he had been attempting to tell the chief that Uncle Willie’s troubles were quite secondary, that Uncle Willie was safely in jail and that any story connected with him could wait. What Larry Phelps wanted to know was the whereabouts of Miss Mary Martin, niece of this fat, grumbly chief of the United States secret service, a Miss Martin who at this very moment should be Mrs. Lawrence Phelps. But his next attempt was as fruitless as the ones which had gone before.

“Chief,” he burst forth, “I’m looking for your niece. I’ve got to find her. I——”

“Can’t be mixed up in this.” The chief waved a hand. “I know what you’d like to do—fill her full of your story and start her out to prove that everything’s all wrong. Impossible! Mary’s no detective bureau. Don’t misunderstand me; no hard feelings or anything of that kind, but I simply can’t permit it. Now, to go on. We put operatives to work and hid them around the mint. The word had gotten around, and the workers were pretty well scared. We were looking for the first fellow who’d make an attempt to get out of town. But nobody ran. Then one of my operatives caught your

uncle in the act of taking some fine gold shavings out of the lining of his coat and dropping them surreptitiously into the acid tanks. There was the whole story—he'd been carrying out these shavings; got scared when he heard the secret service was on the job, remembered that he still had some slivers in his coat—and tried to get rid of them. The evidence is pretty conclusive. He's been caught with the goods."

"But chief!" Larry was desperate now. "I don't care right this minute if he walked away with the whole mint. Your niece has run away, just at the moment when—well, when she promised to marry me and——"

The chief chuckled.

"Left you waiting at the church?"

"Yes, and I want to know where she is! I've got to know!"

"Then go get a ouija board; don't ask me," the chief answered. "She didn't leave her address."

"Then you don't know either?"

"Couldn't tell you where she is, right this minute. Girls will be girls, you know."

"But—but—she was going to marry me!"

"But she didn't."

"No." Larry admitted the fact ruefully. Then, realizing that there was nothing to be gained from the stubborn old chief, Larry moved listlessly out of the office. Once in the street he sought a telephone to call his mother at the hotel and to detail to her all the doleful news from Philadelphia, omitting his own catastrophe. Then glumly he turned for the Pennsylvania Station, en route once more to the city of brotherly love, mints, jails—and Uncle Willie.

It was dark when he arrived, and listlessly he entered a taxi for his hotel. Nothing could be accomplished in any event until the next morning, when another attempt must be made to gain an

order for an interview with Uncle Willie. Certainly Larry had no intention that night of seeing the family again and learning more of the fleshy relative's guilt. His mother's gasps over the telephone when he had told her that hope was slight for the ponderous brother-in-law's freedom was enough for one day. Besides, Larry was striving to figure out just what he was going to do now that Mary was gone, whether he should hate her or trust her, pine away for her or "sashay" out in don't-care fashion and strive to get himself another girl. The last he knew to be impossible; there was no girl just like Mary, and Larry wanted no other kind. Still, in his pique, he thought of it, and dreamed of it as the taxicab lurched along. He wondered what she would think when she came back at her own sweet pleasure and found him married to some one else. It sounded very good and exactly what any distressed, deserted groom should do under the circumstances and more——

But Larry didn't get to the further diagnosis of the situation. Something was happening up ahead. The chauffeur's horn was squawking; the front wheels were zigzagging, and the old, lumbering machine evidently was making frantic efforts to get out of the way of something. Larry stared ahead to see the dodging, darting lights of a speeding machine as it skimmed vehicles by the fraction of an inch, curved about wagons on two wheels, slammed along on the few feet of straightaway toward his taxi and then——

"Crash!"

The wheels had caught. Tumbling and sprawling, Larry felt his ancient machine turn airsets to the left, noticing hazily that the other conveyance was performing the same sort of feat in the opposite direction. A settling smash, and he picked himself up from beneath the seat cushions, kicked out a window and crawled forth, still dizzy

and stunned, to weave a second in contemplation of the two taxi drivers, already past the arguing stage, and rapidly approaching the place where fists were better than words. Men shouted in the distance; pattering feet sounded on the sidewalk as a crowd gathered. And then——

Something stirred within the overturned taxi opposite. Something crawled forth, grasped a handbag, and with a sudden, skirting spurt, dived for another taxi which had halted at the edge of the gathering throng, pushed a bill into the driver's hand and was gone, while Larry, weaving and blinking, merely stood there, too astonished to move, too surprised to know whether he was dreaming or awake.

It had been a girl, and she had run directly into the circle of light from a street arc. The gleam had shown full upon her, and Larry saw that it was Mary Martin!

CHAPTER IV.

CLEWS.

JUST as the departing taxi rounded the corner and lost itself in the maze of the traffic of another street, Larry Phelps suddenly realized that his job was to follow and to learn why, how, and where in the dickens she was going in such a hurry, where she had been, and what was the cause of a rush so great that she could crawl from the wreck of a taxicab and be gone almost before she knew what had hit her. He had a right to know. Wasn't he almost her husband? Wouldn't she have married him that very afternoon had she been in town? But after a few feet of tangle forms, and vain attempts to push through the massing throng, he gave it up and returned to where the taxi drivers stood glaring at each other over the protecting arms of policemen, and the busy bystanders were energetically cleaning up the wrecks. With sudden

inspiration, Larry approached the driver of the colliding car.

"Who was that woman?" he demanded. The taxi driver stared.

"Search me. I never saw her before."

"But where was she going?"

"Pennsylvania Station. Only had five minutes to catch the next train to New York. Gave me ten beans and told me to bust every traffic rule that ever was made—and I was bustin' 'em. I——"

But already Larry had gone to summon another cab and rush him to the station. A wild stab for the ticket window; then armed with the necessary pasteboard, he rushed for the gate. Only to find it closed, and the attendant staring blankly at the ceiling as Larry begged for a chance to catch the rear coach as it moved out of the station. It was lost argument—he turned back.

Nothing could be accomplished by taking the next train for New York. It would arrive there far after midnight; he could do nothing more than telephone to The Elms, and that could be accomplished as easily from his room at the hotel as from Manhattan. Besides, there was Uncle Willie resting his three hundred and fifty pounds upon the steel slats of a jail cot, Uncle Willie who must be interviewed and released from the hoosgow the first thing in the morning. Somewhat bewildered Larry arrived at his hotel. Two hours later, when he was sure she had been given time to reach Long Island, he telephoned.

"Miss Martin?" asked the clerk. "She's not here."

"But she's on the way," argued Larry desperately. "When she comes in, tell her I——"

"Beg your pardon, sir, but there must be some mistake. She won't be here for several weeks."

"I'm telling you that she's on the way. That I——"

"Can't help it. Her uncle telephoned to-day to have her trunks moved to his place in the city, that she might not be back for a month."

"And the trunks are gone?"

"Oh, yes, this afternoon?"

"Ugh!" Larry banged up the phone, only to lift the receiver once more and give long distance the name and address of Chief Leland of the secret service. A long wait, then at last, the singsong message of the operator came:

"All right, Philadelphia. Chief Leland is ready to talk."

Larry tried to crawl into the telephone.

"Hello, chief!" he shouted. "This is Phelps. Larry Phelps. Let me talk to Mary, will you?"

"Mary?" The voice was the grouchy growl of a person aroused from sleep. "What do you think I am, a spiritualist? There's no Mary here."

"But she is there! I——"

"Then come here and look! She isn't here and she isn't going to be here."

"But——"

"Take another drink and you'll feel better!" Then the telephone clicked.

Once more Larry tried to go through the transmitter, only to sink back at a repetition of that singsong voice:

"Party's left the line. Did you wish to repeat the call?"

But Larry, as he wandered back to his chair, knew it would be useless. Either Mary was there, or she wasn't there. In any event, for some reason which Larry Phelps could not divine, the chief had no intention of letting him talk to her.

Blankly he stared at the ceiling. What could it all mean? A few days before she had been all that a man could ask for in the way of a fiancée, planning the house in which they would live, terribly worried as to whether merely drapes at the windows would suffice or whether it would be more

fashionable to have both drapes and curtains; fretted beyond words as to whether the colors of her favorite rugs would match Larry's hair, and sleepless one whole night because he had complained of a toothache. Then things had changed so much that now it took two whole hours for Larry Phelps to determine just how much they had changed. At the end of which time his thoughts resolved themselves into the fact that it was twelve o'clock, that an attorney would be waiting for him the first thing in the morning, and that Uncle Willie still reclined in jail. So he went to bed.

Through sheer mental and physical fatigue, he slept. In the morning, after eating a tasteless breakfast, he sought the attorney and obtained that order at last. An hour more and he was sitting beside the bulbous Uncle Willie on the steel bench in the bull pen, while a guard paced a few feet away, watchful for the passage of saws, morphine, cocaine, guns, and the rest of the what-not of criminality. But all Larry could pass to his uncle was questions. Uncle Willie wheezed asthmatically.

"I'm telling you I never did it!" he protested. "The whole thing's a cooked-up mess. They had to arrest somebody, so they took me, just because I'm fat and got the asthma and can't cause them any trouble. They'll railroad me, too, see if they don't!" Uncle Willie blubbered slightly. "They'll make a goat out of me——"

"Just a minute now," Larry interrupted, while the attorney took notes. "Let's look at this thing reasonably. They've got certain evidence against you, Uncle Willie, that we might as well discuss now as later. How about all this money you've been bringing home?"

"I won it."

"How?"

"Shooting craps."

"Doing what?"

"Shooting craps, with dice."

"But I didn't know you ever——"

"I didn't. Two fellows taught me. I met them in a cigar store, and I had a ten-dollar bill that Margaret had given me because she couldn't find any change. I guess they wanted to get it away from me; anyway, they struck up an acquaintance with me and then taught me how to shoot craps."

"Where? In the cigar store?"

"No. In an empty shed. I won right from the start. I only gave Margaret part of the money and held out the rest. I met them every night after that until I got arrested."

"And won all the time?"

"Yes. They said I had beginner's luck."

"Anybody watching the game?"

"No, there was just the three of us."

"Who were the men?"

"One of them was named Peterson and the other Harris. That's all I know about them."

"Never saw them before?"

"No; I just happened to meet them that night in the cigar store."

"Could you get the storekeeper to testify for you about your meeting them, and how they took you out to gamble?"

Uncle Willie scratched his head.

"No. I don't guess I could, because he was in the back of the store opening some boxes when I met them and talked to them. He wouldn't know what was said. The other nights, I didn't meet them, but just went to the shed and found them there, like they said they'd be."

"Nobody saw you go to the shed, or meet the men, or come away with them?"

Willie shook his head.

"Not that I know of."

"And you always won?"

"Every time. The dice would work for me, but not for them."

"Sounds fishy!" The words were

mouthed, not spoken, by the attorney standing behind Uncle Willie. Larry nodded slightly and went on.

"You've got to realize, uncle, that this story won't bear much weight in court."

"I know it. That's why I say——"

"How about those gold shavings in your coat?"

"I just found them—that's all I know about 'em."

"Well, they couldn't have walked in there."

"I know it," came dully. Larry shook his head in an exasperated manner.

"That kind of tale's going to shove you straight into the penitentiary. Can't you remember how they got in there?"

"I don't know anything about it," was the wheezy answer. "I'd been feeling a sort of weight in there for some time, but didn't pay any attention to it, until all those secret service men got to hanging around. Then I just happened to wonder what it could be. When I found it was gold shavings, I got scared to death and tried to dump them in the acid. That's when they caught me."

"And you'd been wearing this coat home every night?"

"Oh, yes."

"You realize, don't you, that the jury won't take much stock in that sort of a tale?" This time it was the attorney who interrupted. Uncle Willie stared at the bars about him.

"I know it."

Larry strove to take a new tack.

"Who else could have stolen that gold, if you didn't?"

Uncle Willie didn't know.

"Has any one quit there recently?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Not recently. There've been two or three that have left in the last few months, and one that was let out for

not being able to do the work. He was lame, or one-legged, or something, and couldn't keep up with the work. So the superintendent had to let him go. We all chipped in for him; he didn't have anything to live on."

"How long did he work there?"

"Who? Latham? Think that was his name." Uncle Willie rolled his tongue and stared vacuously at the begrimed ceiling. "Yeh, that was his name, John Latham. Oh, he was only there about three weeks."

"Then I guess we can cut him off our list. It'd take longer than that to lug out three or four hundred pounds of gold without the watchman detecting it."

"Oh, yes!" Uncle Willie was positive. "It'd take four or five months. You'd have to cut it up into shavings and stick it around in your belt, or under your hat band, or in your shoe, or something like that; and you couldn't take more than a couple of pounds away at a time."

"How do you know?" Again the attorney interrupted, somewhat accusingly. Once more Uncle Willie rolled his tongue.

"I—I don't know."

It seemed to be the only thing Uncle Willie could say. Larry strove again for the few meager remnants of information which might remain.

"Who were the others who quit, and when did they leave?"

"Well, there was Tom Yarrow. He quit about two months ago and works over at the Big Store now. Then there was Verner Bowman. He left about the same time, and I don't know where he went, although I guess his address is on file at the mint. They always have to leave 'em, you know, when they quit. I guess that's all. I thought there was another one, but I was counting Latham, the lame fellow."

"And you can't think of anything that could be used in your defense?"

Uncle Willie's eyes bored holes through the cement flooring.

"Not that I know of."

They departed. Larry and the attorney to discuss Uncle Willie in various uncomplimentary tones until three o'clock, then to appear with him before the United States commissioner, where a plea of not guilty was entered. For two hours Larry quarreled with the court, the United States district attorney, and the secret service department, regarding bond. At last it was arranged, and with his elephantine charge in tow, Larry sought a taxicab, hurried to the Phelps' home, and delivered Willie once more to his family; then, free for a time at least, to indulge in his own sorrows, turned again for New York.

A tearful evening in the hotel with his mother was spent, while Larry listened to the ruin of the Phelps name, family, and honor. Then followed a night ill-provided with sleep. Then, still determined, still grimly on the trail of Mary Martin, he sought the office of the chief.

There to apologize for his night call, to invent excuses, and to hear gruffly, yet good-naturedly, from the chief that he, Larry, knew as much of the exact whereabouts of Mary as himself. Larry leaned forward.

"Chief, I don't like to doubt your word, but——"

"Could you step in the outer office a minute?" It was the old office man at the door. "Inspector Smith, from the post office department, is out here with a prisoner that he believes matches up with this poster we've got hanging out here."

"Yeh." Bulkily the chief rose and departed, closing the door behind him. Larry was left alone in the big room, with its dingy soot-smeared windows, its pictures of counterfeiting crews, of bogus money, of assorted handcuffs, molds, engraved plates, and what-not in

the big glass cases on the walls, and general gloom everywhere. For a few moments he pretended to amuse himself by looking at them, reading beneath the penitentiary records of the former owners of the various bits of equipment for the manufacture of bogus money. But it was depressing, it reminded him too strongly of what was waiting for Uncle Willie, and the fact that he was to have a near relative soon occupying a cell, perhaps, side by side with the persons who here formed the wall exhibits. It was far from pleasant, and Larry turned back to his chair again.

Only to stop, halted by apparently silly conglomeration of words on a telegram which lay face up on the chief's desk. Idly he read it, its utter lack of coherence and sense obviating any idea of impropriety:

On Board Train 202, P.R.R.

Haversack conglomerate commensurate insurance double divine en route. Makeshift balloon under way deciding odoroloc usual refinery housedoor keep interested party humor good.

TWO SIXTEEN.

Larry scratched his head and grinned.

"Guess it's code," he murmured. "If it is, it'd sure take an insane man to figure it out. I——"

Then he stopped, while his eyes suddenly goggled. A pawing hand went out to grasp the telegram and bring it closer. Then with a sharp intake of breath, he reached for pencil and paper.

"I don't care where she's gone!" he whispered. "Colorado, California, or China, it's all the same to me! I'll find her! And when I do——"

CHAPTER V.

WESTWARD BOUND.

LARRY had noticed three very important things in the code telegram. One was the fact that the word "odoroloc" was underlined, and that

reversed, it spelled Colorado. The same was, at least, half true of the word "house door," and wildly figuring, Larry managed to turn it into "rood house." Whether there was such a place in Colorado, Larry did not know. But he meant to find out, all for the very important reason that, written across the top of the telegram in the chief's scrawling hand, was this instruction in fine penciling: "File, address, Mary Martin."

Carefully, yet nervously, Larry returned the telegram to its former position on the table. Then fidgeting, he resumed his position in the chair, to await the return of the chief, to ask some foolish question, to be rebuffed, to ask another, to be growled at, at last to leave the office under forced repression, hold himself down to a strolling pace until he cleared the building, then leap for the first taxi he saw.

"Railroad office," he ordered. "Don't care which one—nearest."

"Fulton Street's the best I can do."

"Don't care—only hurry."

Five minutes later the carefully groomed, information-crammed occupant of a branch ticket office looked up to view a scrambling form as it hurried through the door.

"Where's Roodhouse, Colorado?" came the excited question.

"In Colorado."

"Yeh—yeh—I know. But is there any such place?"

"You'll have to wait a minute on that one, mister, until I can look it up in the Bullinger. There's a Roodhouse, Illinois, and another in Texas, but——"

He was turning the pages of the big railroad guide, while Larry leaned breathlessly over the counter. At last:

"What kind of a town is it? Mining?"

"I don't know—I never was there."

"Guess it must be. It's up above Silver Plume—on the narrow gauge. Only about two thousand inhabitants."

The size and population worried Larry Phelps not at all.

"How long'll it take to get there?"

"Four days. Three to Denver, then another after that."

Some quick calculation flashed through Larry's brain. Dimly he remembered the trial of Uncle Willie for the stealing of a hundred thousand dollars in gold was only two weeks away. Four days to Roodhouse and four days back—that would leave nearly a week for Larry to solve the mystery of Mary's broken wedding promise and a lot of things. Larry reached for his billfold.

"Give me a ticket on the first train," he ordered.

"Eight-twenty-two to-night," came the reply as the ticket agent reached for the strip of green paper. "I'll only sell you to Denver. You have to change there, anyway."

Following which Larry hurried to the hotel and to his mother.

"It's a matter of this mint business," he explained mysteriously. "I want to find out one or two things."

"Is it about Willie?"

"I—I think it is."

Larry felt that he had told no falsehood. In some vague way he had come to the conclusion that the reason Mary Martin had not appeared to marry him was the fact that at that moment she was busily engaged in putting his own dear, pachydermic Uncle Willie in prison! True, the code telegram had told him nothing definite, except that she was headed for some out-of-the-way place in the mining district of Colorado. But the very fact that it was a code message, that she had disappeared, that he had seen her for one brief, frantic instant in Philadelphia, and that the wily old chief deliberately had lied to him regarding her whereabouts, all spelled to Larry one thing—that it was she who had been put to work on this case, and that she was the

prosecutor against whom he must endeavor to defend a member of his own family.

It brought him up with something of a jerk—after that, he answered his mother's multiplicity of questions in monosyllables, paying but little heed to them until:

"Lawrence, have you thought any more about—about——"

"What, moms?" She was sitting disconsolately by the window, staring down at the crawling traffic.

"This—this marriage affair."

"Why, er, yes. I've thought something about it."

"You've decided on nothing definite?"

"Well, that is—in a way, and then, in a way, I haven't. But—er—let's don't talk about it."

"But I want to, Lawrence." Her mouth drooped at the corners. "You know, son, I—I objected to her on account of her station. But things have changed. Oh, how terribly things have changed! The Phelps family pride is gone forever!"

"Well, now, let's forget it." The whole thing reminded Larry Phelps that his bride-to-be had departed about the same time.

"Oh, but I can't. It just seems I must sit and think of it all the time. This is a terrible thing, Lawrence."

"Yeh; you've mentioned that before, moms."

"But not in this light, Lawrence," and she spoke with resignation as tearful as the ocean. "I have come to the conclusion that since Uncle Willie's misfortune has placed our name in the headlines of every paper and caused us the disgrace that it has, that I can no longer be the chooser. You may marry Miss Martin."

"Huh? I may what?"

"Marry Miss Martin without objection from either Carrington or myself. If he objects, I will speak to him."

Larry Phelps looked suddenly out of the window. A strong inclination had come over him to grin, in spite of the dolefulness of his heart. The supreme sacrifice of his mother was a bit humorous, for, right at this moment, it seemed to Larry that it wasn't a question of consent of parents, or of caste, or ancestors, and the whatnot of social position. The question was wholly that of—Miss Martin herself. Larry turned upon his mother grandiloquently.

"Nope, moms. Couldn't consent to a sacrifice like that. Mary wouldn't hear of it. Fact is, she might object."

"Well! Of all things!"

"Fact. You see we're the beggars now. Nope, couldn't think of it." Again the tears, and again Larry relented. "Didn't mean a bit of harm, moms. Know how you feel." He hugged her boyishly. "Truth of it is, we've put off our marriage. Yep, that's it—we've postponed it. Indefinitely, huh!" He looked at his watch. "Time for my train. You'll know where to catch me if anything bobs up. I left my address on the writing desk."

Then he was gone, to dream abstractedly as the train tunneled its way out of New York City, to call himself seventeen kinds of a fool for following a blind lead such as this might be, then to start suddenly with an unwelcome inspiration.

Suppose Mary Martin had left for the simple reason that she did not want to see him again, that she did not intend to marry him at all? It started Larry on a new and perfectly logical train of thought, one which sent the shivers chasing themselves up and down his spine.

In the first place, Mary Martin had begun to act queer about the time when the secret service must have come to the conclusion that the now-detested Uncle Willie had something to do with that mint robbery.

Then she had disappeared.

Was it because she had been called on the case by an uncle who seemed determined to make a secret service operative out of her, in spite of Larry's perfectly good desires to have her for his wife?

Or was it because she did not want to tell Larry that she could not marry him because there was a criminal in the family!

Or did she suspect that there might be others in it, that the shadows of the past, when a counterfeiting gang had been arrested in his own home, had linked up suspicions in her mind and caused her to believe that he might have been the silent partner in the counterfeiting game, hence a silent partner in this other crookedness, where a member of his own family was involved? Larry hoped that she at least would have given him a chance to explain. But at the same time he realized that a young woman, unaccustomed to detective work, new to the game, in spite of her success, might leap to the extremes of suspicion.

The chief had refused to tell where she had gone. Was it because Mary, his fiancée, was busily putting Uncle Willie in jail and looking up every other shred of evidence that might involve other members of the family, or did she simply want to be rid of him by the easiest possible method?

Then, too, there was that Philadelphia episode. The more he thought of it, the more Larry Phelps felt sure that Mary Martin had seen him, either as she had extricated herself from the wrecked cab, or before. Larry remembered that he had done a bit of wandering about before the girl came forth from the wreckage; that she had looked over her shoulder as she had run for the second cab. Had she seen him? If she had, why hadn't she sought his assistance? Was her speed in escaping from that crowd merely a desire to

catch a train, or was it an attempt to get away before he could see her?

Again, what was she doing in Philadelphia? Why in the name of common sense had she gone through New York so hurriedly that she could not give her new address to her uncle personally?

More, why had she sought to bury herself in a town in Colorado, so small that it necessitated a search of the list of ticket offices by a railway agent?

One by one Larry analyzed the questions as the train clattered along toward the west. Hours passed. The occupants of the buffet car sought their berths. The porter swept up, while Larry abstractedly raised his feet and stared at the reflections of the windows opposite. Then finally, long past midnight, he realized that his digestion of the problems before him had brought nothing more than mental dyspepsia. He grunted, he stretched, then he gave it all up and went to bed.

CHAPTER VI.

CHASING QUICKSILVER.

NOR did morning clear the mental fog about him. When he came to consider it, Larry couldn't even find a reason for following Mary Martin to Colorado. If she really was striving to evade him, then he felt he should have more pride than to attempt to force himself upon her. If she wasn't trying to get away, if she wasn't endeavoring to hide until his desire for marriage should have passed, and the unpleasantness of a broken engagement allowed to drift into oblivion, then why in the dickens didn't she let him know something of what was going on, why didn't she give her consent for her uncle to take Larry into his confidence.

For instance, if Mary Martin really loved him, and if she had wanted to become his wife as she had announced—and she had been willing to accept

his ring and wear it, then why had she left him leaning against a pillar in The Elms, staring at a note which was as enlightening as the six months night at the north pole? If she was through with him, why hadn't she sent him back his diamond? All of a sudden Larry realized that if she wasn't through with him, he was through with her.

"I'll be darned if I'll marry anybody who spends her time putting my family in jail!" he grumbled, as he sank back into a chair in the buffet car and watched the farmlands of Ohio swimming past. "That's what! I'll go out there, and I'll find her. I'll make her tell what she's doing. Then——"

But that old word "why" again! Uncle Willie was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. So was the evidence. So was the United States mint. So—then Larry straightened. Has she gotten a new clew? The hundred thousand dollars in bullion, which Uncle Willie was supposed to have lugged away, along with his three hundred and fifty pounds of fat, still was missing. The ponderous uncle had denied all knowledge of where it had gone. Certainly it was somewhere—had he shipped it away? Or sent it out into the mountains to be hidden until such time as he could come for it? Was that the explanation of his desire to get his trial over as soon as possible—that he might get out from behind the bars all the quicker and literally become worth his weight in gold?

"Darn uncles!" muttered Larry into the pages of a magazine. "Darn money! Darn women!"

All of which accomplished not one particle of good. When night came Larry Phelps still was struggling with the "why's" and the "what-for's." The next day was the same, as well as the one following. Then came Denver, a night in a hotel, and at last the beginning of the final leg of the journey.

Larry was in a new and strange

country now. Twenty miles of flat prairie, then the rocking, stuffy little train aimed itself at the mountains and dived in. The plains had become a cañon, and the rattling pace of the three-coach train a crawling affair, as it wound along the banks of tumbling, spurting Clear Creek, crossed and recrossed it or swept about the edges of great cliffs, crawling farther and farther into the heart of the hills. There was scenery, until Larry became tired of looking at it. There were mountains, until it seemed there could be no more of them. But still they followed in endless succession.

Town after town, each with its projecting hill about—then Larry noticed something he hadn't seen before. Everywhere, it appeared, the mountains were scarred and pock-marked by the black holes of prospect diggings and abandoned mines. Here and there larger workings appeared, with their high-heaped mine dumps, their smoke from compressor and hoist engines, their strings of tram cars and diminutive motors jogging about as the work of bringing the muck and ore from the interior of the hills went ceaselessly on. A spirit of adventure began to make itself felt in Larry's being. He was traveling deeper and deeper into the land of gold and silver. Soon——

Idaho Springs came and went, then Georgetown and Silver Plume. The day was beginning to ebb. An hour more of twisting, crawling progress and finally:

"Roodhouse!"

His destination at last. Fine minutes later the wheezing engine stopped, and Larry disentangled himself from his cramped position in the old, plush seat of the chair car to amble forth in the keen, mountain air. The day was nearly gone; in the dimness of dusk Larry could see that his range of search was, at least, not to be an extensive one. A double row of frame store buildings,

dotted by restaurants and a hotel or two, that was all. Larry, somewhat absently wandered up the street, registered at the first place that passed as a hotel, then, without going to his room, started forth on his mission.

But there was no reward. He sauntered into the other hotel; and, edging to the counter, looked at the register. It was a simple matter—the arrivals of the week all were on one page, and none of them bore the name of Mary Martin. He returned to his own hostelry and pursued the same tactics. Only to meet with failure again. Then he sought the combined clerk, wood carrier, scrubman, and proprietor.

"Isn't there any other hotel besides the one down the street?" he asked.

"Nope."

"Any boarding houses?"

"One or two."

He gained the names and marked them down in his memory for investigation in the morning. Then he questioned the proprietor regarding the presence of a nice young woman with dark, snapping eyes, a piquant manner and prettily-curved lips. But the hotel man shook his head.

"Ain't been keepin' much track o' th' people lately," he said at last. "She might've been here, an' she might not. Been a good many folks comin' in—sort o' spread theirselves aroun' town, an' y' can't keep much o' a line on 'em. Things've sort o' been openin' up in th' placer way an' th' word spreads awful quick."

"Placer—that means——"

"Takin' gold out o' th' crick. 'Course there's always been minin' aroun' here. In th' old days they used to do quite a bit o' placer work. Then it sort o' dropped out o' fashion, an' everybody began diggin' holes in th' hills. But sence that's got so expensive, owin' t' th' cost o' labor and powder, they'd sort o' given it up. Then somebody started on placer minin' again an' got t' work-

"in' one o' these old water wheels that's scattered along th' crick an' doin' right well with it. So they've flocked t' that again."

"And making money at it?"

"Some is, an' some ain't. A few o' 'em have struck it lucky, like th' Barton brothers. They's taken up an ol' claim along th' crick and fooled aroun' with it for a couple o' months without no luck a-tall. Fin'ly they give it up as a bad job an' lit out o' town, t' take a sashay aroun' th' other minin' camps. But I don't guess none o' them looked any too good either, so a few days ago, back they come t' Roodhouse an' start workin' that ol' wheel again. An' almost the first thing, they hit! Seemed t' get into a reg'lar pocket o' nuggets—an' they've been haulin' em out hand over fist since. 'Course it won't last, 'cause it's evidental jest a spot in th' crick where th' eddies have been depositein' this stuff, but it sure is good while it's goin'—an' they're makin' th' most o' it. But that's th' way with gold—y've got it t'-day, an' t'-morrer y' ain't."

"I guess that's about true." Larry was reflecting that the same conditions pertained to womankind. He wandered aimlessly about again, into the ill-lighted streets, feverishly anxious to gain his quest, but as unlucky as ever. At last hunger called, and he ate mincingly in a Chinese restaurant. Then, with the certainty before him that he could gain no information until the morning, he started back toward the ramshackle hotel, only to stop halfway down the block and rub his eyes. The town's one little picture show was disgorging its crowd of the first performance, and some one had just passed under the arc light. There was something strange about her, yet something very familiar, and Larry started forward.

One glimpse had shown him the features of Mary Martin. Yet why was

she wearing clothing that didn't fit with her style of beauty at all? Why was her hat a season or so old, and her dress designed more for the loudness of its colors, rather than conformity to the fashion? And who—this was the question of all questions—who was the man in whom she seemed so interested, the rough, booted, flannel-shirted figure on whose arm she hung?

"Something wrong about all this!" grunted Larry. "But, if that isn't Mary I'll——"

He put some more speed into his pace. They had reached the corner, and the girl was bantering with the man as their paths evidently separated. But she still had her hand on his arm, still she was looking up into his eyes with a glance which, Larry remembered, once had traveled in his direction. It peeved him; suddenly, fitfully, a gnawing something gathered in his throat, something that hurt, yet that could not be dispensed with. Larry determined to learn what it all meant. First of all he desired to know who the man was, and why Mary Martin should seem to think so much of him. He wanted to know how Mary ever met him, and the explanation of the coincidence which resulted in their becoming friends so quickly in this far end of the world. He felt he had a right to know. Wasn't she wearing his ring? Or—or—was she? He was only ten feet away now, lurking in the shadows, waiting until they should part so that he might follow her and demand an explanation. Her left hand showed plainly, and the third finger easily could be seen. But it bore no flashing diamond! The engagement ring was gone!

In quite a detached manner Larry noticed that his hands were clenched and that his teeth were grinding. A glare came into his eyes—all the fury of an outraged almost-husband was his now. He edged closer, hoping to hear what they were saying. But just then

the man drew away and waved his hand to the girl as he started across the street.

"Good night, kid," Larry heard him call to her. "See you in the morning. An' tell that there cook t' have them flapjacks hot, or I'll lay 'em on his face!"

"All right, sweetie!"

Sweetie! It was too much! Larry bounded forward now.

"Mary!" he called. The girl walked on, apparently oblivious of her own name. Again he called and again waited for her to turn, without success. At last he raced before her and planted himself squarely in her path.

"I want to know the explanation of this!" came angrily. "I——" Then he stopped. The girl was looking at him with an air which denoted plainly that she never had seen him before. Her eyes widened, her lips curled, and she put her hands on her hips.

"What's eatin' on you, kid?" she asked quietly.

It was Mary's voice, but those were not Mary's words! Larry Phelps gasped and tried again.

"I—I want to know the explanation of all this! What are you doing out here, and who was that man? What right have you to——"

"Turn over, kid, you're on your back!"

"On my back? I—I—look here, Mary! Stop this foolishness." Then suddenly, weak with surprise, he asked: "Aren't you glad to see me? Aren't you——"

"Sure. Tickled to death." She glanced about her at the curious crowd, edging past from the picture show. "Only, you ought to be back in your padded cell, Napoleon. This night air's bad for you."

"What are you talking about? Listen!" Anger had come again. "I'm getting tired of this foolishness. You must think that I'm——"

"Crazy as a loon, if it'll do you any good to know. Now get out o' my way an' lemme by."

"I won't! I'm going to stay right here until I get some kind of an explanation." I'm——

"Get out o' my way!"

"I won't. I've got a right to know what you're doing out here, and I'm going to stay here until I find out. You've fooled me enough. I'm mad now. I——"

"Oh, are you!" She turned quickly, then smiled. "Hello, sheriff. Look what I've picked up."

"What is he? A nut?" A tall, gangly man had edged forward. Larry stared at him defiantly.

"No; I'm not a nut, and it's nobody's business whether I am or not!" he said heatedly in somewhat tangled English. "I'm this girl's husband. That is—I was—I mean——"

"Come on, youngster." The man had grasped him by the arm. "You need coolin' off."

"Let go of my arm, will you!"

"You'll come on here, or I'll make you!" came the response. "This mashin' stuff doesn't go out in this neck of the woods. Hear me?"

He jerked at Larry's arm, while the blinking eyes of the younger man fastened upon a star of authority.

"Just—just wait a minute," he urged. "There's some mistake about this. Honestly there is, officer. This young woman——"

Then he turned for a final appeal, only to sag weakly, for "this young woman" was gone!

CHAPTER VII.

UNCLE WILLIE UPSET.

OUT of a hazy dimness, Larry Phelps felt the sheriff shaking him by the shoulder and asking questions, while the crowd gathered closer. But the man in the officer's grasp could

only gurgle. Things had happened too swiftly for him to assimilate them all at once. He had found Mary, and yet he hadn't found her. Her features, her height, size, and general appearance—and yet it couldn't have been Mary! For in all the days he had known her, she never before called him "kid," nor had she ever turned him over to the claws of a sheriff, then disappeared while his back was turned. Weakly he faced the officer.

"Take me along," he said, "I guess you're right. There's—there's—something wrong with my head!"

"There sure must be, youngster," answered the older man. But two blocks away, he turned quickly and looked over his shoulder. The crowd had vanished, and he led his victim into a convenient alleyway. "Now look here," he ordered, "what'll you do if I turn you loose?"

"Most—most anything you say."

"Got any business in this town?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I have. Phelps is my name, Larry Phelps. I live in Long Island. I was looking for a young woman named Mary Martin. She'd—she'd left home, and I heard that she was coming out here. That young woman——"

"What's this Mary Martin do?"

"Well, I—I don't know just what she's doing. She's the niece of the chief of the secret service, and—and—she'd come out here." Larry suddenly had an inspiration. "But of course," he added hastily, "it wasn't anything connected with the business he's in. She—just happens to be his niece, and since he hadn't heard from her, I just thought I'd look her up and let him know how she was getting along."

It was a lame lie—but it was the best one that Larry could think of for the moment. Quickly he peered toward the sheriff to see the result of it, but the darkness of the alley made the officer's face only a hazy blank. Larry

went on: "I'm really interested in taking up some of these placer claims around here."

"Oh, are you?" It seemed that there was sudden interest in the sheriff's voice. "Don't figure to make a fortune overnight, do you?"

"I might. You can't tell. Who—who was that young woman?"

"The one you insulted? Sadie Grimes. She's a waitress."

"Funny, isn't it?" Larry tried to laugh. "She looks so much like Mary Martin."

"Can't prove it by me. I never seen this Mary person. Now look here, youngster," and the sheriff grasped him again. "We don't stand for mashing in this town. I don't want to take you down to jail; you don't look like the sort of a fellow who'd fit there. So I'm going to let you off with a warning. If I catch you bothering any more young girls, in you go! Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"And leave that Grimes girl alone."

"I sure will, I——"

"See that you do. I'm sort of responsible for her up here, and I don't want her havin' any trouble."

"Friend of yours then?"

"Well, in a way. I'd knew her father and mother down at Central City. The other day, when the Golden Café wanted another girl, I just thought it was a chance for Sadie. So I went down and got her."

"I see," said Larry Phelps. But he didn't see at all. The statement had put another theory into his head. Blankly he turned to the sheriff. "I hope you'll accept my apology," he said. "Mistake in identity, you know—the light wasn't very good, and I just took snap judgment. I never dreamed——"

"Sure. Understand just how it was. I've done the same thing myself. That's why I don't want to be hard on you. Trot along. If you find your Maggie Mason or whatever her name

is, fine and good. But I don't want you bothering this Grimes girl."

"I won't."

They parted, the sheriff to wander on about his business of the night, Larry Phelps to hurry back to his hotel and plump himself down by the window of his little room where he might study a few more problems in feminine geometrics. For Larry Phelps was sure of one thing—that he had talked to Mary Martin that night, that Mary had quietly, firmly, and without one evidence of joy over his presence, consigned him into the clutches of the sheriff!

"He loved, but she threw him in jail," he quoted glumly. "Fine mess I'm mixed up in: uncle's bound for the rock pile, mother's crying her eyes out, sweetheart's doing her best to make a wreck out of me. And what's it all for?"

Larry wished he knew! That Mary Martin was in Roodhouse on some angle of the mint case, he felt sure. But what? And why should she be playing the part of a waitress and hanging on the arm of a miner who hadn't even taken the trouble to shave before escorting her to a picture show?

The moment of doubt, which had arisen when the sheriff had told of the advent of Sadie Grimes to Roodhouse under the official wing of the law, had vanished. The more he thought of it, the more Larry felt sure that the information given by the sheriff had been bogus, and that Sadie Grimes was no other than Mary Martin, niece of Chief Leland of the secret service, and operative in the hundred thousand dollar mint case. It was all very simple now. Mary had arrived in town a day or two ahead of him, with some mission—what, Larry knew not. Naturally she had gone to the sheriff, told her identity, and asked him for aid. And the sheriff, knowing that the Golden Café needed a waitress, had introduced her

as Sadie Grimes of Central City. It all was simple now—all but the knowledge of why Mary should have come to this out-of-the-way place, why she had refused to recognize him, and why, oh, why she had sent him, her own perfectly beloved fiancé—that was, away in the grasp of the law! Out of it all Larry evolved only one truth. That was the fact that henceforth he would eat at the Golden Café, no matter how bad the food, no matter how rotten the service, and that, sooner or later, he would gravitate to the station where Sadie Grimes dished forth food, and at least let her do a bit of the worrying.

"As long as she stays, I stay!" he resolved grimly. "Until my week's up, anyway."

The next morning found him at an oil-clothed table in the Golden Café, studying his menu, and striving to decide between bacon and eggs or ham and eggs, until there came a voice at his elbow.

"Anybody taken y'r order?"

Larry repressed a start.

"No. Ham and eggs."

"Sunny side up?"

"What?"

"Want your eggs sunny side up?"

"Yes, Miss Grimes," said Larry with studied politeness. "I will take my eggs sunny side up, a la The Elms, if you please."

"Don't serve 'em that way," came quickly. "Jist got ham and eggs, up and over."

"Either one will do," and Larry grinned as he said it. For the first victory had been his. In spite of the quickness of her parry, in spite of her apparent unconcern, Larry had seen the color come and go swiftly at the mention of her home hotel. More, it had told him that he had been correct in his surmise, that Sadie Grimes and Mary Martin were one and the same person. He ate with more relish after that and watched her as she went about

the tables serving breakfast. As he watched he was sure of one thing—that Mary Martin, as Sadie Grimes, was at least a quick worker!

Already she had learned the names of a few miners and addressed them as they entered the restaurant. They seemed glad to see her, to talk to her, and to chaff her as she served the food. Then a tall, heavily-shouldered man entered, and Larry recognized him as the person with whom he had seen Mary the night before. More, she was at his table the moment he reached it, helping him to stow his hat on the rungs of the chair, unfolding the menu for him, and leaning anxiously until he should give his order.

"How's them flapjacks?" It brought Larry memories of the night before, of troubles, and of the sheriff. The girl grinned.

"Hotter'n blazes."

"Bring 'em on!"

She disappeared, returned with a plate of steaming flapjacks, and stood by him while he ate. Then she refilled his glass with water and seemed to divine the every need of his ravenous appetite. In the background Larry Phelps, eyes squinted, hands clenched in spite of himself, watched angrily, peevishly. How had she come to know this man so well, all in a few days? Why—

Suddenly Larry determined to find out, although more than once he had announced himself as through with Mary Martin, that he was merely following her that he might force her to own up to her real identity and then to tell her what he thought of her for tricking him, for teasing him and for helping to put his own family in jail.

"I've got a week to do it in," he muttered, "and I'll—"

"Anybody in here named Phelps?" It was a voice from the door, where a man with a green visor over his eyes,

had poked his head within long enough for the query. Larry rose, hesitated, sank back into his chair, then, impelled by curiosity, rose again.

"Got a telegram for you," came the announcement and an envelope was shoved forward. "Tried the hotels first, and the Blue Crescent said you was there but that you had went out to breakfast. Sign on the second line. Thanks."

He departed, and Larry returned to his table, staring curiously at the telegram. Finally he opened it and read the first few lines, only to fold it quickly as Sadie Grimes quite accidentally replenished his glass with water, and passed it to the table over his shoulder. Then she went on, Larry staring after her and mumbling something to himself about womanly curiosity. Safe at last he read again the words which had caused his little world of plans to turn topsy-turvy.

"Damn Uncle Willie!" he exclaimed irritably, thumped out of the restaurant, without even observing the formality of leaving a tip for the hard-working, dish-slinging Sadie Grimes.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAILED.

THERE was reason in plenty for the displeasure of Larry Phelps, reason which stuck forth from every word of that telegram, sent first to New York, and forwarded from there by his mother, whom Larry knew was wringing her hands in fear, distress, and general excitement. For the message was urgent.

Please come at once. William overcome by charges against him. Losing hope of being acquitted. Absolutely crushed by accusation that he is thief. Is threatening to go into court and confess. Insists that while innocent, evidence against him is so conclusive he has no chance for freedom. Believes will stand a chance of lighter sentence by pleading guilty than by fighting the case.

What shall I do. Come on first train. Situation desperate.

AUNT MARGARET.

"The poor simp!" grunted Larry as he hurried along. "Doesn't he know that he's going to get into more trouble than ever if he pleads guilty and doesn't fork over that hundred thousand dollars in bullion? Doesn't he know that he can't get away with it? Doesn't he know——"

Then Larry ceased that line of reflection. For he realized fully that Uncle Willie probably did not know.

"If he took the stuff," he added after a progress of three blocks toward the station, "he'd be just fool enough to believe that he could tell the court some cock-and-bull story and get away with it—about how somebody met him in the street and asked to look at the stuff and then forgot to give it back. If I'm ever born again, here's hoping that I'm an orphan with all the relatives left out. And deaf, dumb, and blind, so I can't see anybody to fall in love with. I've—I've pretty near got enough!"

Which thought remained with him until he had reached the smoky, grimy station and waited in fidgety fashion until some rough-bearded person held converse with the combined freight and ticket agent regarding a shipment of ore. And in that moment he realized that the plans which had brought him into the western country now were thoroughly and effectually smashed. The schemes and plots of Mary Martin, if there were schemes and plots, might be carried to their conclusion without interference from him. The mistakes—if there had been mistakes—must remain unrectified. The fat, bulbous form of Uncle Willie had summoned him back to Philadelphia. He knew that his mother was weeping by the bucketful, that things in general had gone to pot. His own, private desires must be laid aside—and those included Mary Martin.

The grizzled ore shipper left the window now, and Larry stepped forward.

"Ticket to Denver," he ordered. "When can I get out?"

"Twelve o'clock."

"Noon, huh? Fine. Better than I——"

"Wrong, son. Midnight."

"No train before that?" Larry, somewhat aghast, stared through the wicket. "Man, I've got to——"

"Can't do any better for you. Stopped the two-a-day train service on this line week before last."

"How about an automobile?"

"Haven't seen any of those things around here, have you?"

Larry, on reflection, remembered that he hadn't.

The agent went on. "Grade's too steep on the mountain road from Silver Plume up here. The best you could do would be to get a horse and ride down to Silver Plume and get a machine from there, but even then you'd be taking chances."

Grudgingly Larry agreed; and, in lieu of his own immediate departure, he sent telegrams of assurance to his mother and aunt, begging them to persuade Uncle Willie to keep cool until he could reach there. Then, with a ticket to Denver in his pocket, he wandered forth to a long day of waiting.

Mary he did not see again until noon—once more to find her paying homage to the tall, bearded miner with the penchant for flapjacks, and more oblivious than ever of his own presence. Long he sat at his table waiting, hoping that she would make some move, that she would indicate in some slight manner that she recognized him and that the world to her contained at least a bit of his presence. He longed in vain. In the first place Sadie Grimes, the waitress, was more than busy with the general run of the dining room; secondly, the idle moments that were hers were spent at the table of the miner

whom she had called "Sweetie." Larry didn't like it; Larry was tempted strongly to object, to plunge forward and demand explanations. But he remembered the sheriff—and was silent.

At last he wandered forth, to make the rounds of the town, to stare in every window, to return to the hotel and read all the month-old periodicals there, and finally to mosey out again, this time toward the river. Here and there miners were working along the little stream, gathering up the silt from the creek bed, panning it out until only the last of the float was gone, to be overjoyed at the flakes which remained there, or glumly persistent when the pan revealed nothing. Everywhere they were dotted in a long, thin line, stretching upstream, while at the extreme end, where another rivulet joined the larger creek, two men were working a small water wheel. Instinctively Larry knew them to be the Barton brothers of whom the hotelkeeper had spoken, and he strolled toward their workings that he might observe the birth of gold in its native state. Time after time the half-automatic pan was dipped into the stream, to be brought up and agitated—and inevitably, one of the men picked something forth to place it in a closely-guarded sack. To Larry it seemed a very systematic, easy, methodical manner of getting rich, and it fascinated him until——

He glanced toward the man working with his pan on the next claim and realized that this person had been watching him guardedly for some time. It was the bearded, great-shouldered figure of Sadie Grimes' sweetie. Larry glared at him with all the pent-up anger that a forgotten suitor could hold for the man who now occupied the throne of favor. Evidently Mary had told him! Certainly he must know something to cause him to watch with such interest; was it triumph, or—was it something else? Larry did not try to

solve the problem. Half beaten, realizing* that one word of argument with the miner over the slangy Sadie Grimes could only result in another trip with the sheriff and the possibility of missing that midnight train, Larry turned away and went to the hotel. That night, when dinner time came, he ate at the roost of the Chinaman. The conclusion had come at last that his game with Mary Sadie Grimes Martin was over. One more visit could avail him nothing. Her secret, if there was such a thing, was her own. Larry could not solve it. And if there was no secret, it made but little difference, anyway. Larry had heard before of what infatuation may do for a woman. Had it worked in this case? Had it turned Mary Martin from an alert, well-educated, finely-poised young woman to a slangy waitress that she might be on the same level with an uneducated, unshaved placer miner? Or——

Those conjectures had bobbed up again! Larry knew that this bit of reasoning—or lack of it—was next to impossible in Mary's case at least. But he had thought of everything else—and one or two other possibilities could make but little difference. And at the end of that thought, he found himself out in the street, his evening meal over, vaguely remembering that there yet remained three and a half hours until train time, but more vividly looking into the future and wondering what on earth he would do back there in the East, with no Mary to talk to over the phone, no Mary to send flowers, no Mary to tell how much he loved her, and no Mary to marry!

For a moment, in the sheer distress of the thing, he paced a set distance in front of the Chinese restaurant, at last to turn down the street toward the twisting road which led into the hills. The time must be passed until midnight some way, and to Larry the solitude of

the mountains seemed far better than the grimy, narrow sidewalks, where any moment might bring him face to face with Mary Martin. No, he didn't want to see her—that is, he told himself that he didn't; that he could get along wonderfully well without her; that, anyway, she was a sneak, a cheat who took his own perfectly good diamond ring and then helped to put his uncle in jail. And besides—

Just then he looked back, and with sudden furtiveness dived into the most shadowy part of the mountain road. Just at the end of the town street a figure had hesitated for a second under the single electric light, looked about her, then somewhat hurriedly started out also upon the mountain road, taking the same path as he. Even at that distance Larry had recognized the trimness of the figure, the smoothness and grace of her step. Mary Martin!

"She's on my trail!" Larry said it in a whisper, then spurted along the road. "What's she up to? What's she—"

Again a glance, and in the filmy light he could faintly see her figure a good eighth of a mile in the rear. Her course was in the middle of the road, and her pace, it seemed to Larry, gradually was increasing. With the result that Larry put more speed into his step and forgot the fact that altitude and the grade of the mountain road were tugging at his lungs.

"If it's a chase she wants," he grumbled, between puffs, "she'll get her wish."

When he looked back again, the form was running! Larry broke into a lope, striving to keep his pace just swift enough to allow her not to gain an inch, and yet to permit her to keep him in sight. The night was gray, rather than black, a moon behind clouds suffused its glow in a sort of indirect system of dim lighting. The mountains were filmy, yet not dark; the figure of the

girl in the distance could be seen faintly, and Larry knew that she could see him.

"Guess she thinks she's invisible!" he panted as he took a raise and hurried down the slight declivity beyond. "What the dickens is her idea anyway? What's she—"

Then he stopped short. Had some one called him from the distance?

A second he waited, then hurried on. Had it been his imagination? Or was it a ruse on her part to—what? Larry had become so accustomed to suspicions that everything looked black to him now—if the girl had come to him and fainted in his path, he would have found some sinister motive in it. So, hurrying to make up the distance he had lost, he took the next hill on a trot, pressed one hand tight against his right side to stop the aching of breath-shortness and went on. Only to halt a second time. For faintly it had come again—

"Larry!"

But this time he did not turn. Instead he grunted and went on, a little faster than ever.

"It's some sort of a trick. It's—"

Then he cocked his head toward a shadowy thing far at one side of the road, a great, gaunt, windowless building, looming dimly in the gray darkness, the dismantled remainder of a road house of the days when mining was mining, when liquor and dance halls and music went along with every camp. It was deserted now—Larry could tell that from its very ramshackle appearance, from the tangled underbrush and weeds which grew about it, from the staring windows. Larry was tired.

"It's my turn now, to trail her!" he whispered as he dived from the road, and, taking advantage of the gulleys and mountain brush, sneaked toward the house. "If she's on the level with anything, I can tell from the way she

acts when she finds she's lost my trail. If she isn't—well, I'll be the one who's watching her—not her watching me!"

Then quietly, sinuously, he crept toward the house, and noiselessly crawled through the weeds toward the old, slanting door, hanging awkwardly from one hinge. Stealthily he made his way within, his general desire for caution even exerting itself to the extent that he forgot the person whom he was trailing; he even halted when the floor creaked under his tiptoed weight. A foot at a time he moved, toward the window which faced the road, slowly, quietly—

Then he stopped, scared into gaping inaction. His head turned mechanically upward. A shiver swept up his spine and down again. His hair crept, as though it were upending itself, and when his mouth closed, his teeth chattered. For something was above him, something eerie, weird, and ghostlike!

CHAPTER IX.

GHOSTS.

HAD it been a noise he ever before had heard, conditions might have been different. But it wasn't! No scampering of rats, no creaking of a loose blind, no scraping of tin or crackling of wood. It was something unusual, something uncanny, something which caused the flesh to tingle weirdly. Quite naturally Larry felt his hat, to be sure it was not lifting. Then he listened tensely as that unearthly noise came again.

"Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch!" It sounded all the way across the long floor above, the primary noise being a sliding, sinuous, gliding thing, the one which followed it combining a thump and a velvety, yet pounding reverberation, which echoed through the old, deserted place, and which increased in its eeriness as it was sounded from room to room.

Again and again it came, passing from one end of the ramshackle building to the other, then returning—skip—crunch! skip—crunch! skip—crunch! Then it was gone, and Larry, hands groping, eyes staring, started involuntarily to move away. Only to halt again. For a sound came from the road.

There was the girl, not two hundred yards away, moving first in one direction, stopping to look about her, then hurrying in another—only that she might halt again. Once more came her voice, and Larry detected a frightened note in it.

"Larry! Please answer me—Larry!"

There was something about the plea which showed that she meant it! No longer was she Sadie Grimes, the sophisticated waitress. No longer was she Mary Martin, drafted into the United States secret service by a gruff old uncle willing to take any risk to gain the conviction of a criminal. She was just a plain, frightened little girl, who had followed a man far out into the hills, only to lose him, and who now stood on the brow of a slight raise, staring about her, and calling again and again:

"Larry—Larry!"

He started to answer her, only to have his voice trail away in a frightened gasp. For once more had that noise come from above in quicker repetition now.

"Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch!"

Then it was silent once more, and Larry, hastily wiping the cold sweat from his forehead, sought the window as she called more excitedly, this time in a voice which threatened tears.

"Here I am!" he answered. "Over in this deserted house."

"But come here—please."

"Can't."

"Please—"

"I'm afraid—there's something in

here. Can't tell what it is. Sounds like ghosts—or some animal, and it's safer inside than to try to get out. I've found a club. I'll stay by the door until you get here. Come—come on. I—I want to see what it is."

"But I'm afraid to come in."

"Oh, don't be. I—I don't guess it's anything."

"Well then, why not make a run for it? I'll keep watch. Oh, please do, Larry. I've been so frightened."

"What did you follow me for?"

"Shhh!" She had given almost a whispered warning from the road. "I can't tell you that right now. I——"

"Nobody else can hear you."

"I know—but somebody might come along while we're talking."

"Then, if that's the case, this place is safer than out there in the road. We can tell if anybody's within a hundred yards of us. Make a run for the door."

She started then, and Larry, picking up the piece of wood which he had stumbled against a moment before, moved to the door. A moment more and she had made the house, to give a glad little cry, and then, to the astonishment of Larry, plump into his arms.

"Oh," she begged, "I'm so sorry I've——"

But she didn't finish the sentence, for the simple reason that the breath suddenly was cramped out of her as Larry's arms closed about her in a vise-like grip. But in spite of its tensity, that grasp was trembling. From above had come a new noise, a groan—the groan of a soul in agony!

Weirdly it echoed, to trail away in a rattling, dying sort of way. Then a chain clanked, while the skip—crunch sounded, faraway and faint, and the jangling noises grew louder, then died away. Larry's teeth chattered once more—and they had company. The teeth of Mary Martin were chattering also, and her arms were tight about the neck of the man who, that very day,

had sworn a hundred times that never, never would he think of her again. A moment of silence. Then, between clicking teeth:

"What—what do you suppose it is?"

"I—I don't know. But it can't be anything. It's—nothing to be afraid of."

"Then what are you shaking about?"

"Jus—just a little cold. It must be just some—aw-w-k!"

Words had become useless things. From above had come a shriek like the cry of some harassed, frenzied animal in the death grip. Again and again it sounded, screeching through the eerie, deserted old place like the wail of a soul in an inferno, seeming to descend upon them, to surround them, to grasp them in the chilling embrace of its ghostly characteristics, to freeze their very blood within their veins. Then those chains again—rattling, clanging, dragging, and scraping from one part of the upper floor to another, followed by blank silence, broken by that mysterious, haunting——

"Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch!"

After that the whole world, it seemed, was still with an unearthly stillness. The air, to their imaginative brains, seemed to grow heavy about them. The house, after the shrieks and groans and clanking chains, had become a place of deathly calm!

"Let's—let's get out." It was Larry who spoke this time, showing a strong inclination to move toward the door. But the girl did not budge. The man leaned closer to her with a sudden fear that fright had stopped her heart. But dimly he could see that her eyes were wide open and staring upward. More, she had ceased to tremble.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"Ghosts!" She said it quite loud.

"Oh, Larry, I'm so scared. Why did we ever come here? Why——"

"I thought you were following me. I——"

He stopped at a sudden dig in the ribs.

"Get me out of here, please! No—no, don't! I'm afraid to go. I'm afraid to do anything. I'm—I'm getting to the point of desperation now, Larry. I'm almost desperate enough to go up there and fight it out with the thing—if I have to. I can't stand it much more—it'll kill me!"

"But, honey——"

This time it was a kick on the shins which silenced him, as a series of vivid green flashes shot from the windows above, lighting the brush about the house in tangled specterlike fashion. Then once more the groans, and following that, those unearthly, horrible shrieks—shrieks which followed, one upon the other, in racking succession, until Larry's knees weakened and his arms loosed their tightness about the form of the girl in his grasp. After that, the dead silence and in it——

She sniffed. Sniffed in a way that a woman will do when she enters a house and has her suspicions about it being on fire—or when she smells something burning on the kitchen stove. She had sniffed in quite professional fashion, her nose high in the air, her eyes squinted, her head tilted in a way in which no woman would study a ghost. Then suddenly she drew away from Larry and placed a finger quickly on his lips for silence. Following which, she tugged slightly at his sleeve for him to follow and crept to the door. There she turned and, raising herself on tiptoe, placed her lips to his ear.

"Stay here!" she whispered. "I'm going back to town."

"Who—what for?"

"Stay here and move around. Pretend like you're talking to me. Act like you're scared to death. Keep that club in your hand and watch those stairs. If anybody comes down them, brain

him. I'll be back as soon as I can with Bill."

"Who—who's Bill?"

"That miner you saw with me."

"But——"

"Silly! Don't be jealous. He's only Billy Ballard from the Denver secret service office."

"Then——"

"Don't ask questions." The whisper was tense, excited. "We can't afford to lose time! I've got to find Bill and get him here quick. Here"—she reached into the pocket of her coat, and bringing forth a small revolver, pressed it into his hand—"you may need it. I'd go up now, only I'm afraid that we haven't enough to keep watch on the whole place at once. That ghost might get away!"

"Ghost? Then——"

She laughed quietly at his seriousness.

"Yes. Ghost. Did you ever hear of one that used nitro-hydrochloric acid?"

And before he could reply, she had slipped away into the night, leaving Larry alone with his wonderment—and his ghost!

CHAPTER X.

CAPTURED.

IN spite of the assurance, it was no peaceful task to which Mary had left the amazed Larry Phelps. Evidently the ghost above had received no intimation that one of the frightened intruders below had departed; soon the chains were clanking again, soon the shrieks once more were resounding, and the green lights flashing. Larry, his conversation disconnected, strove his best to carry out the instructions left behind by the girl he had sworn never to care for again.

Now he talked in his own bass, then broke to a falsetto as he voiced an imaginary answer. He told himself how scared he was, then, in different

tones he told himself again. The ghost above appeared to enjoy it, by giving encores on the chain music, by favoring him with shriek after shriek and then throwing in a few groans for good measure. Out of it all there was only one thing which brought any relief to Larry, the sharp biting odor, which now was becoming more and more apparent to him, and which recalled the words of Mary Martin that it must be a scientific ghost who could understand the chemical properties of a combination of nitric and hydrochloric acids.

An hour he waited—wishing that he hadn't, wondering whether he would be able to make his train on time, wondering whether or not he should go at all, and wishing, most of all, that Mary and Bill, or whatever his name was, would return. Fifteen minutes more, while the ghost above outdid itself and while Larry's hair turned airsets. Then suddenly he started at a gleaming light which suddenly pierced the paneless windows. Faraway sounded the roaring of a motor, and above—

"Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch! Skip—crunch!"

The ghost, Larry knew, had gone to the window! Then hurriedly it had skip—crunched away again. Larry breathed more freely. Perhaps Mary was right after all. Anyway, an automobile was approaching; brighter and brighter grew the gleam of the headlights. Louder and louder roared the motor, finally to snort over the top of the hill, swing sharply, and dive straight for the house. Forms leaped forth—Larry could discern Mary in the lead, followed by six men, five of whom spread out about the house, the other entering with Mary.

"Larry!" she called, and Phelps answered. The girl turned to the man accompanying her. "Got your spotlight, Bill?"

Faintly Larry could see that it was the big-shouldered miner. A movement

and a circle of light gleamed in the room. The girl came forward.

"Bill," she announced, "this is Larry Phelps. My fiancé. I've had to be terribly cruel to him. But I can't explain now. Got that gun, Larry?"

"Yes."

"Good. Keep it. I picked up another in town. We'll go upstairs. You two men better be in front—you can shoot quicker than I can."

"But what—" Larry still was in the dark. Mary laughed.

"Nitro-hydrochloric-acid ghosts," she explained. "Go on."

They made their way to the creaking stairs, and up them to the second floor, the spotlight gleaming ahead. Mary edged up beside Larry.

"Make all the noise you want to," she ordered. "We're hoping he'll jump. The sheriff's outside with four deputies. They'll take care of him if—"

"Him?"

"Yes—the ghost. Be careful now—we're nearly at the head of the stairs."

But no resisting form showed before them, only the great blank space of what once had been a dance hall, with sagging doors opening off into tiny drinking rooms. At the top step Mary bent, and, in the glow of the spotlight, studied a slight mark, barely visible upon a scrap of old paper. Then, with a smile she straightened, and held the paper before the eyes of Larry Phelps.

"There's your ghost," she announced with a little laugh. "See it?"

"No—just some funny little marks on that paper."

"Take another look!" Then she chuckled. "Look at those circles—then the lines around them? Ever see anything like it before?"

But Larry was too befuddled to discern it all. Mary pushed the paper toward Ballard.

"We've found out one thing at least,"

she said. "Our ghost wears rubber heels."

Larry grasped at the paper again, and this time saw it plainly, the cups and hollow lines of a rubber heel, imprinted plainly by the pressure of the weight of a human body upon the dust of the paper. Was that the explanation of the skip—crunch? They went on. Here and there the light flashed, to reveal nothing. Then, with Larry standing guard with two revolvers, the girl and the great-shouldered secret service operative began a minute search of the rooms, the floor, and even the walls. Finally, at a door, Mary turned excitedly and beckoned to Ballard.

"There's that bottle of acid," she announced, pointing to a broken container on the floor. "Must have knocked it off that window ledge when he was monkeying around with those chains."

"Yeh. What's that over in the corner?"

"Looks like a stove of some kind."

"Isn't it an oven?"

Mary went forward to examine the small contraption in one corner.

"That's what it is!" came her swift answer. "Some kind of gasoline oven."

"Open it up. See what's inside." Then to Larry: "Never mind watching us. Keep your back against this wall, and your eyes trained all around you. If you see anything move—shoot, and shoot to kill."

"Yep!" Larry didn't know what it was all about, but he was ready to shoot, nevertheless. His hair still was crawling from those ghostlike noises. Behind him, Mary and Ballard went on with their investigations.

"Isn't that a crucible in there?" It was the man's voice.

"It looks like it."

"Sure it is. What's that beside that furnace? A bucket of water?"

"Yes. And something in the bottom. Wait a minute." There came a slight

splashing of water and then: "Gold nuggets!"

"Sure! Just what I thought. Heated up the metal in that crucible and then dropped it hot into the water. That produced the nuggets and——"

"After they were made, he used the acid to give them more of a genuine look. Here a loose board."

"Look under it. Let me help you."

A crackling of wood came then, followed by the combined exclamation of a surprised, yet pleased, man and a woman.

"That's it!"

"What?" Larry couldn't resist turning his head.

"The gold!" came excitedly from Mary Martin. "The gold—nearly all of it. Still in the bullion bars."

"You mean from the mint?" Red and green flashes were snapping in front of Larry Phelp's eyes. Was he assisting in the further deflation of his poor, overblown Uncle Willie? But Mary's voice came again.

"Of course. And it's just what we suspected. I knew from the start that much gold couldn't have been carried out in shavings!"

"But how could——"

Larry didn't finish his sentence. A scraping sound came from far down the blank room, a sudden scrambling, then silence. The form of Ballard leaped to his side.

"What was that?"

"Thought I heard something move. Down there at the end of the room."

Mary joined them.

"Throw the spotlight there—quick!"

But the gleaming light revealed nothing, only blackness of the walls, and the yawning abyss of an old, blackened fireplace. Ballard grasped for his gun and went forward. Here and there he searched, finally to turn to the old grate.

"Take this light," he ordered of the girl. "Throw it up that chimney."

Then he bent and glanced upward. Suddenly his revolver hand tensened, and he leaped back.

"Hey, you, up that chimney!" he ordered. "Come down! You're caught!"

There was no answer and no movement. Ballard grasped for a year's old newspaper and crunching it, threw it into the fireplace.

"All right, old kid," came in jocular tones, "stay there if you want to. But I might as well tell you that we're going to start a fire underneath you! So come down—or roast!"

A gurgling sound answered from far up the chimney. Then the scraping of a scrambling form. A second later, blackened, sooty, minstrel-faced, from contact with the smudge of the chimney, the figure of a man dropped into the fireplace and groveled there, his hands in the air. Mary moved to the window.

"All right, sheriff!" she called. "You can come up. We've got Mr. Wooden-leg!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLEAN-UP.

AS for Larry, he merely blinked and stared. In a vague manner he realized that something important had happened, and that perhaps Uncle Willie wasn't to blame after all. Still more vaguely, as the machine hummed toward town, taking with it the sooty form of a limping, artificial-legged man, he heard from the lips of Mary Martin the certainty that Uncle Willie was innocent, and that, if he chose, he could send a telegram to that effect to his mother and to his aunt in Philadelphia. But beyond that, his brain failed to encompass much. Nor was it until he returned to the jail building from the telegraph station, that he began to get straightened out of the whirling maze of turbulent events.

The prisoner had lost much of his

grime in the washbowl now and sat weakly beside a long table in the sheriff's office, while beyond him were two other men, thoroughly handcuffed, and evidently just brought in. Between them was Mary Martin, a tablet and pencil in readiness for stenographic notes. Ballard was facing the white-faced prisoner.

"Name?" he demanded. The prisoner sighed, as though in farewell to the last vestige of resistance.

"John Latham," he answered.

"Age?"

"Forty-three."

"Residence?"

"Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."

"Occupation?"

Mr. Wooden-leg smiled.

"Now, or previously?"

"Previously."

"Weigher and tester in the refinery of the United States mint at Philadelphia."

"How long did you work there?"

"Only a short time."

"Did you have any designs or ideas in your mind when you went there?"

"Yes. I was sent."

"By whom?"

"These two men."

Larry glanced at the scowling forms in the background and identified them as the lucky Barton brothers, who had been hauling out nuggets by the placer route from the creek bed. They snarled at the confessing man, then were silent. The questioner went on.

"What are their names?"

"Lafe and Henry Jordan."

"Have they ever gone by any other names?"

"Yes. Several. They're known as the Barton brothers here. Then they've gone by the names of Peterson and Harris."

Larry started. Weren't those the names Uncle Willie had mentioned—of the two men with whom he had—

But the questioning was on again.

"You say you were sent. Why?"

"Well, the principal reason was that I've got an artificial leg. My regular leg is off just below the hip—just enough to allow me to handle this artificial one pretty well.

"Well," and Mr. Wooden-leg stooped that he might roll up one leg of his trousers. "You see, it's aluminum and hollow. They had it made for me, Lafe and Henry. I had just an ordinary one before. Anyway, as I said, it's aluminum and hollow. It's got a little pulley and clamp arrangement to it, too, so that I could put stuff in there without it jiggling around."

"Very well, go on. What was your idea when you went to work in the mint?"

"To steal gold."

"All by yourself?"

"Yes. That is, the stealing part. The part the Jordans were to play was in getting rid of it."

Larry began to breathe deeply and freely. Of course, Mary's word had helped, but to hear it from the man himself—Uncle Willie was innocent after all! But the questions still were coming.

"All right now. Just tell your own story in your own words. What did you do when you got your job, and how did you steal the gold—just go ahead with the whole thing."

"Well," and Mr. Wooden-leg wiped the perspiration from his forehead, "there wasn't so much to it. I pretended not to be a very good workman and acted like I was half dead all the time. So that all the boys sort of pitied me—fact is, they took up a collection for me when I got fired."

"Yes, I know. But get to the point."

"I am. Naturally, being sick and all that sort of thing, they didn't watch me as close as they did the others. The Jordans were out in the West here, pretending to be working this water wheel and laying the foundations for getting

rid of the stuff after I'd gotten it. You see, we'd had to figure that out pretty close, because there isn't much chance to get rid of gold bullion, the way it's checked up. The only thing we could do was to pretend to get it out of the ground again. But all they could do at that time was to receive it and store it up, because I was the only one who knew enough about chemicals and reducing the stuff to make it look like nuggets. That's why things hung fire so long. But as I was saying—they didn't pay much attention to me at the mint, and I had pretty free run. It was easy for me to stick a mess of bullion bars into this hole in my leg every day and walk out of the mint without ever getting caught."

"How much did you carry away in a day?"

"I don't know. As much as I could handle. You see, I limped, anyway, and that covered up the fact that I was carrying weight in that leg. Some days I got away with as much as twenty or thirty pounds."

"It didn't take long then to make the haul?"

"No. Only a couple of weeks."

"And then what?"

"Nothing."

"But you had to get rid of that gold——"

"Oh, that. I did that just as I went along. I sent it out to the Jordans as I stole it, in boxes, labeled 'Ore samples.'"

"And they took it and hid it until you could get out there?"

"Yes, but I was afraid to start until after the clean-up. I knew that you fellows would get next to the shortage then and check up on everybody who had left the mint. So I planned to fix the blame on somebody else."

Larry took a new interest. Suddenly the bulbous form of Uncle Willie seemed to rise before him, crying out in pachydermic heftiness for justice. Mr.

Wooden-leg faced his two comrades in crime.

"There was a fellow that worked in the same room with me who was pretty much of a simp. Phelps was his name." Larry winced, but agreed with the diagnosis. "I knew he didn't have enough brains to watch his step, that I could put most anything I wanted to over on him. I knew that he played pool every day at Mike Dalton's, and that, being fat, he usually took off his coat and hung it up. So, just about the time the clean-up came along and I knew the mint authorities would suspect something, I sneaked into the pool hall and, while Phelps's back was turned, stuck a little bunch of shavings down in the lining of his work coat. Then, the Jordans had come to Philadelphia, and they managed to meet up with him and lose a bunch of money to him under circumstances that would sound pretty fakey if there ever came a trial. As soon as we saw he'd been arrested, we lit out for here."

"And began to make money on the water wheel almost the minute you got here?"

"As soon as I could get hold of a gasoline oven without exciting suspicion. The Jordans got it for me—I came into town at night and went right out to the old roadhouse. I never moved out of there, and never was bothered until to-night. And I never had worried—I always figured that if any one came to a place like that, it being scarey, anyway, I could frighten them away by playing ghost."

"Uh—yeh." Larry had broken in. "Where'd you get that skip-stop noise?"

"I—I don't know. Unless it was the difference in the pressure when I was walking on my wooden leg. You see, I can't let that down easy, and in spite of the rubber heel—"

"Of course," Ballard had resumed his questioning. "And in that house

you melted up the gold bars, dipped them while white-hot into water, producing a sort of nugget, and then proceeded to do the job up better by marking them up a bit with a combination of nitric and hydrochloric acids?"

"That's right."

"You realize that this statement may be used against you?"

"I do."

"However, you will be willing to sign it when Miss Martin makes the transcript of it in the morning?"

"I—I guess so." Again Mr. Wooden-leg wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "There—there isn't much else for me to do."

The sheriff led him away then, the other two prisoners following crabably in his wake. Larry Phelps stared blankly after them. But suddenly he blinked. Mary Martin had twisted a finger through a buttonhole of his coat and was tugging at it playfully.

"Well," she asked in teasing fashion. "Now do you understand?"

But Larry shook his head.

"I'm blessed if I do!" he blurted. "I——"

"But what else is there? You heard his whole confession!"

"I know"—old memories suddenly had been revived—"but that doesn't tell me why you should leave me standing like a ninny there in The Elms waiting for you to come marry me, or why you——"

"Oh, that!" She laughed. "Why, honey, I couldn't do anything else!"

"Nothing else? You could tell me, or let me know, or——"

"But I couldn't, Larry! Not unless I wanted that uncle of yours to go to jail."

"He went anyway."

"Yes, to a city jail, but not to a penitentiary."

"Then you——"

"I might as well tell the whole thing," she cut in. "The day the word came

from Philadelphia that your uncle was suspected, the chief—my uncle, you know—called me up and told me to come down to the office right away. When I got there, he was all fretted up about the whole mess—and, Larry, you don't know how much he thinks of you!"

"Him? He never did anything but growl at me."

"Well, don't you know what they say about barking dogs? Anyway, he was terribly worried—because he didn't want to have things turn out against your uncle. Yet there was the evidence. So he sent me to Philadelphia. And I couldn't write you or telephone you that I was assigned on this case, could I? When it might be possible that every bit of evidence I got might have to be turned against your uncle?"

"Well——"

"Of course, when Mr. Godaire interviewed him, while I listened behind the wicket, he seemed such a poor old, pardon me, simpleton, that I felt sure he didn't have anything to do with it. But still I had nothing to go on. Then, on the day I got into that taxi wreck and——"

"Then you saw me?"

"Certainly. But I couldn't stop to explain matters in the middle of a street. Besides, I had to make that train. Anyway, as I say, I had been looking up everybody who had left the mint. I found that our friend with the wooden leg had left his rooming house just a few days before and moved out of town. It gave me a clew, and I questioned the landlady. She told me about two men who had come to see him, and who answered the description of the men who had lost money so easily to your uncle. Then came the piece of luck. She was a regular landlady, and he hadn't paid his room rent when his trunk was taken out. So she snooped on him when the baggagemen came and heard him check his trunk

through to Roodhouse, Colorado. That was enough for me. I just had time to make the train for New York and get a connection out for the West—there wasn't one going out of Philadelphia soon enough. That's when the taxi turned over."

"But when I came out here——"

"Listen, honey," and she moved closer, "what else could I do? When you came up to me the Jordans weren't twenty feet away. I couldn't fall on your neck, could I—a waitress, tickled to death to see a person who showed by his clothes that he was rich? They would have suspected something in a minute—and I had to do the first thing that popped into my mind. Every time you came into the restaurant, the Jordans were there, too. You see, I had located them easily enough, but I couldn't find the other one. I wanted to tell you, honey, honestly I did. Didn't I follow you out on the road when I saw you go on it—just so I could tell you? Didn't I? And wasn't it lucky that you should stumble into that house and——"

"Mr. Phelps here?" It was the telegrapher with a message. Larry slit it excitedly, read it hurriedly, then, his face beaming, puckered his lips into a long happy whistle. For before his eyes was the enthusiastic telegram:

Have just talked with Chief Leland over the telephone. Has told me of part Miss Martin played in saving Willie and our family from everlasting disgrace. My heartfelt thanks are hers. Kiss her for me. In talking with chief learn that she is descended from Martine family of France, among first settlers of Hudson Bay country. Am more than delighted. Love and kisses. Will be looking for you both soon. Give her my love. Love to you both. MOTHER.

Larry chuckled. Mary came closer.

"What is it? Good news?"

"Good news?" The chuckle became a full-sized laugh now. "Oh, no! You just own the earth, that's all." Then he turned to the telegrapher, still wait-

ing for the signature on the delivery sheet. "Lived here long?"

"Fifteen years."

"Know the people of the town pretty well, then?"

The telegraph agent drew himself up proudly.

"I should reckon. Everybody that lives here, and some that don't."

"Then you're just the man I need." Larry glanced without, toward the breaking day. "I'm looking for a county clerk who won't object to making out a marriage license in the middle of the night. Understand? And when you've gotten him for me, the next person I want is an early rising justice of the peace!"



BURGLAR TRAP WOUNDS STOCKHOLDER

RESOLVED to discover the identity of the thief who was making periodical assaults upon the funds of the Fifty-fifth Street Garage in New York, Eugene Grebert, president of the corporation that operates the garage, set an ingenious trap and wounded a stockholder of the company.

The device was a four-inch piece of iron pipe, half an inch in diameter, fastened in the top of the money drawer of the office safe. At the front of the pipe was a charge of buckshot. At the back was a blank shotgun cartridge. If the drawer was opened during the night a spring released a trigger which fired a percussion cap and set off the cartridge.

At half past two one morning, Sam Resi, a watchman, sitting in an automobile at the rear of the garage, heard a loud report and a cry of pain in the office at the front. He did not know that a trap had been set, and he thought burglars had blown open the safe. He ran to the office, found the safe door open and the cash drawer pulled out. The money in the drawer had not been taken, and there was no burglar in sight.

Resi turned on the lights and examined the safe. A crimson trail led from in front of it across the office and out along the sidewalk. Entrance to the garage had been made by breaking a pane of glass, through the opening of which an inner key was turned.

All hospitals were notified to watch for any person who applied for treatment of gunshot wounds. Shortly before five o'clock the following afternoon a man with buckshot wounds in his face and right hand was admitted for treatment at Bellevue Hospital. He said he was Joseph Schmidt, a mechanic. A nurse became suspicious and notified the police. Detectives Dennison and Fitzgerald went to the hospital to question Schmidt.

According to Detective Dennison, Schmidt first said he was wounded when he picked up a package in Central Park containing an explosive. Later, Detective Dennison said, Schmidt admitted he had been wounded when he opened the safe. He said he was a stockholder in the corporation that operates the garage, that he had some shares of stock locked in the safe, and that, knowing the combination, he opened it only to get what belonged to him. He is held on a charge of burglary.

Some time ago the safe was opened during the early morning and eighty dollars taken. A short time later the safe was opened again and fifty dollars disappeared. Then the trap was set.

Firecracker Prevention

by Harold de Polo

Author of "Slicker Than Slick," etc,

DOWN the noisy and dilapidated street, filled with tenements that were crammed beyond all the laws of sanitation, "Three-finger" Carney came hustling at a pace so fast that it occasionally caused him to hack out a cough. Although it was a pleasant April afternoon, the collar of his coat was drawn up, his hat was pulled low, and his hands were deep in his pockets with his shoulders hunched. He was walking apparently with a definite destination in view. He looked neither to right nor left, but down at the pavement. When he came to a certain doorway, however, he sidled swiftly into it as if quite sure it was the one he wanted. Anyway, he certainly found no trouble in ringing the right bell.

The waiting, although it could not have been more than a minute, bothered him. He swore softly, yet with a tense vehemence that was almost chilling. His head was raised now, and his face came into view. The forehead was abnormally low, the chin receded, the whole ensemble was pitifully weak. Had it not been for the eyes, the casual observer would have felt sorry for him. Once they were seen, though, a great change would come. Revulsion, fear, nausea, were the sensations experienced. If ever a pair of orbs held cruelty in them, those of Three-finger Carney were the ones.

Even the slatternly and half-intoxicated woman who presently came to the

door noticed it. The man, too, was endeavoring to put his best foot forward. His smile was palpably false, and for a moment she scowled at him.

"You got a room to rent, eh?" he asked.

"I have—I have that," she replied opening the door wide now that profitable business seemed imminent. "But I charges kinda high, they say," was her warning. "More'n most of them on this dirty block, cause mine are the best!"

"That ain't scarin' me," he reassured her. "Gimme what I want an' I'll payin' for it—that's me!"

"I'm wantin' three-fifty the week," she challenged, as if thoroughly expecting her demand to be refused. "It's two flights up, to the front, an' the sun comes in like it had this room for a pet. It's a clean house; it's a quiet house; an' it's a respect'ble house. An' three-fifty ain't even enough, I'm tellin' you, mister!"

"I c'n pay it, I c'n pay it," he informed her.

"Then come an' see it," she replied hastily.

Midway on the stairs, on the first flight, a scrawny and wizened youngster of nine or ten was sitting. The woman, as she saw him, paused and stuck her arms akimbo.

"Didn't I tell you, you lazy little loafer," she cried shrilly, "not to be sittin' here an' gettin' in the way?"

The boy drew up against the side of the banisters and cowered tremblingly:

"I'm sorry, ma—I'm sorry, ma," he kept repeating, an arm ready to ward off any blow.

This time none came from her, however; and, as she passed, the youngster breathed a prayer of thanks that a stranger had been present. He changed his tone almost immediately. As the man came abreast of him, it was proven that the meanness and the cruelty in those eyes came from the very soul. With a subdued snarl and an ugly leer of joy he kicked out with his foot. The boy caught the boot squarely on the shin and started to cry out. He held it back, however, as he realized that his complaining would only bring more tirades from his parent. The prospective roomer stepped briskly up several stairs and again turned and grinned mockingly at the lad. In return the boy glanced at him with feverish eyes—eyes that held, to their very depths, an implacable hatred such as can come to a child.

Upstairs, highly pleased with what to him had been an enjoyable episode, Three-finger Carney inspected the room briefly. He seemed thoroughly satisfied from the moment of his entrance.

"That's the stuff," he said. "Just what I want. Night watchman's my job, an' this looks like a quiet an' decent place to flop. I'm sleepin' days, so try to keep the floor right. I'll be back with a few of my duds early to-night—an' here's your three-fifty!"

If Three-finger Carney had seemed pleased with his lodging place on his first inspection, he was entirely satisfied about it when he had moved in with his rusty and battered bag and closed the door behind him. The cruelty now spread from his eyes to his entire face, and he paced around and about the small room looking like some foul bird of prey anticipating the torturing of his quarry. He paused before the window. Kneeling down he peered cautiously

from under the lowered shade at a window directly opposite his own on the other side of the street.

"Ain't I the lucky bird?"

The venom in his face was startling. For twenty minutes he stayed there kneeling and gazing at that window across the way. He got up finally and clasped his hands. He rubbed them together time and again and allowed a gruesomely diabolic smile to crease his lips.

"Oh, yea," he whispered, "I'm lucky, all right, I am! You'll know it, too, pretty soon—'Big' Murray!"

He sat down on the bed, shaking, as if the sheer strength of his thoughts had unnerved him.

It was nearly four years ago when he had met Big Murray, who had for the first time drifted into Regan's place. Carney, standing at the end of the bar and watching each arrival with his snakelike eyes, had seen instantly that the youngster was new to the place. He had seen more—that the newcomer was half seas over and determined to become thoroughly so. Out of a job or a gambling loss. Anyway, he had watched him carefully, and, when the big fellow had stumbled out about an hour later, Carney had slunk out of the side door and followed him. With a gentle murmur that "it seemed he was in trouble," he had accosted him, suggesting that he always liked to help a guy out when he could. Wouldn't he come up to his room and talk things over? And Murray had!

His story was simple. A bricklayer, and he'd fought with the foreman and knocked him out. He'd lost his job and had trouble with the union—and jobs were no cinch to pick up when building was getting slack. That was all, and he was now down to his last dollar and some cents.

"Well," Carney had said, carefully watching his man, "you needn't be for long, kid!"

"Whaddayamean?" the other had queried.

"Oh, there's ways," and Carney had smiled softly. "With a big guy like you it's a pipe. Take me—it's kinda hard, but you got the strength, an' I sure can tell by your phiz that you got the nerve. Yep; it's a pipe!"

"What's a pipe?" the youngster had queried frowningly.

"Different things—different things," Carney had replied smoothly. "Me, now, I been touchin' the light work—liftin' leathers, a little house work when the women are alone, once in a while a stick-up. But I ain't got the real strength, see, like you——"

He had paused abruptly, his face going pale as he cringed back. Murray had risen and a lot of the alcohol had left him:

"You mean a crook," he had cried. "To become a crook?"

Carney had been wise enough to let the anger somewhat burn down before again taking up the cudgels.

"Aw, say," he had said, "you don't need to get so excited about it! Listen. What are these guys you work for but crooks, anyway? Ain't they just stealin' your muscles an' your brains? Ain't it plain stealin' they're doin' when you think what they pay you? Crooks, eh? Huh, kid—they're the crooks. It's guys like I an' you, before we get wise, that's the fools! Do they care——"

For some time the mean little crook had reasoned. He used all the hackneyed soap-box anarchist propaganda; he dwelt lengthily on the ease with which things were put over; he pointed out that his pupil would be able to live in style; and in the end he won. To celebrate the partnership he had taken Big Murray out for a night of it!

From then on Carney's path had been pleasanter. Big Murray, he learned, was absolutely fearless; also, he had a natural aptitude for doing the right thing at the right moment. With this

courage, Carney was able to try for bigger jobs—jobs that he had longed to execute, but the danger of which had caused his spine to chill. His part was chiefly the planning, and it was his cunningness that kept them out of the hands of the law for over two prosperous years.

Now, as he thought of it, he cursed again. The years might have been more prosperous, too, if it hadn't been that Big Murray would never steal from any one who didn't have plenty—that, and his soft heart. He had made it understood that he didn't want any rough stuff, and Carney was not allowed to hit when it wasn't necessary. It had made them lose out in lots of cases, too—and it had done more. It had taken one of the chief joys in life away from the cruel and cowardly little rat!

The memory of the final break, so poignant to him, came back as he sat on the bed. He raised his head again and glared at the window—glared at it until a malicious smile came to his lips.

"I'll get you, Big Murray," he whispered. "I'll get you, all right," and again his head sank onto his hands.

It was nearly two years ago that night of the split. Times had been hard in consequence of slim purses and free spending. Carney, with his partner's approval, had decided to try the old hallway game. They had gone up to a fairly prosperous and exceedingly quiet residential section. From the beginning Carney had been angry. Lack of cash for the last few days had annoyed him, and the wait of over an hour, before a victim appeared, had got still more on his nerves. At last one had come into sight, and Carney had said viciously:

"I hope he's got the roll. If he hasn't, I'll stick him clean in the ribs!"

"You will not," Murray had admonished, as they slunk along. "An' don't do no forgettin'!"

The business had gone smoothly. As the man had stepped into the vestibule,

Big Murray was after him and upon him before the unsuspecting citizen realized what was happening. One of the holdup man's huge arms was gripping his hands behind his back in a grasp of steel, while the other was tightly closed over his mouth.

"Make one yap an' I'll have to be rough," whispered Murray. "Promise not to raise no fuss?"

The man nodded affirmatively, and his captor, much to Carney's fright, let his mouth alone. The victim had been as good as his word and stood there passively.

Much to his delight Carney then got busy. This was the job he loved most. Although the man seemed eminently well off, the little crook experienced a sad surprise. The pockets yielded a cheap nickel watch, a wallet with several cards and letters—and precisely eight dollars in cash.

Carney had cursed and brought the back of his hand across the captive's mouth.

"Quit that," warned Murray.

"You beastly little rat," muttered the prisoner with loathing.

Then it was that the craven lost his head. His hand flashed to his breast, and a knife came out.

"Beas'ly little rat, eh?" he queried angrily. "I'll 'rat' you right to your heart!"

Big Murray, for all his clumsiness, showed his agility. Still retaining his hold on the victim, his hand shot out and secured the wrist that held the blade. Then, with a sudden wrench, he obtained the weapon and said curtly to his confederate:

"Lay off that, you fool. Haven't I always told you—an' don't you know what a jam you'll get us into?"

Then it was that Carney lost his head completely. With an enraged snarl he stepped back and reached for his right hip.

"Lay off, eh? Get in a jam, eh? Let this guy call me a rat, eh?"

The action was rapid. There were two flashes—one of dull blue steel, the other of the brighter knife blade. The automatic never went off, but an agonized cry came from the owner of it. The knife, dexterously wielded by Big Murray, had severed the last two fingers of the gun hand as Carney had been about to pull the trigger!

Big Murray had kept cool. With a fervent promise to "do for" the victim if he called out, Big Murray literally threw Carney over his shoulder, hurried down the steps, and was racing at record pace along the street. Several minutes later he had hailed a taxi, taken his partner home, and then informed him that he was finished—not only with him, but with the whole dirty business forever!

"Finished, eh?" Carney said to himself now, getting to his feet and making for the window. "I'll finish him, all right, all right!"

But Three-finger Carney, as he had been dubbed from that day, did not seem to be in any particular hurry to do the job. He carried out in his actions his words to the effect that he was pursuing the calling of night watchman. He was in all day, with his shades drawn, and not a sound came from his room. The landlady said he was the best lodger she had ever known.

Three-finger, however, was not sleeping when he appeared so silent during the long days. Sitting by the window and peering from under the shade had become a mania with him by now. He would alternate this by removing his gun at intervals and practicing drawing a bead on the window opposite—the window of the room where Big Murray lived.

Never once did he lift the shade; never once did he allow himself to be seen in the daylight. April blossomed

into May, and May into warmer June, and still the cruel-eyed crook stuck to his campaign. He was becoming more nervous now, more apt to indulge in his beloved habit of picking on the weak and helpless whenever he found it possible.

For some reason, probably because his mother would not defend him, he had declared war on the youngster who had been on the stairs that first day and received his kick. It pleased as well as incensed him to see the stoical calm with which the lad would hold in his cries. He did not see, however, that single glance of fervent hatred that was always cast at him as he passed on.

As June began to wane Three-finger Carney became positively unstrung. It was all he could do now to be civil to the landlady; and, when it came to her son, the one time he happened to meet him on the stairs he inflicted a blow that left marks for more than a month. At his window, too, an observer might have thought him a madman. Surely he raved like one—hoarse whispers under his breath against Big Murray. Also, his automatic was constantly in his hand now, drawing a bead behind that lowered shade on the window across the way.

The great day at last arrived—the Fourth of July. All the previous night he had been awake, and his nerves were at a tension that must have been torturing. But it would be over, he reflected, in a mere two or three hours. Smugly and gleefully he told himself that he was the cleverest guy in the game. Who else, he wanted to know, would have been able to dope out as good stuff?

The reformed Big Murray—now driving a taxi—was certainly leading a regular life. Carney had learned a year ago that he lived in the house opposite. He hadn't been fool enough to take any chances, but had waited for the one that would give him a room within firing distance. At last it had come, and

here he was. He had noticed, too, that his enemy had developed habit and system to the *n*th degree. Promptly at six he arose, promptly at six-five he shaved daily, and promptly at six-thirty he left the house. A good young man, all right!

"An'," Carney added, with the trick he had developed of speaking to himself, "a good corpse!"

He was sure now that he would never be suspected. It would be laid away as one of the accidents incident to the big holiday. To strengthen this, he was aware that this street was in a neighborhood where the young toughs and gangsters flaunted firearms on July fourth and were not backward in pulling triggers. Oh, yes; it was a pipe—the easiest pipe he had ever known. A stray bullet would be the verdict—and nothing else!

He looked at his alarm clock. It was ten minutes of six. How he ever lived through the next ten or fifteen minutes he never knew. He examined his weapon, feverishly taking it apart and placing it together again and seeing that it worked properly. He paced his room; he looked from under the shade; he made sure that he had left the window fully raised; he prayed that his aim might not go wrong. Incidentally his aim always had been steady and deadly.

At one minute of six—for he could not wait for the sixty seconds to go by—Three-finger Carney went to the window. Between the shade and the sill, a mere half-inch of space showed. Through this he stuck the tip of his automatic. He held it rigidly with his left hand, while his right rested on the trigger. If his eyes looked cruel normally, they took on now the glint of some ghoulis monster.

He cursed Murray for being late—or not on time, rather. In the street below him he heard numerous reports of pistols and giant firecrackers splitting the air. Once more he smiled grimly.

He certainly was the cleverest guy in the game and no mistake. Not one man in a million would get the real line on the thing. A stray shot—a stray shot—ha, ha!

Big Murray at last arose. This was told by the sudden upletting of his shade. In a moment more he saw him. He was getting out of bed, stretching his giantlike form and rubbing his eyes. He went as usual to the washstand by the window. There he laid out his brush and soap and razor. Apparently he was humming a tune—a happy and carefree tune.

He lathered his face, he carefully stropped his blade, and then he put it to his face.

Three-finger Carney, his eyes gleaming cruelly, steadied his hands and took careful aim. His forefinger tautened on the trigger!

It stopped at the first pressure. The whole thing was somewhat confused. Hapily he heard a creak at the door—he felt the shade rustle as a breeze came from that direction—and he heard something strike the floor with a bang and sizzle-sizzle.

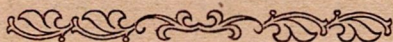
Turning, the scene was kaleidoscopic. First he noticed a burning firecracker

on the floor—but a firecracker that for sheer bulk was quite beyond his imagination. It looked like some ghastly and devastating bomb. At the same time his eye took in the opened transom and the disappearing face of the boy on whom he had lavished such hatred and meanness. Next his nerves went to smash; the red-papered sizzling thing assumed monumental proportions!

A cry of intense fear escaped him, and he dropped his weapon. With a bound he was after the firecracker. He darted for it and missed. In fact, he made several attempts to capture the object that to him looked like a death message. Finally he did. Grasping it securely in both hands he forgot all about Big Murray—all about his revenge—all about everything in the world except that he must save himself. He rushed to the window and lifted the burning cracker high in order to get it as far away from him as he could while hurling it into the street!

A boom came that sounded like the thunder of doom—and doom it was to Three-finger Carney! He shrieked hysterically as he looked at his hands.

The forefinger of his right hand was blown away.



WHICH IS RIGHTFUL HEIR?

UPON the result of a legal battle which is being waged in Leavenworth, Kansas, depends the disposition of an estate valued at more than two hundred thousand dollars. The rival claimants of the estate are Mrs. Maggie Meyers and the children of Mrs. Josephine Stimpson. Mrs. Meyers and Mrs. Stimpson, who were born in the same year, were once playmates in an orphanage in Leavenworth. A jury will decide which woman is the daughter of Mrs. Marie Pieper, who bequeathed a fortune in California real estate to her child.

Mrs. Pieper placed her daughter in the orphanage at an early age. The records of the institution show that Mrs. Stimpson, who died recently, was Mrs. Pieper's daughter, but Mrs. Meyers contends that the authorities made a mistake in recording the histories of the two children, and that her identity was confused with that of Mrs. Stimpson. Scars Mrs. Meyers alleges she received when a child in a fire at Mrs. Pieper's home, promise to play an important part in the case.

The Satchel's Secret

by *Walter Pierson*

Author of "The Yellow Note," etc.

STOPPING at the curb before the entrance of the office building, Staler glanced inside, as though waiting for a friend. There was a vacant look in his face. His expression was that of a bored man. He yawned. He extracted a cigarette case from his pocket and took from it a cigarette. Returning the case, he took out a match, lighted the cigarette, and puffed lazily.

To an observer it would have appeared that Staler was killing time and was half asleep. In reality, he was alert. Through his half-closed eyes he saw the messenger come along the walk carrying the leather satchel. Staler knew all about that satchel. He had made it his business to know.

Every Saturday morning at a quarter after eleven o'clock, a messenger from the Great Stores Company entered the First National Bank on the next corner. He carried an empty leather satchel that was supplied with the very latest in locks.

Half an hour later, at a quarter of twelve precisely, the same messenger emerged from the bank and hurried down the street toward the Great Stores. Now the satchel was filled with bundles of currency and packages of coin. It was heavy, and the messenger carried it carefully. Staler knew that a fine chain connected the satchel with the messenger's wrist.

It was not always the same messenger. The Great Stores Company had two, and on some Saturdays a certain one made the trip, and on other Saturdays the other. But there was

small difference in the messengers. Neither was much physically, when compared to Staler.

The heavy satchel, of course, contained the pay roll of the Great Stores which amounted to about twenty thousand dollars. It was made up by the bank from a working sheet prepared by the Great Stores' head bookkeeper. The messenger merely took the satchel to the bank, saw it filled and locked, and returned with it to the store. There the head bookkeeper unlocked it and prepared the money for distribution.

The messenger passed, and Staler glanced at him dreamily, yawned again, and drifted down the street in the same direction. For twelve Saturdays he had done this. Staler wanted to make certain that the messengers were creatures of habit. What he saw to-day convinced him.

The man with the satchel always left the bank at the same time and went to the Great Stores by the same route. He was methodical in all his movements. It always was the same satchel, and both messengers carried it in their left hands. Each messenger also carried an automatic pistol. Staler had ascertained that, also.

He remained some distance behind his man, but followed him until he turned into the Great Stores. Then Staler cut through a cross street and hurried to the little restaurant, and went to a table in the rear of the room, where another man was waiting. He sat down, greeted the other man, gave his order and got his food, then spoke.

"Well, Melk?" he asked.

"Everything as usual, Staler."

"No use in comparing notes, then. As far as I could see, there wasn't a thing changed."

"Not a thing. I timed the fellow. He passed that doorway exactly at five minutes of twelve."

"Anybody around?"

"Not half a dozen persons. There never is at that hour. Ten minutes later a crowd pours out of the loft building."

"Good enough!" Staler said. "Now you listen to me, Melk. We pull the thing next Saturday."

"It's about time," Melk declared. "We've wasted three months nosing around."

"And we've made it safe. We can't lose now, unless old Mrs. Fate steps in and asks to be dealt cards in the game. Next Saturday it is! And somewhere in the neighborhood of ten thousand dollars for each of us after it is over. Some haul!"

"Any change in the plans, Staler?"

"Not a change, Melk. Everything is perfect. We'll separate now, and you be on hand next Saturday. We don't want to be seen together again."

"I getcha!" Melk whispered. "If there is any change, you know how to get me by telephone."

"There won't be any change, Melk. The plan is perfect. Even old Mrs. Fate would have a hard time wrecking it. She'll play no joke on us this time, Melk. That's all. You'd better go out of here first."

II.

Staler was up at an early hour the following Saturday morning. He took a cold plunge, dressed carefully in inconspicuous clothing, ate breakfast at a little restaurant where he was not known, and then went to a cigar store and entered a sound-proof telephone booth. He called Melk.

A few words over the telephone wire assured Staler that Melk was feeling quite well and was ready to do the part assigned him. Staler returned to his room in the quiet little hotel in a side street. He removed his coat, sat down before a window, and began thinking.

Staler was a good general in a way. Though all his plans were complete, and perfect, he thought, yet he wished to review them before the campaign started. He concentrated his mind on the affair, thought of every detail, and finally smiled and arose, to stretch his arms above his head and then expel his breath in a single great gasp. Staler was ready!

He was satisfied that he had overlooked nothing. Every minor detail had received his careful consideration. The pay roll of the Great Stores Company was as good as in his hands, and without fear that he would be apprehended afterward.

Glancing at his watch he saw that it was ten o'clock. He looked around the room. He had packed all his things in a suit case and bag. It was time to start.

Staler descended to the office and paid his bill. He engaged a taxicab and journeyed to the nearest railway station, and checked bag and suit case at the parcel stand. There they would remain, to be sold later for charges, for Staler did not intend to reclaim them. And he flattered himself that there was nothing in them that would give a clew to his identity.

Leaving the station he walked slowly through the busy streets until he came to the corner where the bank was located. He had timed himself well, and so he did not have to loiter around and run the risk of being observed. As he reached the corner he saw the messenger of the Great Stores Company entering the bank with the empty leather satchel.

Staler hurried on down the street,

taking the route the messenger would take later. He glanced at his watch again, for he had everything timed, and he did not care to make a mistake. Being late, or being ahead of time, would be a grave mistake.

In a cross street he came to the loft building. There were two entrances side by side. One led to a series of busy lofts that would disgorge a throng of employees at the noon hour. The other led to a vacant loft.

Staler darted into the latter and went noiselessly up the stairs. He took a key from his pocket, unlocked the door of the loft, and entered. A glance sufficed to tell him that the loft was empty, as he had expected.

On the other side of the big room was another door, and Staler unlocked that also and glanced into a tiny, half-dark hallway. He closed the door, recrossed the room, went into the front hall, closed that door, and walked down the stairs. Another glance at his watch showed him that it was ten minutes of noon.

Staler's observations had proved to him that the messenger generally passed that door at five minutes of twelve. So he had but five minutes to wait. Outwardly he was calm; inwardly his nerves were on edge.

He looked across the street. He saw Melk, on time to the second, walking along slowly. Melk stopped directly across from the door, stepped to the curb and lighted a cigar, glancing over his cupped hands to make sure that Staler was at his post.

"Everything lovely!" Staler told himself. "Couldn't be better! A quick haul and an easy one! Even old Mrs. Fate can't stop us now. It's as good as done!"

Staler looked down the street, and for an instant his heart almost ceased beating. For here came the messenger, a slave of habit, on time to the second also. He carried the leather satchel

that meant so much to Staler and Melk. Staler's right hand slipped into his coat pocket and grasped a peculiar tool. The handle was of metal, heavy, and well-balanced. The other end was a pair of nippers that would cut strong metal swiftly and neatly.

He made sure that he could get this affair out of his pocket instantly, without having it catch on the side or the flap. Staler thought of everything! He glanced across the street at Melk again, and knew that Melk had seen the messenger. Melk stepped from the curb and started slowly across the thoroughfare as though to enter the loft building.

Staler almost grinned. This went to show what a man of brains could do if he was methodical and took time to gather information and plan correctly. Here would be a great haul and a swift and sure get-away. The police would be some puzzled and undoubtedly make many arrests and hold many persons for investigation. And while that was going on, Staler and Melk would be far away and still traveling, enjoying the proceeds of the daylight robbery.

Carelessly Staler stepped back a couple of feet or so. The messenger, looking straight ahead and walking swiftly along the face of the building, came toward the doorway. He came opposite it and started to pass.

Swiftly and silently Staler sprang forward. His arm flashed up and the heavy handle of the tool he had taken from his pocket crashed against the messenger's head in a tender spot behind the left ear. The messenger groaned once and toppled forward.

Staler whirled the tool in his hand, and with the other hand he grasped the leather satchel. The chain was there, as he had supposed it would be, connecting the satchel with the messenger's wrist. Staler snipped twice with the tool and the chain parted.

Melk got in his work now. He

shrieked and ran forward. Men and women turned at the sound of his voice. They saw the body of the messenger stretched out on the walk. They saw a man disappearing into one of the doors. They saw Melk rushing forward to lift the victim.

Instantly a crowd had formed. A policeman thrust his way through it, and found Melk lifting the head of the stricken messenger.

"I saw it, officer!" Melk volunteered. "I was just coming across the street. This man was hurrying along, carrying a satchel. Another man darted from the doorway, seized the satchel, and smashed this man on the head. Robbery, I guess."

"A Great Stores' messenger!" the policeman gasped. "Pay-roll robbery, I suppose."

Melk made himself generally useful. Other policemen came and an ambulance was called. A detective put in his appearance. Melk was questioned again.

"He was a man of ordinary size," Melk declared. "He had on a brown suit and a hard hat. He ran into that doorway."

Melk pointed to the opening that led to the busy lofts. And at that moment there came streaming through it the horde of workers, going to take their noon hour. The policemen fought in vain to make a search.

Smiling broadly Melk crept slowly to the edge of the crowd, and then went rapidly down the street. He had done his part. He had directed the police to the wrong door. And, as a matter of fact, Staler was a large man, and wore a dark-gray suit and a soft hat.

III.

Staler, carrying the satchel, took the stairs four at a bound. He threw open the door of the empty loft, closed it behind him and locked it, and darted quickly across the room.

Throwing open the other door, he darted into the little hallway. He ran the length of it noiselessly, alert. At the end was an open window. Six feet below the window was the roof of an adjoining building.

Staler dropped to the roof and ran across it for a distance of twenty feet, where the roof ended against a third building. Here was another open window, and Staler crept through it and lowered it quickly. He was in a room in another quiet hotel, where he had registered the week before, and where he had another suit case.

He did not waste seconds now. Two tugs at his waist, and the dark-gray trousers came from him. He drew off the coat and waistcoat. Beneath the thin gray suit was another suit of black.

Staler rolled the gray clothes into a bundle, hurried into the bathroom, and tossed the clothes down into the air shaft. The soft hat he had been wearing followed the clothes. He picked up a derby and put it on his head, opened the suit case and put the satchel in it beneath a bundle of shirts, and stepped to the hall door.

Locking the door of the room, Staler descended to the office and for the second time that day paid a hotel bill. He asked a boy to call a taxicab for him, tipped the bell hop for his service, and directed the chauffeur to take him to a railway station, but not the one where he had checked the other suit case and grip.

Staler was a bit nervous about it yet, but he did not show it in face, voice, or manner. To an ordinary observer he was a man catching a train and nothing more. When the station was reached, he glanced at the big clock on the wall, and then sat down in a corner of the waiting room and began looking through a newspaper.

Ten minutes later he saw Melk walk

through the waiting room and toward the gate. Staler got up and followed. Melk showed his tickets and passed through; he had a lower berth for Chicago. Staler showed his and was passed also. Staler evidently was a man of affairs—he had a compartment all to himself.

Inside the compartment Staler tossed the suit case to a corner, took out a cigar, bit off the end, and began chewing it. The train slipped from the station and reached the open country. Presently the conductor came through. He found Staler going through a bundle of impressive-looking papers, still the picture of a man of large affairs.

The train roared on. Came a tap at the door, and Staler arose and opened it. Melk slipped inside.

"Everything all right?" Melk asked.

Staler grinned. "Everything is lovely, Melk," he replied. "It goes to show what a man with brains can do. There wasn't a slip anywhere. And you must have done your part well."

"According to orders," Melk said.

"And now for the celebration, Melk. Open that window, so we can toss out the satchel after we empty it. I'll have to cut the blame thing open, but I'm prepared for that, too. Got a sharp knife all ready for the job."

Melk tugged at the window and got it open. Staler locked the door, got the

suit case, unlocked it, and took out the satchel.

"There we are, Melk," he said. "About ten thousand each according to the dope. It pays to go slow and plan things well. Not a slip anywhere."

Now he began using the knife. He made an incision in the tough leather after a time and cut a long slit.

"Get ready to give your eyes a feast, Melk," he said. "Here we go to Easy Street for a few months. Brains does it. Even old Mrs. Fate couldn't step in and queer this deal. We had it planned too well. We——"

Staler had been dumping the contents of the leather satchel on the floor. Now he cursed, then went down on hands and knees to investigate and to curse again.

"Old Mrs. Fate——" he gasped, tugging at his collar with one hand, as though about to strangle.

The satchel contained canceled checks of the Great Stores Company—and nothing more!

Said Melk an hour later: "I thought something was wrong. Right after the messenger you sapped, the other came along with another satchel. I thought that was funny. He had the pay-roll coin, I suppose, and the bird you soaked had been to get these canceled checks."

"Old Mrs. Fate will have her little joke," Staler muttered disconsolately.

POLICE SUBDUE MADMAN WITH GAS

GAS was used by the Parisian police recently to capture a madman. Bernard Stieman, a Russian cobbler, became insane and suddenly barricaded himself in a room and threatened to kill any one who attempted to enter. To prevent unnecessary loss of life the police refrained from an attack on the room. Instead they carried two tanks of gas to an adjoining chamber and began to introduce the sleep-producing chemical into Stieman's apartment by way of a transom. The madman, becoming aware of the preparations for his subjugation, opened the door and tried to escape, but he was overpowered and taken to an asylum after he had wounded himself slightly with a chisel.

The Trigger of Conscience

by Robert Orr Chipperfield

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

WHEN Detective James Doyle, who was supposedly the new house secretary of the Broadlawns Country Club, is killed by a shot at the club's Halloween dance, Renwick Crane, the famous detective from O'Hare's Agency in the city, undertakes to find the murderer. Sheriff Coburn and Coroner Fellowes are already on the scene when Crane arrives. Samuel Estridge, the well-known criminal lawyer, is the secretary of the club, and Rutherford Sowerby, the banker, is another member. Crane learns that Doyle was shot through the heart, as he stood on the veranda under the dim light of a dragon lantern. The electric lights had been lowered, and the shot came from the inside through an open window. After the tragedy, Philip Dorrance and his wife, "Empress Josephine;" Ogden Bowles, a broker of forty who has brought Mrs. Carter; Ralph Fraser, of Texas, a guest of his brother, Jack Fraser, and Mrs. Fraser; Mrs. de Forest and her niece, Alice Dare; Gerald Landon, a young man in Sowerby's bank—all gather in the rotunda of the club. Young Mrs. Sowerby has fainted and has to be taken home. Crane has a talk with Mrs. Carter, who spoke to Doyle shortly before the fatal shot, and Mrs. de Forest assures him she heard two pistol reports. The sheriff retains Mrs. de Forest's necklace, which is found in the dragon lantern, and Crane then permits everybody to leave. He himself remains at the club. After a careful study of the building, he finds Estridge in the billiard room, and gets a line on the various members. Taking leave of Estridge on the veranda, he is surprised to find Murdock, the club steward, with a pail and brush, removing the crimson stain on the porch. Then Saunders, a man employed by Estridge to watch the grounds, reports that Lindsay, another of Estridge's guards, was found unconscious in the bushes, a gash in his head, a small pistol at his side. Crane examines Murdock and finds the steward's story is not entirely straight. Jewett, one of Crane's men, next reports to Crane certain mysterious movements of Murdock. Crane then sees Fellowes, and they are both inclined to think Doyle may have been killed by a bullet from the small revolver, which hit Lindsay in the bushes, when it was tossed out of a second-story window. In an interview with Mrs. Sowerby, the detective infers she is trying to hide something. Ralph Fraser, who proffers his service as a gun expert, loses his enthusiasm when he sees the small gun. Crane next sees Mrs. Carter and Philip Dorrance quarreling in a glen, and, when he calls on Mrs. Carter, she tells him she left Mrs. Sowerby alone in the dressing room on the second floor of the club, when she came below, just before the fatal shot.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SHOT FROM THE AIR.

IT seemed to Crane, despite his long years of training in self-control, that his face must have betrayed his surprise at Mrs. Carter's astonishing revelation, but he did not permit his glance to waver, and his voice was as steady as her own calm one. "You did not hold any conversation with Mrs. Sowerby when you came upon her in the dressing room?"

"No. There are two rest rooms, you know, and I had been reclining in the other one; I merely glanced in her room as I passed. I do not know when she

went downstairs. As I told you, the sound of the shot, just as I reached the bottom, stunned me so that I was practically oblivious to everything about me for some little time. But in what way can I help you, Mr. Crane?" She hesitated and then added: "I trust the matter will be cleared up soon, and the murderer discovered, not only in the interests of justice, but because I am thinking of going away."

She glanced off as she spoke toward the little cottage, half hidden among the bare trees, and there was an unmistakable note of wistfulness in her tones. The controversy, which he had overheard in part in the glen that morning,

returned to the detective's mind, and her final words rang again in his ears: "The world is wide and Broadlawns is only a tiny corner of it." Had she defied Dorrance to the end, and would what he meant to tell run her and drive her forth from her quiet home?

"Isn't your decision rather a hasty one, Mrs. Carter?" His tone was that of studied indifference, but the one in which she replied was slightly shaken.

"No. I have not discussed it, but for some time I have considered returning to my old home. As soon as I can arrange my affairs and dispose of my little place here I am going back."

"To Raleigh?"

"Who told you I came from there?"

Her voice had steadied once more, but each word came slowly as though carefully chosen. "As a matter of fact we lived quite a little way out in the country, several miles from any one, except negroes and what are known down there as 'poor whites.' However, after my husband's death, I transacted my financial affairs with bankers in Raleigh and naturally gave them as my business reference on coming here."

"You had friends here, Mrs. Carter? Why did you select Broadlawns as your home?"

"A mere whim." A little twisted smile came to her lips. "I wanted to get away from the South and everything that would remind me of it. I had seen pictures of the Broadlawns Country Club at the time of a golf tournament, several years ago, and, when I came to New York, an agent for suburban real estate whom I consulted had this cottage on his list. I came out to see it and was charmed by the whole atmosphere of the place, but of late I find that I have been growing homesick, and the climate does not agree with me. As soon as I am no longer needed as a witness for that tragic affair at the club I want to return to North Carolina."

"Yet if you were so anxious to get away from everything that reminded you of the South, you could not have been very happy there." Crane remarked. "You must forgive these personal questions, Mrs. Carter, but I shall have to make out the fullest possible report for my chief concerning every one who was on the scene of the crime."

"I quite understand," she replied. "My married life was not altogether happy, chiefly because of the loneliness and isolation in which my husband lived. He was elderly and had many eccentricities, but, after his death, I found pleasant friends in Raleigh during the short period of my stay there, and those I have made here are less congenial."

"What was your husband's full name, Mrs. Carter, and when did he die?"

"Asa Carter; his death took place about three and a half years ago. My maiden name was Nina Shirley, and I came from Charlotte. I was an orphan when I married Mr. Carter, eleven years ago. Doubtless some of my former school friends in Charlotte would remember me, but I have seen none of them since my marriage. My husband would tolerate no visitors, and my desultory correspondence soon languished. Our nearest post-office address, by the way, was a tiny hamlet called Mosely. I think, Mr. Crane, that that is all the information I can give you."

Her air of finality was pointed, but the detective made no move to depart. Instead he asked: "Do you know of any enmity which you may have incurred, Mrs. Carter, either here, or elsewhere? Is there any one, man or woman, to whom you may, however unconsciously, have given cause to harm you?"

"What a strange question!" She spoke in a low voice scarcely above a whisper. "Why should any one wish to harm me, Mr. Crane? I came here

a stranger, desiring only peace and seclusion, and I sought no society, the people hereabout sought me. It was only after repeated urging that I consented to become a member of the country club, but I have participated very little in the social life there and have made no really close friendships. To my knowledge I have not an enemy in the world."

"You say that you have made no close friendships, yet, among all the people here, with whom have you most frequently been associated?"

For a moment her smooth brow wrinkled as though in thought, and then she replied hesitatingly: "There is always rumor and gossip about a woman alone, especially in a small, circumscribed country-club community. I have avoided any but the most formal associations with the members, although Mrs. Fraser has been very cordial, and I have found little Miss Dare most unaffected and charming." She paused. "I have occasionally consulted Mr. Estridge or Mr. Sowerby about investments, and, when I first joined the club, Mr. Dorrance offered to teach me to play golf, but I did not care for it and proved a poor pupil. After several seasons I found myself barely acquainted with the others, with the exception of Mr. Bowles. He has been assiduous in his attempts to relieve my loneliness. If any gossip has reached your ears it must be in connection with his attentions to me, but they are merely those of a friend; I have no intention of ever marrying again. Really, Mr. Crane, I cannot understand what these questions may mean! Has any one been making any absurd accusations against me?"

Resentment struggled with a sort of resigned tolerance in her tone, and, with the insufficient data at his command, the detective dared not betray the knowledge gained by overhearing that conversation in the glen. But another phrase, which had been used by the

woman before him, returned to his mind: "Women have shown me scant mercy in my life." He decided to make one last effort.

"No one has been making any direct accusations, Mrs. Carter, but, as you say, there are always rumors and petty gossip in a place like this, not only about you, but about all other young and attractive women, and they are most cruel to their own sex. These are merely routine questions, for you, in common with the others who were present at the moment of the murder last night, have established your position. But can't you tell me if there is any woman who has been unkind to you and whom you have in your power to aid or injure if you would?"

Mrs. Carter rose, and the setting sun glinted on her copper-red hair as it had done that morning, her voice, too, holding the same note of controlled contempt. "I realize now that you have already been listening to what you call petty gossip about me, Mr. Crane, but I do not know to what you allude. None of it has reached my ears. However, as I have already stated, I have not an enemy in the world, nor is there any one, man or woman, whom I could injure if I would."

Crane rose also, and his frank, boyish, ingratiating laugh broke the tension in the air. "Mrs. Carter, I may tell you in confidence that, in my preliminary interviews with the different ladies of the country-club colony, each one has seemed to consider the others their potential enemies. I will not trouble you further now, and I will not intrude upon you again until the inquest, unless it is absolutely necessary."

His hostess' manner softened to graciousness as she accompanied him to the gate. "I wish it were within my power, Mr. Crane, to aid you in your inquiry, but the horrible affair of last night is as much of a mystery to me as it must have been to all those present, except

the murderer himself; more, in fact, since some of the house committee, at least, must have known why poor Mr. Grant—or Doyle—was installed in the club in the first place, whereas the majority of us were, and still are, ignorant of the motive for his presence there."

Taking leave of her the detective cranked up his little car and descended into the valley. Here the homes of the country-club colony clustered about the Colonial mansion of Mrs. de Forest. It was not to that august matron, however, that he paid his next visit, but, aided by the directions of a small boy whom he met by the roadside, he pulled up before a modern bungalow, its grounds still ablaze with late autumn flowers, and, alighting, asked for Mrs. Fraser.

She appeared almost upon the heels of her trim little maid, and her firm handclasp held no hint of other than the sentiments which she expressed in her greeting. "Can I help you in any way, Mr. Crane? My brother-in-law said that he met you at the coroner's this morning, but, unfortunately, both he and my husband have gone over to the club. However, if I may be of any assistance, I shall be only too glad to answer any questions to the best of my knowledge."

"Thank you." He accepted the seat to which she motioned him in the spacious, chintz-hung drawing-room and regarded her appreciatively across the little tea table, at which she proceeded to busy herself. Her mouth was sensitive, but humorous, her eyes candid and clear with the atmosphere of the clean outdoors which had tanned her skin an honest brown and tinted her chestnut hair with a faded gold. "I asked for you, Mrs. Fraser, but it was really Mr. Ralph Fraser I wanted to consult once more, for I understand that he is quite an authority on firearms."

"That sort of thing is a hobby with Ralph, but I know very little about it;

I have a horror of killing things." She gave a little shiver. "Whenever Ralph comes to see us he brings some new freak pistol or deadly trick knife. He goes to all kinds of trouble to find these things, but it is merely the enthusiasm of the collector."

"And your husband does not share it any more than you?"

She laughed. "Oh, Jack goes duck shooting every year, but, aside from that, I believe his only passion, beside business, is golf; he is as crazy about it as I am, and, if this dreadful thing had not happened at the club last night, we were going to teach Ralph to play during this visit. He brought down an outfit of everything suggested to him in a sporting-goods shop."

"Did he bring anything else, Mrs. Fraser? Any new freak weapon which he may have added to his collection? I should like to see it if he did. I am interested in such things, myself," the detective remarked casually.

"I don't know." She handed him a cup of tea across the little table. "Ralph only arrived on the final train before the dance last evening, and I was so busy dressing and seeing that he was served with a belated dinner that I really did not pay much attention to him beyond a hurried greeting. I believe I did overhear him tell Jack that he had some rather remarkable curiosity to show him later. If it is in the line of his hobby I am sure that he will be only too delighted to exhibit it to you, too."

Crane stirred his tea reflectively for a moment and then observed: "Of course I am trying to interview every one who was present when my colleague was killed last night, but it is rather a large order, in so short a time, before the inquest. Can you help me by telling me something about the rest of the people who were there?"

Mrs. Fraser raised protesting hands.

"Don't ask me for current gossip,

please! I never listen to any; perhaps that is why I am on cordial speaking terms with every one. They have all been here longer than we, with the exception of Mr. Bowles, who only became a member this season, and Mrs. Carter, who settled here two or three years ago."

"Mrs. Carter is one of your best friends, is she not, Mrs. Fraser?" Crane put the question in an idly inconsequential tone, but his hostess' surprise at its tenor made her reply with naïve haste: "Why, no. I was among the first to call upon her, and I found her very interesting. You see, we all know each other's every mood so well out here that, at times, we bore each other to tears, and a new personality is welcome. I tried to draw Mrs. Carter out and make a real friend of her, but there is something baffling about her. This something, while it does not actually repel one, seems to hold one at arm's length. She has always been very pleasant, but I do not feel that I know her any better than on the day of my first call." Mrs. Fraser paused and drew a deep breath. "But all this is dangerously close to gossip, isn't it? Mrs. Carter is reserved, but really very charming."

Crane placed his teacup upon the table. "Miss Dare is also a newcomer, is she not? And Mr. Landon, too?"

"Oh, Alice Dare is sponsored by her aunt, Mrs. de Forest, who is quite the leader of everything out here, and Gerald Landon is our own house guest and a dear boy. Jack put him up at the club for the season, and he plays splendid golf!" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "I think you know that he has a position in the bank of which Mr. Sowerby is president, and he and Alice—but there—I am gossiping again!"

Crane smiled. "I have already heard rumors of an engagement between them, Mrs. Fraser, so you are not telling tales out of school."

Her face sobered. "That rumor is a little premature, I am afraid, for they are both mere children without a penny between them, and Mrs. de Forest has more ambitious plans for her niece."

"Mrs. de Forest is very wealthy herself, is she not?" the detective asked. "I have heard of some famous diamonds of hers, and her estate on the hill seems to be the most pretentious on the countryside."

"Oh, yes, she has a great deal of money, I believe, but Alice is an orphan and wholly dependent upon her," Mrs. Fraser responded, adding, with a little laugh, "I suppose the whole neighborhood has heard about the famous De Forest necklace, but she hasn't worn it lately. I fancy it is too gorgeous for our modest set out here. You are not going, Mr. Crane? My husband and his brother ought to be back from the club very shortly, and they may be able to give you information of more value than I have been able to do, especially as Jack——"

She caught herself up suddenly, biting her lips, and Crane was quick to follow up her slip. "What, Mrs. Fraser? Why do you think that your husband would be especially able to give me information of value?"

She flushed beneath the clear tan of her cheeks and, after hesitating, drew a deep breath. "I am afraid that I have gone too far, now, not to explain, but I hope you will believe me. My husband has never betrayed the confidence of any one else to me, but wives have a sort of way of divining things, you know, and Jack is a member of the house committee of the club. I do not know why that poor detective, who was shot last night, was ever engaged to come out here, but I believe Jack does know, just as you must. That is why I thought that he would be better informed of the situation and able to help you."

"You have not asked him, Mrs.

Fraser?" Crane smiled as he held out his hand, and she smiled, too, as she placed hers within it.

"No, Mr. Crane. I knew that he would have told me if he could, but I observed last night, in the excitement following the shooting, that he did not seem as surprised as the rest at the penetration of your associate's disguise, nor even at the fact of the murder itself, and he was anxious only to discover the author of it. Of course he could not have anticipated the crime, but that he was not astounded when it did take place shows that there must have been a very serious reason for the employment of a private detective at Broadlawns—a reason as serious as life and death itself! I am wondering——"

"Yes?" he asked, as she hesitated once more.

"Why that moment of all others was chosen for the murder, virtually in the presence of a score of people, when the poor fellow might so easily have been done to death at any time during the past month in one of his solitary rambles about the lonelier stretches of the golf course. Could he have been on the point of succeeding, in whatever his quest was, or could some one else among us have discovered his identity and had another cause to fear the presence of a detective?"

"What made you think of that?" Crane asked quickly.

"I dare not accuse anybody!" She had paled beneath her tan, and her reply came in a low tone, surcharged with emotion. "I have not spoken of this to any one, not even my husband, because I was not sure of myself, sure, I mean that my imagination had not played me false. Yet it has been on my mind ever since, and I do not think that the noise of the shot could have quite robbed me of my senses, although it startled me, of course. Besides, I saw it an instant before the sound came."

"Saw what, Mrs. Fraser?" The detective prompted her eagerly.

"A tiny flash of light like a spark, which winked and went out, just as the roar of the shot reverberated through the wide spaces of the foyer."

"You were standing with Miss Dare, your husband, and your brother-in-law, between the entrance to the conservatory and the door leading to the billiard room, were you not? Do you recall in what direction you yourself were facing?" Crane could scarcely restrain the excitement which he felt from betraying itself in his tones. "Was it toward the porch and the window where the dragon lantern hung?"

"No," she responded slowly. "I remember distinctly that I was facing straight across the hall, past the foot of the staircase and in the general direction of the steward's desk and the entrances to the dining and smaller supper rooms. I was singing with the rest and had raised my eyes slightly, as most amateurs do when they reach for a higher note than their usual range. That is how I happened to see the tiny flash, I suppose, for it seemed to start quite far above my head, above the heads of any one there, and, in the brief second before it disappeared, I fancied that it moved slightly in a downward course. It was as though the shot were fired from the air."

"You say that you were looking past the foot of the stairs, but, if that moving spark, which you saw, were above the heads of any one standing on the floor of the rotunda, could it not have come from somewhere upon the staircase itself?" asked the detective. "Think carefully, Mrs. Fraser, for it is important."

But Mrs. Fraser shook her head with decision. "No, Mr. Crane. That was the first thought which came to me after the lights were turned on and the body discovered, but the flash was much far-

ther over toward the center of the hall than where the stairs end."

"Do you recall who was standing on the opposite side of the hall when the lights went up?"

"No!" she replied quickly, too quickly for her assertion to carry conviction. Evidently realizing this she added: "In the general excitement it seemed ages before some one found the switch for the lights, and then everybody was rushing about in the wildest confusion. But, while the people were assembling for the singing and the string orchestra was playing the introduction, I noticed several people on the opposite side of the hall; Mrs. de Forest in her chair, the Dorrances, Mr. Bowles, Murdock behind his desk, and several others moving about between. Really, Mr. Crane, that little flash may have meant nothing."

"Then, if it were not the flash from the revolver shot which killed Doyle—to put into plain words what your suspicions really mean, Mrs. Fraser—why did you say that the motive for his murder might have been other than the errand which brought him here, that some one else among you might have had a different cause to fear the presence of a detective?"

She looked genuinely distressed. "I—I scarcely know!" she said. "Naturally I was curious why a detective should have been installed in our peaceful little club without the knowledge of the majority of the members in the first place, and, in casting about in my own mind, I could think of only two reasons which might be even remotely possible; theft, or some impending social scandal. None of those on the opposite side of the hall, when the lights were lowered, could have been thought of as guilty of the former, for the steward is the essence of integrity, and the rest were all members like ourselves. As for scandal—sordid enough to reach the divorce courts, I mean—that is equally

unthinkable. I had a vague idea, without an iota of knowledge to back it up, that some one might have had a private reason, quite apart from our lives out here, for fearing Doyle's presence. Of course it is the most probable thing, isn't it, that, in the darkness, some stranger stole up from the rear hall beside the staircase——"

It was Crane's turn to shake his head. "And going out into the center of the hall, fired that shot which seemed to come from up in the air? No, Mrs. Fraser, I think we must dismiss that as even a possibility. But, if you know of no scandal and no theft, may I ask why you thought Doyle was sent out here?"

"Well, there have been a series of petty thefts, I believe, from the men's lockers. Besides, minor complaints have been made about the way the club accounts were kept during the summer. Our real clubhouse secretary left very suddenly and supposedly went West for his health, just before Mr. Doyle appeared among us, you know, and, although I had no more reason to suspect him of dishonesty than my own husband, I cannot think of any other reason for Doyle's having been engaged to come to Broadlawns at all."

"Mrs. Fraser"—Crane paused at the doorway, to which she had accompanied him—"you will learn at the inquest why my colleague was summoned here, and, in the meantime, I want to thank you for being as candid with me as you have. I will promise you to keep your confidence."

"I may have been indiscreet, but I told you only what I thought it was my duty to disclose, even though I may have been mistaken about that little flash of light," she responded. "If it is not necessary I do hope that you will not mention my silly little suspicions to any one."

He promised and took his departure, but, as he turned his flyver into the

road that led to the club, the detective realized that his clear-eyed, level-headed hostess had told him as much as she dared of her real suspicions, that she would not have mentioned them had they been either petty or silly, and that in her he had discovered a possible ally who might prove as valuable as Estridge himself.

He had started out that morning without a possible clew to guide him. Now he was returning to the club with a multiplicity of vague indications which pointed in so many different directions that he scarcely knew which to endeavor to trace first.

Why had Mrs. Sowerby lied and claimed to have been in the conservatory? In reality she had been upstairs at the moment the fatal shot was fired? What was the secret which Dorrance had threatened to divulge concerning Mrs. Carter, and whence had come her sudden decision to leave Broadlawns?

Aside from these questions, however, two others had presented themselves to Crane's mind. These he determined to have settled without loss of time by his operatives. One was born of a too hasty reply in the coroner's cottage that morning, and this question was unconsciously attested to by a remark of the lady whom he had just left; the second was the result of a ray of sunlight striking through the bare branches of trees.

On his arrival at the club he found a group of men, among them Rutherford Sowerby and the Fraser brothers, evidently awaiting him on the veranda, but, with a wave of his hand in greeting, he kept on around the drive to the rear. There the ubiquitous Murdock hastened out to him before he had fairly alighted, and he requested that the two men, who had come out with him from the agency, be summoned.

"Walsh," he began without ceremony to the younger of his operatives,

"I want you to catch the next train into town—the club bus will take you to the station. I may want my own car here as well as this flivver. Go straight to the old man and tell him I want you to go to Charlotte, North Carolina. Find out all you can about a young girl who lived there eleven years ago, an orphan named Nina Shirley, who married a rich, elderly man named Asa Carter and went to live on an estate near Mosely, a village not far from Raleigh."

Walsh, who had evidently been hearing the gossip of the club servants, smiled knowingly. "I get you, sir," he answered. "Tall, good-looking vamp with red hair pulled down tight over her ears."

"Not red hair—*black!*" Crane interrupted him brusquely. "I don't believe it was red until she came North, Walsh. Find out, if you can, why she wears it in that fashion; I think there may be a reason with a story behind it."

After he had concluded his instructions and Walsh had departed Crane turned to the other operative. "Jewett, without asking any questions of anybody or making yourself too conspicuous, I want you to nose around the clubhouse and see if you can find in the wall of either the big, round entrance hall or the conservatory the mark of a single bullet hole."

"Yes, Mr. Crane." Jewett spoke as stolidly as though he had been asked to find a package of cigarettes. "About how large caliber a bullet would it be?"

"Unless I am very much mistaken, Jewett, it will be of the smallest caliber known—.22, and you will find the mark of it considerably higher than your head."

CHAPTER XII.

"I KILLED HIM!"

WELL, Mr. Crane, have you been making much progress?" Rutherford Sowerby demanded. The detective had joined him and the Fraser

brothers on the veranda, a few minutes later.

Crane shook his head noncommittally. "I can't tell just yet, Mr. Sowerby. I stopped at your house this morning, and, although you were not there, Mrs. Sowerby very kindly received me."

"What?" demanded the ungallant husband. "A fat lot of valuable clews she could give you! All the gossip and petty scandal of the neighborhood!"

"It wasn't what Mrs. Sowerby told me, so much as what she did not tell me, which I found of partial interest in regard to the case." Crane smiled and turned to the younger of the Fraser brothers. "Everybody is most hospitable to me out here. I had lunch with Mr. Estridge, and just now, Mr. Fraser, your wife gave me a very delightful cup of tea." As he spoke, however, the detective looked beyond Jack Fraser to the latter's brother-in-law and observed that Ralph Fraser's face had turned a dull, brick red.

"Did she give you any information of value? By Jove, I wish she or some one could!" Jack Fraser exclaimed. "Aside from all selfish notions about the scandal of the thing and its reactions upon all of us here, more or less, it is the confounded mystery and the cowardly way the poor fellow was done to death that gets me! Of course, except for my brother here——"

"Oh, don't mind me!" Ralph Fraser rejoined. "I'm only an outsider; you three know why he was brought down in the first place and that ought to give you a line on the man who killed him. You can mark my words, though; this inquest of yours out here on Monday won't amount to a hill of beans. I'll watch the papers for the real results when I get back to Texas and Mr. Crane has had a chance to work out the case."

"I hope to work out some minor details, at least, in connection with it be-

fore that, Mr. Fraser," Crane remarked.

"Unless my brother is held as a material witness, which seems a most remote contingency, he has decided to go directly home again." Jack Fraser turned to the bank president as he spoke. "It will disappoint Elsie a lot, for she had looked forward to converting him to golf during this visit. But, after this tragedy, of course, the club will be closed for the autumn and winter, at least."

"Yes," Ralph assented somewhat grimly, "after I let a clerk in a sporting-goods store sell me a mail bag full of dinky little clubs and a couple of boxes of balls!"

"That is one funny thing about it!" Jack laughed. "If you happen to be a novice and you leave it to those chaps they usually load you up with all sorts of useless things, but the one who sold you that outfit of yours, Ralph, must have been caught napping, for he left out one of the most essential, if not the most essential, of the lot! I went through your bag at the house this morning and found that you have no driver!"

"Thought you brought your golf bag with you when you came over to the dance last night, Fraser," Sowerby remarked. "I've got a battered old driver that you can use, if they keep the course open. Don't play any more myself since I broke my ankle in that motor accident, a year ago, though my wife will persist in calling it gout! However, we're getting away from the main issue. About that shot last night, Mr. Crane——"

But Renwick Crane had slipped away quietly, without a word of excuse or apology, and, sauntering past the conservatory, where Jewett was painstakingly looking for the microscopic bullet hole, he found his way to the locker room at the rear. Its sole occupant was a slim, but athletic-appearing, young

man in the late twenties. A healthily tanned, smooth-shaven countenance turned in eager curiosity to the detective. "Hello, Mr. Crane! How are things coming with your investigation? I guess you don't remember me, meeting such a crowd of us here last evening."

"Yes, I do," Crane said. "You are the Frasers' friend, Mr. Landon, aren't you? You stood in the entrance to the conservatory when that shot was fired, I think you told us."

The young man nodded. "Funny thing about that," he remarked. "It must have been my nerves, of course, but I am in pretty fair condition and not usually jumpy. I could not actually have heard that bullet strike Doyle's body, even without the roar of the shot still pounding in my ears, but I could swear that I heard a dull sort of 'ping,' right near me, at the same instant that the revolver must have been fired. I suppose I was closer to that window, where Doyle was standing, than anybody else, but not close enough to hear the whirr of the bullet, let alone the impact when it found its mark. Odd, isn't it?"

"Very!" The detective spoke dryly, but the blood leaped suddenly in his veins. "I have found it to be my experience that imagination plays strange tricks with the most normal of us in moments of tense excitement. The entrance to the conservatory is wide; were you standing nearer the windows, or more toward your right, where the Frasers and Miss Dare were standing?"

Gerald Landon bent once more over the golf bag and the clubs he was examining, but not quickly enough to hide the boyish flush which mounted to his brow. "I was standing toward the left of the conservatory entrance, with my back almost turned to the windows of the rotunda which look out upon the veranda," he replied frankly. "I hap-

pened to be looking straight at the group of people you mention when the sound of the shot came."

"Then you saw nothing else at that instant? No sudden flash of light across your eyes, for instance?"

"No, Mr. Crane, not until the hubbub arose and all the lights were turned on full. I can tell you that, in spite of all that I went through overseas, I had a sickish minute when I ran out on the veranda with the others and saw that poor chap lying there! I liked him, and I believe that I got to be more chummy with him than any of the members of the club. I'm only a guest here, and, of course, I had no more suspicion of his real identity than most of the rest of us." Landon glanced up with a whimsical twinkle in his eyes. "Maybe he suspected me, though, of whatever it was he came out here to investigate! I don't think so, for it seems to me that it was I who sought his society, and he was a quiet sort of fellow; never talked much or asked a single question that I can remember. I used to drag him out to play a round of golf with me now and then. Just think of it! He handled this very driver many a time!"

As he spoke the young man held out a golf club, and Crane took it and examined it gravely, mentally noting its weight and shape and general difference from the others in Landon's bag. He handed it back and asked casually: "Haven't seen an odd driver lying about here anywhere, have you?"

"No. I'm just sorting out my own clubs from Jack's, for I've played my last round of the season. As soon as the inquest is over I shall be off for town."

Crane sauntered leisurely around the room, idly examining such lockers as were open, with the air of an interested visitor, but his keen, darting glance missed nothing. Then, with a nod to Landon, he strolled back into the ro-

tunda once more and to the left of the conservatory entrance.

Jewett, who was still pottering about within, suddenly heard a low, peculiar whistle. He hurried out to find his superior eying, with great absorption, a small spot in the oak paneling of the wall, just above his head.

"That's just a wormhole; I saw it before," Jewett remarked. "There are plenty more of them in the paneling on the other side of the entrance. The steward told me that these panels were very old and were brought from some other building and set in here."

"Wormhole, is it?" retorted Crane. "I've seen antique oak before, but I never saw a wormhole like freshly bored wood, nor one that dropped a grain or two of new sawdust. Look down at your feet."

The operative did so and uttered an exclamation of amazed vexation, as the yellowish specks glinted back at him from the floor which had been highly waxed for the dance of the previous night.

"That's what comes of taking things for granted. It explains, also, why I am still in the old rut, though years longer with the old man than you, Mr. Crane!" he declared. "I did notice that hole up there, but I had examined the others pretty thoroughly first, and I didn't think it would be worth while to probe this one."

His tone was so crestfallen that Crane withheld a rebuke and merely said: "Get a chair with a wooden seat and lend me your penknife; its blade is longer than mine. Look sharp, Jewett, before that group on the veranda are wise to what we are doing. Never mind about excuses now; we all make mistakes."

Jewett obeyed with alacrity, and, mounting the chair, his superior took from him the knife with its keen, narrow blade and began twisting it in the

tiny hole which marred the time-mellowed grain of the ancient wood.

Grain after grain of sawdust fell until, as the probe ground deeper, it began pouring in a continuous trickle upon the chair and floor. The early dusk was already dimming the spacious hall, and Crane worked quickly to end his task before Murdock appeared to turn on the lights. At last he felt the point of the knife grate against something metallic, and, with a muttered exclamation of satisfaction, he began twisting the blade in a wider circle.

"Strike something?" asked Jewett, his stolidity gone.

"I think so," Crane responded cautiously in an undertone. "That bunch still out on the porch?"

"Yes. There were only three of them before, but now there are a couple more," reported Jewett after reconnoitering. "They seem to be moving toward the door now; I guess they're breaking up. What's that? Got it?"

Crane stepped down from the chair, turned it about with its back to the wall and slid it quickly along the floor to a distance of several feet from the betraying hole. Then, closing the knife, he motioned Jewett to follow him and slipped into the conservatory. It was only when they were securely hidden from view behind a cluster of screening shrubs that he held out his hand to his companion. Upon the palm a diminutive globule of steel winked wickedly back at them.

"What's it mean?" Jewett demanded in a whisper and proceeded to answer himself. "There was two shots fired last night, and they were from different revolvers. Where's the one this came from?"

"I don't know yet, but I think that when we find it—and I am certain that it is still about the club somewhere—it will prove to be the oddest-looking weapon of its size that you ever came across. I am going to look about, and,

in the meantime, I want you to find that steward. Don't let him out of your sight until I send for you."

"No fear if you mean that Murdock!" retorted Jewett. "He's been tailing me all day; I couldn't lose him for a minute, and the questions he's been asking me would fill a book. There—that must be him, now!"

During his speech the lights had sprung up in the huge circular hall, which they had just left, and Crane dropped the bullet into his vest pocket and handed the knife hastily to his companion.

"Here, Jewett, you go out first and talk to him about anything under the sun except what we've just found. Get him away to the locker room or pantries on some pretext, so that I can beat it out of here without his knowing that we have been consulting together."

"All right, Mr. Crane." Jewett grinned and added: "Judging by his complexion I've a pretext in my hip pocket that will make him go off with me to any little quiet corner, and its not my gat, either!"

Left alone Crane made a careful circuit of the conservatory, dodging like a shadow from one tall shrub to another, sweeping aside the fanlike leaves of the palms where they concealed the floor. He looked searchingly into every corner, but with no success. Finally he emerged and was instantly hailed by a cluster of men who had gathered before the log fire on the hearth. Beside the Frasers and Rutherford Sowerby the group now included Samuel Estridge and a dapper young man in a Tuxedo, whom the detective recognized as Mrs. Carter's companion of that morning in the glen.

Crane strolled over to them, and Estridge presented him to Mr. Philip Dorrance, who expressed his pleasure with an obviously nervous little cough. "Just dropped in for a minute to see how the investigation into that sad af-

fair of last night was getting on, Mr. Crane," he explained. He was slightly flushed, and his pale, prominent blue eyes gleamed with a sort of triumphant excitement. "Have to be trotting along in a few seconds. My wife and I are dining out this evening with some friends down toward Rosemere, and we must motor several miles. She sent me—I mean I came to learn if anything had been accomplished toward solving the mystery."

His loquacity and overcordiality made the detective wonder for a moment whether or not he was exhilarated solely by his nervous sensibility.

"I do not know the method of procedure followed by the local authorities, Mr. Dorrance, nor whether they are in the habit of disclosing the initial steps of their progress or not, but we do not discuss the possible clues, which we have obtained in a case, until we have reached definite results." Crane spoke in a pleasant tone, but the meaning of his words sunk in, and Dorrance's flush deepened.

"Perhaps it would have been better for this fellow Grant, or Doyle, if he had taken some one into his confidence," he replied.

"We are going to close the club on Monday for an indefinite period," Estridge announced hurriedly to Crane. "Of course Murdock will remain here in charge, and an outside man or two will be kept, but the waiters and understewards will go. I don't imagine that any of us will care to gather here again until the spring comes. Sowerby and I are going to dine here to-night, and, if you would care to join us—"

"Thank you, Mr. Estridge, you gentlemen are both very kind, but I have work to do and shall have time only for a hurried meal. If you will excuse me now—" The detective was retreating as gracefully as possible when Jack Fraser called after him: "None of us are going just yet, except Mr.

Dorrance. If you will come into the locker room a little later perhaps we can show you something that will merit further investigation on your part!"

Crane laughed and shook his head as he disappeared into the billiard room, but the laughter died from his lips when the door had closed behind him, and he relaxed for a moment upon the leather seat which ran around the wall. For the first time he felt the inertia of mental and physical fatigue. He had frequently worked for days and nights without sleep, but then there had been some definite lead for him to go upon; now all real clues seemed to be lost in a maze of small talk and gossip of a snobbish community where not even death by violence was taken seriously, and each person appeared to care only for his neighbor's opinion.

Then the detective's hand crept up to his vest pocket, and he roused himself. The bullet, which reposed there, had not killed his colleague, but if he could discover whether it had been sped by accident or design, he would have gone a long way toward simplifying the apparent multiplicity of possible motives for the murder. Mrs. Fraser's keen wits had probed to the depths of the mystery without her even having knowledge of the loss of Mrs. de Forest's necklace; surely he, with his training and experience, was not to be baffled now!

Rising he began pacing back and forth in the narrow aisle between two pool tables, his mind alert once more. Where, in the short space of a minute or two at most, could any one have gone from the farther side of the hall, whence had come that tiny flash of light when the shot rang out, and where, unobserved or unnoted, had he or she concealed so cumbersome an object as that which he sought? Not upstairs, for Mrs. Carter's presence upon the lowest step guarded that domain; not out to the rear of the club where a host of

gossiping servants would have been waiting with curious eyes and prattling tongues, nor upon the veranda with its excited group about the dead man.

Neither could the weapon have been concealed in the conservatory nor locker room, for he had already searched both. What hiding place for it, then, remained?

Crane's eyes were lowered in thought as he paced reflectively to and fro. Suddenly he paused, and the question in his mind was answered at last. From beneath one of the tables, resting upon the bracket provided for it, protruded the handle of the bridge used in making difficult shots. From the corresponding bracket, under the edge of the other table, there appeared a handle of quite another kind.

It was a grip of leather and slanted at a sharp angle which denoted its unusual brevity when compared to the ordinary bridge. Crane stooped and glanced beneath the table, then closed his fingers gingerly about the leather grip and drew forth a new golf club of highly polished, but singularly heavy, wood.

Meanwhile the group about the fireplace in the great hall remained intact. Young Dorrance seemed to have forgotten his announced intention of immediate departure and was holding forth sarcastically about the ability of all detectives, official and private. Only the Frasers disputed with him, for Sowerby and Estridge were conversing aside in lowered tones, but all five were so deeply engrossed that they failed to observe the cat-footed Murdock when he took his accustomed place behind his desk. A tall, ungainly stranger, with whom he appeared to be upon the best of terms, lounged confidentially across the counter.

Neither did any of them become aware of the reappearance of Crane. He passed them silently, one hand held behind him, and joined the two at the

steward's desk. Jewett glanced in quick inquiry at his superior, and, when the latter nodded, he stepped aside and, entering the little office, he took up his stand directly behind Murdock, but the steward was oblivious to his presence.

He stood as though transfixed, gazing with a sort of horror at the golf club which the detective laid upon the counter before him, and it was only when Crane's voice, grown swiftly stern, rang out through the hall that the five men by the hearth ceased their several discussions and moved instinctively forward.

"Murdock, is this the golf club with which you reached out to touch that passing waiter last night, at the moment when the shot was fired?"

"I—I don't know, sir!" the wretched steward exclaimed. "I told you, sir, that I shouldn't be able to tell if I saw it again!"

"You put it back in the bag beneath the counter before you vaulted over and out to the veranda, to where Doyle's body lay?"

"Y—yes, sir!"

"Then how do you explain its presence, in place of one of the bridges, under a pool table in the billiard room?"

"I haven't the least idea, sir. The bag and all were gone when I tried to show it to you, if you recall, sir!" Murdock's ruddy face had blanched, and he was trembling visibly.

"Perhaps you could tell if this were the same club or not by taking it up and flourishing it as you did last night, Murdock." A note of command had entered the detective's tones. "Grasp it by the head."

"But I didn't, sir!" The steward's pallid face took on a waxen hue. "I must have lifted it from the bag by the head, of course, but I swung it out by the grip. I—now that I look at it, sir, I am positive that this is not the same."

"Try it and see." Crane's inexorable

voice directed. "Take up that driver and show me just what you did last night!"

Murdock glanced about him wildly for a means of escape, and for the first time he became aware of the five men who had ranged themselves behind the detective. One of them uttered a startled exclamation and advanced a step or two, but at that moment the steward broke down.

"I can't, sir!" he said. "It's no use for me to bluff any longer! May God forgive me—I killed him!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRIVER OF DEATH.

HIS dramatic confession of the murder ended in a cry that echoed back from the high-arched ceiling of the hall, and Murdock collapsed and would have fallen to the floor had not Jewett grasped him beneath the arms from behind and supported him to the chair beside the small safe.

Of the five men, standing back of Crane on the other side of the steward's desk, only Samuel Estridge strode forward. "You, Murdock?" he exclaimed. "That's stuff and nonsense! You never killed Doyle—you haven't the nerve to harm a flea!"

Jack Fraser cast a swift, troubled glance at his brother, whose face was a study. Ralph Fraser stood immovable, without meeting his eyes. Philip Dorrance had fallen back, his weak mouth beneath the small, sleek mustache, working like that of a rabbit in his startled amazement, and old Ruth-erford Sowerby sputtered and snorted, but no words would come.

The steward had buried his face in his hands and was swaying back and forth. Deep sobs racked him. It was doubtful if he even heard the famous criminal lawyer's expostulation, but, when Crane spoke, the questions penetrated to his all but distraught brain.

"If you shot Doyle how did you do it, Murdock? What motive had you?"

"None, sir, I swear it!" Murdock raised a face suddenly grown old and haggard. "I don't know how I shot him. I never meant to do it! It was that devil's machine which you just laid on my desk there, sir—that thing that looks like a driver. It's some kind of a gun, and it went off in my hands!"

"Not a devil's machine, but merely, I think, a cleverly concealed weapon of unique design." Crane turned suddenly and faced Ralph Fraser. "It is the driver missing from your set of clubs, is it not, Mr. Fraser? A driver which projects not golf balls, but these!"

He held out upon his open hand the tiny steel bullet which he had pried from the oak paneling, and Ralph Fraser squared his shoulders and came forward.

"Yes, it is mine," he said. "I brought it as a surprise for my brother and his friends to see, and I never thought that an accident like this could occur! I had a mighty bad time of it after that shot sounded in my ears, I can tell you, but it didn't——"

"How was I to know he was a detective?" asked Murdock. He was too perturbed to grasp the significance of the interrupted sentence. "I never did know for sure until last night, but I suspected him from the very first day he came, and we began going over the books together. When they bring them into court, and it's proved how I've been changing the accounts right along, thieving everywhere I could, nobody ever will believe that I didn't know what that thing was—that I didn't pick it up and shoot purposely at him when the lights were out!"

"What's that!" Sowerby found his voice and emitted it in a sudden roar, as he stepped forward. "What's that about your falsifying the accounts, Murdock, and embezzling from the club?"

"It's true, sir, all of it!" Murdock replied. "All but that I meant to kill the man you put on my track! I'd have run away, maybe, but I never would have harmed him."

"Oh, I can't stand this!" Ralph Fraser broke in impetuously. "What's the good of torturing the fellow? Crane, here, knows as well as I do that he's inno——"

"Stop!" The detective spoke in a peremptory undertone. "We'll get the confession of what he did do, Mr. Fraser, before we reassure him as to what he didn't do."

"What did you do it for, Murdock?" Estridge's persuasive voice sounded before the indignant Sowerby could bel- low again. "You've been with us ever since we founded the club, and we trusted you as we would have trusted each other. You never complained about the amount of your salary. How much have you taken from us, and how long has this been going on?"

"For a little more than a year, sir, and I've kept account of every penny, meaning that you should have it back from my life insurance." Murdock's usually impassive countenance was working with emotion. "I knew how I was trusted, and I couldn't sleep nights with the shame of it, but none of you seemed to miss the money, so it didn't make me feel as bad after a time, and I went on taking more and more! I've had a matter of over two thousand dollars from the club since I started to run crooked, and nobody suspected, not even the last secretary, Martin. An increase of salary wouldn't have helped, you see, sir; I had to have more tahn that, but I'd counted the cost, like any careful man would, and, if I was caught, I'd meant to take my medicine. I never intended to harm a hair of Doyle's head!"

"May I interfere for a moment, Mr. Estridge?" asked Crane. "I know this particular matter is not my province,

but, in a way, it is connected with the case upon which I am working."

"Certainly, Crane. Go ahead," the lawyer responded briefly after a keen, searching glance at the other's face.

"Murdock, you say that you have kept account of every penny which you have stolen from the members of this club. Where is this account?"

"Here, sir!" Murdock thrust a trembling hand in his breast pocket and drew forth a little red notebook. Jewett took it from him and passed it across the counter to Crane. "It's got the amount and the date and the page on the club books where I changed each item. I'm glad I've told, for it is a load off my mind; but if only you could believe that I never knew what that deadly thing was when I picked it at random from the bag at my feet! 'Twas not me that killed Doyle! It was the devil himself that sped the shot!"

"No, Murdock, you did not kill Doyle! The bullet, which flew from this concealed revolver when you accidentally released the firing pin in the head of the club is this bullet which I hold in my hand. See!" He held out the little steel globe. "It harmed no one, but imbedded itself in the oak paneling over there."

Amid amazed exclamations from all, except Ralph Fraser and Jewett, Murdock started from his chair with protruding eyes.

"You—you mean that, sir?" he asked hoarsely. "It's the truth you are telling me? I didn't kill him, after all? Oh! Thank God! Thank God!"

He sank back in his chair and buried his face in his hand, sobbing aloud in the reaction of relief, while the others crowded around Crane with excited questions.

"What does this mean?" Sowerby's voice rose above the rest.

"It means, gentlemen, that two shots
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were fired simultaneously, this one, by the miracle of accident, going off at the same instant as the other. But I will explain later. Murdock, the story you told me was partly the truth, then?"

"Yes, sir, partly." Murdock wiped his eyes and straightened in his chair. "I told you the truth, but not all of it. The lights were lowered, and the singing was going on. I saw that waiter from the caterer's starting to pass my desk on his way to the supper room. Thinking to stop him from disturbing a minute that was as sacred as church. I reached down into the golf bag. Somebody had left it under the counter for safe-keeping, instead of taking it to the locker room where it properly belonged. This instrument of Satan was the first stick which came to my hand, and I took hold of it, without looking, and drew it out. I only meant to tap the fellow on the arm with it and motion him back, and it all happened in a minute, though it takes long to tell it. As I grabbed it I must have flourished it in the air, for I felt something jump under the head, there was a wee flash of light in front of me, and then there came a crash fit to wake the dead. You gentlemen all know what happened after that; the sound of something falling outside and the excitement and the lights going up once more and everybody crowding out on the veranda. I rushed out with the rest, but, when I saw what I'd done—or thought, until a minute ago, that I'd done—something seemed to die inside of me, too, and then I remember that I still had in my hand the thing that had fired the shot. I was fairly crazed to get rid of it, and there wasn't time to put it back in the bag. Before anybody took hold of the affair and began to give orders I ran back into the billiard room and pushed the club under one of the tables, with the grip leaning on an empty bridge rest. No one missed me or knew that I had touched any of the

clubs under my desk, until Mr. Crane suspected."

"You changed the books and stole from our accounts," Estridge observed, as though he had not been following the explanation of the previous night's event. "Did you pilfer anything from the lockers, or the ladies' dressing rooms, or pick up any articles of value that the members may have dropped?"

"No, sir. I've found things from time to time, like Mr. Sowerby's scarf-pin and Mrs. Dorrance's gold bag, but they've always been promptly posted on the bulletin board," responded Murdock. "Somehow it didn't seem like stealing, just to alter the books, especially as none of you missed the few dollars that meant so much to me."

"Then you have never retained unlawful possession of anything belonging to a club member, whether its disappearance was mentioned or not?" the lawyer asked.

"Never, sir. I—I've told you everything. I can't restore the money now, but I'm ready to make whatever amends you gentlemen and the law require of me." He buried his head again in his hands. "I might have known that I would be caught, sooner or later, but I had no choice."

"Why?" Estridge asked again. "Why have you needed so much extra money during this past year? After your years of faithful service, Murdock, why didn't you come to one of us for a loan?"

"I couldn't, sir, without explaining what I wanted it for, and that would have been as much as my position here was worth. Besides I expected each month to recoup."

"You were gambling?" The lawyer's tone was sharpened with incredulity, and even Sowerby looked his amazement. Murdock's native Scotch thrift and cannyness had become proverbial around the club.

"Well, sir, you might call it that, in

a manner of speaking." The steward hesitated. "I—I acted on some tips which came my way in a fashion that I can't explain, and I won just enough now and then to make me keep on, thinking that one more, a flyer would not only let me put back all I had taken, but leave me a bit more."

"A flyer?" repeated Sowerby. "You were playing the stock market, Murdock? Who gave you the tips? If you are frank with us we may come to some arrangement."

Murdock shook his head, and his rugged jaw set. "I'm sorry, sir," he said decidedly. "All my own savings went with what I took from the club accounts, or I could make a partial restitution. It was the stock market, but I can't tell you where the tips came from, nor how I got them. 'Twas my own savings that went first, before I thought of tampering with the books, but well I know that is no excuse. There's nothing more that I can say, sir. I've confessed, and I'm ready to go to prison."

Motioning to Jewett to stand guard over him, Crane turned to the others. "Gentlemen, we have just time for a brief conference before your dinner engagements. Shall we adjoin to the billiard room?"

"Not I!" Philip Dorrance exclaimed in some haste. "It is a wonder that my wife has not telephoned for me before this. You won't mind, I'm sure, if I trot along?"

No one evincing the slightest interest in his continued presence the young man took his departure, and Crane picked up the driver from the desk and led the way to the billiard room.

"It seems incredible!" Jack Fraser ejaculated. "I could swear that I only heard one shot. The chances are a million to one against such a coincidence."

"The odds are not as great as that," observed Estridge thoughtfully. "I have seen things proved in court, in

more cases than one, which apparently only a miracle could have brought to pass. We will have to decide later what is to be done about Murdock's falsification of the accounts, but I am inclined to believe his story of the accidental shooting. Mr. Fraser can tell us if he did leave his golf bag containing that freak weapon behind the desk."

Ralph Fraser nodded. "I did," he affirmed. "We arrived late, and, as I had that dance with my sister-in-law, I did not wait to go to the locker room, but leaned over and rested my bag under the counter. I didn't dream that any one would molest it, for Jack had mentioned that he often did this when he was in a hurry. I handed my coat and hat to the nearest steward. It was criminally careless of me to have left the gun loaded, of course, but that was sheer vanity on my part; I wanted to take it somewhere out on the green to-morrow, where it would be safe, to astonish my brother and you gentlemen with a little impromptu target practice. I can tell you that, until the coroner stated this morning that the bullet which killed your man was a .32 I've been through Hades!"

"Where did you get the thing, anyway?" Jack asked. "How does it work?"

"One of the head officials of a big firearms company—I gave him my word not to mention his name, and, as no actual harm has been done except to an oak panel and the nervous system of the steward, to say nothing of my own, I think I may be permitted to keep my promise—is a bug on golf, and he doped this out merely as a curiosity. I happened to be in a position to do a favor for him, and, knowing my hobby, he presented it to me." Ralph Fraser took up the club from where Crane had placed it on a billiard table. "Don't be alarmed, gentlemen, I know how to handle it safely. It really is shaped precisely like a driver, you see, but there

is a hollow metal tube or barrel, concealed in the shaft, and, when the head is pressed in a certain way, it releases a firing pin which discharges a .22 caliber bullet through the grip. My friend tried to work it out with a trigger, but it wasn't practicable. I thought it a mighty neat little contrivance and an interesting addition to my collection, but, after last night, I never want to see the wretched thing again!"

He laid it down once more upon the table and Estridge remarked dryly: "It is ingenious, at all events. I thought I had come in contact with most styles of man-killing instruments in my professional career, but this is unique."

"It is a devilish sort of contrivance, and I think we can dispense with any further demonstration of it, if you don't mind my saying so, Fraser," said Sowerby. "I hope you'll keep it under your eye until you get it away from the club."

"Still, you gentlemen owe Mr. Fraser a vote of thanks in a way," Crane observed. "It was this device of his which unwittingly scared the steward into his admission of theft."

"Do you think his confession was complete?" Jack Fraser asked significantly. "Granted that he was unnerved, he is a canny sort of rascal. Was that embezzlement the only robbery which he committed, or attempted to commit?"

Estridge glanced in quick warning from the speaker to his brother. At the same moment an understeward knocked upon the door.

"Excuse me, please, sir." His eyes wavered and then rested upon the detective. "Mr. Dorrance is on the wire for Mr. Crane. I told him that you were engaged, but he wouldn't take no for an answer. He says it is most important."

"What does that little——" Sowerby was beginning, but Crane had already started for the door.

"Just pardon me," he remarked, "the question of Murdock is a matter

for the officers of your club to decide, but I cannot afford to leave a possible stone unturned in the affair which brought me out here. The other matter, of which three of you four know, is also extraneous. I am here for the sole purpose of finding the murderer of Jim Doyle!"

CHAPTER XIV.

TELLTALE NUMERALS.

THE lawyer turned to the understeward. "Henry, upon what telephone did Mr. Dorrance call up?"

"The main one, sir, on Murdock's desk," Henry replied.

"Perhaps Mr. Crane would prefer to have it switched to one of the extensions in the locker room?" the lawyer suggested.

"Isn't there an extension, also, in the office which was occupied by Martin and the late—er—Grant?" Crane had paused in the doorway.

"Yes. Would you care to use that?" asked Estridge. "The office has been locked since last night, but I have the key here."

"Then will you have Henry switch the call to that extension, please, and cut off all other connections in the club for a few minutes?" As the understeward disappeared at a nod from the lawyer Crane added: "Also, if you have the combination to the safe in the secretary's office and keys to the desk, or any other receptacles which may be locked in there, I should like to have them."

"I can give you the combination to the safe, of course, unless Doyle changed it, and, although the coroner must have the keys which were taken from the body, I have a duplicate set here," Estridge remarked, as the two proceeded to the little office. "Do you want to compare the accounts with the memoranda in Murdock's notebook?"

"Only one or two items to assure

myself that he wasn't lying in general; the rest of his confession doesn't interest me," responded the detective. "I hope to find some private notes of Doyle's—notes intended for our agency and jotted down too late to be transmitted to us."

Murdock was still seated behind his desk with his head bowed in his hands, and Jewett loitered near, but the steward did not look up nor appear to be conscious of their presence in the rotunda, as Estridge unlocked the door of the other little office, and they entered, the lawyer switching on the light.

"Your man was methodical and businesslike," the latter observed. "When I went to O'Hare I told him to send me down some one who could, at least, act the part and keep books after a fashion. But that fellow would have deceived even me, had I not known who he was! He might have been a private secretary or bookkeeper all his life!"

Crane smiled. "Doyle has acted in both capacities, at one time or another, before he came to us," he said. "That was the reason why the old man picked him for this case."

"But why the disguise? I am sure none of us would have recognized him as he appeared when it was removed."

"How sure are you?" Crane ignored the impatient insistence of the telephone extension on the desk to inquire quizzically, "Have the clients you have defended in court all come from the underworld, Mr. Estridge? One would not think so, judging from your financial rating."

The attorney looked startled. "Just what do you mean?"

"Doyle has run to earth more than one crook in the so-called smart set, and he once helped to convict of murder the leading banker of a small suburban community," replied the detective. "Naturally, before selecting a man for your job, O'Hare had you all looked up as to general standing, and he discov-

ered that you were all practical newcomers here, Mr. Estridge. Doyle was the best man for the case, but was it improbable to conjecture that, among all the members of your club and their transient guests, there might not be one who had come into contact with him in some other investigation he has conducted among people of your class? The world is not so wide, as a certain member of your club remarked this morning."

"There's something in that," Estridge conceded, as he turned to the door. "You'll find me in the billiard room, or dining with Sowerby, if you need me, Crane."

The detective reversed the key and locked himself into the cubby-hole of an office before he took the receiver of the telephone from the hook.

"Hello! Crane speaking."

"What detained you all this time?" The peevish voice of Philip Dorrance, raised to a high pitch of mental strain, came to him over the wire, and it seemed to the detective's keen ear that deeper, but unmistakably feminine, tones mingled, as in a running undercurrent, with those of the speaker. "We have something of the most vital importance to tell you, and my wife would like you to come at once!"

"But your dinner engagement?" Crane could not resist the suggestion.

"Hang the dinner! We're not going! When I reached home I found that my wife had made a discovery which requires the immediate services of a detective, and you are the nearest. We don't care what it costs." There was an odd hesitation, a seeming reluctance in Dorrance's tones, in spite of his insistence, and now he paused while the contralto feminine voice sounded again. The words were indistinguishable, but it was obvious that he was being coached.

"If Mrs. Dorrance's discovery has no direct bearing on the matter I am investigating I really must decline,"

Crane said firmly. "O'Hare's private agency in New York, from which I came, will send a man out to you on the first train if you will telephone to him and state the nature of your prospective case. The one I am working on is of more importance to me than any fee."

"But this is something that cannot be discussed over the phone, and my wife thinks that it may have a direct bearing on the other affair!" Dorrance's voice rose sharply, and, after a moment, he added: "She says to tell you she is positive that it will change the whole course of your investigation, and she is sending the motor for you."

"Thanks, but I have two cars here of my own," responded the detective dryly. "Please give my compliments to Mrs. Dorrance and tell her that I have one or two points to look into before I leave the club. I shall be grateful for any assistance she may be able to render me in this case, of course, and I will be with you later."

"You must come now, man, I tell you!" The wire squeaked with Dorrance's agitation. "My wife demands it! You are wasting your time until you hear what she has to tell you!"

"You will pardon me, but I must be the best judge of that since the investigation is in my hands," Crane retorted. "I can be with you in an hour, not before."

He rang off abruptly, heedless of the sputtered protestations which were choked into silence, and looked about him. The desk was not unlike that of a hotel office and identical with Murdock's except that it ran the length of the small room, with a space in front of it for the convenience of members, and was in a separate apartment instead of opening directly into the great hall. The wicket was barred, too, but Crane quickly unlocked it with a key from among those which, together with a slip of paper, the attorney had placed upon the counter before he passed within.

The safe was larger and of a different model than that in the steward's office. As Crane had anticipated it would not open when he worked the combination on the paper which Estridge had left, and he glanced about for some clew to the change in numbers which Doyle must have made. Methodical in all things the late operative, foreseeing the possibility of an attack upon him and the coming of a successor, must have prepared some hint for a trained eye of the change he had effected.

The first object which met his gaze was a large rack for mail with numbered pigeonholes on the wall above the empty chair. It was identical with the rack in Murdock's office, but Crane remembered that the latter had been new and highly varnished, with envelopes protruding here and there, where the members had forgotten to inquire for their mail. This one was old and dusty, yet, in a series of the compartments, small white cards had been placed.

Carefully noting the number of the pigeonhole from which he removed it Crane picked out one of the cards and found it to be, significantly enough, a left-over invitation to the Harvest Dance, during which Mrs. de Forest's necklace had disappeared. That which interested him more, however, was an annotation down in one corner, in hand-printed characters: "L-7."

Taking a pencil from his pocket Crane jotted down after the characters the number 2—that of the compartment from which he had taken the card. Then he collected the others, adding the numbers in turn.

There were eight cards in all. Seating himself in the chair he spread them out on the counter before him like a new and unique game of solitaire. For a time he studied them with a puzzled frown, then his brow cleared, and, as he rearranged them, he whistled softly.

He had taken the card marked "L-7" from the second pigeonhole; others were labeled with the letter "R" before the various numbers. These ranged in scattered order from 3 to 14. Assuming that they actually represented the new combination of the safe Crane considered it as a first supposition that "L" and "R" represented a turn of the knob to the left or right as indicated; that the numbers of the pigeonholes, from which he had taken them, was the order in which the turns were to be made, and those upon the cards themselves must correspond to the figures on the dial.

This theory was further strengthened by the discovery upon the last card—that marked "L-6"—of a word faintly penciled in the same small, hand-printed characters; "open." Surely that could only apply to the knob in the center of the dial and must mean that the combination had been completed!

Crane rose and kneeling upon the floor before the safe he spread out his cards in a row—all in the order of the numbered compartments in the rack from which he had removed them. Arranged thus they read: "R-4; L-7; R-9; L-3; R-8; L-11; R-14; L-6." Placing his ear close he turned the knob from zero to the number 4 on the right of the dial and felt a glow of satisfaction as he caught faintly the fall of a tumbler within. A quick twist of his wrist brought the knob back to number 7 on the left. In rotation through the other figures, printed on the cards, each stop produced that scarcely audible click which assured him that he was indeed upon the right track.

When the eighth number had been reached the door of the safe swung open, and Crane gathered up his cards before he looked within at the orderly piles of ledgers and account books, each marked with the month and year, with which the receptacle was half filled.

Selecting two or three of the latter

at random the detective took from his pocket the notebook which Murdock had surrendered to him. A rapid comparison of a few of the items listed by the steward with the figures in the club accounts proved that the latter had told the truth, in part at least, and Crane laid them aside, but not before ascertaining one significant fact; since the date of Doyle's arrival, a month previous, not a single speculation had been committed by Murdock.

Turning once more to the safe Crane searched for the private notes of which he had spoken to Estridge. He was certain that Doyle must have taken notes, had anything, bearing upon his investigation, occurred during the last hours prior to his death. Before starting from the agency in town Crane had run hastily through the brief reports sent in by Doyle from time to time, and it was evident from them that the operative had obtained no definite lead regarding the identity of the thief he had come to track down, unless he had done so after mailing the last report which had been received on the Tuesday before.

In none of them had he mentioned the possibility of an attack upon himself, but that would not have been Doyle's way; he had undertaken to recover the necklace and capture the thief. Any physical danger incurred in the commission of a case he had always persisted in regarding as his own private business and no affair of the agency, in spite of O'Hare's repeated warnings.

Crane ruffled the leaves of every ledger and examined all the packets and envelopes in the compartments which lined the upper part of the safe, but without success. Surely Doyle must have had some reason of his own for changing the combination of the safe, and if he made any note in the case, which he had not had time to post, he would have secreted them in this safe. Had any papers been found

on the body Crane was confident that the coroner would have mentioned them to him that morning. Where could they be?

Even as he racked his brains for a solution to the problem the detective noticed that the ledger for the past month, which he had previously examined and laid beside him on the floor, did not close as evenly as the rest. Taking it up again he eagerly examined the binding. The inner lining of the board back had been slit at the top, and, as he handled it, something rustled in the space between.

Taking out his stout pocketknife Crane ripped the lining down each side, disclosing a single sheet of paper which had been inserted in the aperture next to the back. It was covered with disjointed notes in Doyle's writing, but it was manifest that they must have been jotted down in haste and under a state of excitement which had been unusual to that impassive operative. Although rumpled the paper was fresh, and the ink, which had been used for the added lines at the bottom of the page, was not as deeply black as the rest.

Crane spread the document out on the counter and dropped into his chair. Here is what he saw:

17-L & 31-G having affair, 31 more serious than 17. Look up 19-N; sort of Cinderella and stuck on 16-G.

10-L & 12-G engaged? 10 don't trust me & face seems familiar, but can't place her yet; 12 shy of me, too, must look up his record.

16-G is o. k. In love with 19-N, all right & no cap. but straight. Most likely subject at first, so fooled around golf green with him & tried him out. N. D.

17-L afraid of me but more afraid of 28-G. 31-G leery of me.

Club accounts altered, but only small sums taken at a time. Think M. is the man—too anxious to help me with books. Not nerve enough for big job.

31-G more worried. Sounded 10-L but still can't get her number.

Oct. 29: 31-G desperate for money. Sure M. on that I'm dick, but thinks put here to check up books. 19-N & 16-G nervous.

Oct. 30: 31-G tried to bribe me for all money in club under my care and for me to make get-away. Offered 1st mortgage on property, but happen to know it is in name of 5-L. 19-N & 16-G avoid each other like plague; up to some mischief. Possible subjects to date: 17-L; 12-G; 31-G; 19-N, & M as long shot. 12-G watching me now from hall.

Oct. 31: 12-G giving me the eye again, this time through window from porch, where M. has hung Jap. lantern. Dance coming off soon.

What is 19-N doing under lant—

Here the cryptic scrawl broke off abruptly, as though the writer had been interrupted at his task, and for some moments Crane sat staring in bewilderment at it. Clearly Doyle had meant it as a correlation of facts and observations for his own study alone, yet there must be some key to the enigma which this fresh set of numbers presented.

"10-L" was evidently a woman, since the operative had not been able to place her, and "12-G" was as obviously a man, as Doyle had made a note to look up his record. "M" was designated with no number, and, if "L" could be assumed as a starter to indicate lady and "G" gentleman, what could "19-N" mean?

The detective rose and began pacing the small inclosure reflectively. For the time being the urgent summons from the Dorrances was forgotten, as was the lesser importance of his own lack of food and brain fag from loss of sleep. If Doyle had intended those notes for himself alone why on earth hadn't he written the names, or at least initials? He had hidden the single page with extreme care, yet he had left an ingenious clew to the changed combination, and the safe itself contained nothing else which the house committee might not freely have examined.

Where had he got those infernal numbers, anyway? Surely he would not have resorted to those on the pigeon-

holes of the mail rack again. Crane turned and studied it for a moment, but the numbers, when applied to the document in his hands, made no sense, and impatiently he resorted once more to a perusal of the latter.

The only person with whom Doyle had "fooled around the golf green" was young Landon; he, therefore, must be "16-G," and "19-N," with whom the latter was in love, could be none other than little Alice Dare, the "sort of Cinderella." "M" was undoubtedly Murdock, but what were those numbers and how had Doyle come to apply them?

All at once a light broke over him. Gathering up the ledgers he thrust them back in the safe and closed it. He had barely straightened when a knock sounded upon the door.

Vaulting the counter Crane unlocked it to find the understeward, Henry, standing upon the threshold, a laden tray in his hands, from which savory odors arose. "Mr. Estridge's compliments, sir, but the dining room is closed, and we've kept this hot for you as long as we could. Mr. Dorrance has telephoned again, but Mr. Estridge gave orders that you were not to be disturbed."

Realizing all at once that he was voraciously hungry Crane expressed his thanks and added: "Henry, the lockers, in which the members keep their golf clubs and extra things, are numbered, are they not?"

The man looked his surprise, but replied promptly enough. "Yes, sir, both in the ladies' and gentlemen's locker rooms."

"Do you know to whom each belongs?"

Henry permitted himself to smile discreetly. "I ought to, sir. They have been under my special charge, as you might say, for the past two years. I've a list of the members with the numbers of their lockers, if you would care to see it."

"I should, very much. Will you

bring it to me now, please, and then give orders to have my larger car—the one in which I came out from town last night—at the veranda steps in fifteen minutes? Where is Mr. Estridge?”

“In the billiard room, sir. I will get the list at once and see that your car is ready on time.”

Crane attacked the contents of the tray with such vigor that he was half-way through his meal when the steward returned, and, as the latter closed the door behind him again, the detective drew Doyle's notes from his pocket and compared them with the list of lockers.

The meaning leaping out at him now in all clarity, and he whistled softly as he read. Of the ladies Mrs. Sowerby had locker No. 17, Mrs. Dorrance No. 5, Mrs. de Forest No. 19, and Mrs. Carter No. 10. In the men's room Bowles' locker was number 12, Landon's 16, Dorrance's 32, and Sowerby's 28.

“Ah!” said Crane, to himself. “It didn't take Doyle long to discover that Mrs. Sowerby and Dorrance were having a flirtation, to say nothing of Mrs. Carter and Bowles, and that love affair between the two young kids. But why was Bowles shy of him?”

Pausing only to copy on the back of Doyle's notes the names of those whose locker numbers the late operative had mentioned Crane replaced the sheet of paper in his pocket and then finished his dinner hastily. He rang for the steward to remove the tray, returned the list to him, and, locking the door of the little office, he sought the billiard room. “Mr. Estridge, I want to thank you most heartily for your thoughtfulness. But for you I should have had no dinner, for I had quite forgotten all about food.”

The attorney, who had been knocking the balls aimlessly about on one of the tables in solitude, glanced up and laid down his cue.

“You found something to interest you?” he asked.

“Very much so!” replied Crane. “I'd like a little chat with you some time to-morrow, if I may have it, but now I want to return to you the keys you lent me and give Murdock's notebook into your possession. You'll find, I think, that his itemized list of peculations is correct in the main, but you won't be able to open the safe with the combination you handed me. I'll give you the real one to-morrow.”

“I thought so!” Estridge said. “I have some notes to prepare on a case of my own which comes up next week, and you will find me at my lodge all day.”

Crane took leave of him and proceeded to his waiting car, but, as he tore through the night toward the Dorrances', that unfinished final sentence scrawled by Doyle rang in the detective's ears, as though the lips now cold in death were whispering them! “What is 19-N doing under lant—”

What, indeed, had Alice Dare, the pauper niece of Mrs. de Forest, been doing beneath the dragon lantern, wherein had been coiled her aunt's stolen necklace?

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. DORRANCE ADVANCES A THEORY.

EVEN had he not mentally noted its general location that afternoon Crane could not have failed to find the Dorrance's pretentious house. It was illuminated so brilliantly that it stood out in all the ugliness of its hybrid architecture against the night sky, and, as Crane whirled up the driveway, the entrance door was flung open, and Philip Dorrance's figure, prancing excitedly, was silhouetted against the glare from within.

“Great Scott, why didn't you come sooner, Crane?” He seized the detective's arm, before the latter had fairly reached the top step of the veranda, and dragged him in. “My wife has

been like a mad woman! You said an hour, and here it is nearly midnight, and some officious fool at the club refused to put you on the wire again!"

"I told you, Mr. Dorrance, that I had one or two points to clear up there before I left, although I did not anticipate being detained so long," Crane responded, adding: "Perhaps I have come too late, and Mrs. Dorrance has retired?"

"'Retired!'" repeated the other with a gurgle. "You don't know my wife when she gets going, but you will! Come along; she's in the drawing-room."

As he followed his host the detective amusedly noted the change in his appearance from a few hours before. His tie was twisted, his collar and shirt front wilted, and, instead of his usual jaunty strut, he sidled cringingly down the hall. The latter, although spacious enough, was cluttered with spurious armor, chairs, and settles copied from every known period, and hung with portraits, the suspiciously shiny varnish of which belied the antiquity of the costumed characters they represented.

The apartment which they entered was large, and had manifestly been "done" by some interior decorator with an eye to his client's purse solely, but here the details of his immediate surroundings escaped Crane's observation for the moment.

Wide as the drawing-room was it seemed to be filled with the ponderous bulk of the beetle-browed woman who in disheveled evening dress was pacing heavily back and forth. Mentally the detective flattened himself against the wall. The lady paused and demanded in a deep, shaking voice: "Is this Mr. Crane. You have come at last!"

"I am sorry I could not get here before, Mrs. Dorrance." He bowed. "It is an unconscionable hour to call at your

home—even upon such business as mine."

"Hour! What do hours matter, or anything else in the world!" She flung her arms out with such violence that the threads of one shoulder strap snapped ominously. "There is a thief abroad in our community, Mr. Crane! A robber who would stop at a crime of no magnitude!"

"Now, Josephine!" said her husband in what was meant to be a soothing tone, but she turned upon him. "Hold your tongue, Philip, or go to bed! Were they your jewels, I should like to know? I shall tell this person just what I think, and nothing can stop me!"

In spite of himself Crane started slightly. Could she have heard of the theft of the necklace? If so why should she become so wrought up over another woman's loss? But he was vouchsafed no time for idle conjecture.

"Mr. Crane, I do not know why your unfortunate predecessor came to Broadlawns, but, after a certain conversation, immediately following the tragedy at the club last night, I had an inkling. I was standing beside the chair of an elderly friend who has—or had—a diamond necklace of which she was inordinately vain. She has exhibited it on every possible occasion, until last evening. Two days ago she told me that she considered it too gorgeous to wear to so small an affair as the dance, but I was convinced then that she was not telling the truth, particularly as she made some catty remark about my emeralds!" The lady paused and then broke out in a throaty wail: "My emeralds! My emeralds which have been in the Farr family for generations! Oh, this will kill me!"

"Then you might just as well die sitting down as standing up, Josephine," Philip Dorrance exclaimed in a sudden burst of spirit, born of nerves strained to the breaking point. "It doesn't mat-

ter about me, of course, but Mr. Crane had no sleep last night, and he has been on the go all day. In common humanity you might offer him a chair."

"Upstart!" Mrs. Dorrance remarked in what was intended to be an aside, but she turned once more to the detective with a visible effort at self-control. "I beg your pardon. Please be seated; my own agitation, which my husband seemingly does not share, will not permit me to remain quiet. I was standing beside this elderly friend when the sheriff approached her, and, to my astonishment, I heard her say that she felt herself partly responsible for the death of the young man whom we had known as Mr. Grant. Her contrition vanished in elated astonishment, however, when the sheriff told her that Grant had succeeded in what he had undertaken. Then he and Mr. Estridge carried her off to talk privately with her, and, on learning that the supposed secretary was in reality a detective, I commenced to put two and two together.

"This friend of mine had worn her necklace to the dance in September, but she left early in great agitation. There was some sort of a scene which was kept as quiet as possible. I had noticed the necklace particularly on her arrival—no one could help it—it made a display that was almost vulgar on a person of her age! I remembered distinctly that I had not seen it when she departed, for I assisted in putting her cloak about her shoulders. Nothing but theft could bring a detective to our eminently select country club, and no theft could be of much concern nor so closely connected with my friend, as to make her feel partly responsible for that detective's death but the loss of her greatest treasure. Am I not right, Mr. Crane?"

"My dear Mrs. Dorrance, I am not here in Broadlawns on the same mission as my colleague was, but solely

to investigate his murder," Crane responded firmly. "I must decline to discuss anything else."

"That girl Alice Dare would neither affirm nor deny my supposition when I called on her aunt to-day, and she received me in Mrs. de Forest's place, but I am confident that she knew! Perhaps it will repay her when you learn what I have to tell you!" There was morbid triumph in Mrs. Dorrance's husky tones. "If Mrs. de Forest's necklace was actually stolen, and your associate killed because he had discovered the identity of the thief, then you would do well to guard my house, for I, too, have been robbed, and we are all likely to be murdered in our beds! My precious emeralds are gone!"

"Your emeralds!" the detective exclaimed. "That is most unfortunate, and you have my deepest sympathy, but I scarcely see how that has any bearing on the identity of my colleague's murderer."

"The emeralds are not gone, exactly, but Harlier, the jeweler, claims that some time during the past month they have been taken from their original settings and fakes substituted in their place," Dorrance explained in a hurried tone. "They were cleaned in his establishment, just before the dance in September, and nothing was found to be wrong with them then, but my wife got a notion a day or so ago that some of the settings might be loose, so I took them in to Harlier's again. A man from there telephoned out and told Mrs. Dorrance of the substitution, while I was returning from the club late this afternoon, and she is convinced that it has something to do with the theft of Mrs. de Forest's necklace and the killing of your man last night. Nothing would do but I must send for you at once. You see?"

His voice was almost apologetic, but Crane shook his head. "I am afraid that I don't," he disclaimed. "Mrs.

Dorrance has given me no valid reason for her suspicion that the necklace you speak of was stolen, or that my colleague was sent here to find it. I cannot discuss his case, as I said before, but, with my own knowledge of it, I can see no connection between the identity of his slayer and that of the person who effected the substitution of fakes for your emeralds."

"You cannot?" Mrs. Dorrance, who for the moment had subsided, spent with her emotions, started up indignantly. "What if I should tell you I happen to know the necklace was stolen, know that man was sent here to find it, and that he was shot after he did find it? His murderer is still at large, and another robbery of greater magnitude has been discovered, and you see no connection! To say the least I am disappointed, Mr. Crane, for I had heard some really intelligent things of you!"

"If your knowledge were authentic, Mrs. Dorrance—which I do not admit—I should have to know how you came by it before changing my plans and theories." Crane's tone was a study in skepticism as he warily led her on. "Woman's intuition may be all very well in its way, but you have given me only one fact: that fakes have been substituted for your emeralds. In the investigation of a murder we must have cold facts to go upon."

"'Woman's intuition' indeed!" Something very like a snort was emitted by his affronted hostess. "I have heard that you detectives depend more than a little for valuable clues on backstairs gossip—the testimony of servants. I pay mine better than any one in the neighborhood, though Heaven knows I have nothing to conceal, and I am rewarded by the only loyalty which seems to exist nowadays. I could tell you things!"

"Josephine!" exclaimed her husband. "Remember that you have had to pay

costs already in two suits for libel and one for malicious mischief!"

"That will do." Mrs. Dorrance's tone was ominously quiet. "You will remember, Philip, that it was I and not you who paid the costs. The hussies were guilty in each case. I am conducting this interview. Mr. Crane, you must know from your professional experience that servants will talk, and nothing—positively nothing—can be kept from them. Concerning Mrs. de Forest's necklace, her maid and mine are intimate friends, but mine receives higher wages. Need I be more explicit?"

"I think I understand," Crane said. "But, after all, a maid's suspicions and predilection for sensational gossip, of which you have just spoken——"

"I am speaking now of facts, not suspicions, and both maids are reliable witnesses. I do not care to be brought into this matter any further than is necessary to recover my own jewels, naturally, for what would be added glory for you in your profession would ostracize me in my set out here; and what I say to you now must be strictly confidential. I have locked the doors leading to the servants' wing, and my husband doesn't count, for he would not dare to repeat anything. Mrs. de Forest's necklace is safe in the hands of the sheriff, and, knowing that, she would not be inclined to tell you whom she suspected of stealing it, nor help you in your search for Doyle's murderer, lest it bring upon her own household the scandal and disgrace she has done everything to avoid."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed the wretched Philip, but his ejaculation was unheeded.

"Love," Mrs. Dorrance continued—her austere tone conveyed no impression of that tender passion—"will sometimes cause impulsive young people to do desperate, even criminal, things. Mrs. de Forest treats that orphan niece

of hers like an upper servant and has provided her with smart clothes and the outward advantage of wealth, only that the girl might the more quickly make a rich marriage and be off her hands. I have this from her own lips, Mr. Crane. The girl has rewarded her by falling in love with a penniless bank clerk; all Broadlawns can substantiate that. Mrs. de Forest forbade the match, and the young couple were desperate. On reaching home from the Harvest dance Mrs. de Forest accused her niece—in the hearing of another person, although she did not know it—of stealing her necklace. Alice denied it, of course, and threatened to go away and earn her own living and be free.

"I did not learn this until a week later, and, in the meantime, I foolishly decked the girl out in my emeralds for a masquerade at a week-end house party. I make no direct accusation, but I have heard that clever work can be done by expert jewel fakers in three days, and this house party in the Berkshires lasted from Friday until Monday. When the emeralds were returned to me I put them away without a close inspection, and it was only a few days ago that I discovered that the settings of the brooch and pendant were loose. Lately Alice Dare and her lover have given every evidence of a nervousness that amounted to sheer fright; a dozen people have remarked upon it at the club. Last night, after that murder, when Mrs. de Forest and her niece returned to their home there was another scene between them. Mrs. de Forest this time accused her niece of putting the necklace back where—where Doyle must have found it. I saw the girl in the early part of the evening dawdling about the very window through which he was afterward shot. I hope that I am unprejudiced and just, but these are facts which I have given you. Do they interest you sufficiently to listen to my theory of the murder?"

Crane had attended to every word, and again Doyle's interrupted question leaped to his mind, although instinctively he shrank from the possibility which this dominant woman had laid bare. Neither face nor voice betrayed him as he replied calmly: "Your facts might interest me, Mrs. Dorrance, if it were not for a seeming inconsistency. Why is the necklace, which you say is now in the hands of the sheriff, not a fake as well as your emeralds?"

"If you have had any experience with gem thefts you should know that diamonds are the most difficult jewels in the world to imitate with any hope of deceiving even the most casual glance, while it would take an expert to detect the difference between real emeralds and some of the marvelous manufactured ones which are on the market now," Mrs. Dorrance remarked coldly. "Moreover—but that is a part of my theory which you evidently do not consider worth hearing."

"Most assuredly I do, Mrs. Dorrance, but first let me warn you that you have not a shred of even circumstantial evidence to support your idea as to when and by whom your emeralds were substituted. With that theory fixed in your mind you may have overlooked other possibilities, and, as you say, you desire above all things to be just, especially in so serious a matter."

Mrs. Dorrance's jaw set, and for an instant her dark eyes flashed. Then she controlled herself and responded: "Quite so! May I ask what other possibilities you suggest, Mr. Crane?"

"Where do you keep your emeralds when you are not wearing them? At a bank here or in town?"

"Neither. I have a fireproof safe, built into my dressing-room wall, and no one on this earth knows the combination except myself."

"Josephine!" that gentleman exclaimed in shocked reproach. "I trust you don't suggest——"

"I suggest nothing!" she said. "Whenever I go to that safe I lock my door and hang a dark cloth over the knob so that my maid cannot spy upon me through the keyhole, and that woman knows more than you ever will, Philip! If I told you one half of what she has repeated to me concerning the actions of certain empty-headed dolls and dyed-haired vixens in this neighborhood you would realize that nothing can be kept from her—nothing but the combination of my safe!"

"On returning from the Harvest dance you put your jewels immediately away, Mrs. Dorrance?"

"Yes. I did not open the safe until a few days later when I took out the emeralds to lend to Miss Dare."

"When she returned them——"

"I placed them in the safe so quickly that, as I told you, I scarcely looked at them, beyond a glance to see that all the pieces were there. The safe remained closed until I took out the emeralds, a few days ago, to see that all the settings were secure before wearing them to the dance. Harlier's are always very prompt in their work for me, and I thought it odd when, on Thursday they told my husband that the repairs could not be finished in time. The official explained this afternoon that they had not wished to alarm me until they had examined every stone to determine if all or only a part of the set had been exchanged for imitations. Not one of them is left, Mr. Crane! All—all of them are gone!"

Philip, who at the reference to "dolls" and "vixens" had subsided, now interposed.

"I thought myself that the chap's manner at Harlier's was odd when I took the emeralds in to him on Thursday," he observed. "As soon as the inquest is over I mean to have a thorough investigation made of the substitution, Josephine. You can safely leave everything in my hands."

"What! Trust you to find my emeralds for me?" his wife demanded in contemptuous wrath. "I want the most expert advice in the country, both detective and legal, and I intend to have it! Moreover, as soon as this stupid inquest is finished, I shall take the first train to town and interview the head of Harlier's himself! I am convinced, however, that my theory will prove to be the truth."

"Will you tell me that theory now, Mrs. Dorrance?" asked Crane. "I know part of it, of course. You think that, some time during the Harvest dance, Miss Dare managed to steal her aunt's necklace."

"Yes; I believe that she was afraid to take it home, or confess to her lover then what she had done, but secreted it about the club somewhere. A girl values the good opinion of the man she cares for, and I think she meant to sell the necklace at the first opportunity to get to town, persuade Gerald Landon to elope with her, and then produce the money with trumpery, some romantic story of a legacy which she had concealed from her aunt. He is sufficiently young and in love to have swallowed it. However, her aunt's unexpected accusation must have thrown her into a panic, and she did confess to him what she had done." Mrs. Dorrance paused and added: "I do not pretend to say whether it was fear or honesty which impelled him, but it is my opinion that he persuaded her to return them at the earliest opportunity, and they decided on the dance last night as the most favorable time for placing the necklace where it would be found."

"That girl was crazy to marry him, though, and they had to have money, so, when I foolishly offered to let her have my jewels for the week-end, she saw her chance for a second coup. This time she would not fail, for the substitution might not be discovered for months, and much could happen in the

meantime. So much for my emeralds, but to get back to the necklace. Neither of those two young conspirators had counted on the possibility of a private detective being installed at the club, but, as Halloween drew near, I think they suspected the real identity and purpose of the new secretary that would account for their increasing nervousness and fright, yet they had no other course but their original plan to follow.

"It is my belief that the girl concealed that necklace in the lantern. Doyle saw her do it and stationed himself there. Both she and her lover knew that her guilt would be exposed. But, Mr. Crane, it is also my firm conviction that Gerald Landon came to the dance prepared for that very contingency and determined to go to any length to protect the girl who had stolen through love of him. I am not romantically in-

clined, but this is sheer logic. You will remember that he stood alone in the door of the conservatory. That window, where the lantern hung and Doyle stood, was within his unobstructed view and range. When he saw that Doyle knew and meant to remain on guard until he could recover the necklace and denounce Alice—well, it is my theory that Gerald Landon chose that moment of darkness to seal the detective's lips forever, even if he went to the chair for it! Have you a better theory, Mr. Crane?"

There was a horrified gasp from Philip, but Crane's face remained impassive as he replied: "None that I am prepared to offer, Mrs. Dorrance, but I must earnestly request that you will not repeat this theory of yours to any one else until after the inquest. You will have cause to amend it, I think, before then."

To be concluded in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

DEATHBED CONFESSION OF MURDER

ON his deathbed John S. Johnston, of Powersville, Missouri, confessed recently that he had killed five persons near Kansas City many years ago. It is thought by the police of Kansas City that the crime referred to may be the murder of five members of the Meeks family near Browning, Missouri, twenty-six years ago.

George E. Taylor and William P. Taylor, brothers, were convicted of the crime and sentenced to be hung. Both escaped from the jail at Carrollton by climbing to the roof and letting themselves down on the outside along a length of rubber hose. William was recaptured and executed, but George escaped and eluded the efforts of the police to find him. Search for him was untiring, for the murder of the Meeks family was a particularly heinous one and was still fresh in the memories of police officials after many years.

"Gus" Meeks had been employed by the Taylor brothers to help them in rustling cattle. He was caught and sentenced to the penitentiary, but, on agreeing to turn State's evidence against the brothers, he was pardoned and returned to his home. The Taylors went to him and offered him five hundred dollars and a team of horses and a wagon if he would leave the State. Meeks agreed and, with his wife and children, left his farm one midnight for Arizona. The family, traveling in the wagon, was accompanied by the Taylor brothers, who were on horseback. On a lonely hill the Taylors killed all the family except little Nellie Meeks, whom they beat into unconsciousness. The bodies were thrown on a pile of hay, which the murderers ignited. Nellie Meeks recovered consciousness in time to escape the devouring flames. Her testimony played a prominent part in the conviction of the brothers.

Dusted

By

Herman Landon

Author of "Six Random Shots," etc.

THE man who sat at the window was little more than a blur in the shadows. Black, scowling clouds were massed overhead, and a fitful wind was blowing around the corners of the stately country mansion of the Belden Swaynes. With elbows leaning against the sill and eyes fixed rigidly on a wedge of light projected from the window just below his own, the man sat so still that he might have been asleep.

From the room below came sounds of footsteps—the quick, nervous footsteps of one in a state of mental stress. For half an hour or longer the man at the window had been listening to their muffled beat against the carpet. Gradually all other sounds in the house had ceased. Occasionally a door had opened and closed as a guest retired for the night. Now, save for the watcher at the window and the one who was so restlessly pacing the floor below, the house was immersed in slumber.

A silver-tongued clock struck one. A slight stirring of the shadowy figure told that the man at the window was growing impatient. Perhaps the monotonous tread of feet on the floor below was affecting his nerves. Or it might have been that he was anxiously waiting for the light in the window beneath his own to go out and tell him that Belden Swayne had at length gone to bed.

As he sat there, wrapped in shadows, one might have imagined that impulses as black as the surrounding night were stirring within him. About the motionless figure there was a suggestion of something evil and malignant.

Finally he shook himself and rose to

his feet. Noiselessly he walked a few paces away from the window, then stood still, listening. No sounds could he hear save the moan of the wind and the agitated footfalls below.

"Can't wait any longer," he muttered. "I'd rather get him in bed. Easier that way. But he may stay up another hour or so, and I've got to get the thing off my mind."

Silently he crossed over to the wall. A slight click sounded. A series of faint shuffling noises hinted that he was hastily rummaging in a suit case. Then came a slight pop, like that produced when a cork is jerked out of a bottle, and then an audible gulp and a long sigh of satisfaction. Breathing more easily now, as if he had nerved himself for the task ahead of him, the man executed a few motions that were mere flickers in the darkness.

"Safety always," he told himself, speaking in low tones, as if fearing that the walls might have ears. "Lucky I found this thing when I was hunting for a golf club the other day. It will come in handy in case of an interruption. The Swaynes must have given a masked ball here once upon a time."

Now he stole to the door and opened it softly. A light glowed dimly at the farther end of the hall, but the grand staircase was in almost total darkness. With muffled tread he descended the steps, then turned toward a door that stood slightly ajar. He paused outside, his hand on the knob, and a thin streamer of light coming through the narrow opening showed that a mask was concealing his features.

Cautiously he opened the door a few

inches wider, then looked in. He caught a glimpse of the broad back and shoulders of a man who was pacing the floor with hands clasped behind him. The massive head drooped slightly forward, suggesting that he was deeply absorbed in thought, and the clasped fingers fidgeted nervously.

With a swift, comprehensive glance the masked man took in the scene in the room, a spacious, oak-paneled library furnished in heavy and somber tones. It was illuminated only by a shaded droplight, leaving the walls and corners in shadow. The masked man stepped aside, and his fingers shook a little as he drew a metallic object from his pocket. All his senses on the alert for signals of danger, he waited until the other's back was again turned.

Throwing the door wide open he darted forward on tiptoe. His right hand was raised, and the dim light gleamed against the handle of a pistol. With fingers tightly clutching the barrel he stole up behind the broad-shouldered man. The latter's steps faltered, and his head went up a little, as if he had sensed a warning. He seemed about to turn, but already the silent-footed prowler was at his back. The masked man's arm swung back, then forward, and in another moment the heavy weapon would have crashed down with murderous force.

Then the assassin's hand wavered. A sudden screech broke the silence in the room. His eyes blazing through the orifices in the mask, the intruder darted a sharp glance toward one of the dim corners. Another short screech sounded. Back in the dusky corner, some one was calling a name:

"Gordon!"

For a moment the masked man stood rigidly still; then a short, hysterical laugh broke from his lips. He sprang back a step, and again the barrel of the pistol gleamed in the dim light. Throwing all his strength into the blow, he

crashed the weapon against the side of the other man's head. The victim reeled, clutched wildly at empty space, and with a fragmentary cry on his lips went to the floor. Again the voice in the corner sounded sharply, accusingly:

"Gordon!"

The cry, impinging raspily on the silence, had an eerie sound. For an instant the murderer stood still, gazing rigidly at the twisted heap at his feet. A violent trembling seized him as still another screechlike cry came from the corner.

"Curse that parrot!" he muttered, his voice edged with fear. His work was not yet finished, and the shrill squawk in the corner was unnerving him. In the quick revulsion following his crime, a creeping sensation of horror came over him at the thought that his deed had been witnessed, even though the spectator was only a witless bird.

Swaying dizzily, he looked quickly about him, shrinking back a step as his gaze fell on the still form at his feet. Less than a minute had passed since the parrot's first shrill cry broke on the silence. Another might come at any moment, bringing the inmates of the house to the scene before his task was done.

"Gordon?"

The man shuddered. A low groan escaped him. — With a great effort he steadied himself. He listened intently, with eyes slanting upward, but there was no sound to indicate that the other occupants of the house had been alarmed by the parrot's piercing cries. Again his glance moved to the corner. His figure became tense, as if an idea had suddenly come to him. A faint chuckle sounded behind the mask as he sprang forward.

In an instant he was at the cage, his hand groping for the door. A wild flapping sounded within as the frightened bird pressed flutteringly against the bars. He found the latch and

jerked the door open, then inserted his hand. A little cry escaped him as the sharp point of the beak stung his palm. He recoiled for a moment, but in the next instant his fingers were groping for the parrot's neck. The bird, tearing, clawing, and striking with its bill, fought with frenzied strength. It gave forth another screech, but the murderer's fingers, tightening about its throat, strangled it quickly. He tore the struggling parrot from the cage, pressing its palpitant body against his chest while his hand quickly twisted its neck back and forth several times. Finally he let the bird drop to the floor.

The house was silent, yet it seemed as though some one must have heard the parrot's startled cries. The murderer, shrugging as if to shake off an oppressive spell, looked down at the dead bird.

"Gordon, eh?" he muttered, and then he caught his breath huskily. Moving swiftly, as if momentarily expecting an interruption, he stepped to the dead man's side and took a key from one of the pockets. With this he unlocked a drawer in the writing desk and rummaged quickly among the papers it contained. At last he seemed to have found what he wanted, for he thrust a manila envelope into his pocket. As he did so, he tilted his head backward and his eyes became fixed on the ceiling. Some one was stirring overhead.

The murderer sprang away from the desk. In an instant he had returned the key to the dead man's pocket, and now he tiptoed swiftly toward a door opposite the one by which he had entered. There he paused and listened. Some one was coming down the stairs. He reached out his hand for the knob, and he noticed a bleeding scratch where the bird's beak had lacerated his palm. He saw something else, too, and the discovery drew a mutter of perplexity from his lips.

On his hands and on portions of his

clothing were specks of white dust. He stared at them bewilderedly through the holes in the mask, but approaching footfalls warned him that he must hurry.

An instant later the door at the other side of the room came open, and the murderer tarried long enough to look through the keyhole of the door by which he left the library and see who was entering. What he saw must have pleased him, for he smiled grimly as he hurried away in the darkness.

II.

Inspector Thomas Grantley, stockily built and somewhat florid of face, chewed his dead cigar with a perturbed air. Belden Swayne was a prominent man in the financial circles of New York, and immediately upon receiving news of the murder the inspector had hurried out to Shadeview, the financier's summer home, to take personal charge of the investigation. Shadeview, a tranquil retreat, with wide, open spaces and cool, shady lawns, was situated well within the limits of Greater New York, and the sensational crime therefore came within the inspector's jurisdiction.

The body lay crumpled up on the floor of the library. The features, illuminated by the sunshine pouring in through the high windows, showed traces of the aggressive nature and high-keyed energy that had made Belden Swayne known in the financial world as a ruthless fighter and indefatigable schemer. One arm was flung wide, as if he had fallen while making an ineffectual effort to ward off a blow. There was an element of mockery in the unruffled condition of the clothing, showing that Belden Swayne, the fighter, had died without a struggle.

On the other side of the room, beneath a huge brass cage, lay the body of a white cockatoo. Unlike its master, the bird appeared to have died fighting, for snow-white plumage was scattered all around it.

Except for one bewildering detail the case promised to be easy of solution. The medical examiner, who had reached the scene a few minutes behind the inspector, had already stated that Swayne had died as the result of a heavy blow struck on the side of the head. The financier was a chronic sufferer from insomnia, and of late he had been in a highly nervous condition, but only the most urgent importunities of his physicians had prompted him to go to Shadeview for a few days' rest and incidentally attend his wife's house party.

The inspector, as he viewed the scene through deceptively lazy eyes, thought that the case, save for its one perplexing aspect, might prove a rather simple affair. Evidently the murderer had sneaked up behind his victim while the latter was walking the floor late at night, as sleepless men often do. As for the motive, it was no new thing in the inspector's experience for a wealthy man with several expectant heirs to meet with a sudden fatality. The thing that puzzled him greatly was the dead parrot.

Grantley looked almost reproachfully at the bird. Its presence on the scene of the murder complicated the situation a great deal. The inspector could see no reason why the white cockatoo should have been slain along with its master. The killing of the parrot would not fit into any theory his mind could evolve. It would have been easy to find several motives for the killing of Swayne, but the task of finding a motive for the slaying of the bird baffled Grantley's wits. He could not dismiss it as a casual and meaningless incident, or as an act of wanton cruelty. The inspector was too thorough-going in his methods to jump at such a shallow solution.

From the dead bird his gaze wandered to the tall, slightly stooping man standing near the body. As was his habit when starting out on a case of importance, he had picked up Wilton Drew on

the way. The two detectives were friends and, though their methods differed, each held the other in deep respect. Though stone blind, Drew often evinced an acuteness of perception that gave the inspector an uncanny feeling that the sightless man had eyes in the tips of his fingers. It was this knack of keen observation that had given Wilton Drew, despite his handicap, the reputation of being one of the shrewdest criminal investigators in New York.

While Grantley searched in vain for finger prints, the blind man moved gropingly about the room, running his marvelously sensitized fingers over the furnishings in order to familiarize himself with the setting. The inspector knew that each slight touch of those long, slim and finely tapering fingers conjured up a picture in the blind man's mind, enabling him to visualize the scene almost as clearly as if he had viewed it through normal eyes. It was what Drew called "picturing the unseen." The inspector could not understand it, but he had seen the results, and to Grantley's practical mind results were what mattered.

"Any clews, Grantley?" Drew spoke in his soft, slightly drawling voice that had a curiously penetrating quality.

"No," said the inspector disgustedly. "None that amount to anything. There are a couple of finger marks on the desk, but I doubt if they can be developed. What I don't get is where this parrot comes in."

"Very inconsiderate of Polly to gum up a perfectly simple case." Drew's face, always a trifle pale, and sometimes characterized by a wistful expression, was lighted up by a faint smile. "I understand these cockatoos are great scrappers. The murderer must have had a strong motive for tackling her, or he would have let her strictly alone."

"Motive? What motive could a man have for doing away with a parrot?"

"The infernal noise some of them make is motive enough, though it doesn't seem to fit this particular case. How was the bird killed?"

"Strangled, it seems. The murderer must have taken her out of her cage and twisted her neck, though why he did it is more than I can see."

"Patience, Grantley." The blind man had moved over to the body, and now his fingers were running up and down the dead man's clothing. He was kneeling on the floor, with head tilted back a trifle, and the sightless eyes were fixed on an indefinite point in space. Suddenly the fingers stopped, and there was a tension about the kneeling figure which told Grantley he had found something interesting.

"How do you suppose this spot got here, inspector?"

Grantley's eyes were wide with amazement. As many times in the past, he felt a little dazed as he saw the working of the curious faculty which the blind man called his inner sight. Drew was pointing to a small whitish stain on the dead man's black trousers, near the left side pocket. It was so slight that the inspector could scarcely see it, and yet the blind man's finger tips, acting as the antennæ of his mind, had readily located it.

"It's very simple," said Drew with an amused laugh, sensing the other's bewilderment. "As I have often explained, the nerves in the tips of one's fingers are the most sensitive in the body, but one must learn how to use them. I felt a foreign substance the instant my fingers touched this spot. What color is it, Grantley? Eyes are useful sometimes."

"White—a sort of grayish white."

"Oh!" Drew looked as if an interesting thought had occurred to him. "Evidently the murderer picked his victim's pockets."

The inspector examined the spot through his lens. "It's pretty slight.

Where did the spot come from, do you suppose?"

Drew chuckled gently. "Perhaps Polly, like many others of her sex, was a vain bird and addicted to the use of powder. In that event some of it probably stuck to the murderer's fingers, and a little of it came off on Swayne's clothing when he searched his pockets. Since the bird seems to be of some importance in this affair, wouldn't it be a good idea to find out something about her habits and moral character?"

Grantley gave the blind man a puzzled glance, but he did as suggested. Henry, stately and well-groomed, with an air about him that blended perfectly with the massive mahogany furniture and the silken tapestries, entered almost instantly. He gravely explained that the white cockatoo had been in the possession of the Swaynes about three years, having been sent them by a friend living in Australia. Most of the time the bird was kept in the country house, the servant went on, because the neighbors in town objected to the noise she made.

"Was she very talkative?" inquired Drew, his tones signifying nothing but curiosity. "How many words did she know?"

"She didn't talk as much as some of them do, sir. I don't think she knew more than nine or ten words. She said 'good morning,' 'good night,' and 'hello,' and she called four members of the household by their Christian names, and once in a while she swore. I tried to break her of that, but——"

"You are sure she did not speak the names of more than four members of the household?"

"Yes, sir. Absolutely sure, sir."

"Who were they?"

As Drew spoke the question, a muttered exclamation escaped the inspector. Looking as if he had suddenly caught the drift of the interrogation, he looked sharply at the butler.

"One was Mr. Swayne himself, sir.

The other was Miss Nanette Swayne, his niece. Polly called her "Nan" for short, just as her uncle did. The third was Gordon Janis, the son of Mr. Swayne's sister." The butler paused.

"And the fourth, Henry?"

"Myself, sir. The bird seemed very fond of me, sir." Grantley saw the butler cast a regretful glance at the dead cockatoo.

"How long have the niece and nephew been members of the household," was Drew's next question.

"Since they were small children, sir. Miss Nanette became an orphan when she was three years old. Mr. Gordon's father is dead, and his mother is nearly always traveling abroad for her health. Mr. and Mrs. Swayne had no children of their own, and they liked having young people about, so they took them in."

With the sureness of gait acquired through constant practice, the blind man walked forward and took the butler's hand. It was an unusual thing to do, but Drew's manner made it seem natural, and Inspector Grantley was used to seeing him shake the hands of people on the slightest pretext. It was one of many methods by which he formed mental pictures of persons he came in contact with.

"All this must have been quite a shock to you," murmured Drew, retaining the butler's hand. "By the way, Henry, did you hear any unusual sounds between eleven-thirty and two o'clock last night?"

The butler's eyes opened wide. "Nothing unusual, sir. At least, I didn't think it was unusual at the time. The cockatoo cried out a few times. I guess it must have been at one o'clock or a little after. It woke me up, but I didn't think anything of it, so I rolled over and went to sleep again."

"Could you hear what she was saying?"

"No, sir. The house is very solidly built, and sounds don't carry very far."

"Just one more question, Henry." Drew was still holding the servant's hand. "Did the cockatoo recognize the persons whose names she had learned to speak? For instance, if you were to walk into the room where she was, would she be apt to call your name, or would she be just as likely to call one of the other three names?"

Henry lifted his brows. "She would call my name, sir. She knew me by sight, just as she knew Mr. Swayne, Miss Nanette and Mr. Gordon, and she would call either of us by name when she saw us."

Drew nodded. "By the way, Henry, is the suit you are wearing to-day the same one you wore last night?"

"Y-yes, sir," stammered the butler, evidently greatly puzzled.

The blind man had not yet released his hand. "There is a white spot on your sleeve. Where did you get it, Henry?"

The inspector, as bewildered as the butler, was watching closely. From long observation of Drew's methods he knew that there was a purpose back of the blind man's questions.

"A spot, sir?" Henry looked in perplexity at his sleeves. "I don't see it, sir."

Drew laughed and finally released the butler's hand. "I must have been mistaken, then. That's all, Henry."

The butler went out. The blind man's lips twitched a little. Grantley regarded him quizzically.

"Was there a white spot on Henry's sleeve?" he asked.

"No, and even if there had been I wouldn't have been able to see it, as Henry must have realized after he got over his surprise at my question."

"Then why——"

"It was only a little test, Grantley. I'm not sure that I envy you your eyes. To the trained observer a handshake

tells more than the expression of a face. Since Adam and Eve people have practiced the art of controlling the muscles of the face, but they never learned to control the muscles of the hand. That's where blindness is an advantage. Henry's hand told me that he is absolutely trustworthy. How does the case look to you now?"

Grantley was all animation. "It's a cinch that Swayne was murdered by one of the other two people whose names Polly could speak," he declared with his habitual positiveness. "Since you give Henry a clean bill—and you're usually right in matters of that kind—the case narrows down to Nanette Swayne and Gordon Janis. It's a dead certainty one of them did it."

Drew seemed to ponder. In his face was the faint glow that always shone there when his mind was triumphing over his physical handicap.

"I wouldn't call it a dead certainty," he murmured, "but the idea is interesting, and the psychological point involved is not without merit. A murderer's conscience is a curious thing. It is responsible for a lot of irrational conduct. I can imagine myself in the murderer's place. At my feet lies the body of the man I have killed, very still and silent. My nerves are on edge. For the moment I feel nothing but overwhelming horror at the deed I have committed. Then, as I stand there, shivering and filled with awe, I hear my name called in loud, accusing tones. It is only the cockatoo, but I do not stop to reason. My only clear impulse is to crush out the life of the thing that has witnessed my deed and spoken my name. I feel a mad desire to silence its voice forever, and in the frenzy of the moment I snatch the bird from the cage and strangle it to death." Drew paused. He looked as if the picture he had drawn was fading out of his mind. "Fairly interesting speculation, Grantley."

"More than that!" The inspector fairly bristled with enthusiasm. "It's the only explanation that explains anything. You put the idea into my mind yourself when you asked Henry about Polly's vocabulary. Before that I was up a tree. Couldn't see why anybody should want to kill a parrot. This makes everything clear, though. The thing to do now is to put Nanette Swayne and Gordon Janis through a stiff quiz."

"Perhaps you are right," murmured Drew, a faint trace of uncertainty in his tones.

"Of course I'm right! Isn't it clear as day that the murderer killed Polly because she made him nervous when she cried out his name?"

"It's a fairly interesting hypothesis."

"Hypothesis be hanged! Can you imagine any other reason why the bird was killed?"

"Go ahead and try out your theory," suggested Drew, a faint smile playing about his lips.

After a stare at the blind man, the inspector reached out his hand to touch a button. Before he could do so, there came a rap at the door. Grantley opened and a portly, well-tailored man walked into the library. The newcomer laid aside his stick and hat, then gazed with an expression of grief and shock at the body.

"Terrible!" he exclaimed in grieved tones. "Mr. Swayne was my partner and best friend, gentlemen. My name is Phelps—Peyton Phelps. I started for a long walk early this morning, as is my habit when I am lucky enough to get away from town for a few days, and Henry told me the dreadful news when I got back. What—what's this?"

He looked in astonishment at the dead parrot. Inspector Grantley, after introducing himself and Drew, told briefly what the investigation had disclosed.

"As Mr. Swayne's friend and partner, I am sure you can help us a great

deal, Mr. Phelps," said the blind man, extending his hand. Grantley watched them as they shook hands, and he saw disappointment on Drew's face. For once the handshake told him little or nothing. Mr. Phelps was dressed for a walk, and in keeping with the rest of his attire he was wearing a pair of gray suède gloves.

Grantley frowned at the newcomer. He was anxious to question Nanette Swayne and Gordon Janis, and he did not welcome the interruption. The range of suspicion, as Inspector Grantley saw things, had narrowed down to the two young people. Mrs. Swayne had suffered a severe nervous shock and was confined to her bed, and Grantley did not think there was anything to be learned from the guests. Since most of the spare bedrooms were in a part of the house far removed from the library, it was not likely that any of them had heard or seen anything of importance.

He listened impatiently to Drew's questions and Phelps' answers. The latter explained that he had been at the country house for three days, having been called there by his partner to discuss important matters of business.

"Been in France lately, Mr. Phelps?" asked Drew.

"In France?" Phelps' eyes were wide with astonishment. Even Inspector Grantley, though accustomed to the surprising turns of the blind man's mind, was taken aback.

"The toilet water you are using is *eau de Sèvres*, isn't it?" Drew went on, sensing and, evidently enjoying the other's bewilderment. "I happen to know that for some reason it has never been marketed in America. Occasionally a bottle is brought across by people returning from France."

Phelps was too amazed to speak. The blind man, who always took a pardonable pride in his keen perceptions and vast store of odd facts, smiled amusedly.

"Marvelous!" exclaimed Phelps at last. "I had been under the impression that the wonderful talents ascribed to you were mostly newspaper talk. I was never in France in my life. I have a bottle of *eau de Sèvres*, but it was given me by a friend. But, to get back to this awful affair, have you any idea who committed the crime?"

Drew, always quick to give the inspector credit for ideas inspired by himself, outlined the theory in detail.

"Sounds plausible," murmured Phelps, "but I can't believe that either Miss Nanette or Mr. Janis had anything to do with it. Miss Nanette is an impulsive young lady, and Janis has cut a few wild capers, but I'm sure either of them is incapable of murder. However, in connection with the interesting theory you have just outlined, I had a curious impression last night." He smiled sadly and apologetically. "It was so trivial, though, that I shouldn't mention it. I may be doing some one an injustice."

"Out with it," said Grantley in his usual blunt way.

Phelps seemed greatly embarrassed. "I was awakened about half past one or two by some one calling a name. I am a very light sleeper and the slightest sound is apt to disturb me. I listened, but became convinced it was only the cockatoo, so I went to sleep again."

Grantley stepped forward, his impatience suddenly gone. "You say the cockatoo called a name. Whose name?"

"It isn't worth mentioning," said Phelps, looking very uncomfortable. "I am sure it didn't mean anything."

"That's for us to decide," declared the inspector.

"Well, since you insist, the name was 'Gordon.' I must warn you, however, that I might have been mistaken."

Grantley looked triumphantly at the blind man, but Drew's face was inscrutable.

"Haven't you found anything else?"

asked Phelps. "No direct clues? I hope you won't attach too much importance to what I have told you."

"Well, there is one thing more," said Drew, "but it is only a hazy conjecture. I have an idea that if we could examine the clothing the murderer wore last night we should find one or more white spots on it. That is, of course, unless he has taken the precaution of brushing them off."

Grantley looked at the blind man with a frown of perplexity.

"I have read or heard that if one strokes a white cockatoo a snowy powder comes off in the hand," Drew elucidated. "It seems to have been provided by nature to keep the plumage always white. Now, I imagine Polly fought like mad last night, and in the struggle some of the powder must have got transferred to the murderer's clothes."

Grantley nodded comprehendingly. He walked over to the dead bird and touched its feathers. He nodded once more as a white dust came off in his hand. Then he touched a button and instructed Henry to summon Miss Nanette and Gordon Janis. He stood aside as the young couple entered, watching them narrowly, particularly Janis. His lips twitched as the blind man came forward with outstretched hand. He noticed that Drew held the young man's hand a little longer than he did the girl's. Then, while Phelps sat down in a corner of the room, the inspector began the questioning, but it was wholly perfunctory as far as the girl was concerned. She held her head high, and her figure was slim and strong. Her eyes, clear and very blue, met his own without flinching. Her hair, as she stood in the light streaming in through the windows, looked like ruffled sunshine.

"That's all, Miss Swayne," he said finally, and the girl took a seat. The inspector turned to Janis. The young man's dashing, athletic figure was well set off by white flannels. He had thick

wavy brown hair and regular features, but the inspector made a mental note of the fact that his mouth was a trifle weak.

"Janis," said Grantley abruptly, "you might begin by telling us if those togs are the ones you had on last night."

Bewilderedly Janis glanced down the crease of his trousers. "I'm not in a joking mood to-day," he declared. "If you can't think of anything more sensible to ask me, you can go straight to blazes."

"Inspector Grantley never jokes," said the blind man, sauntering up to Janis' side. "Humor isn't one of his strong points. Tell him what he wants to know."

"I never remember what clothes I wear from one day to the next," confessed the young man. "Let me see. Oh, yes! Last night was a sort of semi-formal occasion. I hate such affairs, but I had promised my aunt and Nanette that I'd make a martyr of myself. I was wearing a Tuxedo. Anything else you wish to know?"

The inspector tried a chance shot. "When did you last borrow money from your uncle?"

"About a week ago," said Janis without hesitancy. "He grumbled like a bear, but he let me have what I asked for. He was a good sport, even if he got a bit peppery at times. Anything else?"

Before the inspector could speak, Drew, with a motion that seemed wholly casual, placed a hand on the young man's arm.

"Did you hear any unusual sounds last night?" he asked. "Anything that sounded like a screech from the cockatoo?"

"I did. It must have been about half past one. The parrot seemed to be excited about something. She didn't usually carry on that way late at night, so it struck me as a bit peculiar. After she had cried out a few times, I put on

my bathrobe and ran down, and then—then I saw that.” He pointed at the body. “It horrified me, of course. The only thing I could think of was that a burglar must have done it. I ran out, thinking he couldn’t have got far, but after looking around in the garden and back of the house for a while I concluded he must have made his escape. I went back to the house and telephoned the police.”

Drew’s hand still rested on the young man’s arm. “Could you hear what the cockatoo was saying?” he asked.

“Not very clearly, but I imagined she called my name. I couldn’t be sure, for it took me some time to get quite awake, and——”

“That’s all, Mr. Janis.” Drew released the young man’s arm and sauntered over to the inspector’s side.

“What do you think?” he asked.

By way of answer Grantley jingled the handcuffs in his pocket. “Before I put the links on him, though, we might as well try out that idea of yours. If we find white spots on Janis’ Tuxedo, it will be a dead certainty that he is the one who did it.”

Drew said nothing, and the inspector rang for a maid and instructed her to bring the suit Janis had worn the previous evening. A determined twinkle in his eye told that his mind was made up. To him it seemed an inevitable conclusion that the person whose name the cockatoo had called was the murderer of Swayne. Janis himself had admitted that the parrot had spoken his name, and the powder stains, if they should be found on his clothing, would settle the matter definitely.

He knew that several pairs of eyes were watching him as he took the garments from the maid. Phelps, Nanette Swayne, and Janis moved up a little closer, while the blind man, with a peculiar smile about his lips, walked slowly back and forth. Standing in the bright sunlight at the window, Grantley

picked up the coat. As his keen eyes ran over the fabric, an elated murmur escaped him. Here and there, on the sleeves and on the satin lining of the lapels, were particles of fine white dust.

“How did these spots get here, Janis?” he inquired, eying the young man steadily.

Janis stared hard at the white specks. “Looks like talcum powder,” he muttered. “I use it after shaving, but I always shave before I dress, so I don’t see how——”

Before he could finish, the inspector drew the handcuffs from his pocket and with a brisk step forward seized the young man’s hand.

“Wait!” said Drew quietly, joining the little group at the window. “Handcuffs are useful articles, inspector, but you ought to make sure that you put them on the right man.”

Four pairs of eyes stared at him, and one of the faces in the group paled a little. Grantley, with the steel links dangling from one hand, gaped in astonishment.

“I don’t get you,” he declared. “All the clues point to Janis as the murderer.”

“Not quite *all*, inspector. Only the visible and audible ones—and eyes and ears are easily deceived sometimes. Janis had no more to do with this murder than you or I. He told us the truth during the questioning. A man with murder on his conscience may lie with a straight face, but he can’t control the little muscular spasms and nervous twitchings that sometimes are the only outward indications of the disturbance within him. I had my hand on Janis while we shot questions at him, and he was as cool as a cucumber. The handcuffs belong on somebody else, inspector.”

“But the cockatoo——”

“Yes, I know the cockatoo called Janis’ name last night, and just now I have no explanations to offer on that

point. Neither can I explain how the white powder got on Janis' clothes, but those wrinkles will be ironed out in time. Mr. Phelps," and he turned suddenly toward the dead man's partner, toward whom he had been slowly edging for several minutes, "will you tell us what you were doing in the library between midnight and two o'clock this morning?"

"Sir!" exclaimed Phelps indignantly.

"Do you deny you were in the library at that time?"

"Most—most emphatically. I fail to understand why you ask such a question."

"Please don't excite yourself, Mr. Phelps," said Drew in gentle tones. "Since you deny being in the library at the time I've mentioned, perhaps you will explain when and where you were scratched by the cockatoo."

"Scratched?" echoed Phelps. Then he laughed derisively. "I fear, Mr. Drew, that for once your marvelous powers are deserting you. Do you mean to insinuate that I—that I killed Swayne?" His tones indicated that he regarded the idea utterly preposterous.

"I am insinuating nothing, Mr. Phelps. I was merely asking about a scratch. Do you mean to deny that there is a scratch on your person?"

"Of course I deny it, and I resent being questioned in such a manner."

"Inspector," said the blind man quietly, "will you please remove Mr. Phelps' right-hand glove?"

Grantley, who had listened with a puzzled expression, turned toward Phelps. The man's face had suddenly gone white and fear lurked in the depths of his eyes. Suddenly, as the inspector moved forward, he lunged toward the door, but a rug curled up under his foot and tripped him. In a moment the inspector was on top of him, tearing the glove from his fingers. For a moment he stared at a deep, purplish scratch on the palm of the man's hand.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed. "You were right, Drew, only I don't see how you guessed it."

"It wasn't a guess," said Drew with a whimsical laugh. "It was the *eau de Sèvres*."

III.

"Phelps has confessed—broke down completely when I asked him why he lied about the scratch," the inspector told Drew late that afternoon while they were dining together in the police official's favorite restaurant.

"I expected he would," murmured the blind man. "Phelps is the type that collapses easily when things turn the wrong way. He took long chances remaining at Shadeview after the murder, but I suppose he feared that his departure at that particular time would look suspicious. Besides, he evidently felt sure that young Janis would be accused of the crime. Why did he kill Swayne?"

"It seems Phelps had been double-crossing his partner for some time—fleeing him right and left. Swayne was beginning to get wise; in fact, he had documentary proof of Phelps' crookedness. He asked his partner to come to Shadeview, meaning to have things out. Phelps knew he was caught, and he thought the easiest way out was to kill his partner. He chose last night for the job, knowing there would be a number of guests and feeling it would be harder to single out the guilty man among so many. To play doubly safe, in case there should be an interruption of some kind, he wore a mask he had found somewhere about the house. As it happened, the only interruption came from the cockatoo."

Grantley chuckled in an embarrassed way. "I was dead wrong on that point," he admitted. "It looked like a sure thing to me that the murderer was the one whose name the bird called."

"It was a natural enough mistake,"

said Drew consolingly. "The same idea occurred to myself and—— But go on."

"I learned afterward that it was Polly's habit, whenever she was suddenly startled, to screech out one of the four names she knew. She didn't know Phelps' name, and she probably wouldn't have recognized him anyway, since he had a mask on. So she called for Janis, and Phelps told me she gave him a good scare. I guess it must have sounded kind of uncanny. Besides, he feared that the bird's cries might arouse the household before his job was finished. He had learned somehow that there were papers in the desk which might put him in a bad fix if they should be found. They were reports sent to Swayne by the detectives he had hired to get the goods on Phelps. Well, Phelps didn't dare to leave the room until he had got hold of those papers, and he didn't know how long it might take him to find them. In the meantime Polly was yelling her head off, and he had to silence her, so he choked the bird to death.

"Then a bright idea occurred to him. He felt pretty sure somebody in the house must have been awakened by the cockatoo's cries, and in the morning it would be remembered that the bird had called Janis' name about the time the murder was committed. He couldn't be sure, of course, but he hoped that would throw suspicion on young Janis. At the same time he noticed white powder stains on his hands and clothes. He didn't have much time to think, for just then somebody was approaching the library. He looked through the keyhole

of the opposite door and saw Janis walk in, and then another bright idea came to him. He ran up to Janis' room, using the back stairs, and rubbed the powder stains off on the suit the young fellow had worn that evening. So much for the cockatoo's cries and the white dust. What I don't get is how you came to suspect Phelps."

"Partly by a process of elimination. Too, I felt pretty sure that the murderer couldn't have emerged from his encounter with Polly without a scratch or two. I was rather disappointed because Phelps had gloves on when I shook hands with him. It gave me no chance to form a picture of him in my mind. I made a compensating discovery, though. It was the French perfume."

Grantley stared bewilderedly. On Drew's lips was a faint smile that reflected justifiable pride in his conquest of the night that always surrounded him.

"I guessed that Phelps had used the perfume to conceal some other scent," the blind man went on. "And that other scent, Grantley, was arnica. Evidently he treated his hand with it to heal the scratches. The odor of the arnica was so faint that your nostrils would never have detected it. I wouldn't have noticed it, myself if Phelps had sprinkled just a little more of the *eau de Sèvres* over his clothing. As it was, I noticed just the faintest whiff of arnica, and it seemed to come from the right hand. It was just enough to upset the misleading clews of the cockatoo's cries and the white dust."

SUIT OF CLOTHES IS LAWYER'S FEE

THE suit a penniless prisoner wore when he was arraigned in a Virginia court recently was taken as a fee by the lawyer who defended him. The lawyer obtained a pair of overalls and gave them to his client to wear in the place of the suit.

World-famous Robberies by John Laurence

THE GREAT MANHATTAN BANK ROBBERY

THE bells of old Trinity Church in New York had barely finished striking the hour of ten on the morning of Sunday, October 27, 1878, when a man staggered into the little barber's shop in Bleecker Street under the great Manhattan Savings Bank Building. His hands were tied behind his back, and round his mouth and fastened at the back of his head was a handkerchief making it impossible for him to speak. He was dressed only in his shirt and trousers.

His eyes glared at the barber while the spasmodic jerking of his jaws showed that he was vainly trying to speak under the stress of some strong emotion.

"Good heavens! It's Werckle!" cried the barber. He and a customer who was being shaved hurriedly took the gag out of the man's mouth and unfastened his hands. For a moment he seemed unable to speak, trembling all over with the intensity of his emotions. Then at last he managed to gasp out:

"The bank's been robbed!"

Without waiting any further news the customer dashed out of the shop and informed the nearest policeman. Soon the story was being told by Louis Werckle, the watchman of the Manhattan Bank, of one of the most remark-

able bank robberies in the history of crime.

"Just before six o'clock this morning," said the watchman, "I was woke up by my brother-in-law as usual to take my turn, and he went off home. I live in the bank," he explained to the police officers, "with my wife and her mother. I was dressing when seven or eight men rushed in and overpowered me and tied me up. My wife and her mother were bound as well.

"They made me hand over the keys of the vaults and tell them the combination. They threatened to shoot me in front of my wife if I didn't!" said Werckle, who appeared to be in a state of collapse after his terrifying experiences.

Although it was Sunday the chief officials of the bank, one of the largest and wealthiest in New York, were promptly summoned, and the case placed in the hands of Inspector Byrnes, who afterward became chief of the New York police, one of the most famous detectives America has produced. The inside of the vaults of the bank was an amazing sight.

Two of the great steel safes, among the finest of their make at the time and constructed of the toughest steel known, were utterly wrecked, their massive doors lying broken open by some pow-

erful explosive. These safes were supposed to be proof against the most scientific burglar's tools ever made. The floor and ceiling and walls of the strong room of the bank were made of enormous thickness of concrete so that, if the thieves had not managed to get the keys of the vault out of the watchman, their task would have been a hopeless one. The immense thickness of the strong room walls prevented any sounds the gang of burglars made from being heard outside.

"Never did I see such a complete wreckage of steel safes as those of the Manhattan Bank," said the chief of the New York police afterward. "It convinced me that not only were the thieves at the very head of their profession, but they must have employed some of the finest burglar's tools ever made."

When the bank officials found out what was missing they made the horrifying discovery that the thieves had got away with over three million dollars in cash and securities! The sum was so great that the bank was forced to close its doors temporarily. Apart from the amount stolen, the robbery created an immense sensation because the Manhattan Bank was supposed to be the strongest in America; and, after it had fallen to burglars, no bank felt safe.

The more Inspector Byrnes investigated, the more difficult he found it to account how the thieves had entered the building in the first place, for there were no signs of any of the outside locks having been tampered with in any way. The bank was always guarded, day and night, by a watchman, though during the day his duties were to some extent nominal ones. There were three watchmen who took it in turns, Louis Werckle, the one who had been overpowered at the time of the actual robbery and who lived on the premises; Dan Kelly, his brother-in-law, and Patrick Shevlin.

There was no doubt in the detective's

mind that one or other of these watchmen had been in league with the burglars, for it was impossible to have picked the outside locks without being seen by a passing policeman. He and his assistants, therefore, watched all three men. One, Patrick Shevlin, gave himself away almost immediately. Before the burglary he had been a man who spent very little, for the chief reason that his salary at the bank was not a very large one.

A few days after the robbery, however, Shevlin, the one watchman who had not been on duty officially, began spending money rather freely, though the other watchmen continued their ordinary lives. Inspector Byrnes at once realized that it was through Shevlin that he stood the greatest chance of getting the first clues to the thieves.

For several weeks he followed him about and drank in the same places with him, for Shevlin had been spending far more on drink than was good for him. In several of his intoxicated moments the watchman not only said he knew who had committed the theft, but that he had not been well paid for keeping silent about it. The detective quickly learned that the watchman had a grievance, and he determined to work from that to something more definite.

Under Byrnes's instructions Shevlin was discharged from the bank, and he promptly proceeded to drown his sorrows in liquor. Just as promptly he was arrested, charged with drunkenness, and imprisoned. Each time Patrick Shevlin became intoxicated he was arrested until his resentment against the burglars who had, he now believed, caused him to lose his job and get into the hands of the police, made him very bitter. At the proper moment the detective became a fellow prisoner of the watchman one day and got talking to him.

"I hear you were in the Manhattan affair," he said.

"Well, you've got long ears," retorted the Irishman, who was not going to give himself away when he was sober. "Who told you, anyway?"

"Never mind," replied Byrnes. "But I think you were a boob to take only a couple of thousand for your share."

"That's a lie!" said the Irishman quickly. "They only gave me five hundred dollars."

"What!" answered the detective in pretended astonishment. "Only five hundred dollars. Why they couldn't have done the job if you hadn't let them in. You ought to have had the biggest share."

"They promised me more," grumbled the watchman, "and I'll see I get it when I get out."

"I reckon Jimmy Hope's got most of it," said Byrnes, making a guess at one of the burglars concerned. He felt safe in voicing this assumption, for Jimmy Hope was easily the best known and most expert bank thief in America at the time. He had been in New York not only at the time of the robbery, but for some considerable time before. Moreover he had been seen with a number of well-known bank thieves, so putting two and two together Byrnes felt he would not be far out by suggesting Hope was one of the men concerned, probably a ringleader. Shevlin's reply confirmed his suspicions.

"If it hadn't been for Jimmy Hope and Jim Tracy I shouldn't have been in it at all," muttered the imprisoned man. "And I should have had my job still."

"I shouldn't be surprised if Jim Tracy squealed," suggested the detective.

"If he does, I'll tell all I know," threatened Shevlin to his supposed fellow prisoner. "Jimmy Hope and 'Shang' Draper and 'Red' Leary and all of them ought to be here, not me."

Inspector Byrnes had got here all the information he wanted. The three men the discharged watchman had mentioned so casually to him, believing him to be

a fellow prisoner, were three of the best known bank thieves in America! The inspector soon learned that all three, with several others, had been seen together in New York for some months before the robbery had taken place. Bit by bit he learned through police spies that they were spending money rather freely; and it did not require much imagination to piece together some of the details of the robbery.

The detective had become convinced now that Werckle and Kelly, the other watchmen, were honest, and, as Shevlin had been on duty on the Saturday, he had in all probability let some of the thieves into the bank before he had gone off duty. For some reason or other they had waited till early Sunday morning, when Kelly went off duty and left the bank, before carrying out their big coup.

It took many weeks to gather the little information he had, and at the end of that time he arrested Patrick Shevlin and charged him with being concerned in the great robbery. To the clever detective it was an easy thing to make the watchman believe that the police knew all about the robbery. Soon the discharged watchman had told all he knew of the affair, incensed at the thought that he was getting more than his share of the blame and practically none of his share of the proceeds of the robbery.

"It was Jim Tracy who brought me in it," he said. "We went to school together, and three years ago he first tried to make me help him to rob the bank."

"Three years ago!" echoed the detective.

"Yes," replied the watchman. "Jimmy Hope and the rest have tried that job for three years. They nearly got away with it once, a year ago. It was some time later that I met Jimmy Tracy again."

"Where did you first meet him, then?"

"He ran into me outside the bank just

as I came off duty one evening," said Shevlin, "and he asked me to have a drink with him. Then he wanted to know what I was doing and all.

"When I told him he said I was a fool to be working all them hours for what I was making. He said if he were in the bank he'd get away with a few thousand and never do no more work.

"I'm honest, Jim," I says, "and the bank trusts me."

"The bank fools you," he says. "Why don't you want to go back to Ireland?"

"Why that I do," I told him, and I meant it. I wanted a little farm in Ireland down in County Cork.

"Well," he says. "Do you think you'll ever save enough to buy a farm out there from what the bank gives you? Why, they could buy you a hundred farms and never miss it. I tell you, Pat, bank's the meanest employers there is. In one night you could get away with enough gold to buy all you want, and you'd be away before they could get you."

"I told him I wasn't a crook, but he saw me almost every night, talked it over, and told me some of the boys would do the job, that I need never appear in it. They promised me a big share in what they got, and all I'd have to do was to let them into the building. I promised to help them, though it's me as wishes I hadn't," said the Irishman.

"Who were in it?" asked Inspector Byrnes.

"Jimmy Hope, Jim Brady, Red Leary, Shang Draper, 'Banjo Pete,' and George Leslie," replied the watchman. "They murdered Leslie."

The detective knew every one of the men named to be experts in their profession, and he now learned a little more about the mysterious murder of George Leslie about a year before the great robbery. Leslie was a lock expert. A well educated man, he had won first class honors in his examinations at the

university his father sent him to, he was brought up in luxury, but he was lazy and a spendthrift. He entered crime deliberately, believing he could make more money at it and with less trouble than in any other "profession."

He was an expert mechanic, and he soon became in demand for his remarkable ability in planning and carrying out robberies successfully. At one time in his career he was actually paid by other thieves merely to look over their plans for a burglary and advise them on weak points. His education enabled him to move in the very best of society, and he was able as a result to get to know not only the best places to rob, but to learn all the inside arrangements of a household without exciting suspicion. The South Kensington bank robbery in which the thieves secured one hundred thousand dollars; the robbery of the Lycoming Insurance Co., where thirty thousand dollars was stolen; the raid on the Baltimore bank with the resulting loss of \$140,000, and the robbery from the Saratoga bank of three hundred thousand dollars, were all engineered by this remarkably clever super-criminal. And these robberies were only a few among those he organized. It was calculated by the police, in fact, that he had been concerned with over a thousand robberies in the United States, and only once was he caught, so clever did this master criminal prove in leaving no clews behind.

Naturally he was one of the leading spirits in the attack on the Manhattan bank.

"I let Leslie in over a year ago to look over the locks of the vault doors," said Shevlin.

"Did he try to pick them then?"

"No, he told me he was going to buy a lock like it and experiment with it to see how it worked," replied the watchman, who, though obviously not in the full confidence of the thieves, was yet able to supply the police with a great

deal of useful information. Inspector Byrnes learned afterward that Leslie had bought a similar lock from the makers and spent months seeing how he could pick it without knowing the combination. His ingenuity may be realized when it is stated that he found out that he could work the "tumblers" of the lock by boring a small hole through the steel casing below the indicator.

A few weeks after this discovery Shevlin allowed Leslie to spend a night in the bank. That night he intended to bore the necessary hole under the combination indicator of the lock of the door leading to the vaults and pick the lock. It was purely a practice night, for he and his companions knew that they couldn't afford to be held up at the outside door of the vaults for long. The gang already had learned that it would be impossible to pick the locks of the safes in the vault itself, and they made all the necessary preparations to blow the safes to pieces. This information had been obtained by the pretty wife of one of the members of the gang who posed as an heiress and deposited valuables in the bank vaults. Her "innocent" prattle about the wonderful care the bank took of her "poor little valuables," her "delight" in seeing how the great locks worked, would have baffled the most sophisticated, and the surprise in her blue eyes as she listened to the manager telling her how thick the walls of the safes were, would have deceived anybody!

The door of the vaults was in full sight of any policeman looking through the special grille provided, and that made Leslie's task all the more trying. All the time his ears were strained to catch any sounds while he was at work, yet despite the conditions under which he was drilling the hole, he did it successfully and found that he could pick the lock which gave him and his confederates the first step toward robbing the bank. But when he came to replace

the tumblers he made a mistake which postponed the robbery for some months. In his nervousness he did not replace the tumblers exactly as he had found them, with the result it required a new combination to open the door.

Naturally when the gang heard from the watchman that the bank had found the lock had refused to work to the usual combination, they thought more precautions than ever would be taken to protect the vast wealth in the vaults. The amazing thing is that the bank took hardly any notice of the discovery. All they did was to instruct the makers to put on a fresh lock! The tiny hole which had been bored beneath the lock was discovered, but apparently no importance was attached to it.

Before the next attempt could be made the gang lost one of its best men, for Leslie was shot by a jealous confederate. This was a very severe blow to the men who had been planning for months to carry out the great bank robbery, and who was, with the exception of Jimmy Hope, the greatest organizer of crime then living.

But Leslie had taught the gang how they could get inside the vault without the necessity of attempting to blow the great door to pieces and alarming the whole neighborhood. This was one of the greatest steps in the whole scheme. As luck would have it, however, when the actual robbery came off they were able to get the keys and the combination out of the watchman Werckle. Another thing which this clever thief provided the gang with before he was murdered was a fine set of burglar's tools. Leslie was a mechanical genius, and the tools, which he fashioned himself or had manufactured to his designs, cost over three thousand dollars! Every tool was made of the finest possible steel, and some of them took weeks of patient labor to make.

Jimmy Hope, as leader, went steadily ahead with his preparations. One weak-

ness he discovered in their original plans, and that was the danger of being seen by the policeman on the beat, who had instructions to look through the grille and see that everything was all right. There was only one thing to do, and that was to find out which policeman would be on duty, and bribe him. Hope had very little difficulty in finding out the man who was on duty on Saturday nights, the night he had arranged to get in the bank, and it took him only a few weeks to persuade him, as Jim Tracy had persuaded the night watchman, that his pay as a policeman was nothing to what he would get for turning a blind eye on the bank when he got the tip to do so.

On Saturday afternoon, October 26, 1878, Jimmy Hope, Banjo Pete, Abe Coakley and Shang Draper were admitted to the bank by Patrick Shevlin, while outside, in addition to the bribed policeman, another member of the gang, disguised as an old man, stood idly about ready to give warning through the grille at the approach of danger.

Though the terrified watchman, Werckle, and his family thought seven or eight men had overpowered them there were actually only four concerned. This was one of the reasons why the gang waited till the other watchman had left the building, for otherwise they had to tackle two men and two women, and there was a chance that the alarm might be given before they were overpowered. After the months which had been spent on the job Jimmy Hope and Shang Draper, the two leaders, were not going to spoil everything at the last moment by taking an unnecessary risk. During their waiting the four hid in a storeroom; and, to show how cleverly Hope had arranged everything, he gave Shevlin instructions that he was to appear to have a bad cold.

"You'll get a bottle of cough mixture, drop it in the storeroom and smash it," he said. "That room will smell for days.

of cough mixture and Werckle and Kelly won't notice us by the stuffiness of the room, if they should look in casually. Don't forget to let them know what's happened and make a fuss about the waste of money."

Once inside the great vault the three taking the active part in the robbery were soon at work. With a sledge hammer and fine steel wedges the crack in between the door of the safe and one side was enlarged. In this crack several "cups" of soup were made and filled with a powerful liquid explosive.

"Ready," called out Jimmy Hope when the first safe had been treated. "Tell Abe we're going to fire off."

Abe Coakley was on guard outside the vault ready to give those inside warning that there was danger. Terrific as the noise had been while they had been driving in the wedges, they had little fear of being overheard, because of the thickness of the walls of the vault.

"Coast's clear!" answered Abe Coakley. "Fire away!"

Jimmy Hope touched off the fuse and quickly joined his companions outside the vault. A moment later there came a number of muffled booms; and when the three entered the vault, it was to find the door of the steel safe blown off its hinges, and booty worth over a millions dollars waiting to be stuffed into the handbags the gang had brought with them! Bags of gold and silver, packets of notes and bonds were raked out of the safe and stowed away rapidly. In less than ten minutes the safe had yielded over a million dollars worth of securities and cash!

Exactly the same procedure was gone through with a second safe. This safe contained a large amount in securities, and the robbers stole over three million dollars! There still remained a third safe, but just as Hope was driving in one of the wedges he received warning from outside.

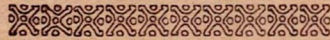
"You've got to clear," said his confederate. "We've got the tip from the cop."

"Curse it," muttered Hope. "There's almost a million in that last safe. I don't like leaving it."

"If you don't we won't get away with any," answered Shang Draper. "Come along."

Very reluctantly their leader gave the order to quit, for he knew that they would never have such an opportunity again. The confederate outside in the street gave them the signal that all was clear, and a few minutes later the gang had scattered. The warning had come because the barber in the shop below had come to his business a little earlier than usual, and the outside man was afraid he would hear the explosions as the third safe was being blown to pieces.

Thanks to Inspector Byrnes no fewer than ten members of the gang were captured and sentenced. For three years on and off Jimmy Hope, Shang Draper, and George Lewis had been planning this remarkable robbery. Leslie was murdered before it was accomplished. Shang Draper died in 1913 after running a well-known gambling saloon, which became the headquarters of thieves and rogues of all descriptions, while Jimmy Hope died in New York in 1905. During his career he robbed banks of several million dollars in the total, and though at one time he had plenty of money and lived in luxury, he died in comparative poverty. But he will always be remembered in criminal history as being one of the leaders in that most daring crime, the great Manhattan bank robbery.



CHAUFFEUR'S ADMISSION WAS TO EMPLOYER'S DISADVANTAGE

A NOTE which a French chauffeur wrote before committing suicide prevents M. Georges Menier, the driver's employer, from collecting insurance on his automobile. The letter, addressed to M. Menier, reads: "Sir: You intrusted a new motor car to my charge. I have not been able to keep it undamaged. I shall not survive this dishonor." According to a French statute, by admitting responsibility for the wrecking of the car, the chauffeur absolved the insurance company from paying for the damage.

M. Menier had gone to a suburb of Paris in his automobile and, deciding to remain there for some time, had ordered the chauffeur to take the car back to Paris. An accident occurred on the way, for the car, smashed and abandoned, was found later by the roadside.

At a near-by village M. Menier learned of the note the chauffeur had left for him. The body of the supersensitive employee was found in a stream near the village.



METAL FRAUD IN LONDON

MANY Londoners are being defrauded by unscrupulous jewelers who are selling "white gold" as platinum. Platinum costs at present about four times as much as gold, so the fraud is a costly one for the victims.

By heating a poor grade of gold and mixing alloys with it, it is possible to produce white gold, which so closely resembles platinum that only an expert can tell the difference. Gems have been mounted in rings, bracelets, and watches of this metal, and sold as being set in platinum. As a consequence of these frauds the public is demanding that a standard registered hallmark be established to distinguish platinum from all imitations of it.

Atoms of Iron

by Scott Campbell

Author of "Connecting Links," etc.

HASTILY Detective Floyd took up his telephone. He was a tall, clean-cut man of thirty, young to be filling the chief of detective's chair on a big municipal police force; but his qualifications and ability to make good was reflected both in his strong, impressive face and quick, decisive movements.

"Hello!" he called crisply.

"That you, Dave? Doctor Barker is talking."

"Oh, yes! What's wrong?" Instantly Floyd had recognized the voice of the district medical examiner.

"Come out to the Crandall Academy at once," said the physician. "Doctor Osgood is dead. He was asphyxiated in his private library. There are suspicious circumstances. Don't delay to question——"

"I'll come at once," Floyd interrupted.

There was more than one reason why he complied so quickly, and for his very serious expression when departing in a motor car with his chauffeur. It was after three o'clock when they entered the beautiful suburban grounds of the Crandall Academy, more than an hour after Doctor Morton Osgood, the venerable founder and director of that exclusive preparatory school for young ladies, was found dead in his private library. It was an old and well-established school. The tuition fees were large, its patrons only wealthy and fashionable people, and Doctor Osgood, though an austere man and a rigid disciplinarian, had been very successful for nearly fifty years and amassed a large fortune.

David Floyd was not thinking of that while speeding up the long driveway. He had no eyes for the groups of pretty girls in the adjoining park and attractive grounds surrounding the several school buildings, all sadly discussing the sudden fatality. Nor was he wondering what suspicious circumstances caused the district medical examiner to require a police investigation. In fact, he was thinking chiefly of his own grievous disappointment a year before, when the only living relative of Doctor Osgood, an orphan granddaughter for whom he had provided since her childhood, had firmly declined his marriage proposal. But he would not allow the thought of Cora Osgood to turn him from his duty.

"Wait here, Joseph," he told his chauffeur. "I may need you."

Floyd was familiar with the huge old wooden house where Doctor Osgood had begun his professional career half a century before, and in which he had lived since with his assistant tutors and a few of his students, most of whom occupied a separate and more modern dormitory. A servant admitted him. There was a lingering odor of gas in the hall, where he was joined hurriedly by a tall, dark man of forty, whose peculiarly pallid complexion was accentuated by his profusion of wavy black hair.

"I've been waiting for you," he said while approaching. "I knew you would want the particulars. Illuminating gas—exactly! I see you detect it. I hope you will as quickly detect, Mr. Floyd, whether the suspicions of the medical examiner are correct." He bowed ob-

sequiously with the implied compliment, while an ingratiating smile lurked in the corners of his lips:

"I am inexpressibly shocked," Floyd replied. "What do you mean? What are Doctor Barker's suspicions?"

"They at first seemed incredible, utterly absurd," Professor Dagmar rejoined. "I ridiculed them then, but now am compelled to agree with him. I have been Doctor Osgood's chief assistant and confidential secretary for several years, mind you, as well as his instructor of physics, chemistry, and other——"

"I know all that," Floyd said impatiently. "Come to the point. What are the particulars? Where is Doctor Barker?"

"In the hall above. I'll show you to Doctor Osgood's apartments, where the fatality occurred." Dagmar led him to the stairway in a side hall. "His vigor has been waning since he turned seventy. He has been in the habit of resting a while after lunch each day, reading or dozing in his private study adjoining his bedroom. He went there to-day about half past one. While reading in my room an hour later, there being no afternoon classes on Saturday, I scented escaping gas and soon found that it came from—but you can see for yourself," he digressed abruptly, when they reached the second floor and entered a broad, brightly lighted hall extending from the front to the rear of the large old-fashioned house.

Detective Floyd stopped and gazed sharply at the scene. He had heard the cold, incisive voice of Doctor Barker, hard-featured man of sixty, who was noted for the stern and merciless insistence with which he performed the functions of his office. He was interrogating the housekeeper, while two young women employed as teachers were standing near by, also about a dozen of the students, whose awed white faces wore frowns of resentment,

the cause of which the detective did not then suspect.

"I'll join you presently," Doctor Barker said a bit brusquely, observing him. "Professor Dagmar will show you."

Floyd's brows contracted slightly. He did not reply, however, but turned at once and rejoined Dagmar, who was waiting for him at the open door of the private library.

"Come in," he said, leading the way. "The gas has been expelled. Doctor Osgood was dead in his morris chair when I first entered, but the body has been placed in his bedroom. You can see for yourself——"

"Stop a moment, Dagmar, and permit me to do so."

Floyd checked him curtly. He saw through the partly open door the lifeless form on a bed in the adjoining room. The windows of both rooms were wide open. The morris chair mentioned stood near a center table in the library. On the floor near one of the walls was a small portable gas heater. But the rubber tube which had connected it with a bracket fixture in the wall a few feet above the heater had been disconnected and was lying on the floor.

"They are just as I found them," Dagmar volunteered, when Floyd gazed more sharply at them. "I soon discovered that the escaping gas came from this room. The door was closed and locked——"

"Locked!" Floyd interjected, noting that the door had not been forced.

"It was—but the key had not been removed."

"Do you mean that the door was locked from outside?"

"Exactly." Dagmar emphasized it with a significant nod. "I opened it and rushed in, holding my breath while I turned off the gas and opened all of the windows," he continued. "I saw at once that Doctor Osgood was dead."

He evidently had fallen asleep while reading. The book he had dropped was lying near the chair. I could remain here only a few moments, but long enough to learn that he was utterly beyond resuscitation. Then I hurried out and closed the door to keep the gas from the hall. Later we supposed it was an accident, of course, and that the rubber hose had become loose and fallen from the gas fixture. When Doctor Barker arrived, however, whom I hurriedly notified——”

“Wait!” Floyd interrupted. “If the cause was accidental, Dagmar, why was Doctor Osgood locked in the room. He could not himself have locked the door from outside.”

“That’s the point Doctor Barker immediately raised,” Dagmar hastened to inform him. “It was a very convincing one. He says there are always criminal possibilities in a fatality of this kind, either suicide or murder, and that caused him to begin a searching investigation.”

“The problem comes down to a single question,” Floyd said decidedly. “Who locked this door? The fact that it was done from outside eliminates every reasonable possibility of accident or suicide. The hand that locked it undoubtedly had disconnected from the wall fixture the tube of the lighted heater and left the gas flowing. Obviously with murderous intent, too. Who locked it? That’s the question.”

“The medical examiner knows who locked it,” Dagmar asserted with bluntness so unusual that the detective eyed him sharply. “There’s no reasonable doubt of it. Cora Osgood was here half an hour before I detected the escaping gas. She was seen closing and locking the windows. She was——”

“Stop a moment!” Floyd’s face had gone strangely white. Not once had it occurred to him that the girl he had hoped vainly to marry, and whom he still loved, might be under suspicion.

“Do you mean, Professor Dagmar,” he asked, “that Cora is suspected of having murdered Doctor Osgood?”

“Why not?” Dagmar questioned. “She is the only person known to have been here.”

“But that’s absurd, preposterous,” said Floyd.

“I thought so at first,” Dagmar repeated. His squinted eyes had a sharper gleam. He drew himself up and ran his fingers through his wavy black hair. “Like me, Mr. Floyd, you may change your mind,” he added. “You already appear to have done so, in fact, since you just asserted confidently that the hand that locked this door sent Doctor Osgood to his doom. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that Miss Osgood locked the door.”

“Has she been questioned about it?” Floyd asked.

“Not yet. She fainted when told of the crime and was taken to her room,” Dagmar informed him. “I think she still is prostrated. Doctor Barker decided to defer interrogating her until after he had questioned others. He soon learned enough to convince him that she——”

“Never mind about it. I’ll get it from him,” Floyd said abruptly. Only his lingering paleness and a subtle hardness that had settled in his tense voice betrayed his suppressed feelings. “This, you said, lies where you found it.”

“Except that Doctor Barker briefly examined it.”

Floyd had crouched to pick up the rubber tube, incidentally placing his left hand on the carpet near the wainscoted wall. Upon rising to inspect the disconnected end of the tube, he observed adhering to the palm of his hand a few dark specks, as fine as black pepper and having a perceptible metallic luster. He did not examine or mention them, however, but proceeded to reconnect the hard, bulbous end of the tube

to the gas fixture, which consisted of a secondary tap and key between the supply pipe and the ordinary wall bracket, so that heat and light could be supplied at the same time.

"The bulb seems to fit securely," he said after forcing it on the spindlelike tap, which was scarcely half an inch from the circular wall plate. "It could not have dropped off of itself. That is, of course, unless it was inadvertently drawn down toward the end of the tap by some one while lighting the heater."

"That's very improbable," said Dagmar, intently watching him. "It would require a vigorous pull to displace it."

"Unless it was very near the end of the tap."

"There's nothing in that, Mr. Floyd, in my opinion," Dagmar declared. "Have you gone back to the accident theory?" he asked derisively.

"Quite the contrary." Floyd turned from the wall and wiped his hands with his handkerchief. "I still retain the opinion I expressed. Doctor Barker may clinch it for me, Professor Dagmar, if he has learned all I am led to infer. I'll see about that."

Detective Floyd did not wait for an answer. He returned to the hall and strode toward the medical examiner and the several women and awed and anxious girls, with all of whom Cora Osgood was a favorite. Floyd knew it. Their affection and sympathy for her was manifest in their faces, and he saw in those of a few who knew of his broken relations with her a more hopeful expression, as if they relied upon him to find some way to vindicate her, but it brought no change to his own tense, white face.

"What's the evidence against Miss Osgood?" he asked, when Doctor Barker turned to meet him.

The physician eyed him intently. "No tangible evidence. We'll get that later," he replied a bit gruffly. He did not like the steely, penetrating gaze of

the detective. "There are some very incriminating circumstances," he added.

"What are they?" Floyd curtly questioned.

"She's the only person known to have gone to Doctor Osgood's rooms," Doctor Barker told him. "He must have been sleeping in his chair, or he surely would have detected the escaping gas after she left him. She closed and locked the windows of both rooms and drew down the library curtains. She was seen by these two girls, who then were passing the house."

"Were you sure of her identity?" Floyd glanced at them quickly.

"Absolutely!" Doctor Barker declared before they could reply. "It is also confirmed by the housekeeper, Mrs. Blair, who was coming up the back stairs when the girl left the library. She appeared much agitated and in desperate haste. She ran to her room to avoid being seen, not having observed Mrs. Blair. Only one conclusion can be drawn from such——"

"One moment!" Floyd interrupted. "Did you see Miss Osgood lock the library door?" He turned quickly and questioned the housekeeper.

"I did not, sir," she admitted. "She had turned from the door and was running through the hall. I am sure, however, that she closed it."

"Professor Dagmar knows that she locked it," asserted one of the teachers, a thin, pinched spinster of middle age. "I was in my room when he detected the gas. I hurried out when I heard him in the hall, and saw him just as he entered Doctor Osgood's library and closed the door."

"Closed the door?" Floyd queried. "When he entered the room?"

"To keep the gas from the hall," Dagmar hastened to explain again, having followed the detective from the library. "I think I so informed you."

"You did." Floyd turned to him and nodded. "I remember it now that you

remind me. If Miss Osgood locked the door——”

“There’s no question about it. No one else could have locked it,” Doctor Barker insisted impatiently. “Her conduct when she revived after fainting confirms it. She did not voluntarily say she had been there, as an innocent person surely would have done. When I mentioned the fact, she evaded me with equivocations and——”

“No, Doctor Barker, I did not.” Cora Osgood startled all by coming from her room at that moment. “If I appeared to do so, it was only because I was so overcome that I hardly knew what I was saying.”

The physician had stopped as if suddenly dumfounded. Every eye was turned on the suspected girl. She spoke calmly and appeared composed, but she was very pale—a graceful girl of nineteen, whose large blue eyes were misty with tears, and the expression of whose face was pathetically appealing. She came nearer while speaking and gazed piteously at the detective.

Floyd’s face remained fixed and white. Its expression was inscrutable. No observer could have told how he felt, or what he had in mind. He uttered no word of sympathy, and the calm coldness with which he replied, much as if he resented the past, sent a chill to more than one heart and dispelled the hopeful expression from many an anxious face.

“It is my duty to learn the truth,” he told her. “The suspicious circumstance——”

“I know.” She drew back with a look of pain as if his coldness had stabbed her. “I have heard what was said. I have been listening at my door,” she confessed, with trembling lips. “But I have nothing to hide.”

“What you say may be used against you,” Floyd warned her. He appeared oblivious to her emotion. “You are not

obliged at this time to answer any questions.”

“I prefer to do so,” said Cora. She drew up with a frown of wounded pride and momentary resentment. “I did no more to-day, Detective Floyd, than I have frequently done.”

“Why did you go to Doctor Osgood’s rooms?” he asked.

“I feared he had dropped asleep while reading and might take cold if the library was chilly. I found that it was, and I lighted the gas heater. I closed a window in each room in case there might be a draft. I drew down the library curtains only to subdue the light.”

“Why did you lock both windows?” Floyd questioned suspiciously. “To exclude every breath of air?”

“Nothing of the kind.” Cora flashed a scornful glance at him. “I always lock windows when I close them. I had no other motive.”

“Nor in locking the door when you left the room?” Floyd eyed her incredulously.

“I do not recall locking it. If I did so, Detective Floyd, I did it unconsciously.”

“That seems incredible. You must have taken the key from inside,” Floyd pointedly accused her.

“That would not have been necessary,” Cora quickly protested. “Doctor Osgood always locked the door when leaving his library, and when there he left the key outside.”

“Had Doctor Osgood any special reason for leaving his door locked?”

“Only because he kept many of his securities in his safe. I am also in the habit of locking my door when I go out,” Cora asserted in a desperate endeavor to explain the incriminating circumstance. “I will not deny that I locked his door, for I am not absolutely sure of it, but I repeat that, if so, I did it unconsciously. It may be, too, that Professor Dagmar is mistaken——”

"Nonsense!" Dagmar cut it sharply. "I know the door was locked. Do you imply that I would incriminate you in this way if I were not sure of it?" he demanded, frowning. "Such an insinuation is preposterous, Detective Floyd, on the face of it."

"No doubt." Detective Floyd appeared to agree with him. "Furthermore, Miss Osgood, your statement is wholly inconsistent with your hurried flight from the room. One in haste does not pause and lock a door unconsciously. You must have had a definite motive. What was it, or what was the cause of your haste?" he questioned insistently.

"I had left a crimping iron to heat on my gas fixture," Cora replied curtly. "I suddenly remembered it and feared it would become so hot as to crack the glass globe on which I had placed it. I ran to my room and removed it. I had no other motive. But I see that you don't believe me!" she cried indignantly. "You are trying like Doctor Barker to incriminate me and——"

"I am trying to learn the truth," Floyd corrected her. "But I am making no headway. Your statements are inconsistent and wholly incredible," he told her, turning abruptly to the medical examiner. "You may question her further, Doctor Barker, if you like, but I shall not do so now. It looks to me like a waste of time."

He strode away then, as if blind to Cora's distress, as if deaf to the indignant protests of her loyal girl friends to whom the weeping girl had turned for sympathy. Seeing Professor Dagmar then entering his room, which was the next one to the private library, he hastened and followed him.

II.

Detective Floyd had a covert motive in the course he was shaping. He was confronted by a singular problem. He was working it out in what seemed the

only promising way. One most important question was uppermost in his mind. Had a murder really been committed, or was the fatality an accident? The answer hinged on the library door, said to have been locked from outside.

But that gave rise to many secondary questions. Had Cora Osgood locked it unconsciously, as she asserted, or had it been stealthily locked by another? Or was Professor Dagmar mistaken? Did he know it was not locked, or had he some sinister motive in lying about it? Did he know the girl had lighted the gas heater, as she had frequently done, and was he trying to incriminate her? If so, with what motive? Furthermore, if the fatality was accidental, how had the rubber tube been disconnected from the gas fixture? Had Cora unconsciously loosened it when lighting the heater? Had it dropped off the spindle after she left the room? Or had Doctor Osgood, waking after her departure, disconnected it himself and for some unknown reason committed suicide?

Detective Floyd had all of these questions in mind, and he felt that the correct answer might never be found if he showed his hand. He had been watching for an opportunity to inspect Professor Dagmar's room without causing distrust that would put the professor on his guard, if there really was any ground for his own suspicions.

"One moment!" he said, when Dagmar appeared to resent his intrusion. "You have been quite close to Doctor Osgood and in a position to observe this girl. Do you know any motive she may have had for this crime?"

Dagmar eyed him keenly for a moment. "Doctor Osgood is wealthy," he replied in a smooth, insinuating way. "I know he also has a large life insurance in her favor."

"Is she informed of it?" Floyd inquired.

"Most likely." Dagmar emphasized

it with an expressive shrug. "I recently saw her reading some of his private papers. Doctor Osgood was dozing in his bedroom and had left his safe unlocked."

"Does she know the combination?"

"She does not. Doctor Osgood did not confide it to any one, not even to me, though I did much of his clerical work. I have access to the desk containing his account books and business letters, but not to the safe."

"Reading his private papers, eh?" Floyd thoughtfully muttered. His gaze lingered furtively on the varnished wainscot of the wall near by. "Do you know any reason for her having a special interest in them?"

"I know she has been quite moody and had frequent altercations with Doctor Osgood," Dagmar told him.

"About what? Could you hear what was said?"

"Enough to convince me that she was very discontented and wanted to leave here. Others may not have heard them, but my room adjoins the private library," Dagmar pointed out. "Doctor Osgood was very strict with Cora. Furthermore, which I think she bitterly resented, he opposed her affection for a young lawyer who has been calling on her. I think he compelled her to refuse his marriage proposal and——"

"Stop a moment!" Floyd's features hardened. "Who is the lawyer?"

"His name is John Falkner."

"I know him."

"You also know, I suppose, what that might mean to a girl in her dependent position. I don't say it drove her to desperation, mind you, or impelled her to seek a remedy in crime. Nevertheless, there is no telling what a girl will do for love, money, and——"

"Let it go at that," Floyd interrupted. "It may have been her motive. I'll very soon find out. I'll see John Falkner and question him." He started as if to go, then turned quickly and added:

"I don't want to arrest her at present, Dagmar, or put her under police surveillance. Keep an eye on her till I return, will you?" he requested. "Detain her, if she attempts to leave the house. Am I asking too much?"

"Quite the contrary." Professor Dagmar drew up a little, and his long, thin face took on a melancholy smile. "I feel very sorry for her. I had a very deep affection for Doctor Osgood. That alone would constrain me to aid you. You will find Miss Osgood here when you return," he added with convincing inflection.

"Good enough!" Floyd remarked. "It won't take me long. I'll return after seeing Falkner. I left my hat and gloves in the library. I must get them."

Then he hurried out. He saw when entering the library that Dagmar had not followed him, and he turned quickly to a small steel safe in one corner, which he briefly inspected with a lens. Scarcely a minute had passed when he left the room. Without a glance at the anxious observers in the hall, he hurried down the side stairs and out of the house, looking stern and determined when he rejoined his chauffeur in the motor car.

"Let her go, Joseph," he commanded. "Let her go—and drive fast!"

Detective Floyd did not go in search of John Falkner, however, with whom he was well acquainted. Purely by chance he saw him approaching as he sprang out of his car at the door of a hardware store a little later.

"One moment, Jack," Floyd said familiarly, detaining him. "I want a word with you. Have you heard that Doctor Osgood is dead?"

"Good heavens!" Falkner exclaimed, staring at him. "No, Dave, I have not. What was the cause? What——"

"Asphyxiation," Floyd interrupted. "I can't stop to explain. There are suspicious circumstances, however, and I

want you to answer a question. I know you will tell me the truth."

"Surely! What is it?"

"Have you recently proposed to Cora Osgood, and did Doctor Osgood compel her to turn you down?"

"Humph!" Falkner ejaculated, flushing. "That's two questions, Dave, rolled into one."

"Tell me," said Floyd gravely.

"I did propose to her," Falkner admitted. "But Doctor Osgood did not compel her to turn me down. She declined voluntarily, but, bless her heart, very considerably."

"You mean——"

"She told me that he had been a father to her since childhood, that as long as he lived she felt she must love and care for him, and that she really must not marry. She told me frankly, too, that she already had refused the only man she would ever want to marry."

"What!" Floyd's fine face lighted wondrously. "She told you that!"

"You heard me." Falkner smiled oddly and held out his hand. "I must hurry. I have an important engagement. I hope soon to hear, Dave—that you have one. So long!"

Detective Floyd entered the hardware store and bought an ordinary toy magnet. He found it had a strong attraction for a few dark specks adhering to his handkerchief, those wiped from his hand in the private library. Then he bought a small chisel and a wrench and returned with them to the Crandall Academy.

The throng of anxious girls in the upper hall had increased. They were gathered near the library door, where Doctor Barker was sharply interrogating Cora about the details in the room. She was the first to see the detective, and he never forgot her look of mingled sadness and reproach. But it brought no change to his own deter-

mined face. He looked strangely cold and calm.

"Stop a moment!" He cut short a question the medical examiner was asking. "I think, Barker, I now am in a position to set you right in this matter."

"You returned quickly," Professor Dagmar exclaimed. He was standing in the room with the physician. He eyed the detective keenly, but with no sign of waning assurance. "I have been doing what you requested," he pointedly added.

"Thank you." Floyd stepped by Cora and entered the room. "But I had another motive in my request. I wanted to feel sure, Dagmar, that you would remain here," he told him with caustic dryness.

"That I would remain here!" Dagmar shrank slightly. "You surely did not suppose——"

"Let it go at that," Floyd interrupted.

"What do you mean by setting me right?" Doctor Barker brusquely demanded. "Where have you been?"

"After articles with which to confirm a suspicion." Floyd drew up a little. "Hasn't it occurred to you, doctor, that a sleeping man might have been aroused by the odor of gas, or by the distress it occasioned?"

"One might in some cases, but obviously not in this," the physician said bluntly. "Why do you bring that up?"

"Because it's a significant point and one of the first that occurred to me," Floyd said incisively. "It brought up another. Would not a person about to commit such a crime have thought of it? Would he not take some step to prevent it?"

"To prevent it?" Barker queried. "What step?"

"By drugging his intended victim," said Floyd. "That could have been easily done in this case by stealthily dropping a drug in Doctor Osgood's food or his teacup while he was at lunch. Who sits on his right at the

table, Miss Osgood, where one's cup is placed?" He turned abruptly and questioned her.

"On his right?" Cora faltered, pale and trembling. "Why, sir, Professor Dagmar always sits next to——"

"Stop!" Dagmar cried. "What are you saying?" He turned, his eyes taking on a sudden fiery glow. "Do you dare to imply, Detective Floyd, that I——"

"You be quiet!" Floyd cut in sternly. "I'm going to the bottom of this crime."

"I won't submit to such slander," Dagmar protested vehemently, in vivid contrast to his customary smoothness. "I won't remain here to be falsely accused——"

"You'll stay right here." Floyd barred his way to the door. "If you attempt to leave this room, Dagmar, I'll put you in irons. It would have been very easy for the instructor in chemistry here to have prepared an adequate drug."

Professor Dagmar drew back and pulled himself together. He realized for the first time that the detective had been hiding his true suspicions. He did not reply, but a look of resentment and increasing fear settled on his drawn face.

"Good heavens!" Doctor Barker said amazedly. "What's the meaning of this?"

"I'll show you," Floyd replied. He did not so much as glance at the startled girls in the crowded doorway. "Here is one of the articles I went to get."

"A magnet!" Barker exclaimed.

"Exactly. Let's see what can be learned with it."

Floyd crouched and moved it to and fro over the carpet near the gas heater. Almost immediately the ends of it were partly covered with dark, metallic particles.

"Atoms of iron!" he exclaimed, rising. "See for yourself. Ordinarily,

Barker, they never would have been discovered in the meshes of the carpet if this fatality was believed to be accidental, as the criminal designed."

"But I don't understand," said Barker perplexedly. "How did they get there? What are they?"

"Filings! Atoms of iron," Floyd repeated. "Notice that this gas bracket is made of brass, however, also the insert to which the rubber tube of the heater was connected. But the wall plate evidently is iron with a coating of yellow bronze. Let's see about that."

Floyd unscrewed the bracket with his wrench, also the inserted fixture to which the tube of the heater had been connected, and then he removed and examined the small circular wall plate.

"Here we have it, Barker," he said quickly. "A groove has been filed in the back side of it, also a slight notch in the edge, neither of which is visible when the plate is fastened against the wall."

"But what's the idea?" Barker questioned. "Why were the groove and notch made?"

"So that a strong thread, or a fine silk line, could be run through them and wound two or three times around the upper bulb of the gas tube," Floyd explained. "If of the same color, it stood only a remote chance of being seen by a person turning on the gas. Furthermore, if the bulb of the tube was only slightly attached to the gas tap, or spindle, a very moderate jerk of the thread would disconnect it. The flexible tube, then dropping to the floor, would free itself naturally from the thread wound around it. The thread then could be drawn back through the wall plate and entirely removed by the operator."

"How back through the wall plate? That would be impossible unless the thread ran directly through the wall and into the next room," Barker argued.

"Perhaps not directly," Floyd corrected. "It could run downward between the two plastered walls, Barker, in the space where this supply pipe comes up. Notice this hole in the wall where the connection was made."

"I now see the point." Barker nodded, frowning. "But what a devilish scheme that would be!"

"That's not all," Floyd continued. "There are numerous finger prints on a small section of the varnished wainscot in the next room. They are directly below a gas fixture connected with this same supply pipe. They indicate that a strip of the sheathing has been skillfully removed and replaced, and there may be a hole in the plaster back of it, through which the thread was pulled to disconnect this tube while the gas was flowing. Am I right?" Floyd turned on Dagmar. "Am I right? Did you prepare this infernal device for use at an opportune moment? Tell me—or shall I prove it by ripping off the wainscot in your room?"

Professor Dagmar did not reply. His lips moved, but no sound came from them. They were the color of lead, and his ghastly face looked gaunt and haggard. He swayed for a moment, trembling violently, and then he staggered and fell prostrate into the chair in which Doctor Osgood had died.

"There's no need to go farther at present." Floyd glanced at the medical examiner. "I was certain about the finger prints in his room. I feel equally sure of others on the safe, which he tried to impress me he could not open. We shall find that he in some way learned the combination, that he has stolen money and securities, and since killed Doctor Osgood, bent on covering up the robbery by what looked like an accident. He would have got by safely, knowing that others are ignorant as to what the safe contained, but for the fatal mistake in stating that he

found this door locked. I'll learn why later. It's said, Barker, that the devil always leaves a gapway open."

He glanced at the guilt-stricken man and took out a pair of handcuffs. He appeared oblivious to the excitement in the hall, the amazement and relief of his observers, the tenderness and eager congratulations with which her friends were helping a sobbing girl to her room. It was more than an hour later when he knocked on her door. All her friends had departed, and he found himself alone with her.

"I have come to tell you that Dagmar has confessed," Floyd said. "We found the stolen securities in his trunk. After learning that you had been seen and were suspected, he determined to fix the crime on you, not only to shield himself from suspicion, but also to get revenge for your having repelled his affection. That's why he asserted that you had locked the door. It was a fatal mistake. I came also to express my sympathy and to ask your pardon," Floyd gravely added.

"My pardon?" Cora gazed up at him wonderingly.

"For my severity and apparent suspicion," Floyd explained. "It was necessary to blind Dagmar until I could find positive evidence of what I really suspected. It seemed very unkind, of course——"

"Don't!" Cora pleaded. She drew nearer and gave him her hands. "You never were unkind to me, Dave."

"I never will be, then," Floyd said fondly. "I learned something to-day from Jack Falkner. I now know, Cora, that you felt you would be doing me a wrong to let me wait for you. So you didn't tell me the whole truth when you let me go and——"

"Not now, Dave!" She checked him; but her eyes were brighter and a blush came into her cheeks. "Not now, please—but later!"

On His Honor

by Alan Graham

Author of "Witch Temple," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

NO one on board the *Bedouin* suspects that Peter Brown is a detective, or that Frank Honiton is his prisoner. Many of his fellow passengers Honiton had known in Cairo, Egypt, and there is a marked friendship between Honiton and Jocelyn Upton, who is returning to America with her mother. Brown is particularly drawn to a Mrs. Upton, whose tipsy husband, Charlie, makes a scene on board by his insulting remarks about Sir Evan and Lady Pilth. A few minutes later the Englishman appears on deck with the startling news that his wife's diamonds, valued at a hundred thousand dollars, have been stolen. Suspicion attaches to Charlie Conliffe, because he had once announced in his cups that he would like to steal them. Lady Pilth fosters the suspicion. Conliffe proceeds to drown his shame in drink. In sight of the Azores, Jocelyn Upton declares her love for Honiton, and Honiton can neither deny his own love nor accept hers without bringing torture to them both. At the Azores, the mischief-maker among the passengers, Mr. Steven Corris, finds in a newspaper that Harold Oxterham, the notorious jewel thief, is returning on the *Bedouin* in charge of a detective. He takes his story to Jocelyn, and they decide that Honiton must be the detective. Honiton does not undeceive the girl. Conliffe is now in the throes of delirium tremens, and his wife goes in quest of Peter Brown. To quiet Conliffe, Brown risks a suspicion he has long held. He goes to the Pilths and demands the necklace. Lady Pilth has accused Conliffe of the theft to punish him for his abusive words. Brown puts the necklace in the hands of Charlie to quiet him, and the delirious man rushes on deck, leans over the rail, and throws the diamonds into the sea. Honiton's confession of his lie to Jocelyn is interrupted by the sight of Charlie Conliffe plunging over the rail. The man had lost his balance. With a blow in the face, Jocelyn had turned on Honiton for his deception, and Honiton keeps to his cabin. Mrs. Conliffe is under the impression that Brown is the thief, and she refuses to see him. Brown talks to Jocelyn, and the girl then decides to go up on deck, when Honiton takes the air under cover of night.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"HONOR ROOTED IN DISHONOR."

THE evidence of the Scotchmen's continued good will touched Honiton. Through Peter Brown he conveyed to them a kind refusal of their invitation. He could not bring himself to face even those who were prepared to treat him as though there had been no change in his reputation. He preferred solitude and his own bitter thoughts, even at the risk of hurting their feelings. Not until he felt assured that darkness and the night air had driven the last of the passengers below would he venture on deck and start upon his weary mechanical tramp.

He had paced the length of the deck twice. Turning at the forward limit of his course he was arrested by the sound of his own name, spoken in little

more than a whisper, but in a voice that he could not mistake. He stopped abruptly and looked around into the darkness, his pulses throbbing almost painfully. He had a wild impulse to turn and run rather than face again the torture of a meeting, but something in the tone in which she spoke his name held him back.

At first he could see nothing, then, as she moved in the darkness, he saw her figure dimly. He paused breathless for what she would say.

"I have waited for you," she said in a constrained, yet tremulous, voice, "because there is something that I want to say—that I must say."

He made no answer in the pause that followed, but waited to hear her voice again.

"I—— When you told me—what you did I behaved very badly. I can hardly speak of it for shame. I feel

that I must ask you to forgive me. I—the shock was—so great. Afterward I could hardly believe that I had acted so.”

Her phrases came to him brokenly from the darkness, and his heart yearned and ached for her. Was it not enough that she should suffer from her disillusionment without having this additional cause for pain? That she should be able to sink the former in remorse for her momentary instinctive lapse into elemental anger brought him to a new realization of what he had lost in her.

“Forgive you!” he exclaimed hoarsely, almost in awe. “There was nothing to forgive. I deserved all—far more than all. Do not speak of it.”

“Whatever you deserved—and even now I do not know—I wish you to believe that I am deeply ashamed that I—struck you and said things that were bitter and cruel. Can you forgive them?”

“I have forgotten them. I do not know if I even heard them. I could think—can think—of nothing but how I deceived you—how I took advantage of your innocence of life—how I broke your heart—and mine.”

Jocelyn was silent. She had said all that she admitted to herself that she had come to say, yet she did not go.

Honiton waited. He had nothing more to say. His confession had ended all that he could ever say to her, and he waited dumbly for her to close the interview. Instead of that she spoke again, a new note of entreaty in her voice.

“Frank—have you nothing to say? Can you not tell me something—anything—about yourself that will soften the awfulness of it? Is there not some excuse you can make?”

It was a cry from the heart, but it was also an unconscious appeal for the rehabilitation of her self-respect. Could she only feel her love to be less

of a degradation she could suffer its hopelessness with greater resignation.

Honiton answered with difficulty. To him it was the tearing open of the wound and the rubbing of irritants into its rawness.

“I can offer no excuse,” he said painfully. “I am guilty.”

“But—but— Oh, Frank, I can’t think of you as a common thief.”

Through the darkness there came to him the sound of her sobs, and his nails dug into his hands as the impulse came upon him to rush forward and take her in his arms. He groaned aloud in the agony of his helpless sympathy.

The sobs died away and she spoke again. “I want to know—I must know—how you came to be a thief. If there is no excuse for you, perhaps—perhaps I can learn to hate you—I have a right to that if I can. You owe it to me to tell me.”

Though he could not see her face, he knew that she waited for him to speak. He did not know how to begin. He had never attempted to analyze his past, to picture to himself the stages by which he had reached his present position.

“I never thought much about it all until I met you,” he said slowly, hunting round in his mind for some loose end in the tangle of his thoughts. “I just went ahead. I thought it was a sporting risk, and I made a great point of never taking—stealing—except from people who could well afford to lose. I’m not excusing myself. I know now that that doesn’t matter, but there it is.”

“I want to know more. How did you come to begin? Were you brought up to steal? Oh, I want to know everything.”

Honiton tried to concentrate his mind upon his past. As Jocelyn had said, she had a right to know if she wished it, however much it might hurt him in the telling.

“I needed money,” he began again

abruptly. "I was not brought up to work, and when my father died—my mother died years before—there was much less for me than he had led me to expect. I was fit for nothing but office work, and that was no use to me. I had been brought up to spend money freely. So I—I just drifted into it."

He stopped as abruptly as he had begun. He did not want to elaborate the bald story, to put in the human touches that might seem to supply excuses for his sins. Having realized their iniquity he was prepared to accept his punishment in full.

Perhaps the girl guessed at his desire for self-immolation. She would not accept the explanation that he had given. She hungered for the detail in which she might discover something in extenuation of the simple viciousness that he had outlined.

"Yes?" she asked with a certain subdued eagerness. "But—how did you come to drift into theft?"

He stopped to think.

"Yes—go on," said Jocelyn's voice from the darkness.

"I had to have money or lose my friends and position. The chance occurred at a reception. I saw a diamond brooch slip to the floor in the crush, unnoticed. I picked it up quickly and slipped it into my pocket. I had no scruples. The woman who owned it was loaded with diamonds, and the loss was nothing to her. After that—I went on.

"I had an apartment in an exclusive section of the city and many wealthy friends. They thought I was quite well off, so I was never suspected. I did not steal from my friends, though I made use of information that I got through them. My life was idle, and I enjoyed the excitement of the risk I took. There is no need to tell you in detail of the robberies I committed. I have surely said enough?"

Jocelyn did not answer the question

in his last words. Instead she asked him another. "If you were free now would you go back to that life?"

"Good heavens, no!" exclaimed Honiton with as great and genuine abhorrence in his voice as though all that he had confessed had been in reference to another than himself.

"But why not? You are the same man as you were then. If your instincts led you to do such things then—why not again?" Jocelyn spoke in a puzzled tone. She wanted to understand. The complexity of the man's mind was beyond the range of her own single-mindedness, and she could not reconcile its contradictions.

"It did not seem to matter then. I can't explain—I can't even understand how I felt about it because I feel so differently now."

Honiton, too, was puzzled by the inconsistencies of his feelings. The awakening of his dormant moral sense, through his love for Jocelyn, had rendered it impossible for him to understand his old point of view, still less for him to convey it to another.

"I can't understand you," said Jocelyn. "As it is the last time we shall ever talk together I want to understand. It will—it will make things easier for me, I think. When you had a chance to escape at Malta why did you come back?"

"What else could I do?" replied Honiton simply. "I made a bargain with Brown. How could I go back on it?"

"You could steal, and yet you could not break your word!" exclaimed Jocelyn. "If you could be so honorable in one way how could you be so dishonorable in another?"

"It was different somehow," replied Honiton helplessly. "I have always kept my word and tried to act honorably to my friends. I can't even try to explain the difference."

He heard Jocelyn sigh in the dark-

ness. "I shall never understand you," she said piteously.

There was a pause, and then she spoke again, hesitatingly. "You will be sent to prison?"

"That is certain. I mean to plead guilty," he answered.

"And when you come out again?"

"I have not thought. It will be years. But I suppose I can find work somewhere—in Australia, probably."

"I suppose so," said Jocelyn in a toneless voice. "There is—nothing more to be said—is there?"

"I have told you all I can," he answered.

He saw her dark shape move and heard her light steps upon the deck. She was leaving him without a word of farewell. He listened as she moved slowly away out of his life. Then in desperation he called: "Jocelyn!"

"Yes?" She stopped and waited for him to speak. Now that he had his opportunity he was tongue-tied. He hardly knew what he wanted to say. He had called her upon the impulse of the moment, desperately clinging to the last glimpse of her. "Before you go," he asked, "can you say a kindly word—a word of forgiveness? I have no right to ask—I know it. But, if only I could think that you had ceased to be bitter against me, it would make the future less bitter for me."

She did not answer at once, but stood thinking what she could say. In the end it was from the hardness and narrowness of her youth that she spoke—youth that would not let her waver from the truth as she saw it, even to ease the torture of the man she loved.

"How can I say I forgive you," she said bitterly, "when I cannot even forgive myself for having—loved you? You have made me ashamed of my own feelings. At least I will not lie to you. If I could stop thinking of you—perhaps I could forgive you. I would not then have the shame of lov-

ing unworthily. No—I can pity you—I do pity you, but it would be a lie to say that I forgive you."

She waited to hear if he would answer her, and then, as he made no attempt to speak, she turned again to go.

"Good-by, Jocelyn," she heard him say faintly, speaking almost as if he were afraid that she might hear.

"Good-by, Frank," she answered, and hurried away—afraid of herself.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TWO ADMIRABLE CRICHTONS.

IT was not until the morning of the next day that Peter Brown found an opportunity to give Honiton's message to Murray and Scrym. They received it with their customary lack of outward emotion and invited the detective to join them in a drink, an offer which he accepted more from a wish to gratify them than to quench an imaginary thirst.

When he had gone and they had the smoking room to themselves, they sat puffing earnestly at their pipes. The silence seemed likely to be permanent, but it was broken at last by Scrym. "Murray?" he asked suddenly with a pronounced accentuation of the middle consonants.

Murray smoked on thoughtfully for an appreciable time and then, taking his pipe from his mouth, said questioningly:

"Aye?"

"I wus juist thinkin'."

"If that wus all ye needno have disturbit me. I wus thinkin' myself."

"Aye, but this wus aboot Honiton," went on Scrym, in no way disturbed by the rebuff.

"An' whut aboot him? He'll not come out, so there's an end to it."

"Aye, but I wus thinkin' that mebbe Broon did not make enough o' the message ye gave him," went on Scrym. "I thought that mebbe if ye was to go

doon yersel' an' ask him to come up an' have a nip an' a crack he might think better o' it. It must be dry down there by hisself."

"Me go down? What fur me?" demanded Murray. "You're the lad fur that, Scrym. Ye've far more of the gift of the gab nor me. Be off with ye an' see whut ye can do."

"No, no, Murray, ye're deceiving me. Ye know well ye're a far better hand than me at a ticklish job lik' this."

With characteristic obstinacy they argued the point hotly until the original kindly intention was in danger of being lost sight of. As neither would give in, the point at issue had to be settled finally by the toss of a coin, and it fell to the lot of Scrym to carry out his own suggestion. He accepted the inevitable grimly.

"We'll have a nip first," he said, partly to fortify himself for his task, but more for the sake of the delay.

"Ye'll take care what ye say," said Murray anxiously, when they had ordered and consumed the drink, and Scrym was on the point of departing reluctantly on his errand of mercy. "Ye'll no' give a hint that ye know onything—about——"

"Man, d'ye take me for a fool?" demanded Scrym indignantly and hurried off. "I'm not so shure," retorted Murray to his departing friend.

To the apologetic tap upon his door Honiton answered, "Come in," expecting no more than the steward. Surprised by the sight of Scrym in the doorway he was inclined to resent the intrusion. Something of this feeling appeared upon his face, and Scrym was quick to notice it.

"I hope I'm no' disturbin' ye," he began hastily. "Don't blame me if I am, for I've juist brought ye a message from Murray."

"Yes?" asked Honiton in a far from encouraging tone.

"Aye, Murray likes fine to get in with
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ye. I told him ye might not like bein' seen wi' two old Scotch stonemasons, but he wouldn't listen to me. 'Go down,' he ses, 'an' ask Mr. Honiton if he'll no' come up an' have a nip an' a crack. Tell him it's awfu' quiet without him.' Well, mebbe ye don't know whut Murray is, but I just had to do whut he told me."

Despite himself Honiton could not but be touched by the kindly intent of the pair, and by Scrym's crudely delicate pretense that the favor was all on his side. "It's good of you both to ask me to join you," he said, with a melancholy attempt at his old friendly smile. "The fact is, I've made up my mind to keep to my cabin until we reach Boston. You may have heard——"

"Heard!" interrupted Scrym anxiously. "We've heard plenty, but, as they say at hame, 'If ye believe all ye hear, ye'll eat all ye see.' We heard ye were unwell, but ye don't seem that bad but ye could do with a drap o' whusky an' a crack wi' two old Scotchmen."

As Honiton's face grew less hostile Scrym's courage increased, and he began to shelve the fiction of the awe-inspiring Murray.

Without hurting his feelings Honiton did not see how to refuse, and the intention was so genuinely kindly that he could not but hesitate to repulse it. He attempted once more to state his position clearly. "It's awfully good of you both," he said, "but I can't mix with people now. It is perfectly well known—even my steward is in on the secret—that I am——"

"I'll be thinkin' in a minute that ye don't want to have any talk with me an' Murray," Scrym interrupted again, attempting a tone of injury and gentle melancholy. "If that's yer meanin', Mr. Honiton, just say it out right, an' I'll take yer message back to Murray."

Honiton gave in. Any further hesitation would have been an insult to the well-meaning, if overinsistent, Scrym,

and, after all, it mattered little to Honiton. He might as well endure his misery in the company of these kindly Scotchmen as alone. "You know it isn't that," he said, with a second and more successful attempt at his old smile. "My only reason for keeping by myself has been the fear of butting in where I'm not wanted. I believe you will really be glad to see me, even though I'm under a cloud, so I'll come."

"That's the lad!" exclaimed Scrym with the nearest thing to a show of enthusiasm of which his wooden face was capable. "Man, I'm that pleased I thought o' comin'!"

"I thought it was Murray who forced you to come against your will," said Honiton mischievously.

For all his weight of trouble he could not but be amused at Scrym's opportunism.

"Man, that was just what ye might call a ruse," said the latter with a twinkle in his eyes that belied the solemnity of his countenance. "It did Murray no harm, for he was not here to know, an' it might have been a considerable advantage to myself if I'd angered ye."

"I see," said Honiton. "But you needn't have been afraid that your kindly thought would annoy me. I daresay there are few besides yourselves on the *Bedouin* who would care to be seen with——"

"Ye'll be up in a while, then," said Scrym, the rudeness of his interruption covering an instinctive delicacy which his rough appearance would not have suggested. "We'll both be expect'in' ye."

"Not until later. I'll look in on you some time after dinner."

"All right, lad. Good luck to ye!"

When Honiton was alone he felt a tightening of the muscles of his throat at thought of the genuine sympathy and kindness that lay at the back of the invitation he had just received. Two

at least of his fellow men were prepared to pity rather than condemn. However dark his despair it could not but be lightened, if only a shade, by the knowledge.

Scrym returned to the smoking room inwardly triumphant though outwardly expressionless.

"Well?" asked Murray after a decent interval. He did not wish to be accused of impatience.

"It's all right. He's comin' to-night," announced Scrym carelessly. "Will ye have a dram?"

"It's my turn," said Murray reluctantly. "Ye can't be standin' all the drinks."

"Well, mebbe ye're right," agreed Scrym. His original suggestion had really been intended as a hint, for they were both great sticklers for the strict rotation of the finance of their hobby.

"Was he willing to come?" asked Murray. Another decent interval had elapsed, during which the drinks had been ordered and served.

"He was not falling over himself with enthusiasm," replied Scrym, "but I brought him round. I was full o' persuasion, Murray."

"Aye, I know ye," replied his friend ambiguously.

By evening the pair were restless and fidgety, though neither would have admitted to the other that he had given a further thought to the coming visit. After dinner they settled in their usual corner of the smoking room, which, as usual, they had to themselves.

Honiton was a long time in joining them. Much as he appreciated their sympathy, he was sorry that he had given his promise. He was far from being in the mood to chatter idly to them, as he had done occasionally during the early part of the voyage. He walked the deck, postponing his entry into the smoking room as long as possible. He was not a heavy drinker, and he knew that if he joined Scrym and

Murray, he must keep their pace or risk giving offense.

They awaited his coming with growing anxiety which they strove to hide from one another with ludicrous elaboration. Their heavy gold watches were in frequent but surreptitious request.

Scrym proved himself the weaker vessel. He spoke first. "He's late. I doubt he's comin'."

Murray looked at his friend with a certain contempt. He hated a man whose emotions were so lightly controlled. He attempted an expression of puzzlement gradually changing to comprehension.

"Oh, aye—ye're speakin' o' Honiton. Man, he'd clean slipped my mind," he said mendaciously. "He'll not be comin' now."

His words were disproved almost immediately afterward. Honiton entered with something of his old attractive smile on his face. He had determined that it was no use accepting the invitation he had been given unless he made some attempt to shelve his troubles and enter for the moment into the spirit of the smoking room. "Well, old friends, and how goes it?" he said genially, as he crossed the room and sat down between Murray and Scrym.

They were as nervous as two maiden ladies called upon to entertain important callers. Each looked at the other to speak, and each scowled at the other's inability to find words.

Honiton noticed their embarrassment. "We'll have a drink, eh? I suppose it's whisky as usual?"

"No, no! This is with me," said Scrym emphatically. "Is your's whusky? Better have a double one. They're awful wee things, the nips they give ye here."

Honiton protested as vigorously as he could, but the order was given in spite of him for "glesses—no' haulve ones." The steward, on seeing Honiton, seemed to hesitate and be on the

point of refusing to degrade himself by serving a criminal, but the Scotchmen were his best customers, and he did not think it worth while to risk the tip that he expected at the end of the voyage.

Honiton, however, was conscious of the hesitation, and it hurt. It was a foretaste of what he must expect for the rest of his life. The strong whisky ran through his veins quickly and enabled him to throw off, for the moment, the gloom in which he was wrapped.

Conversation was at first difficult. Murray, jealous of Scrym's successful opening over the drinks, attempted another of his own, using the weather as a subject. It did not lead far, however. Then Scrym, encouraged by his initial success, suggested cigars, and a few of the rough edges of their mutual embarrassment were rubbed off in the solemn choosing of the imagined best from the box.

Honiton's heart warmed to them in their clumsy efforts to make him feel at his ease, though the very need for these efforts was in itself a reminder of his miserable plight. With the aid of the whisky he had drunk he was able to open up and be something like his old self. He talked and laughed freely, and gradually he put his two hosts at their ease.

"Man, it's grand to see ye back with us again," said Murray when the embarrassment had at last worn off.

"It is that," agreed Scrym. "Ye can't think whut I have to endure with nobody but Murray to clash with all day."

"It's the other way round," retorted Murray. "Ye've no conception of the blather that comes out o' Scrym at times."

Once started their tongues wagged freely, and Honiton had to admit that they took him out of himself. A second round of drinks was called for and

partially consumed when the door opened and Mr. Steven Corris entered.

He looked across at the group in the corner, and his face assumed a look of intense disgust. "Well," he exclaimed aloud, "this is about the limit!"

Honiton felt a cold shiver run over him. He did not wish for trouble, and, if he made it, he knew he would be quite in the wrong. He wanted to sneak away and hide himself.

Corris threw himself down contemptuously on a chair and rang for the steward. The faces of Murray and Scrym were like thunder clouds. Scrym looked at his friend meaningly and jerked his head in the direction of Corris. Murray rose, and Honiton, guessing his intention and desperately anxious to avoid trouble, tried to detain him. Murray shook off the restraining hand and walked across to Corris. Bending over him, his gnarled hands resting upon a small table, he spoke in a low, but ominous, voice. "Did ye say anything?"

His eyelids opened so wide that the white could be seen completely surrounding the iris, and the effect was that of a vicious glare.

Corris looked up at him with a mixture of insolence and misgiving. "I said this was about the limit, and it is," he replied, nodding across to where Honiton sat palefaced and mortified.

"Well, I would just warn ye to keep your opeenions to yersel', ma lad, if ye don't want a bash in the jaw."

"I've a perfect right to say what I think," retorted Corris, his voice rising to a shrill and querulous treble which could be heard easily across the room. "It's a scandal that a fellow can't come into a public room on the ship without butting up against an outsider like that."

Honiton waited for no more. He was sick at heart with what he had already heard. He had no wish to be present at a vulgar altercation in which

he could only receive more bitter thrusts. He pressed Scrym's hand silently and went hurriedly from the room, regretting that he had ever laid himself open to the affront that he had received.

He paced the darkness without, trembling at the rawness of his sores. This was what he had to expect even when he had satisfied justice and was set free upon the world again. The vicious self-righteousness of Corris brought his true position home to him as he had never felt it before. He was an outcast for life. Even under another name he would go in continual fear of recognition. He walked the deck in his misery for a long time before he could bring himself to join Peter Brown in the cabin below.

Meanwhile his assailant was having none too pleasant a time in the smoking room. No sooner had Honiton left than Scrym rose and joined Murray, as he stood over Corris.

"D'ye know what ye are?" he demanded harshly, his hard face lined with a cold, controlled anger. "Ye're just a dirrty mess, that's what ye are. For two pins I'd wring yer scraggy neck for ye, and Providence knows it would be for the good o' yer fellow men."

"Men!" exclaimed Murray. "Don't call him a man. It makes ye doubt the omneecience o' Providence to think he was ever born. No, no, don't get up, my lad, ye're not going yet. Ye've got to hear more about yer character first."

Corris, a hunted look in his eyes, made an effort to rise, but he was pushed back into his seat by a knotted, calloused hand. There was no escape for him, for both Murray and Scrym were between him and the door.

"Let me go," he demanded, a mixture of truculence and trepidation in his voice.

"Ye're not worth keepin' for yersel'," replied Murray. "Me and Scrym were,

mebbe, no' so well brought up, but, before ayther of us were you, we'd rayther be dead."

There was much more that they said to him, but very little that is printable. Although it may have relieved their feelings it had little effect upon Mr. Steven Corris, who understood it not at all. He was, however, conscious of a great relief when he escaped. He realized that he had been within an ace of a very rough handling.

CHAPTER XXX.

JOAN DECIDES.

AT breakfast, on the last day of the voyage, Captain Spedley announced that the *Bedouin* would arrive in Boston too late for the passengers to get ashore until next day. There was not one who heard him but was heartily glad to feel that, when twenty-four hours had elapsed, they would be free from the gloom of the ship—free to forget, in fresh interests, the melancholy, and, for some, the more than melancholy voyage.

Peter Brown conveyed the news to Honiton when breakfast was over. It could hardly be expected that the prisoner would find pleasure in the end of the voyage which meant for him trial and inevitable condemnation. Yet such had been the misery of the past few days that he was actually relieved at the thought of solitude behind bars.

"Brown, old friend, you are always doing me favors," he said. "I wonder if I can count on you for another—probably the last?"

The detective smiled deprecatingly. "I haven't favored you so very much, except in the first instance, at Cairo," he said. "What a disaster that has proved itself! But what is it you want me to do? If it is in my power and doesn't clash with my duty you can count on it as done."

"Get me away from the ship quietly,

that is all," said Honiton with great earnestness. "I can't face the others again. You can easily manage it, I'm sure, so that we are allowed to leave in the early hours of the morning. The rest of the passengers will still be in their cabins."

Peter Brown did not answer at once. He was thinking of Joan Conliffe. Unable to get in touch with her through the stewardess, he had counted upon an opportunity of a farewell word with her before she went on shore. If he granted Honiton's request she would be gone out of his life—probably forever. The thought was very bitter to him.

Honiton saw his hesitation and became more urgent. "You won't fail me, Brown? I can't bear the contempt I can picture on faces that have always smiled on me. I've had one experience of the charity of my fellow men. I don't want any more. It isn't only myself either, Brown. I want to spare—her—the sight of my departure to prison."

That was in Peter Brown's mind, also, and complicated his decision. He pitied the girl intensely and would not cause her unnecessary pain. He might have refused Honiton had his appeal been based on wholly selfish reasons, but his heart went out to him when his entreaty was on behalf of Jocelyn.

After all, what could he gain from a few more words—a last look at Joan Conliffe? Only an added heartache! She did not care to see him. Her silence proved it. He might as well accept his rejection philosophically. He could gain nothing by remaining, but he could help others by agreeing to Honiton's request. "All right, Honiton," he said at last. "I'll see the captain and find out if it can be done."

Honiton had no reason to suppose that this concession meant more to the detective than a little inconvenience, or his gratitude would have been much deeper. "I can't thank you enough,

Brown," he said. "I'm sorry to get you up so early, but it means far more to me than an hour or two longer in your berth can mean to you."

Peter Brown sighed and made no answer. He had committed himself, and, only when it was too late, did he realize how much he had counted on that last meeting. What he had expected he did not know rightly, but Joan Conliffe had undoubtedly been in sympathy with him at one time, and there had lingered in his mind a certain half formed, half admitted hope that he did not dare to consider with himself openly.

He had little trouble in making the arrangement that Honiton desired. Captain Spedley had taken a liking to the detective since the interview in which he had pleaded the cause of Sir Evan and Lady Pilth, and he was quite ready to oblige him where he could. "If you can get round the customs people you're welcome to take the poor fellow away quietly," he said. "You are so infernally good-hearted, I don't know how you ever manage to get any one locked up. Look at these Pilths now—but for you they would have been in a nasty hole. I should have handled them differently, I assure you, but for your sake."

"There will be no further trouble for them, I hope?" asked Peter Brown anxiously.

"No. Between ourselves, the rumor has got about among the crew that poor Conliffe did pinch those diamonds and took them to the bottom of the sea with him. The man at the wheel caught the glint of them. We can let it go at that. It can do Conliffe no harm now, and it's the easiest way out, eh?"

The detective agreed, but he felt the injustice to Charlie Conliffe's widow in letting her husband's name remain under the stigma of a crime. Better that, however, than that Sir Evan Pilth should be publicly shamed at the end of an honorable career.

Later in the day he had evidence that Sir Evan was grateful for his intervention. Looking wonderfully subdued and strangely older than at the beginning of the voyage he came to where Peter Brown sat solitary on deck. "I may not again have the opportunity of talking to you in confidence, Mr. Brown," he began nervously, "and I wish to express my extreme indebtedness to you for the—ah—kindness and consideration you have shown to Lady Pilth and myself."

"Please don't speak of it, Sir Evan," replied the detective, as embarrassed as the other.

"But I must speak of it, sir," said Sir Evan, with just the ghost of his old pomposity. "Rarely have I been treated with greater tact and delicacy, and it is no less than my duty to acknowledge the debt I owe you. I should like you to believe"—he went on with less confidence of manner, but greater earnestness—"that—ah—Lady Pilth's action on the—ah—occasion which you brought to my notice was a—an isolated one and quite out of keeping with my whole knowledge of her."

"Yes, I believe it, Sir Evan. Women are strange creatures. You can tell, shrewdly enough, what a man will do if you've known him for a month, but a woman—not if you've lived with her a lifetime."

"It was exceedingly strange to me," went on Sir Evan, without commenting on Peter Brown's statement, "that you should have come to the conclusion you did, while I myself remained in total ignorance of the truth."

Peter Brown hid a faint smile beneath the long fingers of his bony hand. "A matter of perspective, Sir Evan," he said, generously refraining from the truth. "You are too close to her."

"Perhaps you are right," agreed Sir Evan, pleased with any explanation that removed the imputation of density from himself.

Peter Brown parted from him convinced that, as the incident faded into the past, he would contrive to ignore, if not forget, it and quickly regain the bulk of his grotesque faith in himself and all that pertained unto the name of Pilth.

Jocelyn Upton also sought out the detective on that last afternoon aboard. "You take too little exercise, Mr. Brown," she said, stopping before him as he sat doubled up in his deck chair, pipe in mouth, thinking of the woman who remained secluded below. "You should come and walk the deck with me." She spoke lightly, for the benefit of those who were near, but her eyes told him that she wished to talk to him alone.

"I should like to, Miss Upton," he said, unfolding himself and rising awkwardly.

"I want to know, Mr. Brown, what—what they will do with him." She had led him to the windward side of the deck. There were no chairs here, and she felt free from observation.

As Peter Brown did not reply at once, she went on eagerly: "I have tried to take no interest—to believe it is nothing to me, but I must know. Will he be—get—long?"

"I am afraid it will be a pretty long term, my dear," replied the detective.

"How long—years?"

"Yes, years. A great deal depends upon the judge. It may be three—five—even ten years, perhaps. One can never tell with them. A conviction, I believe, is certain. The evidence is overwhelming."

"The evidence doesn't matter. He told me that he will plead guilty."

"Guilty! You must not tell me things like that, child. Remember I am the detective in charge of him."

"What does it matter," said Jocelyn wearily. "He will plead guilty. Will that make any difference, Mr. Brown?"

"It may, but again one can never

tell. It all depends on the view the judge takes. You—you have not been able to put him out of your mind then, Miss Upton?"

"No. I have tried, and perhaps—perhaps I may succeed in time. It is too—raw, just now. I lie awake—thinking of him in convict's clothes—with no one to talk to and the time seeming to him as if it would never end. I know he deserves no sympathy from me—he doesn't, does he, Mr. Brown?" she broke off piteously.

"Heaven knows what he deserves," replied Peter Brown, a perplexed frown on his brow. "I only know that I pity him from my heart. If I had a son there's no one I would like to see him grow up to be like more than this man, but for the one thing."

"And that, I believe, he will never do again," said Jocelyn eagerly.

Peter Brown looked at her discerningly. Her tone warned him that the love she had confessed for Frank Honiton was still warm in her, and he became afraid.

"My dear," he said gravely, "you have a bitter time before you until you forget him. You must make that your aim. When you reach home you must not brood over this. You must rise above it until the time comes when you can look back on the *Bedouin* and its passengers without regret, but with a generous sympathy."

She was crying softly before he ceased to speak, and he patted her shoulder in a clumsy attempt to soothe her. She shook him off with a sudden strange petulance that he did not understand. "Leave me," she said sobbingly, her back turned to him and her face hidden in her hands. "I am not—I can't—talk any more."

Peter Brown went quietly away, his mind in a state of perplexity. He wandered restlessly over the ship, absorbed in a strange confusion of thoughts, his own hopeless devotion to Joan Conliffe

mingling with the compassion that he felt for Honiton and Jocelyn.

Gradually, however, his own personal feelings emerged clear from the confusion, and he forgot everything but his overwhelming desire to see once more the woman whom he loved. He felt that he must make one more effort to approach her, even at the risk of another and final rebuff.

He sat down in the saloon and, after long thought, wrote her a letter.

DEAR MRS. CONLIFFE: Circumstances have arisen which will cause me to leave the ship without having an opportunity of saying good-by to you in the morning. I do not think you realize all that this means to me. I feel that you and I had a certain sympathy toward each other, which to me was an inestimable pleasure. Will you see me this evening, if only for a moment? I ask it as a favor, and I think, if you knew how earnestly I long to see you—to hear your voice—once again, you would not be so cruel as to refuse me. Yours sincerely,
PETER BROWN.

He read it through time and again hesitatingly. He felt that it was stilted, artificial. Yet in a way it expressed what he wanted to say, and, summoning all his determination, he sealed it and went in search of the stewardess.

For over two hours he awaited his sentence in an agony of uncertainty. When it came it seemed to him that the very delay was an additional affront. There was no heading and no preliminaries—just one line: "I cannot see you. J. C." That was all, and it had taken her two hours to send him the message! Surely she had deliberately tortured him by allowing him to linger so long in uncertainty!

Yet, could he have known it, those two hours were more than nights of torture to Joan Conliffe. All her desire was for this man whom she believed to be a thief. There were moments when it all but mastered her, when she took the pen in her hand to call him to her side and tell him that,

whatever he had done, she loved him. Then before her eyes would come the reproduction of that scene in her cabin. She would see him dangling the glittering necklace before Charlie—the necklace he had stolen—the necklace that had driven her husband to drink and disaster. Should she see again her husband's murderer? The pen fell from her hands.

She struggled with the temptation while he waited, and then her resolution won, and she had sent him the one line.

Thus it came about that the prisoner and his guard slipped silently from the *Bedouin* in the dawn, each leaving behind him the only being whom he loved, and each believing firmly that he would never see her again.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VESTIBULE SECRETS.

THOUGH the unhappy pair succeeded in getting away from the *Bedouin* before the rest of the passengers were awake, various factors prevented them leaving for New York until considerably later in the morning. There was a delay over the customs, a further delay at police headquarters, where Peter Brown reported in the expectation of finding a letter of instructions. When they reached the station the best morning train had just left.

The pair breakfasted together gloomily at the station. Intent upon their own thoughts they derived little satisfaction from the meal. Hardly a word was spoken throughout the ordeal. They boarded their train just before eleven, and, until a moment before it left the station, had the Pullman to themselves. Then, as the whistle blew and the train jarred into motion, a porter rushed up and shepherded three ladies into their seats. The late arrivals were Joan Conliffe, Jocelyn Upton, and her mother. The occasion was one of the most pain-

ful embarrassment. Honiton shrank back into his corner like some wretch aroused from an imagined security to find the rack of the thumb screws awaiting him. Fate had cast him into the very company that he had taken such pains to avoid. His body was paralyzed with shame.

Peter Brown felt a sudden leap in his pulses at sight of the woman whom he had believed he had lost forever. He forgot Honiton and the distress that this meeting must cause him. He fixed his eyes upon Joan Conliffe as though life itself depended upon the manner of her greeting.

She did not greet him. A tremor ran through her frame as she recognized the man whom she believed she should hate, and her eyes fell away from his as if in fear—fear that they might betray that which she tried to hide, even from herself.

Jocelyn Upton's face went white beneath her veil as she saw the figure shrinking in the corner. But her eyes held an eager light that hinted at something other than distaste at the meeting. Her lips parted, and she would have spoken, had not her mother risen to the occasion in a fashion that no one could have anticipated.

Mrs. Upton had an intense distaste for the unusual, still more for the unpleasant, in life. The present embarrassing meeting—an encounter with an actual thief—filled her with terror of a scene. Her eyes moved like those of an animal that finds itself of a sudden trapped. "Come, dear," she said hastily, taking Joan Conliffe's arm, "there may be more room farther along."

Without a word of recognition to Peter Brown, she hurried Mrs. Conliffe out of the carriage. Jocelyn bent over the detective and whispered, "I must speak to you later." Then she followed the other two ladies into the next car.

Honiton, alone with his guard, wiped his brow. Brown hardly noticed him,

so intent was he on his own thoughts. What had he done that she should treat him as a stranger? For the first time a suspicion arose in his mind that there might be some misunderstanding. He thought back, in the hope that he might light upon some word or action of his own that could have aroused her distrust or dislike, but he could think of nothing. Could it be merely the fact that he had been present at and enacted a part in a scene that she longed earnestly to forget?

For an hour or more he was so intent upon his thoughts that he forgot Honiton completely, and he was only roused when his prisoner touched him upon the knee. "I think Jocelyn—Miss Upton—wants to see you, Brown," he said hesitatingly. "She has looked into our car several times."

"Yes—she spoke to me as she went out," replied the detective.

"For Heaven's sake, Brown, keep us apart. If—if she wants an interview I can't bear it. I've reached the limit. I can't endure the shame nor the agony of my loss if I see her again."

"I will do what I can, Honiton. It may not be that." He went out, and, in the vestibule of the next car saw Jocelyn Upton plainly awaiting his coming. She turned eagerly to meet him.

"Mr. Brown, I must see him again—alone. Will you remain away for a time?"

He looked at her sadly, compassionately. "My dear," he said, "do you think it is wise? No good can come of it, and it can only hurt him and you."

"I must see him," she insisted. "I will not hurt him. I will make it easier for him. Mr. Brown, will you do this for me?"

"He would rather not see you, Miss Upton. He told me so. He cannot endure the agony and shame of another meeting. These are his own words."

"But he does not know. I shall not

reproach him and—I have something to say—that I must say.”

There were tears in her eyes, and her beautiful face was white and drawn, as she held it up beseechingly to the rugged face of Peter Brown.

“I promised to do my best to avoid an interview,” he admitted in a low voice, almost inaudible in the rattle of the train.

“You have done your best, but you can’t prevent me seeing him. Rather than that he should go without hearing what I have to say I will speak in your presence.”

That she was in deadly earnest and immovable he saw, and he gave up the attempt to dissuade her. “Very well, Miss Upton, I shall say no more,” he said with a sigh. “I shall stay in the corridor until you call me.”

“Thank you, Mr. Brown. You are doing what is best for him—if you only knew.”

As she turned to go Peter Brown had a sudden inspiration. “Miss Upton, will you do me a favor first?” he asked, detaining her by a hand placed softly upon her arm.

She looked at him inquiringly, and his courage oozed away. In the heat of the impulse he had not reckoned on his diffidence in all matters that concerned himself alone.

“Gladly,” said Jocelyn. “What is it that I can do for you, Mr. Brown?”

“Can you get Mrs. Conliffe to come out into the corridor?” he asked nervously. “I—I would like to speak to her alone.”

“I’ll tell her now. I——”

“No, no. You must not say that I want to see her,” the detective interrupted hurriedly. “You must bring her by some other means.”

As his excitement grew his timidity left him. “If you beckon to her she will come to see what you want,” he suggested.

Jocelyn looked at him in surprise.

She had no idea that these two had parted other than friends. She had too much upon her own mind, however, to give thought to the woes of others, and her anxiety to see Frank Honiton led her to fulfill Peter Brown’s wish as quickly as possible.

“I will do it now,” she said.

Peter Brown opened the door and stood on the closed-in platform. Jocelyn saw his move and knew that she must entice Mrs. Conliffe to the spot.

Joan came unsuspectingly in answer to her signal. Jocelyn did not wait for her, but moved quickly down the narrow corridor, and Joan followed her to the door.

“Some one wishes to speak to you, Mrs. Conliffe,” said the girl, turning sharply at the widening of the passage. “I will leave you.”

She slipped quickly through the door and on to the platform, and then passed into the rear car, intent upon her interview with Frank Honiton.

Joan Conliffe found herself face to face with Peter Brown. Her color went suddenly hot and as quickly cold. Instinct told her to turn and fly, but something—was it inclination—would not let her move. She stood dumbly looking at him, her wide eyes startled, her hands clasped together over her breast.

“You would not see me before we left the ship,” said Peter Brown. “Why?” He had nerved himself to the interview and, in his anxiety to carry it through, spoke harshly and hurriedly.

“What good could come of it?” she said slowly, as though putting a strong restraint upon herself. She paused, and then suddenly her feelings took command, and her tongue refused to be curbed. “Tell me,” she said appealingly, her sweet face all solicitude, “what will they do to you? I have tried not to care—not to pity you. I have blamed myself bitterly for pitying you, but it was useless to try. Tell

me, have you—have you—any chance, any hope?"

Peter Brown looked at her in amazement, and then light streamed in on him. The memory of Honiton's confessed deception rose in his mind, and with it the misunderstanding became clear. His heart leaped to his mouth at her words. She believed him a thief, yet she could not withhold her pity for him in his supposed affliction. He trembled as he thought of all that this meant to him—trembled, too, in a cold fear lest his hopes were rising too high.

He determined quickly that she should remain in ignorance of the truth a little longer. He could not look in her candid face and deceive her. With eyes upon the ground he answered. "Oxterham will assuredly be convicted."

He felt the full meanness of his words, but the temptation to find out more of the depths of her heart was too strong for him.

"And you—you will go to prison?" she asked brokenly.

"The sentence will be a long one—that is certain," he replied, fully sharing with her the pain that he was inflicting so selfishly.

"Oh, how could you do it?" she demanded. "I can't understand! You were so kind—so good. I felt—I feel now, however I strive against it—that—oh, even now I would turn to you in trouble!"

Her head was on his breast, and she was sobbing like a little child. She was in trouble, and she *had* turned to him, though he was the very source of it.

"Mrs. Conliffe—Joan," began Peter Brown, his throat swelling so that it was all he could do to speak. "It is all wrong. You were misled. I am not Oxterham. Don't cry—dear." The last word was whispered—to himself.

She turned her tear-stained face up to him, with wonder in her eyes. "You are not—the man?" she asked.

"No. I am the detective in charge of him."

"But—but—the diamonds!"

Only then did Peter Brown realize the full measure of the misunderstanding. She had believed that of him, yet it had not been able to turn her against him. Even now her hands lay pathetically upon his shoulders, and she sought in him—him—the comfort that she could not find in herself.

"Let me tell you, Joan," he said gently. He told her rapidly all that was necessary to explain the mistake, and, as he spoke, she gradually regained her self-possession and her natural reserve. Her hands slipped from his shoulders, and, little by little, she drew away from him, her face coloring prettily in her embarrassment.

He was quick to notice the change, but now he was filled with a courage born of hope. "Joan," he said, using her name with a new confidence, "you will not treat an honest man with less consideration than a dishonest one?" He took her hand and held it despite its inclination to resist.

"You should not take advantage of my pity," she said, her color rising higher, and her eyes falling before his. "I would not have spoken as I did had I not believed you were going to prison for years. You let me think it." She looked up at him with a certain indignation as she saw how he had deceived her.

"I could not help it," he answered. "Your words told me so much that I could not cut them short. Don't remember it against me—Joan." He held her hand in both of his—a treasure that he feared to release.

Her eyes looked down again before she spoke. "I said what I did, not knowing that we should meet again. You must forget that."

"Then we will meet again," said the detective eagerly. "You will let me?"

Joan looked up at him, and for the

first time her face lit with a smile that to him was like the sunshine of all the world.

"Tell me," she said lightly. "You have taken liberties with my name, and I have never even heard yours."

"Peter."

"If I give you my address, Peter, you will come to see me—soon—very soon?"

"I will never be off your doorstep, Joan."

It was a new Peter Brown who spoke—a man full of hope and confidence—a man with a whole new life before him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN SIGHT OF GRAND CENTRAL.

AS Jocelyn approached his section, Honiton shrank back into his corner, like a dog in dread of the whip. The girl did not hesitate for a moment. She had not come without long thought over all that had happened, and she believed that her way was clear before her.

She sat down close to him and took in hers the freckled hand that lay clenched upon his knee. As her soft warm skin touched him he started violently and turned upon her eyes full of anguish. It seemed to him like a very refinement of cruelty that she should come to him like this.

"Frank," she said softly, "do not look at me like that. I have come to tell you that I still love you."

He started to his feet, tearing his hand from her clasp, and stood trembling before her.

"Jo—why torture me!" he exclaimed in agony.

"I love you still," she repeated earnestly. "Sit down and let me tell you."

She held out her hands to him. Unable to resist he took them in his, and she drew him down again to the seat.

"Frank," she said gently, "can you

ever forgive me for being a renegade. I pledged you my love when I knew nothing of you, and then I thought I took it back when I knew the truth. But love is not like that. It won't stop. It was you that I loved, Frank, not the things you had done. I've thought and thought and now I know. When I found this morning that you had gone before I could tell you, I did not know what to do until I remembered that I could see you in prison." She spoke of his fate without faltering. In the gallantry of her youth she accepted it as part of him.

"You would have come to see me there?" he asked, unable to comprehend the full extent of her avowal.

"Of course," she answered simply. "I will come to see you in prison whenever they will let me in. You see, Frank, I love you, and I will not lose you."

"You will not lose me," he exclaimed, unable to believe the words he heard. "What do you mean?" He stared at her in unabated amazement, his breathing loud as that of an exhausted runner.

"I mean," she said slowly and in a kind of exaltation, "that you are mine and that I am yours, and that, however long you may be in prison, you will find me at the gate when you come out."

Honiton gazed at her for a moment, and then, covering his face with his arm and leaning upon the ledge of the window, he shook with uncontrollable sobs. Love, shame, admiration, remorse, struggled within him as he realized the magnanimity of her love.

Jocelyn placed her hand upon his shoulder. "Frank, Frank," she said, with the first sign of agitation that she had shown. "It hurts to see you cry. Stop, dear, stop."

He started to his feet, pushing her away almost brutally, his face wild and terrible to see. His hands were

stretched as though to keep her from him, and his eyes would not rest on her face. "No, no," he declared desperately. "Do not tempt me. I will not listen to you. Leave me, Jocelyn."

"You think I am sacrificing myself, Frank," she answered. "You are wrong. I am doing what my heart makes me do. You cannot change me. Come, sit down quietly, dear, and let us talk of our future."

She spoke throughout with an almost unearthly calm and decision, and it came home to Honiton slowly that nothing could move her. She had settled her problem as her young mind dictated, and she could see no flaw in her position.

He sat by her side and listened to her, astounded at the detailed fashion in which she had looked into the future and solved the problem of their life together when his term of imprisonment was over. No words of his could move her. As he grew calmer he spoke of the slights that would be put upon her as the wife of an ex-convict, the hardships she must suffer in the rough life that was inevitable, the poverty in which she must live wherever they went. Each fresh reason he urged hardened the decision she had made.

Peter Brown, waiting in the corridor, was forgotten as completely as was the flight of time. But for him, too, time had ceased to exist. In an intimate silence he was experiencing the first joys of loving and being loved.

When, at last, Jocelyn brought herself to part from Frank, her tears flowed for the first time, and her face was still wet with them when she rejoined Peter Brown. He was alone, for Joan had left him with the promise of a word before Grand Central was reached. His heart went out to the girl, as he saw the signs of her grief, the more so as he contrasted his own lot with hers. "My dear," he said kindly and pressed her arm, as the only means

he had of letting her know his sympathy.

"Don't think I am sad, Mr. Brown," she said, looking up almost defiantly through the tears in her eyes. "I am happy—for I am going to marry Frank when he is free."

"Marry him," exclaimed the detective, a look of consternation spreading over his face. "But, my dear, have you thought what this means? To bind yourself down—for years, probably, and then——"

"It is useless to try to stop me, Mr. Brown. I have thought it all out, and I am determined. Frank has said all—more than all—that you can say, but I have quite made up my mind. I love him, and I will wait for him—forever."

Peter Brown was thunderstruck. Such an eventuality had not even occurred to him. She was throwing away her life—giving a promise in her girlish enthusiasm—a promise which she would regret bitterly long before Honiton's term of imprisonment could possibly be over. Had she been able to marry him quickly it would have been another matter. If they could have gone abroad at once, young and full of a loving enthusiasm, her love would have grown, and her life might yet have been happy. But to wait years for a convict, meeting as she would with numbers of other men—young men of her own circle, with no stain upon them—and living the social life that she must live with her mother, his clear vision told him her decision must lead to disaster.

He knew, however, that argument was useless. He returned to the compartment where Honiton awaited him, his own happiness embittered by the catastrophe which he saw ahead of these two younger people.

The light of manhood burned up afresh in Honiton's eyes. Peter Brown could barely recognize him as the man

whom he had left an hour earlier, yet he pitied him only the more, with a pity that he must hide at any cost.

For Honiton, in his almost incredible joy, must confide in Peter Brown. The detective listened and made the best show of delight at the news that his honest nature would permit, but he was distracted and unhappy for the remainder of the journey. When at last Honiton ceased to talk and lapsed into dreams of the unexpected and happy future, that he now believed in store for him, Peter Brown sunk into a gloomy meditation. He had grown so fond of this man, in the time that they had been thrown together, that it was a personal pain to him to think of the blow Honiton would suffer if the girl failed him in the end. How could she help but fail? Who could blame her if she did? If only they could marry now and start the fresh life while yet their hearts were ardent!

It was then that the quixotic idea first crossed his mind. It would cost him his job, probably, but after all—well, there were other jobs. But there was Joan! Joan? She would be the first to urge him to it if she knew the whole facts. Yes, he would do it. Honiton should have his chance of happiness as well as Peter Brown. He roused from his gloomy reverie, and, for a time, talked with Honiton upon indifferent subjects. At last, after a glance at his watch, he said: "Only another hour to go, and then my responsibility ends. That bargain of ours had strange results, Honiton, yet I am almost sorry it is at an end."

"At an end?" asked Honiton. "It doesn't finish until you hand me over."

Peter Brown shook his head. "It ended when we left the ship. In fact, it really ended when the news of who you are got about, for I wasn't able to fulfill my part any longer."

Honiton looked at him curiously, wondering why he should trouble over

such a fine point. Nothing further was said on the subject, and soon after Peter Brown rose to leave the car. "You would like to say good-by to Miss Upton?" he asked, pausing in the doorway. "I will get her to come to you."

Mrs. Upton was asleep, and it was simple to call Jocelyn out. "I have come to give you a chance to say good-by to him," said Peter Brown.

"You are good," said Jocelyn simply. "I shall go at once."

"It's not for a detective to talk to a prisoner as you could, Miss Upton," he said with a curious hesitation.

"How do you mean?" asked Jocelyn, puzzled.

"Well, to urge him to make the most of every chance—and all that sort of thing," he said vaguely.

Jocelyn looked at him intently, unable to fathom his meaning, which she doubted. "I shall tell him that," she said. "But I mean to see that everything possible is done for him."

Joan Conliffe followed Jocelyn out, and, as she came forward, the girl moved away to go to Honiton.

"She has told me all about it, Peter," said Joan, and it thrilled him to hear the intimate tone of her voice. "Her devotion is wonderful. Tell me, is he worthy of it?"

"He is a fine fellow, gone wrong through—almost through carelessness," said Peter Brown earnestly. "I would trust him with anything now. Joan, if I could help those two to make a fresh start in life, you wouldn't blame me?"

"Of course not! But how?"

"Not even if it meant that I—suffered some disgrace?"

Joan Conliffe looked in his face earnestly. "I shall always trust you to do the best thing, my friend," she said.

Later, when both partings were over, Peter Brown settled back into his corner seat. When the earliest outskirts of New York appeared his eyes were

closed. As the train rattled through the suburbs his head had sunk forward, his chin resting upon his breast. His heavy breathing and an occasional faint snore convinced Honiton that he was asleep.

At last the train slowed and slung into Grand Central. Honiton rose and collected his hat and bag. Peter Brown slept on undisturbed, for Honiton had waved away the porter. The train stopped, and still the detective slept on.

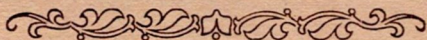
What had Jocelyn said? "Make the most of every chance!"

What better chance! Honiton looked around him, the hunted look of an animal in his eyes. He looked again at Peter Brown. The detective's head had dropped lower. He snored audibly. Honiton put out a hand cautiously and started for the door. He turned to look once more at Peter Brown and his whole expression changed.

He put out his hand, seized the detective by the shoulder, and shook him roughly.

"Wake up, old friend," he said. "We've got there."

THE END.



IDENTIFIES CAR BY TOBACCO STAINS

HARRY MOSHIER, of Kingston, Pennsylvania, probably would admit, if asked, that the trap he set for his abductors was not delicately baited, but he would say also that that was of minor importance since the trap was effective. Tobacco juice was the means Moshier used to effect the bandits' undoing.

While driving a truckload of alcohol, he was held up by several men. They pulled him off the truck and thrust him into a limousine, which sped away with him and two of the holdup men. Others of the band made off with the truck in another direction.

The truck driver's mind worked quickly. He thought of a plan to circumvent his captors, and he proceeded to act on it. He asked one of the bandits for some chewing tobacco. When he was given it he chewed vigorously and then expectorated several times in the car, leaving stains on the sides which he felt sure he could recognize later.

Two men were arrested in Newark, New Jersey, a short time afterward, while they were removing the body and license plates from a limousine similar to that used to kidnap the chauffeur. Moshier unhesitatingly identified the car by tobacco stains on the woodwork.

BEGGAR WAS NOT CRIPPLED

SYMPATHETIC persons who gave alms to an "armless and legless" man seated in a basket in a New York street, received a severe shock when they saw the basket overturned and the "cripple's" arms and legs brought into view. His clothing was arranged so that he appeared to have had his arms and legs amputated. In the rush of people for trains, some one collided with the basket and upset it, exposing the fact that the beggar had legs. Then, in his frantic efforts to rise, he showed bystanders that he had arms, also. Indignant at the fraud, the almsgivers had him arrested.

When arraigned in court, he gave his name as John Thomas and explained to the judge that for four years he had been unable to obtain employment. He said that friends of his had carried him in the basket to the entrance to a subway station and had left him there.

Discovering that Thomas had been arrested five times, the judge sentenced him to sixty days in the workhouse.

Headquarters Chat

KINGS may step down from their thrones to pay us homage; presidents, senators, judges, lawyers, doctors, ministers may join the world in our applause, but this all pales beside praise from that great mentor and oracle of childhood, whose "teacher says so" ends every argument. Yes, and to our dying day we can't shake off the feeling that the word of this dictator, who "taught our young idea to shoot," must always reign supreme.

Thus we offer up sincere praise and thanksgiving to Miss Lane for the following, and we promise her, as we promised another young lady many many years ago in a little red schoolhouse, that we will do our best, our very best, to raise all our stories to her standard of literary merit.

Children—yes, we're all children, every one of us, 'cept teacher—you just listen here:

"DEAR EDITOR: I notice in your latest issue that you have other women readers. I am glad, for I had the idea, somehow, that it was a man's magazine, and that it was a bit queer for a woman to buy it. I am a school-teacher and got my first copy by taking it away from one of my pupils as 'objectionable literature.' I took it home with me with the idea of looking it over and delivering a classroom lecture the following day against such tastes. Imagine my surprise when I found myself reading a Clackworthy story and chuckling over the delicious *Early Bird* and *actually entranced* by the wicked, but so likable, Mr. Clackworthy! Then I wandered on through the magazine and was surprised to find that, while *some* of the stories fall below my standards of literary excellence, the magazine was clean and interesting. I see that many of the best books appear serially in your magazine first. My favorite author is Christopher B. Booth. His stories are all clever, and his style of narration is admirable. I have just finished his novelette in *WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE*, which you called to the attention of *DETECTIVE STORY* readers, and think it was wonderfully good. Mr. Poate is an entrancing writer, although Doctor Bentiron does sometimes become a little ridiculous. The Thubway Tham stories, by Mr. McCulley, are, next to 'the Clackworthy stories, the best of your series. But those Thunderbolt things! How can you print them? Mr. Tyler's railroad stories are very good, and Herman Landon is a splendid writer.

"Why couldn't you give us a Clackworthy story and a Thubway Tham story every week? And why doesn't Mr. Booth do more novelettes? Sincerely,

"Middletown, New York.

RENE K. LANE."

"DEAR EDITOR: Where, oh, where, is Thubway Tham? Isn't he out of the hospital yet?

"I like your other stories very much, but Tham is my favorite. I only wish your magazine came out seven days a week. I enjoy your *Headquarters Chat*, too, but please bring on Thubway Tham. Patiently waiting. EDITH GILBERT.

"San Juan Capistrano, California."

You must surely have missed a few. Get them, Miss Gilbert, for you, if you follow the inclinations of your charming sex, will be particularly interested in the latest of these stories. All the other girls are. Why? There is a

touch of intriguing romance in it. Yes, Thubway Tham, who has had many a thrill, gets the thrill of all thrills. He meets—well, he meets some one whom he rather fancies, to put it mildly. And we kind of have a feeling he's going to get many more thrills from the same hands—or shall we say lips?

Thanks for that "seven-days" stuff. We feel much complimented. Wonder if we could get away with it? Willing to try. Please write your suggestion to the business department. You know, the business department of a publishing house thinks editors are—— Well, what's the use of getting personal? However, when it comes to the business end of the game we are *not* consulted, because the business department thinks that we are—— There, we almost told you that time.

"DEAR EDITOR: The whole-hearted interest I have in your fine magazine is of long duration. Heretofore I have been content to read Headquarters Chat and never have anything to say, and for a good while I've been trying to 'discover' an excuse to write you. At last Fate gave me one. Hence this letter.

"In the April 9th issue you have a good story, 'The Sealed Envelope.' If you turn to page ninety-seven and read the seventh paragraph, you will find:

"Weaver nodded approvingly; the boy was no fool. He took from his desk a heavy envelope and filled it with *sixty* pages of blank onion-skin paper . . . applied a splotch of wax, and pressed his signet ring . . . into the hardening circle.

"That's all right. But later, on page one hundred and fifteen, the eighth paragraph, we read:

"Almost reverently he pressed back the flap and drew forth the contents. As he slowly removed the *forty* sheets of onion-skin paper——

"As this was the same envelope and paper referred to on page ninety-seven, please tell me where the remaining twenty sheets disappeared to. Maybe some of our readers will offer a few suggestions as to the mysterious disappearance of the twenty sheets. I noticed the slight error the first time I read the story; and, although I enjoyed it, I was at a loss as to what became of the other sheets.

"Now, as I have consumed enough paper here to start a couple of fires next winter, I shall close, wishing your magazine all success, for, if any publication deserves it, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE does.

RICHARD M. SANDS.

"Box 496, Talladega, Alabama."

Where is the man who bet we did not dare print a letter of criticism? Let him read the above, and then, for he loses his wager, go out and search till he finds each and every missing page of that onion-skin paper.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE YOU WILL FIND:

The Opening Chapters of

MYSTERIOUS HIDDEN HALL

By C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON

Authors of "The Lightning Conductor," "Every Man's Land," etc.

THORNDYKE FLINT AND THE POISONED GROOM

A NOVEL

By DOUGLAS GREY

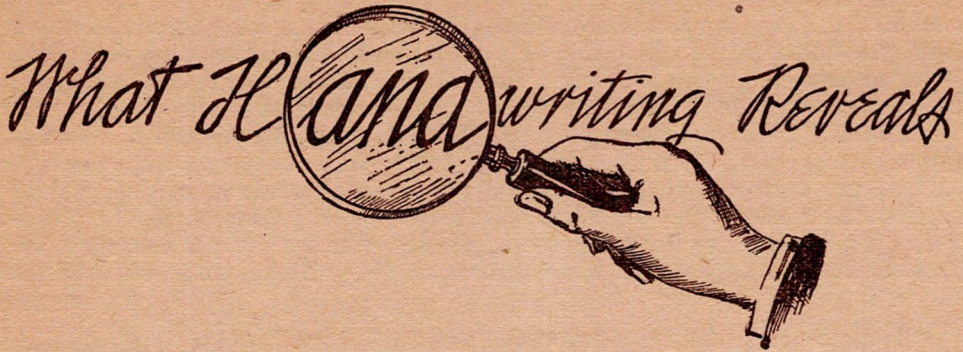
WHERE THEY MAKE 'EM

By ROY W. HINDS

SILENT ACCUSATION

By HERMAN LANDON

AND OTHER SHORT STORIES



If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send Louise Rice, in care of this magazine, specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned, and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. She will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in the department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Rice cannot be responsible for them.

C. F.—I really don't know what to say to persons like you. How do you expect to escape from every painful thing in the world, or how can you seriously ask me to tell you how to "make a fortune in not more than five years?" Honestly, now, my advice to you is to come from cover and go to the nearest poorhouse and ask for admission. Don't like that, eh? Well, that's practically what you are doing. You are asking the world to support you, and you are acknowledging your inability to fulfill the obligations of ordinary people. Those who do that are confessed failures and incompetents and might as well just throw themselves upon the mercy of their more efficient neighbors. And my goodness—how furiously mad you must be by this time, because, you know, you are really as proud as Lucifer! All I'm trying to do is to show you just where you really stand, you see. You are just as able to hold up under the ordinary bustle and wear of life as anybody, and a great deal more able than many who would be ashamed to whine and complain in the way you are doing. Didn't know you were doing that? Well, now you do, eh? And let me tell you that you have a great deal of talent, and that you would be successful in business, even though you didn't make a fortune in five years. I don't care how angry I've made you; only hope you'll be infuriated enough to set to work at once to prove how wrong I am.

CARRIE.—I've said this same thing a great many times in this department, but here we go again. Why in the world, my dear, do you imagine that you can sit back and do nothing except quarrel with your husband because he does not do more? Tell me that? Give me one honest reason why you should live in a two-roomed hotel "suite with bath," never so much as manicure your own nails apparently, and then write me this wail as to your "circumscribed condition of life." Suppose you had two or three children, a house to care for, your own clothes and theirs to make? By the way, you would be infinitely better off if you had! What reason can you give for your existence? Seemingly you don't even make your husband happy. Please read my reply to C. F. He's a young man, but he is also a pauper; yes, and he would be still, even if he possessed a million dollars. Your character and his both have good qualities, and both of you have something that is not common—real practical ability. Why not open a little shop in that very hotel where you live, for the "exquisite bits of lace" and those other trinkets which you say your soul longs to possess? If you like

them to that extent you must have the gift of selling them. Trust me when I tell you that that overworked husband of yours will be actively interested. You have a sense of humor tucked away somewhere in the recesses of the assortment of nonsense which you have allowed to accumulate in your mind. Drag it out, look at yourself through its lens, give yourself a disgusted kick—then grin and go to work.

JOSE B. DE LA C.—There is no doubt that you have at least traces of musical talent, and that, generally speaking, you possess more artistic leanings than the majority of people.

*Most respected Miss:—
For some time I h
"Detective Story" Magazine,
curious to have my wr
I am a Filipino, —
and educated in, "Vancouver
I am seventeen y
two years have been a*

It's not to be denied that you need more education if you are to be able to satisfy your own ambitions. And as you are only seventeen, I would, if I were you, so arrange my life that I could go to night school for a couple of years, get your high-school course complete. I am not willing to say that you will then make a success in any line of art, but I am willing to say that you will be successful in some branch of endeavor which at least approximates such work. Your writing expresses a nature which is open to suggestion and good influence to an unusual degree; it shows a will power which, while not yet strong, is beginning to indicate strength. Look out for an element of diffidence in your nature, which makes you hesitate and defer decisions. Filipinos, of whose writing I have had many examples, seem to possess as a national characteristic this instinctive leaning toward art, and it is to be hoped that ultimately they will help to raise the standard of creative art in these United States.

GUSTAVE B.—What in the world ever gave you the idea that I would think—what you say you think I will think? There is not a sign in your writing of anything worse than impetuosity, a lack of sufficient self-confidence, and too great a tendency to be influenced by others. Your will power is really ample for your needs, though not always used with discretion and firmness. If you will take a different attitude toward yourself, one of more self-confidence, and if for a time you will keep a tight rein on your emotions, especially on your love of pleasure, you will soon find yourself a man of moral power and substance. I note that you have the qualities which make a good salesman.

LAURA D.—At intervals for the last six months I have repeated my entreaty that you write me again, giving your name and address. You thought that you sent it, but you didn't; and I know that you must be thinking me a most cold and indifferent woman not to reply to such a letter as that of yours, with its manifold problems which I am sure I could help you with. Write me.

X. K., Ohio.—No, I don't think that your writing shows any sign of heart disease, which is the one affliction that will find expression soonest and most explicitly in writing. As you are exceedingly nervous I would suspect you of some functional disturbance, probably giving you palpitation of the heart, which is a symptom and not a disease. Isn't it possible for you to get work out of doors? I think the worst possible thing for you is this secluded life of a desk clerk in a business where you literally never have to "speak to a person or move anything except the writing hand." That kind of life would be cruelly hard on any one, and for a nervous person the continuation of it is practically the committing of suicide. Write to our Mr. Scott about opportunities for outdoor work, with special reference to your physical condition.

MRS. BROTEN.—Specimen numbered one shows a person who is excessively conceited. Better not allow this writer to get too intimate with number three, who is frank and kind, but blunt and utterly without tact. The pair will clash without delay. Number two has more capacity to deal carefully with number one and should undertake the task. It does seem a pity that number one, owing to the circumstances which you mention, should have to be dealt with in this particular manner. The vanity, conceit, and consequent selfishness indicated, are enormous.

N. S. M.—Your writing does not indicate that those tremendous talents you say you have, are in existence. Sorry; I seem to be handing out a lot of unpleasant statements in this number, but—there you are! You haven't artistic talent at all, and I know you'd find it out if you came to New York and spent even three months in an art school. I don't deny your love of what is beautiful, but that is quite a different thing from the ability to create beauty, as many a person has sorrowfully discovered. Why not train to be an interior decorator, or to follow some of the seminoncreative lines of art which demand only appreciation of beauty such as yours? For information on this head inquire of a good school of design, one of which, a most excellent institution, you will find right there in your home town.

GEORGE L.—I don't believe that we need to accept the influence of heredity. I do not believe that we need to take on the physical or mental attributes of our parents, unless we make the fatal mistake of thinking that we must. You see? In my opinion—and, mark you, this is only my opinion—we need not be hampered, even if born of diseased parents, if we have the sense to fight against the thought of what they suffered from, and to fight the weaknesses to which they succumbed. Your writing is expressive of an idealistic, sensitive nature, and I think that the atmosphere in which you now live is not especially good for you. If possible, try to get a change in this respect, and for goodness' sake throw those books on "psychological and pathological" subjects out the window. Read some wholesome tales of outdoor life and some rattling good sea yarns. You ought to like that last, since you once followed the sea. Write me again if you need help.

HETTIE.—I am not especially in favor of young persons of fifteen trying to choose a career. Fifteen is pretty young, and it is an age at which general

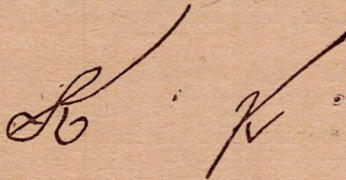
talent is not yet in evidence. Special talents, such as mechanical skill, inventiveness, the talent for writing, painting, and music, may be deduced from the writing of persons as young as you, but when such special talents aren't shown, then it is better to wait for a little more maturity before a decision as to a career is settled. Your writing shows you to be of the careful, accurate, and self-possessed type, so that I suspect that you will ultimately become a business woman. Your sister's writing shows far less of maturity than yours, although she is older. She needs more discipline than you, and your father's decision to send her to a girls' school is very wise. Your friend's writing shows her to be a warm-hearted, affectionate person, but without much ambition.

O'N., Indiana.—It is quite impossible to discuss adequately here the problem which you set forth so clearly. Please trust me and send your address, so that I may write you. There is no doubt but that duality of personality does exist and that such cases are most baffling and unusual. On the other hand I am a little skeptical about the usual duality, because I have found usually that such cases are merely cases of sly trickiness and low cunning. This, also, is the testimony of physicians. So far as handwriting has had the say, I have, in all my experience, had only two cases which I thought were genuine dualities. On this point, however, graphology still has a great deal to learn and to settle. This specimen is so eccentric, and your account of the person is so brief, that I cannot venture an opinion here. Write me; send me a great deal of writing, with the signature; if possible, with previous history of the case, age, physical condition, and a slight outline of the ancestry.

HOW TO READ CHARACTER IN HANDWRITING

LESSON XLI—The Letters K L and M

WHEN the upper stroke of K, on the inner side, is very high the writer is inclined to be strongly spiritual, or, at least, aspires toward spiritual development. The fineness, delicacy, and simplicity of the writing will give the first, and heavier pressure the second.



When the formation of L is so close to S that it is somewhat difficult to tell them apart, the writer is intuitional, to some extent, and is possessed of a gentle nature. These persons hardly ever have enough assertiveness for their own good.

When M is made so as to be very similar to the small letter, the writer has rather a friendly and modest disposition. It is worth noting that many persons who have other distinctive and even startling capitals, showing love of beauty and sometimes eccentricity, usually keep M simple.

When M is made with a narrow space between the upper points, and with the beginning and ending strokes resting on the basic line, the writer is apt to be rather narrow-minded and is often physically timid.

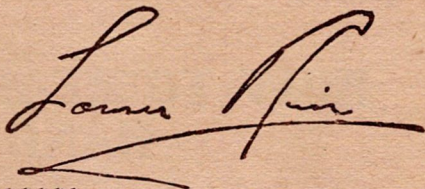


The M of the same type, but with curves and flourishes appended, expresses a timid nature which tries to conceal this by a bombastic and assertive manner.

When the first point of M is higher than the rest the writer has the instinct for independence and will resist coercion. Whether actively independent or not will depend upon other indications.



When the second point of M is higher than the rest the writer is easily drawn into an argument, but has no very strong convictions and is very apt to be a coward, morally and physically.



EXPERT LEGAL ADVICE

Conducted by LUCILE PUGH

In writing the Expert Legal Advice Department please be careful to give full details of your case, stating whether or not it has been before the courts previously, or whether or not it has been submitted to a lawyer of your locality. If you desire Miss Pugh to find a lawyer for you give your address with care: personal address, city, and State. Unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope your communication will be answered in this column.

ANSWERS TO READERS' QUERIES

K. W.—When a note is presented at a bank on the day when it is due, and is protested, on account of the death of the indorser, the executor of the will or estate of the indorser is the one to whom the note should be presented.

F. H.—All children born in wedlock are supposed to be legitimate. A lawyer has no business interfering with a client's personal affairs, as you say, but your lawyer is only doing what any right-minded person would do in trying to dissuade you from this suit, so dishonoring to yourself and your wife. If you are wise you will listen to this advice.

EMP.—The circulation by a labor union of a statement that nonunion labor had been employed by your firm, when falsely and intentionally falsely given for the purpose of preventing you from securing labor, which has resulted in serious

detriment to your business will give you the right to an action for damages. The fact that the heads of the union repudiate any knowledge of this report being circulated cannot free them from obligation, since the written statement appears on their letterhead and is signed by an officer of the union.

MRS. D.—The fact that you cannot repeat, word for word, the slanderous accusation need not injure your case. The length of time during which the conversation went on, and the number of times that the accusation was repeated, would be sufficient cause for your inability to give testimony verbatim. Yes, I think you have an excellent case. I wish that every one suffering under the lashing of a malicious tongue would have your courage. If these cases were taken to the courts oftener there would be far less of such trouble, and people would learn to know that taking away the reputation of a person is, in the law, just as reprehensible as taking his money.

P. EVANS.—The law requires the registration of a statement of the ingredients of patent or proprietary medicines with the health department. The police have the power to enforce this. You are very unwise to persist in trying to evade this law. It is not only hopeless to so try, but it will give you a very bad standing in the eyes of the officers of the health department.

N. O. McL.—The laws governing automobiles vary somewhat in different States. In Kansas the owner of a car is not held liable for the negligence of an adult person who is driving his car, not even if the owner is in the car at the time the alleged negligence occurs. In Massachusetts the owner is not responsible for any accident which may occur to a guest in his car, provided that he or the driver cannot be shown to have been grossly negligent. In Ohio the owner of a car cannot be held responsible for anything which may happen to a child who enters his car unknown to him or who is taken to ride after persistent begging or who neglects to get out of the way of the car when the driver is taking reasonable precautions to avoid the child. Generally speaking the law recognizes that when driving a car the majority of people are reasonably careful, but it is extremely severe upon such drivers as are shown to be customarily negligent of their duty to protect the lives of others. While the law cannot quibble it can and does recognize the fact that the motive and the general attitude of the owner of an automobile makes some difference in his liability.



The How, When, and Where of Success

Conducted by RUTHERFORD SCOTT

If it is impossible for you to wait for Mr. Scott to touch upon the work in which you are especially interested, in one of his articles, send a stamped, addressed envelope, and a careful, accurate, and brief statement of what your education is, what your experience has been, and where you wish to begin your career; also, the amount of time and money which you can give to your apprenticeship. He will write you a personal letter, and tell you what you wish to know.

Breeding Dogs for Profit—Continued

PRICES of Boston bull terriers run up into the hundreds. Pekingese bring all the way from a hundred to thousands of dollars. Collies sometimes bring very large prices indeed, and so-called "police dogs," well trained, are worth enormous sums.

It would be quite impossible to go into the financial question of outlay and possible income, in the confines of brief articles like this. Persons thinking of beginning to breed dogs should get all the literature possible dealing with dogs, should make a practice of going to all "shows" of the breed in which they are interested, and should inform themselves thoroughly of the market and the breed before investing any money.

The breeding of collies, old English sheep dogs, police dogs, great Danes, and other large breeds cannot be successfully carried on in a city. All these dogs need an enormous amount of running and galloping to keep them fit. To exercise them at the end of a chain on a city street is an injustice to the dog and suicide so far as the business is concerned. The cost of food in a city is also a very serious item when considering the breeding of large dogs.

An ideal place for them is not a farm, where the feathered folk distract and worry the dogs, but about a ten or twelve-acre place, where a fair amount of ground can be used for the dogs alone. All rules have exceptions; therefore I hasten to add that a farmer in the Southwest has made a modest fortune raising sheep dogs and collies trained especially for the care of flocks and cattle, and that he has done this on what is mainly a chicken-and-fruit farm. His original investment was the one thousand dollars which I have previously stated to be about the ordinarily correct sum to invest in the business.

Collies can be trained to be guardians of children and to feel with peculiar affection toward them. Several firms which sell these beautiful animals specialize in this, and for such purpose they bring up the puppies with youngsters; one of the firms, operating in a suburb, gives homes to orphan children from time to time for the express purpose of instilling into their collies this instinct for child love. The collie, in fact, is one of the stanchest and most loyal of dogs, but, more than any other dog, he can be utterly ruined in his first year. He has to feel the mastership of his owner and to acknowledge it, and if he is allowed to be insubordinate he will be that most dangerous of dogs, a "snappy" collie.

The sheep dogs are not so affectionate as collies, but they are royal in their courage. Great Danes are dogs which it is well to breed only after a thorough acquaintance with some mature specimens. The great Dane does not run true to dog form as the other breeds do. You can never tell how one of them is going to turn out. They develop sullenness for no reason, are sometimes incurably vicious, are occasionally, great, fun-loving clowns, sometimes are as gentle and affectionate as a Boston—there is no telling how a puppy will develop. Great Danes are enormous eaters, and for this reason the problem of keeping them, in these days of expensive meat, is difficult. And the Dane will not eat substitutes as many dogs will; he wants meat, and unless he gets enough of it he will fall ill. This breed brings a very high price when it sells, but the market is exceedingly limited, since only those with large grounds and pocket-books to match can afford to keep them.

All the toy breeds thrive well, even when raised in an apartment, if taken to walk regularly and fed with great discretion. They are spoiled pets from birth, and many a valuable dog has been lost because a breeder allowed it to be finicky about its food, such as refusing to eat anything but chicken or liver, and so on. None of the toy breeds is really as affectionate or loyal as the "doggy dogs," but they are liked by many who feel that they are the only sort of dog really adapted for city life. With care in buying a not too expensive female, yet one whose pedigree is pure and high, and in treating the expectant and nursing mother with the care which is that of infinite detail, so that the pups survive their first critical six weeks, the toy dog is apt to be a pretty big money maker.

White bull terriers are magnificent animals, but they are inveterate fighters and have the odd reputation of being treacherous to women. Whether deserved or not this reputation has done them a great deal of harm, though they will always have their admirers. They are very much a man's dog and are not happy as a house pet.

The Airedale has been called the one-man dog, but this, I think, is not quite true. They are essentially friendly animals, though their devotion is emphatically for their intimates. They are invaluable as watchdogs and very discriminating. Airedales are very easy to raise and have few diseases to which they are prone.

The genuine English bulldog was not much seen in this country, for a long time, but he, also, seems coming back into favor. Because he is not yet established this would be a splendid time to acquire a female or a pair. As Canada now has some magnificent specimens, it would be opportune to purchase such dogs there.

All that such articles as these can do is just to suggest lines along which interested persons must make their own investigations. The breeding of dogs is not a business into which a small capital ought to be invested, as it is sometimes invested in commerce, with the expectation that within a fairly short time it will pay. But it is a most prolific source of extra income for the household of moderate means, and from that point it may go on to be an actual business.

UNDER THE LAMP

CONDUCTED BY HENRY A. KELLER

THIS week's problem is one that will keep you under the lamp for a longer time than you generally spend—unless I miss my guess by a wide margin. It's a cipher that contains nothing but a man's name and address. The police got hold of it when Detective Lieutenant Cameron was trying to locate Arthur Chase, a convict who had escaped from Mount Kisco prison.

Chase had been convicted of first-degree burglary on the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence. Any one knowing him could not help believing that he told the truth when he declared he was hired by two men, whom he learned later were crooks, to "stand outside and let them know if any one came into the house, because they were plumbers, and had been engaged by the mistress of the house to install a shower bath on an upper floor, as a surprise for the head of the house, who was not to know anything about it until the job was finished." While Chase stood guard some one did approach and enter the house. Chase himself went in to give warning, but the birds had flown, and—well—it was burglary, and Chase was caught and held as an accomplice. A swift conviction and severe punishment followed, to satisfy the squeamish ones of the populace who complained loudly and at great length about a new and "positively unprecedented crime wave!"

At Mount Kisco, Chase was put into a cell with "Big Jim" Connelly, grizzled, sympathetic, and a veteran in ways of crime—and the workings of the law. He *knew*, even before Arthur Chase unburdened himself and told his story. The hardened old yegg's heart was touched, and as a result he set to work at once to see that—according to his lights—justice did a job once more, minus her blindfold.

Big Jim was successful. He arranged Arthur Chase's escape, and so careful and thorough were his plans, due partly to his knowledge of the game, partly to his liking for "The Innocent," as he called Arthur Chase, that they were carried through without a hitch. Just how he accomplished it, does not concern us here. All we need to know is that the crush-out was managed in such a way that a great deal of suspicion attached itself to Big Jim. The idea became firmly planted in the mind of Detective Lieutenant Cameron that Big Jim engineered the escape, and that he knew where Chase could be found.

Cameron just had to recapture Chase. His record for never failing to get his man had to be sustained. So as part of his job he kept a careful watch on Big Jim's mail—without result. After long months of fruitless waiting Cameron arranged for Big Jim's release, on the positive conviction that the old veteran would lead him straight to his man.

When Big Jim was dressed in the coarse prison suit, ready to face the "outside," he was put through a mild grilling, at the instigation of Detective Cameron. He was searched thoroughly, in the hope that some clew to Arthur Chase's whereabouts could be found. Big Jim was clever; he had some intuitive feeling that such a step might be tried—and he was prepared.

The elated prison guard found on Big Jim a slip of paper, on which was written a man's name and address, as printed below. He rushed with it at once to the waiting Cameron, while Big Jim was allowed to go on his way, immensely enjoying the situation. Cameron hunted up the man at the recorded address, and found that no one lived there of the name he mentioned. He had been tricked.

Cameron, still suspicious, had an expert in ciphers take a look at it, in the hope that it would turn out to contain some secret message, and in due course a solution was handed to him. He took a look at it, rubbed his eyes and looked again—and swore.

See if you can make the following reproduction of the name and address, which the guard found on Big Jim, tell you what Big Jim wrote in cipher for the benefit and chagrin of Detective Cameron.

**H. A. HALLIAN,
STORK AND KISMET STS.,
CITY.**

Next week's issue will contain the answer.

The first report in last week's problem was: "Found Lon Haskin's finger prints on the window sill;" the second, "Ike Gilligan paid the mortgage on his farm this morning. Source of money is unknown;" and the third, "Found loot in pawnshop at Smithtown." In the first cipher, B was substituted for A, C for B, D for C, and so on consecutively to the end of the alphabet. The second cipher was "route" transposition, or a rearrangement of the word order of the original text. Five vertical columns of three words each were used, this way:

Ike	the	his	morning	money
Gilligan	mortgage	farm	Source	is
paid	on	this	of	unknown

The third cipher was straight figure substitution, 1 for A, 2 for B, and so on to the end of the alphabet. These figure substitutes, which were the text of the transposition part of the cipher, were transposed in six vertical columns of five figures each, in this way:

6	12	14	19	20	8
15	15	16	8	19	20
21	15	1	15	13	15
14	20	23	16	9	23
4	9	14	1	20	14

Fjf get you 20 9?



MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that those persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

When you hear from the person you are seeking, tell us, so that we may take your notice out.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

MORELLE.—We have two letters for you from your father, who is anxious to hear from you. Send for the letters as soon as you see this, and please write to your father and mother, and relieve their anxiety.

BILLS, MRS. ADELIN.—She left her home in Oklahoma City on May 27, 1920, saying she would be back the next day, and has not been heard of since. She had with her two children, Merrie, six years old, with dark, bobbed hair and brown eyes and a deep cut across her nose, and Jake, three years old, with blue eyes and very light hair. Mrs. Bills is thirty-two years old, about five feet in height, weighs about ninety-eight pounds, and has jet-black hair and dark-blue eyes. Every effort has been made to find her, but no trace of her has been found. Any one who can give information about her will do a great kindness by writing to her daughter, Gladys Bills, 425 West Walnut Street, Altus, Oklahoma.

CRANE, ROBERT.—He has not been heard of since September, 1919, when he was in the U. S. navy. He is tall and dark and is about twenty-one years of age. His home is in Tennessee. A friend would be glad to hear from him or from any one who knows his present address. T. Diet, care of this magazine.

PRINCE, PHILIP SHERIDAN.—He is twenty-eight years old, six feet tall, with blue eyes and dark-brown, curly hair. He was last heard of in Great Falls, Montana, over five years ago. He may have been in the war, but it has been impossible to get news of him through the war department or the Red Cross. His father is dead, and his mother and all the family are very much worried. If Philip should see this he is asked to write as soon as possible to his sister, Ada Prince, care of this magazine.

Can any one give me information about my parents? According to the lady who brought me up, I am now about twenty-nine years of age, and have brown eyes and hair. I was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel James Madison, who lived in Stanton, Michigan, at the time. I have been told that my father whose name, as I remember, was either MANCHESTER or CHAMBERLAIN or something similar, is still alive, and that my mother is dead. Please address Minnie Madison, in care of this magazine.

BUCK, MRS. MARIE VICTORIA.—She is about fifty-nine years old, and was last heard of in Sugar City, Colorado, about six years ago. Any information will be thankfully received by her niece, Marie Victoria Wilkinson, 218 South Carrizo Street, Corpus Christi, Texas.

VORBACK, VIRGINIA.—On Monday, the 22d of November last, Mrs. Vorback told her husband she was going to see a doctor. She had been ill for some time, and had undergone an operation. When she did not return, he called on the doctor and found that she had not been there, and in his coat pocket he found a note telling him that she was going away, and would not come back until she was quite cured of her illness, because she felt that he could not stand the expense. She gave no hint as to where she was going, and he has not heard from her since. Her little girl, three years old, is crying all the time for her mother, and her husband hopes, if she sees this, that she will come back at once. He is only too glad to do anything in his power to help her restore her life, and he is afraid that the child will get ill if she does not see her mother soon. Any one who knows where she is will do a great kindness to this family by writing to Edward J. Vorback, 144 Lorentz Avenue, Morgantown, West Virginia.

GOLDSTEIN, SAMUEL.—On the 29th of April, 1918, he left his home in Baltimore and went to Washington, D. C., to get a position. He was accompanied by a man named Herman Sumsy. After about a week they disappeared, and every effort to find them has failed. Samuel was about twenty years old, five feet ten inches tall, with black hair and eyes, and had a small pimple on his forehead between the eyebrows. Sumsy was about twenty-three years old, five feet three inches tall, with dark-brown hair and eyes, and a dark complexion. He is an artist. Samuel's mother is ill through worry over her son's strange disappearance, and will be most grateful to any one who can give her news of him. She has great hopes that readers of this magazine may be able to help her, and is sure that they will do so if they have any information of her lost son. Now, readers, do your best to save a distressed mother from breaking her heart, and your kindness will be always remembered with gratitude. Please write to his brother, Leon Goldstein, care of this magazine.

VIRGIE.—Where are you and the "Walking Boss"? Send your address to me in care of this magazine. "Slats" and I wish to know where we may find you. "Joe," "Slats" and I wish to know where we may find you.

DAVIS, JOHN.—He was born in Alabama, and is now about seventy-five years old. He had three children, John, Annie and Thomas. Also CHARLIE MISKEL, about thirty-seven years old. He was a soldier in the Spanish-American War and was last heard of in Lead, South Dakota. News of either of these two will be gratefully appreciated by a relative, Mrs. J. J. Beach, Route 3, Box 340, Dallas, Texas.

SAPONIERI, JOHN.—On the morning of March 5, 1920, this boy left his home to attend his class in wireless telegraphy at the Y. M. C. A. on East Eighty-sixth Street, New York City. He did not show up at the school, and has not been seen or heard of by his family, or by any one who knows him, since that day. He has disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. He is eighteen years old, five feet eight inches tall, weighs one hundred and fifty pounds, and has chestnut-brown hair and eyes. Below his left ear there is a black birth mark, the size and shape of a penny, and the design of an anchor and eagle is tattooed on his right forearm. This boy is an only child, and his mother is almost dying with grief at his absence. All the usual sources for tracing lost persons have been tried, but in vain, and his distracted mother has implored us to help her find her son. She has the fullest confidence in our ability to do so, and is quite sure that our readers, who are spread all over the world, and have done so much to help others in trouble of this kind, will be the means of bringing her boy back to her. Their kindness will be remembered gratefully as long as she lives. Mrs. Teresa Saponieri, care of this magazine.

LICHTENWALTER, CLYDE.—He was last heard of in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He is sixteen years old, about five feet four inches tall, and has light hair and gray eyes. Any information about him will be gladly received by Mrs. D. Lichtenwalter, care of this magazine.

KANE.—When I was four years old I was placed in the Home of the Annunciation in New York City. My mother was a widow, and I had two brothers and a sister. They visited me until I was eight years old, after which time I never saw or heard of any of them. My brothers' names were Harold and Eugene, my father's name was Thomas, and my mother's Ross. Any information that will help me to find my people will be most gratefully received. Helen Florence Kane, care of this magazine.

COLLINS, DARWIN S.—He was last seen about 1897 at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, when he parted with his friend, who is anxious to hear from him again, and will greatly appreciate any information that will help him to find his old pal. F. E. Hall, 2950 Clifton Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

MURPHY, FRANK and GERTRUDE, the children of Jonathan Murphy, a veteran of the Civil War who died at the Soldiers' Home in Marion, Indiana, in 1907 or 1901. Their half sister is seeking them, and will be deeply grateful for any news that will help her in her search. Mrs. H. Murphy Parkins, Box 86, Manito, Illinois.

ESPOIU, JOHN M.—When last heard from he was in Phoenix, Arizona. A friend would be glad to get his address and will appreciate any information as to his whereabouts. Please write to Henry Aguayo, 2109 California Street, San Francisco, California.

HUGHES, JAMES H.—He was last heard of in Memphis, Tennessee, about fifteen years ago. He was about five feet six inches tall, with dark hair and mustache. He is now about sixty-eight years old. Any news of him, or of his wife, Annie, or his grandson, RAYMOND MONTAGEAU will be greatly appreciated by his sister, Mrs. S. J. Bonham, 717 De Soto Street, Clarksdale, Mississippi.

DERBY, CHARLES.—When last heard of he was with the Sixth Division, Fifty-second Infantry, Company E. He sister-in-law has important news for him, and would be glad to hear from him. He is also known as Frank Ferris. Mrs. Kate Miller, 1463 1-2 Market Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

BUCHANAN, THOMAS.—He was in Kansas City seven years ago, where he worked in the German Hospital, and was last heard of in Syracuse, New York, four years ago. Any one who knows him will do a favor by communicating with Bob Wilson, care of this magazine.

FOLEY, BRENDAN J.—His mother has not heard from him since June, 1920, and begs him to write to her, as she is ill with worry about him. She hopes he will write at once and send his address. She will be glad to help him if he has need of any assistance. Mrs. Catherine Foley, 609 Newfield Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

WILSON, HENRY.—He was the son of Narvah and Henry Wilson, of Glasgow or Edinburgh, Scotland, and had some brothers and sisters in Canada. Any news from his relatives will be gladly welcomed by Mrs. E. Helms, R. F. D. One, Box 104, Pope Station, Mississippi.

DUTTON, JOHN B.—He is about sixty years old, and over six feet tall. He may be in Canada. He was at one time a Knight Templar in the United States. His niece would be very glad to get some news of him, and is sure that he would like to hear from her. Any information that will help her to find her uncle will be gratefully appreciated. Mrs. M. R. Cox, 408 1-2 East Thirtieth Street, Tacoma, Washington.

WRAY, ALFRED R., is anxious to get some information about his parents or relatives. He was deserted in Philadelphia about twelve years ago and does not know the first names of his parents, but believes they came from some Western State. He will be glad to hear from any one who can tell him anything of persons of this name. Care of this magazine.

HATTINGS, JAMES F.—He left New Britain, Connecticut, in February, 1918, and it was said that he was with the Canadian army in France. He is thirty-nine years old, has brown hair, blue eyes, and is inclined to be stout. He left a wife and five children in New Britain, who are most anxious to know what has become of him. Any news that will help them to find him will be gratefully received by his daughter, Doris Hattings, care of this magazine.

O'BRIEN, WILLIAM.—He was born in Bristol, England, in October, 1871. His father was in the British army at the time of the London Boats. The boy was sent to Canada about 1885 with some other boys, and his name was changed to O'Connell. He was last heard from in Ottawa in the spring of 1887, when he was staying with, or was employed by, some people named Cahill. Any information about him will be thankfully received by J. D. O'Brien, 1620 Seventh Avenue North, Great Falls, Montana.

STEWART, D. L.—He was last seen at Agny, near Arras, with the Twenty-fourth Victoria Rifles, Second Division, Fifth Brigade, Canadian Expeditionary Forces. His regimental number was 1080184, and his home town was Berlin, New Hampshire. If he sees this he is asked to write to his old friend, U. S. S. Satterlee, care of Postmaster, New York City.

COOK, MICHAEL.—He is about thirty-six years of age, five feet eight inches tall, with fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair. He has three brothers, John, James, and Edward. He was last seen around Christmas time in 1903. Any information regarding his whereabouts will be greatly appreciated by his brothers. Please write to Edward Cook, 1821 Second Avenue, New York City.

GRASSLAND, BILL.—He is about seventy-six years old, and used to live at Deep Park River in Western Oklahoma, Oklahoma. His niece, who has lost all trace of him, is very anxious to find him, and will be most grateful to any one who will be kind enough to help her in her search for her uncle. Mrs. Alice Patterson, Route number one, Cadiz, Ohio.

BUNTON, ETHEL MARIE.—She was born in Munsey, Indiana, about 1892, and has light hair and blue eyes. She was an orphan and was adopted from the Delaware County Home by some people named Orest, who were farmers. When last heard of she had joined a road show as a chorus girl at Indianapolis. Any information about her will be greatly appreciated by her brother, Charles Bunton, care of this magazine.

OSOVISKI, ALEX.—He is about thirty years old, five feet six inches in height, with brown hair and eyes, and a dark complexion. His nose is slightly bent to the left of his face. His nephew will be grateful for any news that will help him to find his uncle. Walter J. Lane, care of this magazine.

HINMAN, MRS. L.—She placed her two children, Ruth and Harry, in the care of an aunt and uncle in Cincinnati, and then has heard nothing from her since that time. They did hear that she had married again and that she had another daughter, twelve years old. At that time she was supposed to be living in Columbus, Ohio. Harry was born in 1902. Ruth is a little older and is now married. If any one can give these young people news of their mother the kindness will be greatly appreciated. Harry L. Hinman, care of this magazine.

HILL, MRS. MAYNE. formerly of Sharon and Butler, Pennsylvania, and Youngstown, Ohio. She has three children, Thora, Beatrice, and Billy, all last heard of about eighteen or twenty years ago. Her old friend Cora would like to hear from them. Mrs. Cora E. Scott, 9116 Aetna Road, Cleveland, Ohio.

ARCHIBALD, JOHN RAY. also called Ray Brady.—He was post sergeant of Company E, 111th U. S. Infantry, at Camp Hancock, Georgia. His home town was McKeesport or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Also **EDWARD CLAY MCINTYRE**, who has been missing for twenty-five years, and would be now about fifty-four years old. He was fair, of medium height, and stocky. He was a barber and his home was in Girard, Pennsylvania. Any information of these two men will be gratefully received by E. C. McIntyre, care of this magazine.

MILLER, EMMA.—She is the daughter of Elliott Miller, of Troy, Ohio, where she lived until a few years ago. After the death of her parents she went to Los Angeles, of medium height, and lived at Dayton and Corvinton, Ohio, and some at Cambridge, Illinois. Any information about her will be gladly received. F. M. Hinman, 333 North Fifteenth Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

BEECHER, EDWARD H.—He is a cook and is fifty years old. He lived in Bridgeport, Connecticut, but disappeared from there about seven years ago and has not been heard of since. His sister will be very grateful for any news of her brother. Mrs. H. J. Hurlock, R. D. 2, Box 273, Stratford, Connecticut.

LORSON, CARL.—He was in Company H, 146th U. S. Infantry, in the E. F. at Cleonant, France. His last home address was Lakewood, Ohio. Also **HERMAN KAUFFMAN**, who was in Company B, First Antiaircraft Machine Gun Battalion, A. E. F., at Bordeaux, France, in May, 1919. And **ROSCOE R. ELTON**, also of Company B, as above, and last heard from at Yrac, France, in May, 1919. News of any one of these men will be most gratefully received by Samuel L. Jett, 1396 Seventh Avenue, Belle Plaine, Iowa.

LIPSCOMB, FRANK.—He is twenty-eight years old and was last heard of at Fort Wayne, Indiana. His home was in Auburn, West Virginia. Any one who knows anything of him will do a favor by writing to his brother, William Lipscomb, 1206 Solvy Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

BATES, LOUIE O.—He was last heard from about eleven years ago. His sister Nora would be glad to hear from him, or from any one who can give her news of him. Mrs. Nora Lipscomb, 1206 Solvy Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

SMITH, WILTON.—He was a sailor on board the U. S. S. "Marius," and was in Newark in May, 1919, since which time all trace of him has been lost. His home is in South Carolina. He is asked to write to his friend, I. G., 81 Ann Street, Newark, New Jersey.

WILSON, MARGARET.—She left Bluffton, Indiana, several years ago, and was last heard of in Chicago. Any information regarding her whereabouts will be very much appreciated by James De Witt, care of this magazine.

LURIER, ABRAHAM H.—He was last heard of in New York City thirteen years ago, and is said to have gone to Alaska. His brother is dead and his sister would like to hear from him. Mrs. S. Jacobson, care of this magazine.

MINNICK, ALFRED J.—He used to live in Redford, a short distance from Detroit, Michigan. He is about seventy years old, and in January, 1920, was going to Florida for his health. Any information about him will be appreciated by H. Upchurch, care of this magazine.

KILDAY, ANNIE.—She left Glasgow, Scotland, for America about twelve years ago. If she sees this she is asked to write to her friend, Mrs. John Findlay, 265A St. Antony Street, Montreal, Canada.

CAMP, JAMES A.—Write to your brother in Chipley, Florida, and send him your address. He has something of importance to tell you.—T. T. C.

STEPHENSON, THEODORE LADLEY.—His daughter has not heard from him for twenty years. He was a tall, well-built man, of dark complexion, with one arm cut off at the wrist through an accident when he was a boy. His baby girl, Mabel, where he left in care of Jim Enoch, at New Canton, Illinois, would be glad to hear from any one who has known him. He may spell his name Stevenson. Mrs. Mabel Malone, care of this magazine.

HIXON, BESSIE.—She is the daughter of Joe Hixon, who was killed by the kick of a horse at Boon, Michigan. When last heard of she was in California. Their brothers, Daniel and John, and their sisters, Martha and Maggie, are anxious to find them. They have all been separated since they were very small. They may be known by their mother's maiden name of Jamieson. Any one who can give any information that will help to bring this family together again will earn the deepest gratitude of their sister, Martha, care of this magazine.

DOCHERTY, MARY and WALTER.—They left Scotland for Winnipeg ten or twelve years ago, and would be about thirty years old at the present time. Their brothers, Daniel and John, and their sisters, Martha and Maggie, are anxious to find them. They have all been separated since they were very small. They may be known by their mother's maiden name of Jamieson. Any one who can give any information that will help to bring this family together again will earn the deepest gratitude of their sister, Martha, care of this magazine.

PARSONS, ALBERT E.—He was a telegrapher and agent for the C. B. & I. at Lovell, Wyoming, eight years ago. He is asked to write to his friend "Jonesy" at Bedford, Iowa.

RIZZO, MITCHEL.—Mickey, write to your old pal, George E. who was with you in Portland, Oregon, and Salt Lake City in the winter of 1919. Care of this magazine.

MILLER, HARRY E.—Your brother is anxious to hear from you. Frank B. Miller, 295 First Avenue South, Fort Dodge, Iowa.

STEWART, EDWIN.—He left El Paso, Texas, about 1913, with his mother and younger brother, and it is thought that they went to their old home somewhere in Iowa. He is asked to write to his old friend David H. Morris, 509 Corto Street, El Paso, Texas.

HAUSERMAN, MRS. MINNIE, her daughter, Susie, and her son, Louis. They were last heard from at White Horse, Oklahoma. They left there in 1904, and it is not known where they went. A relative will be deeply grateful to any one who would be kind enough to send their present address. Frank Schubert, Box 505, Wakefield, Nebraska.

AMES AMOS H.—He is forty years of age, five feet six inches tall, and has blue eyes. He was last heard from in Inyokern, California, in 1912. Any information regarding him would be greatly appreciated by his sister, Mrs. E. M. Olson, Lansing, Iowa.

KENNETH.—I was born in November, 1899, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and when I was a few days old I was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John W. Sinsel. They then moved to New York City. Mr. Sinsel was a government official. Both my foster parents are now dead. I have been led to believe that I had a sister near my own age, and heard that my name before adoption was Kenneth, but do not know whether this was my first or my family name. Any assistance in finding my sister, mother, or other relatives will earn my deepest gratitude. John E. Sinsel, care of this magazine.

ERICKSON, ALEX.—He is between forty-five and fifty years of age, about six feet tall, and had dark hair when he left Montreal, about ten years ago. It was said that he had bought a homestead outside Winnipeg. If any one can tell where he is and will send his address to an old friend they will do a great favor. Alex. F. Olsen, 135 Cour-sol Street, Montreal, Canada.

BAILEY, WILLIAM T.—He was last heard from at Breed, Wisconsin, in April, 1918. He is thirty-two years old, with dark, curly hair and gray eyes. He has a scar on his right cheek. His mother will be most grateful for any information about her son. Mrs. Ida Drake, R. R. B., Box 161, West Terre Haute, Indiana.

MOLESWORTH, H. A.—He is generally called Gus. He is asked to send his address to Harry Carr, Box 123, Mount Washington, Missouri.

PHILLIPS, SYDNEY H.—He was a sailor on the Great Lakes, and was last heard of in Canton, Ohio, in 1919. He is five feet eight inches tall, twenty-one years old, of heavy build, and has a scar under his right eye. Also **GUSTAVE E. NYBERG,** who was last heard of in Niles, Ohio, in May, 1920. He is five feet eleven inches tall, of Swedish origin, and weighs about one hundred and seventy pounds. Any information about these men will be very much appreciated by R. A. P., care of this magazine.

CHERRY, BESSIE.—My health is failing and I would like to hear from you, and make up for the years you have had to work. Send me both names, as I want you both to share what I have.—B. W.

ANDERSON, ALVA L.—Your sister is anxious to know where you are and will be glad to hear from you, as she has something of importance to tell you. Also **ALENE OTTO,** a friend of years ago. Please write to Mildred Anderson, 5211 Second Avenue North, Woodlawn, Alabama.

MITCHELL, BEN and MAPP.—These two served in the First U. S. Cavalry at Camp Stotsenburg, Philippine Islands, from 1907 to 1910. Any information will be greatly appreciated. Boys, if you should see this write to a former pal. H. C., care of this magazine.

PRANGEN, ETHEL PAULINE.—She was last heard of in Akron, Ohio, in August, 1915, when she was going to Newport News, Virginia. Her home was in Penn Yan, New York. Any one who knows her address will do a favor by sending it to A. M. C., care of this magazine.

SMYTHE, WALTER A.—He was formerly a captain in the Seventeenth Lancers, British army, and when last heard of was assistant manager of a theater in Brooklyn, New York. A friend would be glad to have his present address and will be greatly obliged to any one who will be kind enough to send it to him or help him in any way to find him. William Lloyd, care of this magazine.

SEODING, HARRY.—He left Philadelphia nine years ago, and was engaged in various hotels in Atlantic City. He is about forty years old, five feet ten inches tall, weighs one hundred and sixty pounds, and has a heavy mustache. His mother is dead and his brother is very anxious to find him. Please write to Gustave Seoding, 2835 North Watts Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

HOGAN, MARY, DELIA, LILLIAN, and JOSEPH, the children of Mathew and Annie Hogan. Delia was last heard of in New York in 1906-07, when she was employed by the Western Electric Company, Betune Street. Any one who can give any news of them will do a favor by writing to J. Huggans, care of this magazine.

FARLEY, JOHN.—He was last seen in England fifteen years ago. His wife came to America about that time, and was killed when his daughter was nine years old. He is about seventy years of age, and is a carpenter. He is supposed to have come to America and to have settled in Philadelphia. Any one who knows his address will do a kindness by writing to Kate F., care of this magazine.

THOMAS, J. J.—If he, or any one employed by him at the Thomas Ranch, Fish Springs, Utah, should see this, they are asked to write to H. M. T., care of this magazine.

MORNINGSTAR, RICHARD DICK, contractor and plasterer. He was a great huntsman and nature lover, and was a trainer of bird dogs, being especially devoted to pointers. It was said that he had been badly hurt, and died in Oklahoma from injuries to his back. This was eight years ago. In spite of all efforts, his burial place has not been found, and his son hopes that, through the kind assistance of some of our readers, he may succeed where everything else has failed. He will be most grateful for any information that will help him in his search. Charles H. Morningstar, care of this magazine.

MICKELSON, MAX.—He is twenty years of age, about five feet, ten inches tall, and has red hair. He formerly lived in Edmonton, Alberta, and from there went to Winnipeg with his father, his brother Abe, and his sister Florence. They all went to Philadelphia, and it is thought that they may be now in Los Angeles. Any one who can give their address will do a great favor by sending it to N. Steinberg, 229 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York.

JERROND, JAMES.—Please write to R. D. Sorelle, who served in France with you, care of this magazine.

JOHNSON, MRS. D. M.—She may be known as Alice Hunt or Williams. Her husband is very anxious to find her. She disappeared from her home in San Francisco on December 23, 1919, and every effort to find her has failed. Any information will be gratefully received. Private Donald M. Johnson, care of this magazine.

STELTZER, CHARLES.—He left Calmar, Clinton County, Iowa, and went to Oklahoma forty-three years ago. His son, who has not seen him since he was five years old, would be thankful for any information that would help him to know where he is or what has become of him. F. W. Steltzer, care of this magazine.

VILES, MRS. M. E.—When last heard of she was living on West Third Street, Pueblo, Colorado, in the winter of 1902, where she was staying with her sister, Mrs. Alice Fisher. She is now about fifty-three years old. Any news of her will be most gratefully received by C. L. Viles, Box 7, Maramba, Oklahoma.

DARK, JOHN and STERLING.—John is now about fifty-seven years old, and was last heard from eight years ago, when he was in Vancouver, Washington. He was about six feet six inches tall and had dark-brown hair and gray eyes. Sterling is forty-nine years old, five feet six inches tall, with dark-brown hair and gray eyes. He was a prospector for gold in Alaska, and spent some winters in Dawson, Fairbanks, and Yukon. He has not been seen by his father for twenty-nine years. Any information regarding either of these two will be most gratefully received by their sister, Mrs. Janie Collins, 15 North Tenth Street, Kansas City, Kansas.

FERGUSON, J. B., of Carruthersville, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee. Please write to your daughter, Bonnie Louise Ferguson, in care of this magazine.

MOORE, JOE.—His mother and sister Kate will be very glad to hear from him. His mother is heartbroken, since he left home, and hopes, if he sees this, that he will write to her at once. Mrs. Jasper Moore, Darrah, Pennsylvania.

CLARK, TEDDY.—Your old pal who was in the Catskills on the tunnel job, shaft five, wants to hear from you. He has tried to reach you for six months. He expects to go to Old Mexico in a few months, and would like you to go along if possible. Bob D. D., care of this magazine.

MORITZ, EARL.—I would like to hear from you. Mother is dead, and I am all alone. Elizabeth Moritz, 1104 M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

GASPER, VICTOR E.—When last heard of he was in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, about twenty years ago. His son will be glad to hear from any one who knows his present address or can give him any news of him. Howard E. Gasper, 124 South Derbigny Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

PERKINS, MATTIE.—She was last seen in St. Louis seven years ago. Any one who knows where she is asked to be good enough to send her address to Mrs. Maude Moore, Route 2, Texarkana, Texas.

GAMBLER, ROY.—When last heard of he was in the navy on board the U. S. S. "Mobile," at Hoboken, New Jersey. Any one who knows him will do a favor by telling him to write to his old pal, Corporal Rufus Overstreet, care of this magazine.

NAVE, PANSEY.—formerly of Middle Grove, Missouri. An old friend would like to hear from her, and will be grateful to any one who will send her address. C. S. V., care of this magazine.

LEVY, MORRIS.—He enlisted in the Eleventh Irish Fusiliers, Canadian forces, and went from Camp Val Cartier, Quebec, overseas in 1914-15. He gave an assumed name when he enlisted. He is thirty years old, and was last heard of in September, 1915, when he was in Field Hospital Number One, in France, with three shrapnel wounds in his leg. All trace of him has been lost since that time. It is not known under what name he enlisted. His sister will be glad to hear from any member of his company, and will send a photograph of her brother for identification to any one who may have information about such a young man. Mrs. Dorothy L. Rose, care of this magazine.

WILSON, H. E.—Daddy, write to me in care of this magazine. Everything is all O. K.—Florence.

ATTENTION, PLEASE.—Members of Co. D, C. and Supply Co. of the 163rd Infantry, Twenty-sixth Division, are asked to write to their pal, who has been unable to get in touch with his buddies since he was wounded in July, 1918. Weldon G. Tibbetts, care of this magazine.

ADAMS, MRS. JAMES.—Vic, please write to me at mother's. I am sorry for what I did.—Chief.

DOLAN, AGNES.—I was born in New York City and was placed in the New York Foundling Home when I was about two years old. Some months after I was adopted and was sent to West Bend, Iowa. I am now eighteen years old and am married. I would be glad to find my mother, or any of my relatives, and will be most grateful to any one who can help me in my search for my parents. Agnes Dolan, care of this magazine.

FENNEY, MRS. LAURA.—She left her home on July 6, 1916, with her child, Anna, who is now seven years old. When last heard of they were in her father's home in West New Brighton. Any one who can help to find these two will do a great favor by writing to Charles D. Fenney, 23 Liberty Street, Kingston, New York.

THOMPSON, SAMUEL ARMSTRONG.—He was last heard of in 1917, when he was in Colorado. He is seventy-two years old. Any information as to his present whereabouts will be greatly appreciated by his sister, Mrs. B. D. Galloway, R. D. 6, Box 10, Quaker City, Ohio.

LOGSDON, SHERMAN A.—He was last heard from in Columbus, Ohio, in 1914 or 1915. His brother John would like to hear from him, or from any one who knows where he is at this time. John J. Logsdon, 1925 Luden Avenue, Zanesville, Ohio.

PURNELL, FRANK.—He was a private in Company F, 115th Regiment, A. E. F., and was discharged in Baltimore, where he was last heard of. An old buddy, who has something of importance to tell him, would like to hear from him, and hopes if he sees this that he will write. H. J. B., care of this magazine.

CARSON, JAMES, sometimes called **JERRY.** Please write to your mother and father. They are very anxious to know where you are, and are worrying about you. Mrs. J. T. Carson, care of this magazine.

HIRONS, MRS. DOMINICK, formerly of Hopkins Street, Cincinnati, Ohio. An old friend would like to hear from her. She has not forgotten her, and hopes she will write. M. M., care of this magazine.

HARMON, NANCY MABEL.—She was married in 1894 to John W. Scott, when she was seventeen years old. They parted when their son, Lowell, was seven months old. He wants to know his mother and will be grateful for any news of her. It is thought that she remarried and is living somewhere in Louisiana. Please send any information about her to Mrs. M. Bowman Reese, P. O. Box 388, Dinuba, California.

REINSTEADLER, WILL.—He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and has not been heard from since 1912. His sister will greatly appreciate any information that will help her to find him, and will be glad to hear from any one who knows his address. Mrs. Joe Ridings, Box 166, Kensett, Arkansas.

KECKLER, FRANK E., nicknamed "Ski." He is forty-one years old, and has dark hair and eyes. For some years he was a guide in Glacier National Park, and the last news received from him was a letter he wrote from Aberdeen, Washington, in November, 1918. Any information as to his present whereabouts will be gladly received by his mother, Mrs. Fannie F. Keckler, 1474 B Street, San Diego, California.

BEST, JOHN W.—He was last heard from in 1880, and would be about sixty-five years old now. He was a miner then in Colorado. An old friend who has not heard from him in forty years would be grateful for any information that would help to find him. W. Taylor, 57 East Springfield Street, Boston 18, Massachusetts.

HILL, DIXIE.—She married a soldier named Ortega in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on August 22, 1919. She has red hair and wears glasses. She was last heard of in San Antonio, Texas, and Grand Island, Nebraska. If she sees this she is asked to write to Ralph, care of this magazine.

DAVIS ROBERT.—He had four daughters, Jessie, Irene, Nellie, and an infant. They lived in Fairmont, West Virginia, and went from there to Ohio. A friend, who has lost all trace of them, would be glad of any news of the family. Roy L. Dunn, 106 Alta Vista Avenue, Fairmont, West Virginia.

PEARY, ALICE.—She lived at one time in Macon, Georgia, and two years ago was in Memphis, Tennessee. Any news of her will be gratefully received by E. T. Allison, 261 St. Emanuel Street, Mobile, Alabama.

COUSINS, HAROLD.—He went to work on a farm in Reno, Nevada, about four years ago. He is about twenty-two years old, and had an aunt and cousin named Campbell. Any one knowing his address will do a favor by sending it to Isaac T. Baker, care of this magazine.

ERVIN, HENRY.—He was last seen in Junction City, Iowa, in June, 1920. He is five feet ten inches tall, twenty-five years old, with blue eyes and brown hair. If he sees this he is asked to write to his mother at once. Mrs. Carrie Petri, care of this magazine.

MACH, GEORGE CHARLES.—He has been missing from his home since 1913, and was in Brooklyn when last heard of. His father has died since he left, and his mother is very lonely. Any news of her son will be thankfully received. Mrs. Annie Mach, 20 Chase Street, Methuen, Massachusetts.

WELDER, JACK.—He is about five feet nine inches tall, thirty-four years old, with brown eyes and dark hair, and was in the army at Hampton Roads and at Newport, Rhode Island. Any one knowing his address will do a favor by sending it to Mrs. Eva Smith, 1339 East Twentieth Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

PRINCE, PHILIP SHERIDAN.—He is twenty-eight years old, six feet tall, with blue eyes and dark-brown curly hair. He was last heard of in Great Falls, Montana, over five years ago. He may have been in the war, but it has been impossible to get news of him through the War Department or the Red Cross. His father is dead, and his mother and all the family are very much worried. If Philip should see this he is asked to write as soon as possible to his sister, Ada Prince Papesco, R. F. D. No. 1, Montague, Montana.

GOGA, FRED.—There is an important letter at this office for you. Please let us hear from you at once.

BEHAN, W. X.—He was born in Texas and is thirty-two years old. He was on the U. S. S. "N. Mexico" in February, 1920. His friend of Santa Fe would like to hear from him. E. A., care of this magazine.

TROY, ARTHUR.—Please let me know where you are. I am not angry and am very anxious to see you. Penny has gone West. Write to me in care of this magazine. Mrs. Arthur Troy.

BOBBIE, L. S.—Please write to your old pal at old address. Am anxious to hear from you.—Billy M.

ABBOTTS, ALBERT.—He is twenty-nine years old, five feet six inches tall, weighs one hundred and fifty pounds, and has black hair and eyes. He is a toolmaker. He left a wife and two children in Bridgeport. Any one having information about this man should communicate with William E. Burden, Washington and Madison Avenues, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

FINLEY, NICHOLAS.—He came from Southsea, England, where his family lived. When he was twenty years old he joined the First Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, stationed at Portsmouth, and was sent to Curragh Barracks, in Ireland. He deserted and came to America as a stowaway. He joined the marines and served through the Spanish-American War, and was discharged at Mare Island in 1901. He had already changed his name to Smith, which was his mother's maiden name. He has not been heard of since his discharge, and all trace of him has been lost. He would be now about forty-six years old, five feet ten inches tall, with dark curly hair and brown eyes. His mother and father have died since he left home, and his youngest brother is seeking him, and hopes to find him through the kind readers of this magazine. Charles T. Finley.

FLESEMAN, BENJAMIN F.—He was born on June 12, 1893, and when last heard of was a marine on the U. S. S. "Minneapolis." Later his name was seen in the casualty list from overseas, but no further information has been obtained. His father is anxious to know what has become of his son, and will be deeply grateful to any one who knew him "Over There" who can tell him what has happened to him. James F. Fleseman, care of this magazine.

WETZ, ROSE, or MRS. THOMAS R. ADAIR, please write to your old pal Grace, who has something important to tell you. Miss Grace Allen, Room 312, Chandler Hotel, Los Angeles, California.

L. A. F.—Come home as soon as you can. Not so about H. Everything is O. K. Mother. F. A. Faust.

HEDDLESON, THOMAS.—His home is somewhere in Montana. A friend who was in a hospital at Solesmes, France, with him, and who parted from him at Angers, is anxious to find him, and will appreciate any information as to his present address. Harry Holden, 161 Martin Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ELAM, MRS. ELIZA.—It was said that she had moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where she died about ten years ago. Her niece, Myrtle H. Simcoe, who was brought up by her, would like to get in touch with some one who knew her, as she believes she has several cousins, and she would like to know them. Any information will be greatly appreciated. Mrs. Mefford Wintemute, 203 South Grant Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

DIXON, GEORGE, or DICKERSON.—He was a colored lieutenant stationed at Camp Taylor, where he was discharged after serving overseas. He said his home was in Boston. If he sees this he is asked to write to Albert Ruban, 173 Spruce Street, Lexington, Kentucky.

DUDLEY, W. R.—He was last heard of six years ago in Rockford, Illinois, where he was working for the railroad company. He is now forty-eight years old, with black hair and eyes. His wife is sick and is very anxious to find her husband. Mrs. Leona Dudley, 1033 Jay Street, Fresno, California.

TAYLOR, OLIVER C.—He is now about fifty-five years old, and was last heard from seventeen years ago. He has brown hair and blue eyes. It was heard that he had married and had two children. He wrote to his sister in 1904 from Michigan. She would be glad to hear from any one who knows where he is, or who can give her any late news of him. Mrs. Myra Bridges, Route 1, Box 4, Bemidji, Minnesota.

BROWN, JOHN H.—His boyhood home was near Augusta, Wisconsin. In 1873 he went with friends to Colorado, and later had mining interests near Leadville and Kokomo, where he stayed for some ten years. At one time he had a silver mine with a partner, which was known as the "John R." mine. In 1888 he wrote saying that he was going to Court-de-Laine mines in Idaho. In 1890 an old neighbor met him on the Pacific coast. Any information will be appreciated by his brother, Charles A. Brown, Hanley Falls, Minnesota.

WITT, OTTO.—World War veteran. He is asked to write to his brother Emil, at Reeder, North Dakota. There is important news for him. Any information will be thankfully received.

STICKEL, MARY ELIZABETH.—She was always called "Dellie," and was last heard of in Springfield, Ohio, in 1907. She is about five feet nine inches tall, with black hair and eyes. Any information regarding her will be gratefully received by her niece, Verna, care of this magazine.

CONNOLLY, BILL. formerly of Troop A, Thirtieth U. S. Cavalry, regular army. He was in Mexico with the punitive expedition in 1916, and when last heard of was in France in 1918, with a truck-train detachment. Any one who knows his present address please write to A. J. Shrader, 5753 Fisher Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

DEWISE, MILDRED, also known as WHIPPLE.—When last heard from she was in Milton, Pennsylvania. Any information as to her present whereabouts will be greatly appreciated. If she sees this she is asked to write to her old friend, M. H., care of this magazine.

BRITT, JOE B.—Please write to K. O. General Delvery, Los Angeles, California.

CLINE, PAULINE.—Her half brother, who has not seen her since they were both quite young children, would be glad to hear from her, or from any one who can help him to find her. When he heard from her last she was in a boarding school in Tennessee. He is now in the army and is very anxious to find his sister. William Weaver, care of this magazine.

OLSEN, FRED.—He was last heard of in Denver, Colorado. He was a soldier in the Ninety-first Division. He is asked to write to his friend, W. A. Harvey, 4017 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

BARR, EUGENE (CURLEY).—He is about twenty-one years old, and is a soda dispenser. He has curly auburn hair. He is asked to write to his old pal, who saw him last at Mount Vernon, Indiana. Tom, care of this magazine.

MEGILTEY, EDWARD and JACK.—They left Roslea, Ireland, between thirty-five and forty years ago, and were last heard of in Providence, Rhode Island. Any one who knows their whereabouts will do a great favor by writing to their niece, Mrs. E. T. McLean, care of this magazine.

HESTMAN, ANNIE.—She was last heard from three or four years ago at Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba, and is believed to have gone to the United States. She is about twenty-three years old, with fair complexion and light hair. Any information as to her whereabouts will be gladly received by her brother, Roy Hestman, Mulvihill P. O., Manitoba, Canada.

SMITH, CLINTON B., formerly of Washington, D. C. He is thirty-seven years of age, and when last heard from was in Baltimore, Maryland. Any information in regard to him will be greatly appreciated by his brother, Joe P. Smith, 611 Eleventh Street, N. E., Washington, D. C.

WILMOT, HENRY.—He has been gone about thirty-five years, and when last heard of was in the vicinity of Ashland, Wisconsin. His daughter would be very happy to learn something about him, and to find him if possible, and will be deeply grateful to any one who can give her any information that will help her in her search. Mrs. Fred Wilson, Route 2, Box 112, Colley, Wisconsin.

BRADFORD, ALLEN.—When last heard from, about twenty-one years ago, he was at Crockett, California. He is a carpenter by occupation. Any information will be thankfully received by Frank Mahannah, 9 Grand Street, Redwood City, California.

ELMEN, WILLIAM E., known to his friends as "Bubbles," and traveling with a pal called "Red." When last heard of he was working for the Sampson Tractor Company, Janesville, Wisconsin. Any information as to his whereabouts would be greatly appreciated by his friends. Please write to Fred G. Morgan, 923 West First Street, Los Angeles, California.

CLARK, JAMES KIRKWOOD, formerly of the Seventy-ninth Field Artillery, Seventh Division, discharged in July, 1919. He re-enlisted in Group B, R. U. 304, M. T. C., stationed at Camp Normyle, Texas, and was discharged from this company one year later. He worked for a while at Coalport, Pennsylvania. Any information that will help in finding him will be greatly appreciated. Please write to M. E. J., 3509 Cleveland Street, Dallas, Texas.

RAYMOND, MARK.—He has been missing six years, and was last heard of in Detroit, Michigan. He will hear of something to his interest if he will write to George Knotte, 1139 West Fourth Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

IRENE.—Please come home. Iggy and I both want you, and hope you will write soon.—E. E. R.

BRYMMER, HARRIETTE.—Her maiden name was Dean and she lived in Burg-Lens, Quebec, until her marriage to Freeman Brymmar. About 1899 she was living in Montreal, and went from there to Toronto, where she was when last heard from. Her husband was killed in France four years ago. Important news awaits her if she will write to her sister, Mrs. Sarah Dean Garvin, 11 St. Eugene Street, La Tuque, Province of Quebec, Canada.

RYAN, ROACH, DUNLAY.—Persons of these names related to, or descendants of, Nicholas Ryan, born in Wexford, Ireland. He went to Liverpool, England, where he died. He had several children who would now be somewhere around fifty years of age. His wife was a Welsh woman named Amelia Hall. They were last heard of about thirty-eight years ago. Jerry and Sarah Dunlay, who lived in Chicago about 1871, and James and Nellie Roach, the children of Mrs. Mary Roach, who died in Chicago about 1874. The children were put in a convent after their mother's death. The relative, who has been trying for years to find these people, will be glad to hear from any one who can give her information that will help her in her search. Mrs. W. K., care of this magazine.

JUNG, MAY.—She left the home of her adopted parents in San Francisco in 1915 and was last heard of in New York. Her brother by adoption and his father and mother are all very anxious to get news of her, and will be grateful to any one who can help them to communicate with her. Milton Y. Jung, P. O. Box 885, Marysville, California.

STEGNER, FLORENCE, formerly of Rochester, Minnesota. A very old friend is anxious to find her, and will be glad to hear from any one who knows her present whereabouts. D. S. N., care of this magazine.

PAYNE, ROAL, also known as William Parks. He is about forty years old, five feet three inches in height, a barber by trade, has white hair, and was last heard from at Jenkins and Webb City, Missouri. He is troubled with rheumatism. Any information about him will be gladly received by Bryan W. Payne, 317 Anchor Building, Fort Worth, Texas.

MYERS, PAUL VINCENT.—He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 7, 1898, and was last heard of on Staten Island, New York, in 1910, where his parents had a laundry business. Any one who knows his present address will greatly oblige by sending it to Mrs. D. Lynne, 1014 Clark Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

MOORE, JOHN L.—He was born in Shelby, North Carolina, on February 26, 1873, and when last heard of was working for M. K. & T. Railroad in Oklahoma. He is about six feet tall, with dark-brown hair and blue eyes. His sister will be glad to hear from any one who can give information as to his present whereabouts. Mrs. Martha Westman, 2829 Burling Street, Chicago, Illinois.

SOMMER, CHARLEY.—He is about fifty years old and of medium height. He is sought by relatives in connection with the settlement of his parents' estate. They were residents of Clay County, Nebraska. Any one knowing where he is will do a favor by notifying George Steinbrück, Hastings, Nebraska.

COLEMAN, C. C.—He is twenty-five years old and is a telegrapher. He has dark hair, brown eyes, and wears glasses. Is five feet seven inches tall, of medium build, and is probably employed as a railroad telegrapher. When last heard of he was working in the mail office of the Western Union Co. in Detroit. Any one who knows his address will do a favor by writing to H. E. Merrill, 1617 Jefferson Avenue, West, Detroit, Michigan.

MUELLER, PAUL, and BERTHA HORSCH.—Their son Adolph was placed in a Catholic home on Staten Island when he was five years old, and has neither seen nor heard anything of his parents since that time. He was born at 239 Pearl Street, New York City, on May 20, 1896. He left the home when he was fifteen years old and went to Texas, where he still lives. He has made every effort to find his parents, but without success. There had been five children, but only one other was living at the time of his birth. The parents were both born in Germany, and were about thirty-two years old when Adolph was born. If any one can give this young man some information about his parents he will be deeply grateful, and will appreciate any assistance that may be given him in his search. Adolph P. Mueller, care of this magazine.

SNOOK, MRS. ONNA E.—She left home on December 24, 1920. She is twenty-six years old, but looks younger. She is five feet in height, weighs one hundred pounds, has a light complexion, black hair, and gray eyes. Any information will be gladly received by H. J. Snook, 3600 West Second Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

SHECKLES, JACK, who used to live in McAllister, Oklahoma. There is good news for him and he is asked to send his address to B. M., care of this magazine.

JOHNSON, MAE, ALICE DRUMMOND and MABEL MUREN, who attended St. Teresa's Academy in East St. Louis, Illinois, are asked to send their address to a former classmate, Mab., care of this magazine.

RAFFERTY, THOMAS P.—He enlisted in the army and left for the Philippine Islands in 1907. He was in the Nineteenth Infantry, Company A. His brother Joseph would be glad to hear from him and will greatly appreciate any information that will help to find him. Joseph Rafferty, care of this magazine.

MCALLISTER, ALEXANDER.—He left County Durham, England, about twenty-three years ago for Kansas, where he went to work in the mines. He has never been heard of since he left. His cousin would be glad to get some news of him and will be glad to hear from any one who has known him and can tell him where he is or what has become of him. Alexander McAllister, care of this magazine.

BROADAWAY, V. A.—He was in Brest in November, 1917, and was last heard of at the Chateau Thierry offensive, since which time it has been impossible to get any news of him. He was a structural engineer, and was formerly connected with a Boston firm. He is about thirty-one years old, five feet eleven inches tall, with black hair, a gold front tooth, and the third finger of his left hand is missing. There is some important news for him from England, and any information that will help to find him will be greatly appreciated. A. G. Tige, care of this magazine.

BUTCHER, NATHAN BURTON and HENRY.—Nathan was last heard of in Oakland, California, in 1918, and Henry in Los Angeles, in 1913. Their sister would be glad to hear from them and will be glad to hear from any one who can tell her where they are. Mrs. Ella M. Corder, Placerville, California. M. R. A.

BAILEY, CHARLES, who was at Eagle Hunt, New York City, in December, 1919. Please send your present address to L. A. C., care of this magazine.

ELLIOTT, VERA, GERALDINE, and EARL.—Their sister is anxious to know what became of them after their mother died and their father broke up housekeeping. She will be very grateful for any information that will help her to find her brother and sisters. Mrs. Ernest Swan, 23 Canton Street, Portland, Maine.

MIGLIETTI, ROMALDA, of 149 Locust Street, Waterbury, Connecticut. She is missing with two of her little girls. Any one knowing where she is will do a great favor by notifying her husband, Luigi Miglietti, at the above address.

SKINNER, FRANK ROYSTON.—He was born in Royal Oak, Maryland, and is about fifty-three years old. When he was twenty years old he moved to Wichita, Kansas, and seven years later he went from there. He was seen in Houston, Texas, about twenty-eight years ago, and has not been seen or heard of since. Any information about him will be greatly appreciated by his nephew, Fred Whitlock, 625 South Lawrence Street, Wichita, Kansas.

HUTCHISON, ALFRED F. B.—When last heard from he was in Mont Alto, Pennsylvania. Four years ago it was heard that he had gone to New Mexico. He is nearly six feet tall, slim, with brown hair and gray eyes. Any news of him would be greatly appreciated by his broken-hearted wife, Mrs. D. Hutchison, care of this magazine.

EDWARDS, JAMES FRANK.—He is a railroad man, dark, with curly hair and a deep scar over his left eye. He is about five feet nine inches tall, twenty-eight years old, and has been gone seven years. He was last heard of in Birmingham, Alabama. It was rumored that he had been killed on the railroad, but this was never verified. His mother is getting old and is longing to know something definite about her son. It would make her very happy to get news of him, and she will be deeply grateful to any one who knows anything of him who will be kind enough to write to her. Mrs. Mattie A. Edwards, Box 21, Waynesboro, Mississippi.

BURNS, RALPH.—He enlisted in the army in April, 1920, in Detroit, and later was killed in a railroad accident. He was twenty-two years old, five feet nine inches tall, with light complexion and brown hair. Before he enlisted he was working for a construction company in Detroit. It is thought that the name of Burns may have been an assumed one. He said he had a sister in Los Angeles. A friend would be glad to communicate with his relatives, and will appreciate any assistance in finding them. O. Hoover, Box 225, Oceanport, New Jersey.

ROLSTON, PAUL.—He has not been heard from since September, 1920. He enlisted in the army and went to Camp Knox, Kentucky, in August, 1919, and was sent from there to Virginia, where he was in the photographic department at Langley Field, Hampton Roads. From there he was sent to Sarasota, Florida, where he was in the Aero Squadron. When he was last heard from he was back in Virginia, and his people do not know what became of him, or whether he is dead or alive. If any one who knows what has happened to him should see this and will write to his sister, the favor will be greatly appreciated. Susie Rolston, Pendleton, Kentucky.

LINCOLN, VIOLET.—She was last heard of in Greybull, Wyoming, in January, 1914. At one time she lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma. An old friend would be glad to hear from her. O. B., care of this magazine.

CUNNINGHAM, HAROLD.—His last known address was in West Forty-fourth Street, New York City. He is asked to write to Thomas J. Finn, 246 West 146th Street, New York City.

HESTER, JAMES HERBERT, of Vincennes, Indiana, and formerly of Company A, Second Indiana Infantry, is asked to write to an old friend. Any one knowing his address will do a favor by sending it to C. E. S., care of this magazine.

LINDLEY, ARTHUR.—Please write to Friend, care of this magazine.

GULLICK, TRUMAN.—There is interesting news for him if he will write to O. Singleton, Gorman, Texas.

BRIDGES, WILLIAM, HENRY, and VIRGINIA.—Their sister Mary has not seen them since 1875, and would be very happy to hear from them, or from any one who knows them and can tell her where they are. She was married to Joe A. Long at Deatur, Texas, in 1871. He has not heard from his brother, JESS LONG, since 1875. Any news of the three people will be gladly welcomed. Mrs. J. A. Long, Atoka, Oklahoma.

WISDOM, JOHN H.—He was last heard of in Ranger, Texas, in 1918. He has dark-brown hair and blue eyes, and is about thirty years old. He has tattoo marks on both arms. Any information about him will be appreciated by J. P. W., care of this magazine.

McKINZIE, LEWIS.—He was last heard of or seen in Wabash, Minnesota, on a farm near there. His father is very anxious to hear from him and will be grateful for any information that will help him to communicate with his son. Horace McKinzie, care of this magazine.

DEMARS, MRS. JAMES.—Her maiden name was Philomena Haynes and she was last heard from in Calgary, Alberta, in 1917. Information regarding her present whereabouts will be greatly appreciated by a relative, H. H., care of this magazine.

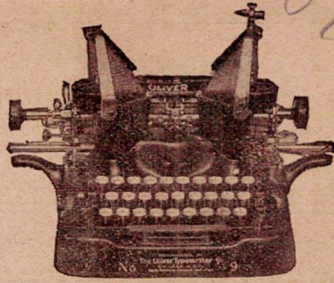
LUTHER, HARRY NELSON.—It was heard that he was in Detroit, Michigan. If he sees this he is asked to write to his wife. Any one knowing his address will do a great favor by sending it to Mrs. H. N. Luther, care of this magazine.

CRAMPTON, ANNIE, who married J. Murther at Fort Smith, Arkansas, on December 11, 1875. Murther was one of a detachment of soldiers detailed from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to Brownsville, Texas, to round up some road agents. On reaching Galveston Murther shot himself and his wife. He died in the City Hospital of his wound, February 26, 1876. A friend is anxious to know if his wife died or is still alive, and would be glad to hear from any of her people. C. D. T., care of this magazine.

OLTESON, SANFRED P. formerly of Twenty-second Ambulance Company, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. If any members of this company know his present address, or anything about him after he went overseas, they will do a great favor by writing to M. M. G., care of this magazine.

ROSE, J. T.—When last heard of was living at or near Oklaheima, Ok. Information will be appreciated by J. B. Rose, 1012 South Ninth Street, Tacoma, Washington.

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EVERY WEEK

Vol. XLI

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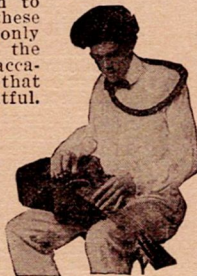
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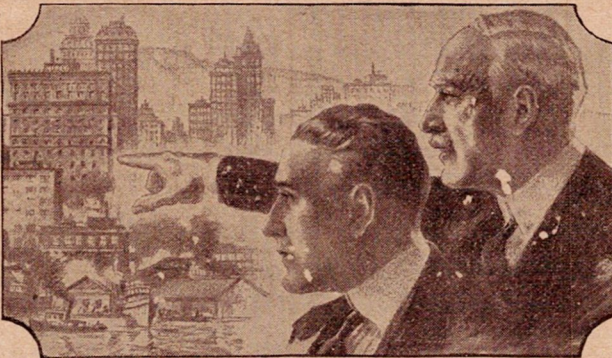
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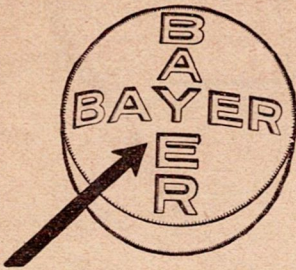
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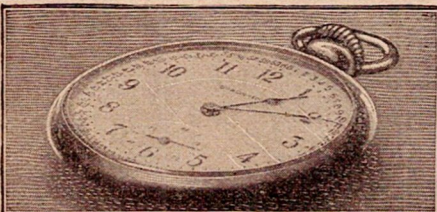
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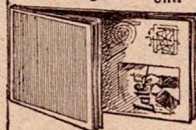
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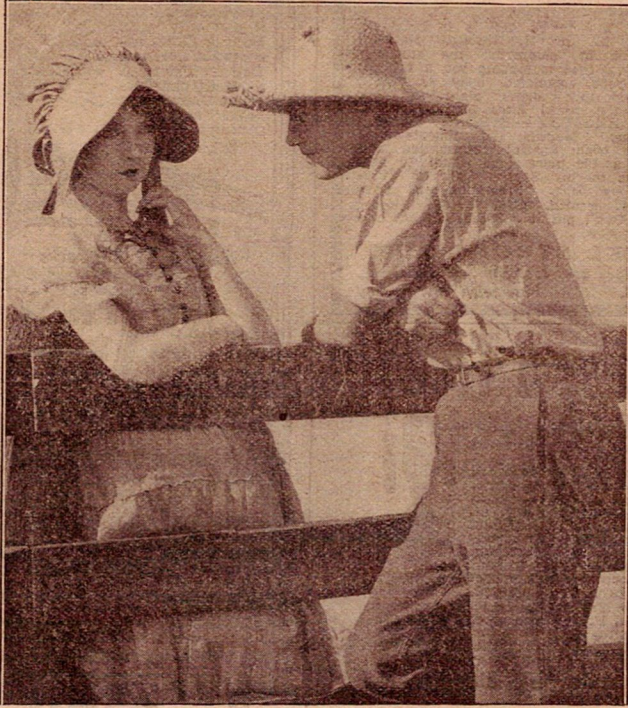
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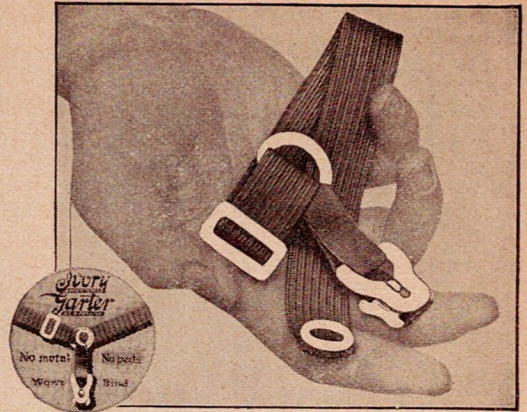
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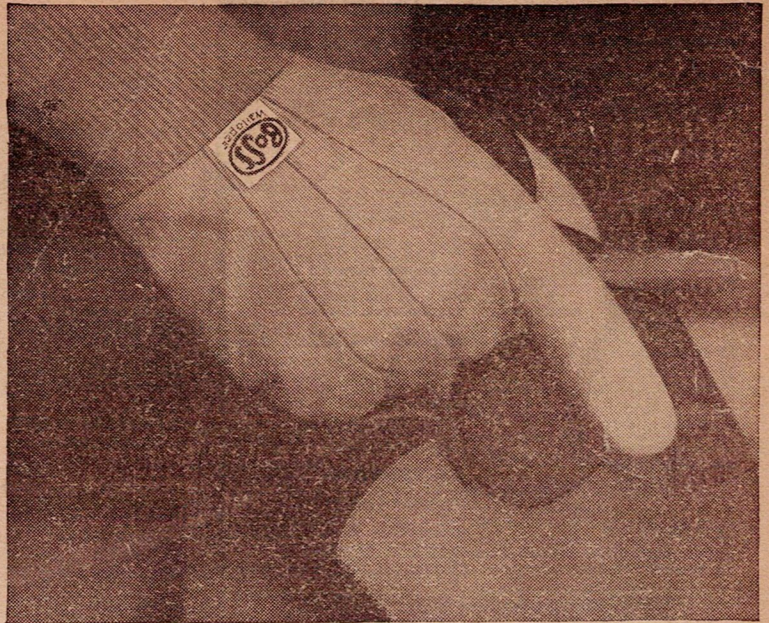
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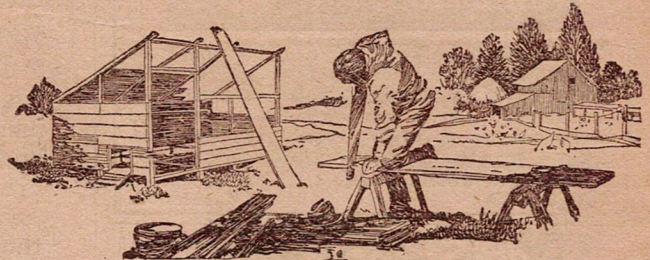
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