

APRIL 15, 1922

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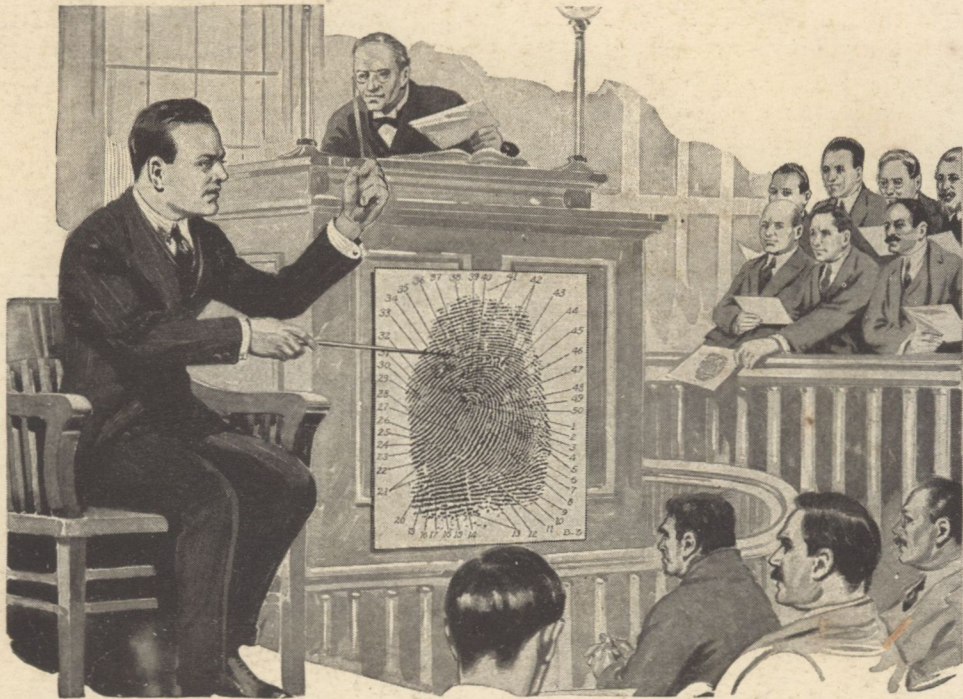
# DETECTIVE

STORY MAGAZINE EVERY WEEK



ARMSTRONG LIVINGSTON & EDGAR WALLACE  
ERNEST PASCAL & ROY W. HINDS & JOHN D. SWAIN





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# DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE EVERY WEEK

Vol. XLVIII

April 15, 1922

No. 3

## *The Butler's Ruby* by *Armstrong Livingston*

### CHAPTER I.

#### HIS FIRST BUTLER.

**M**R. JEREMIAH BRONSON, of the firm of Bronson and Bartlett, real estate brokers, opened a copy of *The New York Star* upon the desk in front of him and ran a thin, nervous finger down the column of "help-wanted" advertisements until he found the one he sought. He nodded his satisfaction and was just engaged in refolding the paper when he heard the heavy footfall of his partner approaching from the next room.

"Good morning, Jerry!" said Mr. Bartlett.

"Good morning," replied Mr. Bronson.

It was really three o'clock of a warm afternoon in June, but, as it chanced to be the first time the two had met that day, they automatically used their customary greeting.

With more decision than grace Bartlett dropped into a chair beside his part-

ner's desk—he ran to fat—and gave a sigh of relief, as he drew a handkerchief and mopped his red, good-natured face. He had one of those curious-shaped heads that are almost pointed on top, thereafter slanting down and outward until they finish in broad jowls; the same architectural scheme was carried out on a larger scale by the next division of his body. His shoulders were by no means broad, so that his sides were obliged to run out at an amazing angle in order to encompass his magnificent girth. As he sat there, his short, plump legs scarcely reaching the floor, it was easy to see why his friends and business associates good-humoredly referred to him among themselves as "The Bartlett Pear."

"The Murdock deal is closed, Jerry," he announced, then he added after a slight pause: "They put up a noble struggle, but eventually gave in at our figure."

Bronson swung around in his chair, beaming approval. "Thanks to your



hard work and good judgment, Henry," he exclaimed cordially. "I congratulate you on your success—and myself on having such an excellent partner!"

"Tut, tut, Jerry," responded Bartlett, getting a little redder. He noticed the newspaper that lay on the other's desk and quickly jumped to a less embarrassing subject. "By the way, what's the news? I have not had a minute to look at a paper."

"Nor have I. When you came in I was just looking to see that *The Star* had not forgotten to run an advertisement of mine for a—for a servant."

"Huh!" Bartlett betrayed amusement. "I know that's the main occupation of you poor suburbanites. Which is it now, cook or housemaid?"

"Er—neither. We're looking for a butler."

"Oh, excuse me!" The Bartlett Pear regarded his partner with some admiration. "By gracious, Jerry, you *are* going it strong! Is this the effect of prosperity upon yourself, or is it the effect of the Claredale atmosphere upon Mrs. Bronson?"

"It's mostly Mary," admitted Bronson, a little sadly. "Not that I don't agree with her, of course," he continued hastily. "Most of the Claredale crowd have them, and, as long as we're going to live there, we might as well fall into line."

"I see. Are they a pretty nice bunch?"

"Why—I don't know." Bronson was mildly surprised and showed it. "I suppose so, but I haven't really given much thought to it. The English are the best, I expect, though the Japs have always appealed to me as being quick and intelligent."

"Excuse me, Jerry. I wasn't asking you about butlers; I sought your opinion of those society stars to whom you have just irreverently referred as the 'Claredale crowd.'"

"Oh!" Mr. Bronson smiled faintly and caressed the top of a head that was becoming gray in some spots and distinctly bald in others. "I find them very nice—very nice indeed. Our welcome to Claredale has been most—hospitable. Mary is looking forward to a delightful summer of being entertained and entertaining. Hence the butler."

"H'm! Well, it will be a fresh experience for you. I suppose a man's first butler must be like his first silk hat."

"I dare say," returned Bronson without enthusiasm. "I remember I hated mine."

Bartlett chuckled and rose from his chair. "By the bye, Jerry," he said more crisply, "you have the letters in the Graham matter; if you'll give them to me I'll skip around to the old boy's office."

Immediately Bronson began to delve into the mass of accumulated papers that littered his desk, a desk that no one of several generations of stenographers had ever been able to keep in order. The senior partner antedated the business era that thrives and flourishes upon elaborate filing systems. He paid the penalty now, as he ran through pile after pile of documents and finally began pulling out drawers.

"Got it!" announced The Bartlett Pear triumphantly from across the room. He had detected the missing letters on top of the office safe. He held them up to view, shaking his head in mock sadness, but with the fine twinkle of amusement in his eyes that so often brightened his face and atoned for its habitual heaviness. "Take my word for it, Jerry; your carelessness is going to get you into serious trouble one of these days—if you aren't careful!"

"Pshaw!" Bronson's hand strayed to his head again, as it always did when he was embarrassed. "I see there's no help for it, Henry. I shall have to get one of those newfangled automatic filing cabinets that give three clicks, walk



across the room, and hand you just the paper you've whistled for."

They both smiled at this flight of fancy, and with a cheerful word of farewell, Bartlett took his ponderous way from his partner's office to his own.

Left to himself, the head of the firm conscientiously returned his desk from its present state of chaos to the earlier state of chaos that it had enjoyed prior to the disturbing search for the Graham letters. That done, he bethought himself of a more congenial pastime.

He strolled over to the window, through which the afternoon sun was streaming brilliantly, fumbled in his pocket and drew forth a flat, oval box, such as jewelers use. He opened it tenderly, then waved it gently to and fro, so that the jewels within might catch the full brightness of the sunlight; he smiled lovingly at the crimson flames that darted from the facets of each ruby.

A tap at the door interrupted the fire worshiper. He snapped the lid upon his flashing treasures, restored the case to his pocket, and called a summons to enter. The door opened slightly, a shock of red hair appeared in the aperture, and the piping voice of the office boy said: "Someun to see you, sir. About a advertisement, he says."

"Show him in."

There was no hint of perturbation in the sharp command. In this, one of the crises of his life, Jeremiah Bronson was perfect master of himself and his emotions; he merely flitted one hand to his necktie to make sure that it was straight, while the other shot to his head to see that the third wisp of hair, counting up from his forehead, was faithfully performing its appointed duty of concealing a particularly chilly piece of scalp. Then he was ready to interview his first butler.

The office boy reappeared, followed by a tall, well-built man of perhaps thirty-five years, neatly dressed in a suit of some dark, gray material, a carefully

knotted, navy-blue four-in-hand, a stiff collar, a quiet pair of socks, and well-polished black shoes. Mr. Bronson from the corner of his eye drew a swift impression of a subdued, respectful manner.

"Mr. Peters, sir!" The office boy vanished.

Jerry Bronson with ostentatious difficulty recalled his rapt attention from the two-year-old business communication that had come first to hand. "Oh, —yes! You have come to see me?"

"About your advertisement in this morning's *Star*, sir." The man's voice was pleasant and well modulated.

"Exactly. Of course you noted that I only wish a man for the summer months?"

"Yes, sir. That would suit me very nicely, sir. My present employer is leaving for California, and he has asked me to come back to him when he returns in the fall."

"Who is he?"

"Mr. Reginald McKittrick; a writer, sir."

"He is willing, I presume, to recommend you?"

Peters silently produced an envelope from some hidden recess in the dark-gray suit and handed it over with a slight bow. Bronson read the inclosed note at a glance, for it was brief and clear. It highly recommended the bearer, John Peters, as an honest and faithful servant who had been in the writer's employ for five years, and it was signed, "Reginald McKittrick."

The broker looked up. "This seems quite satisfactory," he said. "What wages do you want?"

"One hundred dollars a month, sir."

Mr. Bronson experienced the same agreeable sensation to which he thrilled when he scented a bargain in real estate. He had expected to pay at least one hundred and fifty, and he concealed his feelings with some trouble.

"Not an unreasonable wage," he ad-



mitted. He leaned back in his chair, half closed his eyes, and appeared lost in some abstruse calculation. He emerged to volunteer some information concerning himself. "Um! There are five of us in the family, counting my little girl, Cicely, who is only eight and does not come to the table. Besides yourself we keep a cook and housemaid."

"Will I be expected to do any outside work, sir?"

"Oh, no. The gardener does all that."

"Thank you, sir."

"You say that Mr. McKittrick is expecting to leave for California; does that mean that you cannot come to me at once?"

"He has his tickets for to-morrow morning, sir. I think he would like me to spend the rest of the day in straightening up the apartment, but I could report to you any time the following day."

"Wednesday," replied Jerry, and confirmed this shrewd guess by a glance at the calendar above his desk. At the same time he rose to his feet with an air of finality. "Very well, Peters. Consider yourself engaged, and take your things out to Claredale as early on Wednesday as you can manage." He turned back to his desk and scribbled a line or two. "Here is my address. You can look up a convenient train for yourself."

"Very good, sir. I'm sure I hope you'll be satisfied, sir."

On the instant he was gone, shutting the door swiftly and silently behind him, with a touch that Jerry hoped the office boy would note.

The broker felt very well satisfied. The interview had been fifty per cent easier and fifty dollars cheaper than he had dared to hope; as he looked back upon it he could not help wishing that some other affairs of life might be settled half as quickly and as easily. Then his native business sense gave him a cautionary nudge.

"Might as well check that reference," he muttered, reaching for the telephone book.

He found McKittrick's number without any difficulty, but his effort to get connected met with a steady response of "Don't answer" from a curt central. He eventually gave it up, and, as it was really past his time for the daily dash to the four-fifty train, he seized his hat and gloves and raced madly from the office. In a moment he was racing back to secure his cane, an implement of social amenity which was still a novelty to him, and which he was prone to forget in his more hurried moods.

Fifty minutes later he alighted from the train at Claredale and marched briskly across the station platform, inhaling deep drafts of the fresh country air and twirling the cane with the jauntiness peculiar to gentlemen of fifty-odd who are well to do and at peace with the world. A number of handsome automobiles were ranged against the platform, waiting upon their fortunate owners, and his attention was instantly caught by the familiar outlines of a dark-blue touring car and the still more familiar outlines of the charming young woman at its wheel.

"Hello, Joan! This is very thoughtful of you."

"Hello, Cousin Jerry." The girl opened the low door at her side and jumped lightly to the ground. "It has been so beastly hot that I thought you might appreciate a drive instead of your usual walk."

She spoke with a faint, but unmistakable, English accent, an evidence of her nationality that was borne out by her fair hair, her blue eyes, and her exquisite complexion. She was exceedingly pretty, too, and made a delightful picture as she stood by the side of the blue car, her tall, slim figure arrayed in snowy white.

"Hop in," she said. "Or do you want to drive?"



Mr. Bronson preferred to hop in. She slipped after him into her place at the wheel, slammed the door behind her, and skillfully guided the blue car through a score of departing motors. There was an interlude of hairbreadth escapes and apologetic smiles, and then they were clear of the crowd and running smoothly along a shady boulevard.

"This is bully!" cried Jerry, and there was something almost boyish in the gesture with which he presently seized his stiff straw hat and tossed it into the tonneau of the car. "Why didn't you bring your Cousin Mary?"

"Bridge," answered Joan tersely. "At the club—with the Lathams."

"Oh! And why aren't you there?"

"On a day like this?" Her sweeping gesture might have been even more emphatic if she had not been compelled to keep one hand on the wheel. "I had two sets with the Brownell boys, took a tub, and here I am."

"Well, I'm very glad you are! And Cicely?"

"At a children's party."

"Good for her! Are there any other items of local interest?"

"N-no, I don't think so." Then her pretty mouth suddenly hardened. "Oh, yes! Sidney telephoned just before I left that he would not be home until late."

"Ah!" said Mr. Bronson.

A little silence fell upon them.

## CHAPTER II.

### SOME REFERENCES.

THEY kept steadily on for ten miles.

The boulevard had given place to a dusty country road and the last villas of suburbia had been supplanted by a series of weather-beaten farmhouses before Joan took advantage of a crossroad to back and turn the big car.

"Do we pick up your Cousin Mary?"

"No," answered the girl. "She expected the Lathams to run her home.

Anyway she wouldn't be ready yet. You know what the bridge crowd is when it gets a chance to settle down to work on a really nice June day in the country."

"You seem to have quarreled with bridge, Joan. I thought you rather liked it."

"I do, and I don't," she answered non-committally.

She had few secrets from her Cousin Jerry, of whom she was very fond, and she would have been glad to tell him in considerable detail just what it was she disliked about the game as played in Claredale. But loyalty to her Cousin Mary sealed her lips.

It is not unusual for a naturally broad-minded man to have one or two pet aversions, just as nonsuperstitious people who go out of their way to defy the lightning, will nevertheless balk at passing under a ladder or raising an umbrella in the house. Thus Jerry Bronson, who was in most things tolerant to a fault, had suddenly developed the fanaticism of a reformer when it came to the subject of gambling; he was frankly rabid on the question and prepared to exhaust all the villifying adjectives in Roget's "Thesaurus" to express his opinion of a man who sacrificed wantonly to the goddess of chance. He shared the inconsistency of some reformers, too, in that he would never admit, even to himself, that his own business had in it any element of speculation; he believed, like many a better man, that his successful coups owed nothing to luck, but everything to his shrewdness and prescience. A tactless young man who had once argued with him to the contrary, never forgot the experience.

When Jerry moved to Claredale at his wife's behest, there soon appeared slight suggestions of storm clouds on the matrimonial horizon. It so happened that bridge amounted to a craze that summer, and Mrs. Bronson, young,



attractive, socially ambitious, discovered in about five minutes that her way into the hearts and boudoirs of the Claredale aristocracy ran via the cozy little card-room at the country club. The question of stakes arose, and Jerry was consulted. True to form, he gave a passable representation of Mt. Pelee in a fit of temper. True to form, Mrs. Bronson wept like Niagara Falls. The flood vanquished the volcano, and Jerry consented to her playing for points, "provided they were small."

Joan thought of these things as she drove the car homeward, and her reflections brought a bitter little smile to her lips. Small stakes! She had a vivid recollection of a bad twenty minutes in the club when a poor hand and a wretched partner had set her back exactly one month's pocket money; since then she had dexterously dodged or refused all invitations to the little green tables. But Mary— No, she decidedly preferred not to discuss bridge in detail with her Cousin Jerry!

It was half past six when they drove into the garage, and a question to the gardener, who hastened up, made it evident that Joan had not overestimated the fascination of the game for her cousin. No, Mrs. Bronson was not home yet.

Secretly Jerry was not displeased with the news. It meant that his wife was enjoying herself, and that, after all, was the reason for this new home at Claredale, for the new automobile of superior horse power, for the new cane that trailed behind him, as he walked to the house, and—confound him!—for the butler whose shadow hung over their lives. It was pleasant to think that his wife's happiness was already justifying these material and spiritual efforts on her behalf.

He was confirmed in this complacent belief some twenty minutes later. He was in his room when the deep blast of a motor horn, the crunch of heavy tires on the gravel driveway, and the sound

of laughing voices told him that the mistress of the house had returned. He stole to his window and cautiously looked down upon the group below. There were the two Latham women with a Miss Willoughby, who was their guest, and there was his wife, quite the most cheerful and prettiest and youngest looking of them all. They stood talking and laughing for a few moments, and he noticed that Mary lingered on the porch, to wave a last farewell, as the car curved out the gate.

At once he hurried down to meet her in the front hall.

"Evening, dear. Been having a good time?"

"Oh, fair!" She unpinned her hat slowly and laid it, together with her parasol, on a near-by chair. She was a slight, dark-haired woman, piquantly pretty, ten years younger than her husband and, for the moment in the subdued light of the hall, ten years younger than that.

"How did the game go?"

"Tiresomely. I had that awful Willoughby girl for a partner, and she did her worst to ruin me."

"Lose much?"

"Oh, no, just a trifle."

Jerry gulped, but he was no Indian giver.

"The luck of the game," he observed airily. "The best reason for not playing bridge is the partners you get."

"Perhaps!"

"By the way, Mary, I engaged a butler this afternoon."

"Did you?"

"He seems a very decent sort of man. He's due here the day after to-morrow, and, now that I think of it, I must call up his present employer after dinner, just to make sure that his references are in order. Will you remind me in case I forget?"

"All right, dear."

Keenly he looked at her, surprised that she did not show more interest in



an affair that he had thought close to her heart.

"What's the matter, Mary?" he asked. "You seem a bit quiet."

"There's nothing wrong with me, Jerry." She flashed him a quick smile. "Tired—and a little headachy, perhaps." She picked up her hat and parasol and was moving toward the stairway when he checked her.

"Come into the library before you go up. I have something to show you that may do your headache good."

She followed him obediently; and, when he had switched on the electric light, he handed her the jeweler's case that he had kept in his pocket. She took it with a little exclamation of pleasure.

"Oh, Jerry! What's in it?"

"Open it and see."

Pressing the catch, she gave a soft cry of delight when the lid flew back and disclosed a handsome bracelet of rubies.

"Jerry! How darling!" She slipped the jewels over her hand and caught the clasp about her wrist. "You *are* a dear—and a great deal too good to me." She drew closer to him, put her arm through his, rested her head on his shoulder, and for an instant ten years were lifted from them both.

"How's the headache?" he asked presently.

"Gone!" She laughed up at him, then held out her arm and admired her new present. "I'm going to keep it on, Jerry. The Stowells are coming in this evening after dinner, and I just want to show off!"

"Of course!" He smiled indulgently. "Just as you wish, my dear, but be careful of it and don't forget to give it to me before you go to bed."

"I won't forget," she promised promptly, but something of the gayety had gone from her voice, a little of the sparkle from her eyes. "Well, I suppose it's time to get ready for dinner."

She glanced at the clock that stood on his desk. "Is Sidney home yet?"

"No."

The tone of the monosyllable caught her attention.

"Isn't he coming?"

"No. He phoned to Joan that he would be late getting out."

"Oh! I do hope——" She knitted her smooth brows and left the sentence unfinished. "Do you suppose——"

"Certainly I suppose," interrupted Jerry, a little irritably. "I am afraid that Sidney is getting in with a pretty fast crowd, and he seems to prefer their haunts to our home."

"And after all you've done for him!"

"I know." His eyes grew thoughtful. "Funny, isn't it? You'd think he'd show a little more appreciation, considering that we've given him a home since he was a child. He knows that we're both devoted to him, that we'd do anything we could for him; but if those things don't mean anything to him, there's nothing more we can do. He's twenty-three years old and able to choose his own way of living."

"I wish he were more like Joan," said Mrs. Bronson.

"Oh, Joan is an unmitigated blessing!"

"It's a pity that Sidney doesn't take more interest in her," continued his wife musingly.

"I'm devoutly thankful for her sake that he doesn't!" declared her husband, with as close an approach to savagery as his nature permitted.

"Jerry! Look at the time!" Mrs. Bronson ended the conversation by hurrying off to her room, and she had barely descended again when dinner was announced.

The meal was conscientiously, but awkwardly, served by a tall, dark, young Irish girl whose rather good-looking face was marred by a sullen expression that seldom lifted its shadow from her features; and, as she was in the room



most of the time, conversation languished. It rose to animation only for a few minutes while Joan was admiring the new bracelet, and again as Mrs. Bronson took advantage of Julia Shaughnessy's momentary absence to breathe a pious hope that the coming butler would not pass the mayonnaise in such a thrusting fashion.

"Julia means well, but she's a little overzealous," said Jerry Bronson mildly. "I wish Pietro would spray those rose bushes as earnestly as she sprays us with food."

After dinner Joan and Mrs. Bronson departed for the veranda to await the expected guests, while Jerry mixed himself a Scotch high ball and repaired with it to the library, where he settled down to enjoy the drink and a cigarette. There was a telephone against one wall of the room, and an extension instrument that stood for convenience sake on Bronson's desk. His eye was caught by the latter, and it reminded him that he had a duty still to perform.

"McKittrick! He ought to be home by now."

He called the number and was presently answered by a quiet, polite voice which he instantly recognized as that of John Peters.

"Oh, is Mr. McKittrick there?"

"I will see, sir. Who shall I say?"

"Mr. Bronson."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Bronson. I will call him at once."

Jerry crossed his right leg over his left and waited. A minute or so passed. Jerry changed legs and continued to wait. At last a crisp, clear greeting almost startled him by its unexpectedness.

"Hello!"

"Ah, is this Mr. McKittrick?"

"Yes. Sorry to keep you waiting. What can I do for you?"

"I called up in regard to your butler. He came to see me this afternoon."

"Oh, yes. He told me he had another position in view."

"He showed me a reference from you. I suppose you will confirm——"

"Certainly—of course. He's a fine fellow."

"Honest, I suppose?"

"Perfectly."

"Sober?"

"Absolutely. He has never watered a drop of my whisky in the five years he has been in my service."

"I am glad to hear that," said Jerry, and he added genially: "I have still got something of a cellar."

"Lucky man!" said McKittrick. "A rare blessing these days! Anything else I can tell you?"

"No, that's all. Thank you very much."

"You know I want him back in October? Mind you take good care of him!"

"I assure you I will keep him in cotton wool," replied the broker a little stiffly.

"Fine! Good-by!"

The last word was almost lost in the click of the receiver as it was snapped up at the other end. Jerry Bronson hung up his own more deliberately, as became an elderly gentleman who felt as if he had just crossed teeth with a buzz saw.

"Abrupt chap, that," he thought. "But I suppose he's busy packing."

He sauntered out to the veranda, as the Stowells drove up to the door. The next two hours passed quickly enough in laughter and gossip. Then the visitors said good night, Joan vanished in the direction of bed, and Mrs. Bronson followed her more slowly.

Jerry stepped into the library for a last cigarette, and he considered it a remarkable piece of good fortune that his first glance should happen to rest on the small safe that stood in one corner of the room. It reminded him of something, and he stepped quickly back into the hall.

"Mary!" he called. "Oh, Mary!"



She turned at the head of the stairs. "Yes, Jerry?"

"Your bracelet, dear! You forgot to give it to me after all!"

"Oh, how stupid of me!"

Descending halfway to meet him, she smiled and said: "I'm sorry. Good night, dear, and thank you!"

Bronson returned to the library, dangling the bracelet from one finger and enjoying its beauty and brilliancy. He had an inordinate passion for rubies, and, as he had been gathering them and giving them to his wife upon every possible occasion during the ten years of their married life, he already had a very handsome and valuable collection. They were always kept in the library safe, which for its size was remarkably strong and secure, and of which only he had the combination.

He knelt before it now, opened the heavy door, and placed the latest acquisition with its predecessors. "There!" he exclaimed as he twirled the knob. "Even Bartlett would have to admit that I've been careful this time!"

### CHAPTER III.

ENTER SIDNEY WITH DIFFICULTY.

THE following day was one of those charmingly warm ones that only suburban New York can produce in June. The thermometer registered eighty degrees in the sun and at least ninety in the breathless shade, when John Peters stepped from the comparative coolness of the train into the baking heat that radiated from the Claredale platform. In each hand he carried a heavy suit case, and his appearance was that of a man who is hot, very hot indeed. As the train slid on its way behind him, he put down his bags on the concrete walk, patted his face with a pocket handkerchief, and looked about him.

Just two people were in sight. At the farther end of the station from where

he stood was the ticket agent, hatless and coatless, standing with his thumbs looped into his suspenders as he gazed dreamily after the disappearing train. The other person was a girl in white who was doing something to the mechanism of a big blue car; as she stooped over the open hood her profile was sharply outlined against the blue background of the automobile, and Peters could not help seeing that she was a very pretty girl—remarkably pretty. The longer he gazed on her the more impressed he became, and at length he decided that she was quite the prettiest girl he had ever seen.

It was absolutely necessary for him to speak either to the railroad somnambulist or the lady of the car. Peters did not hesitate an appreciable instant over the choice.

"I beg your pardon," he said, stepping toward the car, "but can you direct me to the residence of Mr. Jeremiah Bronson?"

Joan Ayres, who had come to the station to send a telegram, slowly straightened from her problem in mechanics and regarded him with mild surprise.

"Can you—is your name Peters?" she asked a little doubtfully.

"Yes, miss."

"Oh." Her tone became more assured. "Well, I'm just going there." She closed the hood of the car, dusted one hand against the other, and seated herself at the wheel. "Put your bags in the tonneau and get in yourself." He hurried to obey, and she idly noted the evident weight of the suit cases, as he picked them up. "You're in luck," she said with a smile.

"I'm sure I'm very grateful, miss," he responded fervently.

Joan had nothing further to say until they reached the house, when she jumped to the ground and bade him follow her in.

"Mr. Bronson is in the city, of course, and Mrs. Bronson will not be home until



lunch. But I will show you the room you are to have." He toiled up a flight of steps behind her and was ushered into a good-sized room in the rear of the house, a room which he noted with pleasure was bright and airy. The bed looked most comfortable. "I expect you will want to get settled," added the girl, with her usual thoughtfulness for the comfort of others. "When you come downstairs you will find me on the veranda, and then I will show you the pantry."

Twenty minutes later he appeared before her, much refreshed by a change of clothing and the liberal application of a quantity of cold water. Joan took a good look at him for the first time and found her fleeting impression of the station confirmed. He was by no means unprepossessing, and, as she led the way to the pantry, she lazily wondered why a comparatively young man, able-bodied and not bad looking, should find himself contented in so menial a walk of life. Could he really be satisfied merely to buttle—or whatever it was that butlers did? She dismissed the question as interesting, but unimportant; then, after giving him a few directions in regard to lunch, she returned to the shady veranda with her book.

Peters, abandoned in the pantry, scratched his smooth-shaven chin reflectively. "The first thing a wise butler does," he mused, "is to make himself solid with his fellow domestics—especially the cook, if she's a good one."

He opened a door that led into the kitchen and found himself in the presence of a large person of obviously Hibernian ancestry. She was placidly peeling potatoes, and there was not a sign of emotion on her red face as she raised her eyes and saw him.

"You'll be the new butler, I'm thinkin'."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, I'm Mrs. O'Malley, the cook."

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mrs.

O'Malley," acknowledged Peters politely. With that the conversation hung fire, and to end the pause the butler thrust his hand into his pocket and brought forth a box of cigarettes. "You don't mind if I smoke?"

She lifted her calm eyes to his. "If you smoke in my kitchen," she said dispassionately, "I'll clout ye over the head wid a wet dishcloth."

There was a hiatus of silence.

"Oh," said Peters, and because nothing further suggested itself, and because he really did want a cigarette, he beat an orderly retreat to the pantry and cautiously smoked out the window.

His lungs satisfied, curiosity drove him forth to make a survey of his new home, and he soon decided that he liked it. The rooms were spacious and comfortable, dignified without being stiff, orderly without being unhomelike. His eye lingered fondly on the well-filled shelves in Jerry Bronson's library, and he wondered if the broker would occasionally lend him a volume to read in his spare moments.

Across the hall, in the drawing-room, he found Julia Shaughnessy polishing a pair of big brass andirons and displaying a marked lack of enthusiasm for her work.

"Let me help you," he volunteered gallantly, and Julia obligingly did. She sat back on her heels and watched the bright yellow metal emerge from its massage of smelly red paste.

"I hate doing brasses," she confided presently.

"Do you? Well, I suppose it will be my job after this."

"Will it? Then it's glad I am that you've come."

She went off about some other duty, and when Peters had finished the andirons he returned to the pantry, with the comfortable feeling that he had endeared himself in material fashion to at least one of his fellow servants. The minor



success encouraged him to try his luck again with the brandisher of dishcloths.

Fortune favored him. Mrs. O'Malley was engaged in laboriously removing the skins from a number of tomatoes, and after watching her for a minute he ventured a suggestion.

"Why don't you put them in boiling water?"

She put down her knife and regarded him stonily.

"An for why should I be doin' such a silly thing as that?"

"If you put them in boiling water for a few seconds the skins will come off easily."

"Is it jokin' ye are?"

"Of course not. Let me show you."

He filled a saucepan from the steaming kettle, put several tomatoes in the water for a moment or two, and then chilled them again beneath the cold-water faucet. She looked on, fascinated, as his deft fingers slipped the skins from the fruit.

"Will ye look at that, now!" she said, and there was warm admiration in her voice. "Sure I'm much obliged to ye, Mr. Peters—an' me cookin' twenty years without learnin' that simple trick!"

Immediately the butler thought it tactful to change to another subject.

"I suppose they'll want mayonnaise with these?" he asked.

"They will that."

"Now, then, if you'll show me where the things are, I'll make it."

She was his warm friend from that minute.

Mrs. Bronson turned up for lunch, but went out immediately afterward, taking Joan with her. From the conversation at table, Peters gathered that they were going to the club, the one to play bridge and the other tennis.

He washed the luncheon dishes with the aid of Julia, who passed the time by giving him many intimate details of the family's private life. He learned that Joan Ayres was a cousin of Mrs. Bron-

son, a "poor relation" to whom the hospitable pair had given a home for some years, and who partially repaid their kindness by keeping the child, Cicely, in order, and more than repaid it, thought Peters to himself, by her delightful presence in the house. Sidney Durant, in similar fashion, owed his place in the family circle to the fact that his father and mother were both dead, and that Jerry Bronson had accepted the responsibility of bringing up his favorite sister's boy. He was now in his twenty-fourth year, "an' powerful wild," said Julia.

The sharp summons of a bell broke in on their conversation and took the butler off to the front door. He opened it to discover a rather doubtful character, in dilapidated garments, whose breath was redolent of illicit liquor. He carried an old leather tool kit in one hand, and he was obviously surprised at the sight of Peters.

"You're new, ain't you?" he demanded huskily.

"Yes, I'm new. What do you want?"

"I've come to fix the lock on this here door."

"What's the matter with the lock?"

"How can I tell until I find out?" retorted the man reasonably enough. He dropped the bag of tools with a thud, and proceeding to divest himself of his dirty coat, revealed an even dirtier shirt. He rolled up the sleeves of this, and Peters noted with fastidious distaste that he had a hideous mole on the lower part of his right forearm.

"Get on with it, then," said the butler sharply. "You'll have all the flies in America in this house if you keep the door open long."

The locksmith gave a contemptuous grunt and commenced work with a screw driver. Peters withdrew to the purer air of the library, where he hovered about and kept a casual eye on the laborer, who, he was convinced, was none too sober. He watched the man



remove the lock, take it apart, and turn the pieces several times in his hand; a look of indignation came into his ugly face.

"Say," he called in aggrieved tones, "this here is a Barlow lock, and they told me at the shop I was to fix a Dale!"

"Well, what of it?"

Putting his arms akimbo, the man glanced about him and then gazed at the butler.

"Look here," he demanded in a more minor key, "whose house is this—anyway?"

"Mr. Bronson's, of course."

"Huh?" The locksmith returned to his knees and began replacing the plates he had removed. He volunteered a shame-faced explanation. "I thought this was Bristed's. I'm new to this neighborhood. Can you tell me where they live?"

Peters could not, but Julia appeared on the scene and supplied the desired information. The Bristed's house was the third place on the right, down the boulevard. The workman completed his task, pulled on his coat, and picked up the leather satchel.

"Sorry to have bothered you, mate," he apologized. "My mistake."

"See you don't make it again," said Peters severely, and shut the door on the other's retreating back.

With the exception of this negligible incident the afternoon wore along quietly and monotonously. Toward six o'clock Jerry Bronson reached the house, and, as he stood on the porch fumbling in one pocket after another for his latch-key, he was agreeably surprised to have the big door flung open and hear a polite, low-voiced, "Good evening, sir."

"Ah, Peters!" he said heartily. "So you have arrived? Getting on all right?"

"Oh, yes, sir, thank you."

"Find your room comfortable?"

"Very nice indeed, sir."

Mr. Bronson found himself swiftly relieved of his hat and stick, which the butler with sure instinct deposited in a shallow hall closet.

"Anybody home, Peters?"

"Only Miss Cicely, sir."

The broker took himself to the library, where he settled himself to examine some papers that he had brought home from the office. In a few minutes he was joined by Cicely, a long-limbed, dark-haired child with her mother's coloring and features, who promptly sat herself upon one of his knees, a place where he loved to have her, and where she loved to be. He gave her a hug of greeting.

"Well, my dear, what have you been doing all day?"

"Putting my new doll's house in order," she answered gravely.

"Fine! Is it all fixed now?"

"Yes, papa. I've got a mother and father doll, two little boy dollies, and two little girls. And there's a cook and a nurse and a gardener in the kitchen."

"You've got *him* placed right! That's where Pietro spends *his* idle hours!"

Cicely's face was screwed up in the throes of thought. "Papa, who is the person in our pantry?"

"Eh? Oh, I see. He's a butler, Cicely."

"A butler!" She digested the word slowly. "He's nice. I like him."

"That's right, my dear."

"I must get a butler for my doll's house," decided the child. "It will be very useful." She went off to deliberate upon the new idea.

Peters, in compliance with a hint from Julia, had set the table for four people, but only three sat down when dinner was announced.

"Is Sidney still among the missing?" asked his uncle.

"Apparently," answered Mrs. Bronson with a little frown. "I don't think he even telephoned." She looked up at



the butler, who was at her elbow. "Did any message come from Mr. Durant?"

"No, ma'am."

"That boy is getting to be the limit," declared Jerry crossly. "I suppose he is off on another party."

"Who is it that he finds so fascinating?" asked Joan casually.

"I don't know," replied Jerry.

He did, however, suspect. But he had not told even his wife of the rumors he had heard concerning an attractive chorus girl who was reputed to be the especial object of Sidney's attentions; while there was a possibility that the story was not true, Jerry preferred not to repeat it at home.

Peters' disappearance into the pantry at that moment gave him a welcome opportunity to change the subject from Sidney's peccadillos. He caught his wife's eye.

"How do you like him?" he asked softly.

"Very much," replied Mrs. Bronson. "He's a blessed relief after Julia."

The butler began to feel a natural curiosity about this young man, Sidney, of whose wildness he had been hearing at intervals during the day. He did not have long to wait for his first glimpse of the family skeleton.

Joan and the Bronsons went to bed about eleven-thirty, and the butler, having made sure that the house was secured, prepared to follow their example. He was just about to extinguish the hall light when he heard the unmistakable sound of a wandering key that was seeking the lock of the front door. He hurried to open it, and a young man, who had apparently been trying to steady the rollicking door with one hand, while unlocking it with the other, came in with it. He recovered a doubtful balance with some difficulty. In the shaded light of the hall he looked scarcely more than a boy, with a pale face, a rather weak chin, and a mop of sandy hair that was

meant to lie smoothly, but was now disordered.

"Good evening, uncle," said this apparition.

"Good evening, sir."

A slight flicker of surprise crossed the boy's face.

"Why—you're not uncle!"

"No, sir."

"Who the deuce are you?"

"The new butler, sir."

"Oh!"

If anything, he took a little longer than Cicely to assimilate this information. Then he drew himself up with a laughable assumption of dignity.

"Quite so. I knew you had changed too much to be uncle. Er—good night, butler!"

"Good night, sir."

The young man achieved a wavering ascent of the stairs. Peters, with impassive face, saw him make the landing in safety before he put out the light.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MAYBELLE OF THE REVELS.

A WEEK later Jerry Bronson and his partner were seated in the former's office going over the morning mail, which at first did not seem likely to produce anything worthy of comment. There were the usual number of circulars from other brokers, the usual number of checks in payment of rent or interest charges, the usual letter from the gentleman with a goat pasture in Yonkers, who was willing to sacrifice it at Times Square prices. Suddenly Jerry gave a little exclamation of impatience as he picked up a long, blue envelope.

"'Smatter?" asked The Bartlett Pear.

"It's an ad from a detective agency," replied his companion. "Why in the world they want to circularize me——" He shook his head sadly over people who would thus waste their money and his time, and he dropped the missive unopened in the wastebasket beside him.



His partner, idly curious, rescued and opened it.

"Traynor, Foster, and Henderson," he read. "Private inquiry agents. Investigations conducted with the greatest secrecy. Maximum of service with the minimum of publicity.' How those fellows do love that phrase! 'No case too large or too small.' Say, Jerry, do you suppose they could find that fountain pen I lent you last Tuesday?"

"That's the third card they have sent me," said Jerry, still complaining. He felt in his breast pocket, discovered the missing pen by a rare stroke of good fortune, and silently returned it to its surprised owner. "They must spend a fortune on stationery and stamps, and I'm shot if I can see why. Advertising can do wonders, I know, but it can't create a demand for a private detective."

Bartlett put his pen in his pocket and dropped the circular back in the basket. Meanwhile Jerry had found a pale-pink billet-doux that smelled strongly of perfume and was addressed to him personally. He tore it open, wrinkling his nose disdainfully, as a fresh wave of scent was wafted upward, and mastered its contents in a few seconds. He gave a slight, choking gasp as he finished, and Bartlett, glancing at him quickly, was startled to see that his face was white and strained, and that he was leaning back in his chair as if faint, his eyes half shut, the perfumed note clenched in his hand.

"Jerry! What is it?"

Bronson drew a long breath, expelled it slowly, and partially regained his self-control.

"I'll tell you what it is," he answered in a low, hard voice. "It's a letter from a young woman who signs herself 'Maybelle Minnedinker' and who wants me to give her twenty-five hundred dollars, or face certain unpleasant consequences!"

"Phew!" The Bartlett Pear's eye-

brows tilted sharply. "My word, Jerry, what have you been doing? Who is Maybelle—er—Upsedaisy, and how have you damaged her to the extent of twenty-five hundred?"

"Don't be an ass, Henry," said the senior partner with righteous asperity. "I haven't done anything to the girl. Here, read the thing for yourself. Read it aloud! I'd be sorry to think I'd missed anything."

Bartlett obeyed, stumbling now and then over the bolder samples of a dashing handwriting that was apparently evolved from the Runic.

MY DEAR MR. BRONSON: I cannot tell you how distressed I am to have to approach you on a matter that is causing me serious concern, but circumstances compel me to turn to you for assistance. Briefly, I lent to your nephew, Mr. Durant, some months ago, the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars. He gave me his note for the amount, and payment is now long overdue; he tells me that he cannot repay me, although I have repeatedly threatened him with legal proceedings, and, as I am in desperate need of the money, I have decided to appeal to you to settle the matter. I am sure you will do this in preference to incurring the unpleasant notoriety that must follow on my obtaining a judgment against Mr. Durant in open court. I am naturally anxious to know your answer, so I will call at your office to-morrow afternoon at four o'clock. If you are obliged to be absent at that hour, may I hope that you will leave a note for me—preferably containing a check.

Believe me, dear Mr. Bronson, sincerely yours,  
MAYBELLE MINNEDINKER.

"Wow!" Bartlett tossed the letter on the desk, and the two men stared at each other in dismay. "The blackmailing hussy!" he added vigorously.

"I suppose so," answered his partner gloomily. "But what can you expect of a chorus girl who's out twenty-five hundred?"

"Is she a chorus girl?"

"I assume so."

"'Minnedinker?'" demurred Bartlett. "It's tuneful, but hardly chorus."

"Oh, I daresay she uses her real name for business purposes."



"True." The Pear glanced at the note once more. "'Four o'clock to-morrow afternoon.' That's to-day. You surely won't accede to such an outrageous demand, will you, Jerry?"

"I don't know."

"What are you going to say to her?"

"I don't know."

"You are going to see her, aren't you?"

"I don't know, Henry."

Consternation spread over Bartlett's ample countenance, consternation that deepened, as he looked at his partner and noted the genuine misery in his staring eyes. It came to him suddenly that Jerry was much less troubled by the blackmailing hussy's letter than he was by this fresh evidence of his nephew's wildness. Moved by a quick rush of sympathy, Bartlett struggled erect, stepped toward his friend, and dropped a pair of heavy hands on the despondent shoulders.

"Say, Jerry, shall I see her for you?"

"I'd—appreciate it, Henry."

"The question is, what do you want me to tell her?"

"I don't know."

Bartlett opened his mouth to protest against the reiterated expression of uncertainty, but was abruptly seized with inspiration.

"I know," he said cheerfully. "We won't tell her anything. We will not commit ourselves. We will listen to what she has to say and advise her of our decision at a subsequent date."

"Henry," said Jerry Bronson with deep foreboding, "she is a chorus girl, not a business man."

"Well, I can't help that!" retorted Bartlett. "You surely don't expect me to open champagne for her, do you?"

"I'm sure whatever you do will be right." Bronson fluttered his thinning locks with a vagrant hand. "I've stood a good deal from Sidney, but this is the last straw."

2C—DS

"Say, what's he been up to?" asked The Pear.

"Don't know, and I hardly care. Mary and I are both fond of the boy, as you know, and we've brought him up like a son. But apparently he's a bad egg. Of course one expects a bad egg to sow a certain amount of wild oats," he continued vaguely, "but Sidney's crop has exceeded the human limit."

Bartlett, able to look at the situation from a more neutral position, interposed a mild objection to this vegetable and zoological condemnation. He had always liked Sidney, and, although this new entanglement appeared to be rather unsavory, he still hoped that some mitigating facts might come to light.

"There must be some good in the boy, Jerry. He couldn't hold on to a responsible job with a big insurance company if he didn't have some brains."

"Just superficial cleverness!" snapped the irate uncle.

"Superficial, huh! Did you ever try to borrow twenty-five hundred from a chorus girl and get it?"

Mr. Bronson had never experienced this financial triumph.

"Well, then! And now, Jerry, buck up! Leave the fair Minnedinker to your Uncle Henry, and don't go crossing bridges until you're sure you've come to them, particularly when the toll is twenty-five hundred simoleons!"

A brisk real-estate business has its exacting moods, and both the partners were compelled by sheer necessity to turn their attention to more pressing matters than Sidney and his troubles. Bad eggs and wild oats are all right in their proper place, but business is business.

The partners, still talking shop, lunched together. The forced distraction from his domestic anxieties was probably the best thing in the world for Jerry Bronson; he slowly threw off the shock he had received in reading Maybelle's letter, and, while still talking



real estate, in the back of his brain there formed the ghost of an idea that he might yet turn this incident to good account in furthering one of his keenest ambitions. As he sat in his office after lunch he arrived at a decision with the help of a big black cigar; summoning the office boy, Jerry asked Mr. Bartlett to step in for a moment.

"Henry, I've been thinking about this interview of yours with Miss—er—Minnedinker."

"Yes, Jerry?"

"I suppose in the end I shall have to pay her. He'll be in the deuce of a hole if I don't."

"Hold on!" protested Bartlett. "After all, we have yet to hear the boy's own story."

Jerry had very little hope that it would be edifying. "I guess she's telling the truth—or mostly so, anyway. But, as I was saying, if I don't come to his rescue he'll be in a sweet mess." He tapped his knee gently and cast a look full of meaning at his partner. "It might not be a bad idea to give him a bit of a scare, eh?"

"What do you mean?"

"I could dash Miss Maybelle's hopes with a flat refusal to give up a cent, and then let him know that I've done so. When he has had a week or two of worry, I can intervene; it will always be easy enough to choke her off before she can start any proceedings, and it may be that a dose of real anxiety will stiffen Master Sidney's virtue—if he has any."

"Rather a desperate remedy," commented Bartlett thoughtfully.

"It's rather a desperate disease," said Bronson grimly, "and I'm getting to be a pretty desperate doctor."

Bartlett's brow cleared, as he considered the proposal. "I believe you're right, Jerry. I've always taken the boy's part, but I agree with you that he has gone too far, and he must be brought up with a round turn. It is possible that your idea of scaring him may ac-

complish what all your kindness hasn't. Shall I talk to her, then, along those lines?"

"If you please, Henry."

A few minutes before four, Jerry left the office; at four o'clock to the dot the red-headed office boy appeared before Bartlett with the information that a lady was asking for Mr. Bronson.

"Show her in here, Jimmy."

"Yes, sir."

Adopting his sternest and most dignified air, Bartlett, as a finishing touch, put on a pair of glasses, heavily rimmed with gold, which he never wore except on state occasions, and which he fondly believed lent him an awesome dignity and impressiveness. He fastened a grim eye on the door of his office.

The vision of beauty that presently floated into view did not appear to be impressed either by the dignified manner or the stern gaze, which latter lost much of its severity as it rested upon one of the most beautiful members of "the classiest front row in New York." She was a tall, well-built young woman who radiated a superb self-confidence from every inch of her, from her small feet to her glory of golden hair, hair of a hue so chemically perfect that a new double eagle resting on its soft masses would have seemed but tarnished dross. Her slim figure was clad in a dark-blue suit whose brevity, heedless of Paris dicta, revealed about eighteen inches of the most shapely blue silk stockings in the city; her feet were shod in suede slippers of the same color, her small hat carried out the scheme to perfection, but no part or parcel of her costume could compare for blueness with the large eyes that gazed upon The Bartlett Pear, unafraid. For the rest of her appearance, it need only be said that she had just been engaged for the "Summer Revels" at a figure as pleasing as her own.

Bartlett rose and made obeisance twice; once outwardly to her, and once inwardly to Sidney's taste, which he



thought had been underestimated. He drew up a chair with one hand and reached for a dark-blue parasol with the other, but this she refused to relinquish. She sat down rather stiffly and fixed him with an accusing gaze.

"You are not Mr. Bronson?"

"No. Mr. Bronson was obliged to leave early to-day, and he has asked me to represent him."

"Oh!" Her blue eyes dropped to the tip of her parasol, which made a sharp, squeaky noise, as she absently rubbed it against the base of Mr. Bartlett's desk. "Oh, I see!"

If there was any innuendo in either her words or voice, it was lost entirely upon Bartlett. Of all things on earth, he objected most to sharp, squeaky noises; the explosion of a dynamite cartridge in the next room, if it left him at all, would have left him calm, but a sharp, squeaky noise played havoc with his spine and rasped his whole body to the marrow of his bones. He shivered now and eyed the offending parasol resentfully.

"In a way," continued Miss Minnendinker, checking her restless weapon to his great relief, "in a way I'm rather glad. It is really easier to discuss these—these embarrassing matters with some one not personally involved. I am sure I shall find you a most delightful substitute!"

Without warning she hurled at him her most effective man-taming smile, which, sad to say, was woefully wasted upon this occasion. Her intended victim was watching her parasol with the same trepidation that a sufferer in the dentist's chair watches the shining instrument in the hand of his torturer, and he recalled his attention with something of an effort.

"Oh—er—certainly, by all means!" he stammered. "Now, you see, your letter left a few things unexplained that Mr. Bronson would like to know more about."

"Yes?" asked the lady graciously. "I am sure I'll be delighted."

"Well, let me see. You know Mr. Durant quite well, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," corrected the girl in her clear, fresh voice. "I never lend twenty-five hundred dollars except to strangers."

"Um! And just what was the nature of the loan?"

"Cash," she answered briefly and added sorrowfully, "the hard-earned savings of a poor working girl."

A lingering squeak came from the parasol; Mr. Bartlett unclenched his teeth, as it subsided, and resumed his questioning.

"You misunderstand me. I meant for what purpose did you lend Mr. Durant the money, and on what terms?"

"To play a tip on the market," she answered sadly. "Six months at six per cent."

"Ah!" A legitimate action, if a foolish one; he could find no reason to quarrel with her on that score, so he trained his batteries on a weaker spot. "You realize, of course, that your letter to Mr. Bronson was in the nature of a threat for the purpose of extorting money? Perhaps you are aware that the law has an unpleasant name for that."

"Blackmail," she agreed sweetly, "but of so mild a character that no judge would condemn me."

"You may be given an opportunity to learn whether that is so or not." The Bartlett Pear felt he was not distinguishing himself and decided to bring matters to a head. "Mr. Bronson, I may tell you, is a man of great resolution—very great resolution and firmness—exceptional firmness. A hard man, my dear young lady. I fear he is not disposed to hand over twenty-five hundred dollars to pay for a piece of foolishness on the part of his nephew, and I assure you in all friendliness that you are prob-



ably wasting your time in trying to collect Sidney's debts from his uncle."

The parasol squeaked furiously. Mr. Bartlett prayed for strength.

"I think," said the girl slowly, describing little circles against the desk, "I think (*squeak*) that Mr. Bronson is very ill-advised to take such an attitude (*squeak-squeak*) in this matter. He must know that in order (*squeak*) to protect myself I will be compelled to secure a judgment against Mr. Durant. That means publicity (*squeak-squeak*) which cannot fail to injure the young man's reputation (*squeak*) and his prospects (*squeak*) with the company that employs him. In the circumstances I believe Mr. Bronson would prefer to (*sque-e-e-ak*)——"

"Don't do that!" cried Mr. Bartlett in agony.

"Don't do *what*?"

"Squeak with your parasol, I mean. I can't stand it!"

"Gracious! Do you mean this?" (*Squeak.*) She watched the writhings of her victim with deep interest, and to better appreciate such a curious reaction she mauled his nerves with one final, satisfying, excruciating squeak, while she watched him quiver. "How funny! I suppose you are nervous? I never am myself," she added consolingly. Then her voice became more businesslike. "However, this is interesting, but it isn't getting us anywhere. Please tell Mr. Bronson for me that I am very much in earnest, and that I will do exactly as I say. I will give him just one week to come through with the cash."

Mr. Bartlett flushed indignantly. She had tried him too far already.

"Is that an ultimatum?" he asked.

"Absolutely!"

"In that case," said The Pear with great deliberation, "I am authorized to inform you, here and now, that Mr. Bronson refuses to have anything more to do with you. You will have to de-

pend upon Mr. Durant to repay your loan."

She sprang to her feet, an outraged goddess in blue. Her eyes flashed fire.

"In-deed! Well, let me tell *you* that Mr. Bronson never said any such thing! I know from Sidney that he is much too kind and gentle to treat a poor girl so mean! That's why he got *you* to see me! When it came to a bit of dirty work he had to employ a sneaking, stingy, stodgy, hard-hearted, brainless, bald-headed *crab*!" She swept him from head to foot with a withering glance, took a long breath, and expelled it in one violent epithet. "*Pig!*"

The Bartlett Pear bounded to his feet with a purple face.

"L-look h-here!" he stammered, between little choking sounds of wrath. "Look here, Miss Minnie Maybelle-dinker——"

Swinging on her heel she marched swiftly from the office, her face and form eloquent of fury. But even in her tempestuous anger she remembered to trail the parasol heavily along the floor, while The Bartlett Pear clapped his hands to his ears and suffered.

## CHAPTER V.

MR. BRONSON IS FIRM.

JERRY, driven from his office by the fearsome advent of the fair Miss Minnedinker, took the first train for Claredale. He found, as he had half expected, an empty house. Joan was playing tennis, his wife was at the club, presumably playing bridge, and Cicely was attending a birthday party somewhere. Jerry sighed and betook himself into the library to work on some rent rolls that he had brought home with him.

He was glad when the sharp summons of the telephone at five o'clock gave him an excuse to thrust the papers aside. His partner's voice came over the wire, and he listened with absorbed



interest, while The Bartlett Pear gave a slightly edited account of his interview with the blackmailing hussy.

"You made it clear to her that there was nothing doing?" asked Bronson. "Fine, Henry! That is just the line I wanted you to take! I am sure she will report the result to Sidney, and then we'll see if he can be scared into behaving himself!" He brought the conversation to a close with a few heartfelt words of gratitude. When he had hung up the receiver, he touched a button.

"Peters, have you received any message to-day from my nephew?"

"Mr. Durant phoned, sir, just before you came in. He does not expect to be home for dinner, sir, but will be here later."

"Thank you, Peters. That's all."

When the butler had gone, Jerry hunted through the drawers of his desk until he discovered an old pipe that he reserved for his more serious moods of reflection. He had filled and smoked it twice; now he determined that, no matter how late Sidney might be in returning, he would find an irate guardian awaiting him, when the sound of a latch-key in the front door, followed by the subject of his thoughts in person, aroused him to the fact that he was even now on the threshold of the interview that he dreaded.

"Good evening, uncle!" said Sidney, a shade too heartily. "Isn't this rather early for you to be home?"

"Speak for yourself, my boy! As a matter of fact, I was expecting you to be late; didn't you telephone that you would not be out for dinner?"

"Yes," admitted his nephew. "I was supposed to dine with some chaps in town, but I changed my plans."

He lighted a cigarette, took several nervous puffs at it, and threw it impatiently into the fireplace. The action, simple though it was, indicated clearly his frame of mind; he avoided his uncle's eye, while he took two or three

turns about the room, but finally, with the air of summoning all his courage, he halted in front of Jerry and plunged into the matter that weighed upon them both.

"I understand, sir, that you have just been informed of my last bit of asininity."

"Your last?" Mr. Bronson raised questioning eyebrows. "I've little hope that it's that, Sidney; but if you mean your latest, and if you mean Maybelle, I can say that I have."

"She called me up and said she'd talked to Bartlett," confessed the young man. "She has threatened several times to go to you, but I never dreamed that she'd do it." He lighted another cigarette and meditated a moment. "Not that I blame her at all; twenty-five hundred dollars must make a pretty big hole in her nest egg."

"Or any one else's," added Jerry, not without some feeling. Sidney had the grace to flush. "If I'm not being too personal, may I ask the size of your own nest egg at present—in cash?"

"One hundred and thirty-seven dollars and sixty-three cents," replied his nephew promptly and derived small comfort from the grunt with which his uncle acknowledged the figures.

"Suppose you sit down, Sidney, and tell me the history of your indebtedness to Miss Minnedinker. If there is anything particularly disgraceful about it, I will guarantee to keep the knowledge from the family."

"Oh, it's not as bad as that, sir. The truth is, I saw a chance to make a nice little pot of money if I could lay my hands on enough capital to take advantage of my knowledge. I have known Miss Minnedinker for quite a while, and, when I happened to mention my needs in her hearing one day, she immediately offered to lend me the twenty-five hundred—on terms, of course."

"What were they?"



"We agreed to act as partners, she putting in her money against my information; we were to split the profits fifty-fifty."

"And the losses?"

"There weren't going to be any losses," answered Sidney, and in spite of his chastened mood he could not restrain a mirthless grin. "That is how I came to fall in with her suggestion that I give her my personal note for the amount I borrowed."

"Didn't it occur to you that it was a case of heads she won, tails you lost?"

"It did, but I was so confident——" He broke off with a shrug of his shoulders.

"In what new and graceful shape did this latest gold brick appear before you? At least, I hope you have observed the promise you made me a year ago, that you would do no more gambling?"

"Of course I have, sir! This was no gambling proposition; it was a perfectly straight tip on a sound Wall Street stock. If the whole silly market hadn't skidded——"

Jerry Bronson raised anguished eyes to heaven.

"Oh, no, that isn't gambling! Wall Street never is, any more than Monte Carlo, or a horse race! We all know that. So you took this woman's money for a little flyer in stocks, and then what?"

"Well, it flew all right," admitted Sidney, and again his lips shaped themselves into a smile more tragic than tears.

"You have had time since then, I suppose, to reflect that the sum you owe the young lady represents approximately eight months of your salary?"

"Seven months and twenty-three days, to be exact, sir! I have figured it several times."

"Have you any other resources?"

"No, sir."

"It appears to me that your affairs

are somewhat seriously involved. How do you expect to get out of this mess?"

"I was hoping you could suggest something, sir."

"Oh!"

"If you could find it convenient to give me the twenty-five hundred to take up that note, I might repay you by giving you half my salary until the debt is wiped out."

"Humph! I thought Bartlett made himself pretty clear on that point to Miss Minnedinker."

"I—I don't think I understand, sir."

"Didn't she tell you the result of her talk with Bartlett?"

"No. She just called up to say that she'd gone to you as she had threatened, and then she hung up with a bang. She seemed peeved."

Jerry Bronson nerved himself to pronounce a thumping untruth for the boy's own good. He cleared his throat, resolutely kept his hands from his hair, and tried to look as stern as Draco and as inexorable as a Mede.

"Well, she had some cause to be angry. Mr. Bartlett, acting under my instructions, told her that I would do nothing toward paying your note, that she must look only to you for redress. You know, Sidney, that I have borne with you long and patiently, and I feel that you might have behaved toward me as if you appreciated it. But there, I did not mean to speak of that, for it is a point you can settle with your own conscience. I do, however, refuse to foot any more bills to get you out of your senseless scrapes, and I'm going to start now! You must manage to square Miss Minnedinker by your own efforts, or face the consequences of your folly like a man."

Sidney's face was white, as his uncle finished speaking; his eyes were cast down, and the cigarette between his fingers shook with the trembling of his hands.

"I'm afraid Maybelle has made up her



mind to sue me," he muttered. "That's going to put a crimp in my prospects with the Universal; they may not fire me, but they'll be darned careful how they promote me."

To this melancholy prediction Jerry Bronson could find nothing to say except the age-old retort of the consciously righteous. "You should have thought of that before, Sidney!"

"Am I to consider your decision as final, sir?" asked the boy, as the lines tightened about his mouth.

Mr. Bronson was secretly glad that his nephew had phrased it so happily.

"Yes, that is exactly the way I wish you to consider it," he answered firmly.

"Then," said Sidney, in a voice so low that he might have been talking to himself, "I must get out of this mess in any way I can."

"I wish you luck, my boy," responded Bronson more gently. He gave a sigh. "If I could only believe this would teach you a lesson——"

Sidney did not look up as he answered. "You can rest assured of that, sir. After this you will have no further cause for anxiety on my account."

By themselves the words were fair enough, but Jerry Bronson was inwardly perturbed by the tone in which they were uttered. He shot a scrutinizing glance at the speaker, but the boy's eyes were still fixed on the floor, and his expressionless face gave no clew to his thoughts.

"I sincerely trust——" The broker cut short his sentence, as Joan Ayres came through the doorway from the hall.

"Hello, Cousin Jerry! Busy?"

"Good afternoon, my dear." He was pleased with her intrusion, ending as it did the disagreeable interview with Sidney. "No, we're not busy; come in and tell me what you've been doing with yourself."

"Not much time for that, I'm afraid. Have you forgotten that the Derwins are coming to dinner? That means my

very best dress, which is also the hardest to get into."

"Great Scott!" Bronson looked at his watch and sprang to his feet. "I had forgotten! Don't talk to me about your sartorial trials, Joan; be grateful you have no stiff shirt or high collar to worry you!"

He fled the room. Joan lighted a cigarette, perched herself on a corner of her cousin's safe, and regarded the gloomy Sidney with a contemplative eye.

"Why is our noble brow thus mantled with dull care?"

"Oh, I'm in Dutch."

"Still, or again?"

"Again!" He moved restlessly in his seat, impatient under her questioning, though he had the best of reasons to know that Joan did not ask out of idleness.

"Well," she went on, a little dryly, "I suppose Cousin Jerry is ready to throw out the life line as usual, isn't he?"

"No. He has turned me down hard."

"Question of money, of course?"

"Of course," he echoed bitterly.

Joan flicked an ash from her cigarette and studied the tips of her tennis shoes. She had told Sidney more than once what she thought of his conduct, but on the other hand she had come to his aid on occasion in very practical fashion, and it should be said to his credit that such loans as she had made him in his idle hours of need, had always been scrupulously repaid. She prepared now to don the familiar robe of the good Samaritan.

"Can I give you a lift, Sid?"

"Thanks, Joan." He managed a grateful smile. "I'm afraid the ante's too stiff for you to sit in."

"How much is it?"

"Twenty-five hundred."

"Ouch!" said Joan, and almost dropped her cigarette. She looked at him in frank dismay. "Whatever will you do?"

"Hanged if I know," he answered



sulkily. "I've as much chance of raising twenty-five million as twenty-five hundred—unless," he added with a short laugh, "I take a can opener and bust into that tin safe you're sitting on! I expect Uncle Jerry's rubies would melt down to what I need."

Joan frowned. She tossed her cigarette into an ash tray and slipped to the floor before speaking again.

"That is a type of silly remark that I particularly despise. It doesn't mean anything, and it is just asking for trouble. Don't you know that if any one burgled the safe to-night, I'd be the star witness for the prosecution to-morrow morning?"

"Nonsense, Joan!" He stood up. "You're much too good a sport to give me away like that! Well, I'm off to prepare for the dear-Derwin invasion."

The Derwins, a healthy-looking couple with excellent appetites, arrived punctually at the time appointed and were warmly received by their hostess, who considered that their presence at her dinner table marked a notable advance in her policy of peaceful penetration into the upper circles of Clare-dale society. Her triumph made her radiant, and her eyes sparkled as brightly as the handsome rubies that she wore. She noticed during dinner that her guests glanced at them more than once, and she was not surprised when Mrs. Derwin finally spoke of them.

"What lovely rubies! Are they new, or are they heirlooms?"

"Some are old and some are new. My husband is very fond of rubies, and when he sees any that he particularly likes he gets them for me." She held out her arm. "This bracelet is the latest acquisition!"

"I'm awfully fond of them myself," said Mrs. Derwin after she had sufficiently admired the bracelet, "but unfortunately they are not at all becoming to me." She suddenly noticed that her host had caught the word rubies and

was smiling at her. "You must have a lot of fun selecting such beautiful things, Mr. Bronson, and I think your taste is wonderful!"

"Rubies have a fascination for me," he admitted. "Yes, I do enjoy shopping for them whenever I get a good excuse. I am looking forward now to making a tour of the ruby markets in search of a stone that I need."

"Need?"

"Yes. A few months ago I picked up a remarkably fine unset ruby, and now I am looking for a mate to it in order to have the two made into earrings."

"I envy you your task," sighed Mrs. Derwin.

He beamed his recognition of a kindred spirit.

"Would you like to see the one I'm trying to match?"

"Oh, I'd love to!"

Rising promptly, he went into the library. In a minute he returned with his treasure, which he laid in Mrs. Derwin's outstretched palm, where it settled like a big drop of liquid flame. She gazed upon it with little exclamations of wonder and reluctantly parted with it to her husband, who admired it no less than she.

"Can I see it?" asked Joan, who sat next to him.

Derwin started to place it in her slender hand, but his fingers incautiously released their grip too soon and the stone fell. Joan made a quick attempt to catch it, but she only succeeded in striking it with the back of her hand and knocking it some feet behind her. It was retrieved by the alert Peters.

The butler had his back turned to the table as he stooped for the ruby, and Jerry Bronson, keeping a careful eye on the wanderings of his crimson treasure, was surprised at Peters' manner of handling the jewel. It seemed to Jerry that the man was a long time straightening up, as if he were taking a good look at the ruby, and he could have sworn that



he weighed it appraisingly, as it rested an instant in his palm. In another moment Bronson's favorite jewel was restored to his keeping, and he tucked it away in his waistcoat pocket. Presently the incident slipped from his mind, but he recalled it later when the guests had departed and he was putting away the set that his wife had worn.

"I don't know much about butlers," he mused, as he turned the knob of the safe and felt the handle to make sure that it was locked, "but I'm reasonably sure that one doesn't expect them to be connoisseurs of rubies." A dark thought crossed his mind. "Heaven send he's not a crook," he murmured piously.

## CHAPTER VI.

### M'KITTRICK'S RUBY.

THAT night Jerry Bronson noted the fact that, while a guilty conscience may prevent sleep, a clear one does not induce it. Thanks to the lingering presence of the Derwins, he had had no further conversation with Sidney during the evening, but after he was in bed the broker found himself haunted by the memory of the earlier interview in the library; his restless brain dwelt continually on the tone of voice in which his nephew had made his last despairing remark. He would have given a good deal to know whether the words meant more than the manner of their utterance, whether he had heard a promise of better things or a threat of worse.

Yet his conscience did not reproach him. He had acted after due deliberation, and he still thought himself entirely justified in refusing to pour unlimited money into the bottomless well of Sidney's extravagance; but he knew that, if the boy did anything rash as a result of his well-intentioned firmness, he would never forgive himself. It was small consolation to the broker, tossing from one side of his bed to the other,

to reflect that he intended to come to the rescue eventually.

He got to sleep at last on the comforting idea that he would talk to Sidney in the morning and ask him to explain exactly what he had meant by his bothersome remark. But, as it turned out, Jerry was not given this opportunity to set his mind at rest. He entered the dining room to find the table set only for himself, and he learned from Peters that Sidney had swallowed a cup of coffee and bolted for an earlier train than he was in the habit of taking. Jerry sighed for another good intention gone where good intentions are reputed to go, and divided his attention equally between breakfast and the morning paper, while Peters functioned smoothly between the pantry and the table.

Jerry had laid aside his paper and was just commencing his second cup of coffee when the butler spoke.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but there is something I'd like to say to you, sir."

"Go ahead, Peters."

"It's about that ruby—the one you showed last night, sir."

Bronson looked up from his coffee, and there came to him a disagreeable reminder of the suspicion that had crossed his mind the night before while locking his safe. He frowned slightly.

"What about it, Peters?"

"Only this, sir, that when I picked it off the floor it struck me as being exactly like one that Mr. McKittrick has. I should say, sir, that the stones are identical."

"That is interesting—very interesting, indeed! I imagine, though, that you are mistaken; the chances are overwhelmingly against such an exact likeness, and only an expert could be sure of such a thing without placing the stones together."

"That is true, sir, and, of course, I'm not an expert."

A faint hint of hesitancy about the



butler's manner brought Jerry to the point with some abruptness.

"You have some reason for mentioning this to me, Peters; what is in your mind?"

"I was thinking, sir, of what you said about trying to find a mate for yours. I know Mr. McKittrick would be glad to sell his ruby if he could get anything like a fair price for it, so I thought I would tell you about it."

"I see!" The broker felt the thrill of a collector who scents a new specimen. "But I don't quite understand how it helps me; McKittrick has gone to California, hasn't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"And won't be back until autumn?"

"No, sir."

"While I want to find the second ruby and have the earrings made in time for Mrs. Bronson's birthday in August!"

"If you'd like to see the ruby, sir, I think it could be managed."

"How? I don't suppose McKittrick will come all the way from California just to show me a ruby that may be like mine?"

"Oh, no, sir!" The butler permitted himself to smile discreetly. "I was going on to say, sir, that his jewelry is in a secret place in his apartment, along with his silver. But he never had any secrets from me, sir, and, if you so desired, I could very easily bring you the stone to examine."

"Why I couldn't hear of such a thing!" Astonishment, decision, and something of wrath were mingled in Bronson's outburst. "Neither you nor I have the right to touch a valuable jewel belonging to another man!"

"I quite understand that it's unusual, sir," answered the butler respectfully, "but under the circumstances I am sure that Mr. McKittrick would have me do just what I've suggested."

"Circumstances? What circumstances?"

"Er—Mr. McKittrick's, sir!" The

butler smiled again. "Of course I cannot talk too much about his affairs, but I may say that he is very anxious to dispose of some of his jewelry, and he would have done so before now if he could have got a good offer. Mr. McKittrick has always been very good to me, and I'd like to do him a good turn if I could. When I gathered from your remarks last night that I might be able to help you, too, sir, it—it seemed only right to speak!"

"H'm! I'm sure you mean well, Peters, but the scheme is out of the question. Anyway, as I have said, it is most improbable that the stones are really alike."

"Yes, sir."

"I could not permit you to take such a risk with another man's property, especially as the chances are a hundred to one against the two rubies being the same shade."

"Yes, sir."

Silence ensued. Jerry returned to his coffee, and Peters sedately withdrew to a corner of the room. But from time to time the broker glanced at the butler, and from time to time the butler glanced at the broker, until finally their eyes met.

"Er—Peters!"

"Yes, sir?"

"About that ruby—you're *quite* sure Mr. McKittrick would approve your letting me see it?"

"Perfectly, sir. I think he'd be very glad, and I don't believe any harm could come from my bringing it here to show you. I could go for it this afternoon, sir, and take it back to-morrow morning if you'd prefer it that way."

The broker's conscience battled with the collector's passion—and lost a fight against heavy odds.

"Very well," said Jerry severely. "On that understanding you may bring it out and show it to me this evening; but, whether it matches or not, it must abso-



lutely go back to Mr. McKittrick's safe to-morrow morning."

"Of course, sir."

"I'll tell Mrs. Bronson that you are going to town after lunch. You'll be back in plenty of time before dinner?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Jerry let it go at that, not without some inward qualms.

As soon as the butler had served lunch, he broke the news to Julia that she was to have the pleasure of doing the dishes single-handed, and forthwith he betook himself to the station. When the train arrived, he settled himself in the smoking car and prepared to enjoy a well-worn pipe that he drew from an inner pocket. It rather annoyed him when a young man, whom he had noticed on the Claredale platform, slipped into the seat beside him.

"Aren't you the new man at Bronson's?" asked the stranger with courtly politeness.

"Yes."

"I thought you were. My name is Jackson, and I'm second man at the Lathams."

"Glad to meet you," acknowledged the butler after an instant of uncertainty. He added, "My name is Peters."

"It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our midst," said Mr. Jackson. "I trust we shall see something of you, now and again."

"Delighted," murmured Peters.

"What is your evening off?"

"Thursdays, and alternate Sundays," answered Peters, and then hastened to forestall the invitation he saw gleaming in Mr. Jackson's eye. "Most of the time I have to go to New York." He added after an almost imperceptible pause, "Got a sick mother."

"That is indeed too bad," said the courtly one, "but I shall hope to see something of you when the old lady's health permits."

Mr. Jackson drifted to other subjects, and, being of a talkative turn, he did not

resent it when he presently had a monopoly of the conversation. He gave some rather racy sketches of Claredale society, the source of many of his anecdotes being one Henry, the chief steward of the country club.

"A rare fellow, Henry!" he said admiringly. "Full of life and fun. You can bet nothing gets by him!"

"Indeed."

"Yep. Come to think of it, it was only last evening he was telling me some yarn about your Mrs. Bronson and my people."

"Yes?"

"You know, these dames play for pretty high stakes at the club. Putting together what Henry told me and what I've heard in our dining room, I guess your missus must owe my bunch a cool two thousand bucks."

"Owes it?" Peters was surprised out of his indifference. "Do you mean to say she doesn't pay up when she loses?"

"Doesn't look like it, does it? Guess her little dress allowance can't be stretched over too many rubbers."

"But surely Mr. Bronson has plenty of money?"

"I heard something about that, too," said Jackson, slightly closing a knowing eye. "It seems old Bronson is dead set against gambling, and, while he don't object to bridge in moderation, he'd take the roof off the house if he had to settle wifie's losses for two thou."

The complete conversationalist rambled off to other fields, and Peters, between monosyllabic answers, pondered this side light on his employer's affairs. If Jackson's story were true, and no doubt it was, it would explain one or two things that had puzzled him. Mrs. Bronson was always cheerful, sometimes with a gayety that the butler suspected was forced in the presence of her husband; at other times she habitually appeared moody and depressed. Once, surprising them as they talked on the veranda, he had discovered Mrs. Bron-



son and Joan in an emotional scene; the girl had been flushed and severe, the older woman dissolved in tears. "I know I ought to, Joan," she sobbed, "but I haven't got the courage!" So much he had heard before the realization of his presence startled Mrs. Bronson into silence.

It appeared evident to him now that Joan must have been urging her cousin to confide her troubles to her husband. It was the sort of straightforward, common-sense action that a girl like Joan would advise. If there was one thing that struck a man about Joan, mused the butler, it was her honesty, her courage. He was still elaborating this point in his mind when the train puffed into the terminus.

Bronson was detained at the office that afternoon. He did not get home until a few moments before the dinner hour, bearing with him a small, leather case full of papers that he proposed to work over during the evening. Between the lateness of the hour, which had forced him to hurry, and the importance of the business that obsessed his thoughts, he forgot the matter of McKittrick's ruby until dinner was nearly over. Then the memory recurred to him, and he looked up quickly from his salad.

"By the way, Peters, did you get that ruby?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is it?"

"Right here, sir."

The butler slipped his hand into the side pocket of his coat, produced a small white box, and laid it in Bronson's eager hand. Jerry lifted the lid and gave a cry of surprise and delight.

"By George, Peters, I do believe you're right!" He peered long and lovingly at the big red stone that gleamed up at him from its nest of cotton wool. "Here, Sidney, pass this to your aunt, while I get the other ruby from the safe." He rose and left the room.

Sidney, who had heard nothing of the

second stone, was rather startled by the casual appearance of such a gem from a butler's pocket, and he held the open box in his hand and stared earnestly at the ruby before passing it on as requested.

"It's certainly a peach!" he sighed. "What do you suppose it's worth, Aunt Mary?"

"About five thousand, I should think," answered Mrs. Bronson. The butler, standing near her, caught the sound of a little sigh that echoed Sidney's just before Jerry bustled into the room and to her side.

In his hand he carried the ruby that he had shown the evening before, and excitement left him almost breathless as he put the two stones together on the white tablecloth and leaned over them. Joan and Sidney caught fire from his enthusiasm and left their seats for a closer view, while Peters, displaying discreet curiosity, hovered in the background. At last Bronson straightened up and gave his decision.

"As far as I can see," he announced solemnly, "these two rubies are exactly alike in every respect. A most amazing coincidence!" He turned to the butler. "Of course I should like my opinion confirmed by an expert. I suppose there can be no objection to that?"

"None at all, sir."

"Then I will take it to town with me to-morrow." He suddenly bethought himself of the fiat he had delivered at breakfast. "I will ask you to come with me, Peters, so that you can take it back to Mr. McKittrick's apartment."

"Very good, sir."

Jerry lingeringly restored the jewel to its bed of wool and handed the white case to the butler, who dropped it into his coat as negligently as if it were a box of matches. The broker tucked his own into the corner of his vest pocket, but, abruptly remembering her troublesome absent-mindedness, he determined



to guard against it at least on this occasion. Instead of resuming his seat at the table, he marched at once into the library and carefully locked the ruby in the safe, and when he returned to his dinner it was with the pleasing knowledge that he had effectively provided against some tailor discovering a treasure when next the suit went to be pressed.

The evening passed quietly. Some neighbors dropped in and were entertained by Mrs. Bronson and Joan on the porch; Sidney slipped off to his own room, where he presently requested Peters to bring him some soda water; Jerry excused himself from the party on the veranda on the plea of the papers he had brought home.

He labored in the library without interruption until ten o'clock, when the entrance of Peters with a tray of glasses and a pitcher of ice water broke in on his work.

"By the way, Peters, it has just occurred to me——"

"Yes, sir?"

"I'm a little nervous about Mr. McKittrick's ruby. It's silly of me, perhaps, but if anything *should* happen to it I'd never forgive myself. You have

no very secure place to keep it, and I've been wondering if it wouldn't be better to let me put it in the safe overnight?"

"I think it's an excellent idea, sir."

The butler immediately took the white box from his pocket and gave it to the broker, after which he silently left the room. Jerry lifted the cover and made sure that the ruby was all right, then put the box, still open, on the desk beside his pad. From time to time he raised his eyes from the papers with which he was engaged, to glance fondly at the stone.

A little before eleven, Joan and Mrs. Bronson came into the house. He was vaguely aware of their footsteps ascending the stairs, and then he heard his wife's quiet movements, as she paid her nightly visit to Cicely's room, which was directly above the library. A moment later he was surprised to hear her hurry from the nursery to the head of the stairs.

Some premonition of evil brought him to his feet, and he was at the door of the library when his wife's frightened voice called his name.

"Jerry! Do come here at once! There is something the matter with Cicely!"

To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

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## DETECTIVES WATCH ROBBERS AT WORK

FOR a period of six hours, from midnight until six o'clock in the morning, detectives in Brooklyn, New York, recently watched four robbers at work. During this time four detectives stood in doorways while the crooks went ahead with their work. They were busily engaged in cutting a hole into the cellar of a tailoring establishment where men's clothing, worth many thousands of dollars, is stored. Beside the neat hole, which the burglars had spent most of the night in making, the detectives found several bits and a brace, a jimmy, a chisel, a saw, and a flash light.

The detectives surprised these midnight laborers just as they had bundled up, preparatory to removing it, clothing worth three thousand dollars. When the four detectives surprised the men in the building, they declared they were workmen engaged on some repairs in the cellar. But the detectives, who had been on a scouting tour about midnight, had observed a suspicious automobile stop in front of the tailor shop long enough to permit four men to alight. At six in the morning the detectives grew tired of waiting for the men to emerge and went into the shop and arrested them.



# Fine Feathers

by *Dahlia Graham*

Author of "Pug's Choice," "His Fatal Gift," etc.

**I**T was on the way home from the show that Jim Franklin received the first warning that he had not provided the girl who walked by his side with all that her heart desired.

"Let's cross over," said Dorothy Franklin, and although Jim was six feet of solid brawn and bone, bound for his pipe and armchair, Dot's little hand steered him where he didn't want to go. They halted in front of a hat shop. Much to Jim's relief it was closed, but the lights in the windows were on.

"Look," said Dot, and Jim eyed with intent interest a hat trimmed with rosebuds. It was marked four dollars and ninety-eight cents.

"Pretty, very nice indeed, and——"

"Which one are you looking at?" inquired his wife.

"That one, of course. I know which one you mean. The one with the pink rose——"

"Pink nothing," interrupted Dot. "I wouldn't have that thing as a gift. That's the one I mean; the one with the feathers. Aren't they exquisite? Aren't they a dream? Just look at them."

Jim looked, and Jim marveled. The only thing he could see was the price ticket—sixty-five dollars!

Dot nestled closer and gazed with adoring eyes at the hat.

"Isn't it a perfect dream?"

Jim shuddered and shuffled his feet. Dorothy clung to his arm. As he glanced down at her he noticed a rapt, determined expression on her face.

"Y-yes," he agreed. "It's kinda pretty. Too old for you, though. Besides—those are bird-of-paradise feathers. You wouldn't encourage them to kill those birds, would you?"

"I'm not," declared Dorothy indignantly. "I never asked them to do anything of the kind. Anyway, it doesn't make any difference now. If I don't buy that hat somebody else will."

"Well, you're not going to have it," said Jim. "It's too much money. Can't afford it."

Dot moved away from the window.

"I guess you're hungry," she remarked.

"Why do you say that?"

"Because you're so grouchy."

Following this statement the Franklins exchanged a few pungent remarks and arrived home in dignified silence. It was not until after supper that peace was declared. Nothing more was said about the hat with the paradise feathers, but the next morning Dorothy went to the hat shop and paid a five-dollar deposit. Before she left the hat was taken out of the window and put into a box.

"I'll call for it and pay the balance in about ten days," she promised. Dorothy had carefully ticked off each day on the calendar. The tenth day would be the first of the month, and on that day Jim always gave her the money for the monthly accounts as well as her allowance. Also, on the first of the month, the Franklins held a little celebration. Dot generally met her husband in town, and they had a good time eating food that was not half as well



cooked as Dorothy could prepare in her own kitchen.

For nine days Dorothy hugged her secret. She had twenty dollars saved up. Jim would give her forty for herself. That would make sixty.

"I've paid five," she thought triumphantly, "and that makes the lot. Sixty-five bucks. I won't have a cent to spend for a whole month, but it'll be worth the sacrifice just to see Jimmy's face when he sets eyes on those feathers."

On the morning of the first Dorothy got a shock and a lesson in counting on feathers before they are paid for.

"Honey," said Jim, jumping up from the breakfast table and taking a sheaf of notes from his pocket, "I'm sorry, but I'll have to leave you a bit short this month. There's enough here to settle all the bills, but I guess you'll have only about ten dollars for yourself. Never mind, I'll make it up to you next month."

Jim rushed off to catch his train. Dorothy counted the money he had given her. She compared the total with her list of bills she had to pay and discovered, to her dismay, that figures are stubborn things.

"I'll only have seven dollars left over. I'm thirty-three dollars short on my hat. If I don't get it they'll stick to the five I've paid. I can't ask them to wait a whole month. I won't. I'll—I'll get it somehow."

During the morning and until late afternoon Dorothy alternated between tears and stern determination, but there was only one outcome to be expected. She went to the hat shop and paid the balance of sixty dollars to the smiling woman. On her way back home she turned down a side street and went three blocks out of her way rather than pass the grocery store.

Standing before her mirror, with the plumed hat on her head, Dorothy had

a brief moment of pleasure, but it was very, very brief. Those paradise feathers were light enough, but they had brought with them a load of care. Over and over again Dorothy told herself that she would save and skimp and get the money together to settle the bill she had not paid, but she could not rid herself of the miserable feeling that kept stealing over her.

"Lots and lots of people owe money," she told herself. "It's silly of me to worry. But I wonder what Jim will say. I guess I won't tell him everything. I'll just say I had some money saved. If it's not quite true now it will be in a few weeks."

While she was getting ready to go to town, during the ride in the train, and right until she caught sight of Jim waiting for her at the terminus, Dorothy worried and planned how she would make up for her misappropriation of the home funds. Her head ached, and she was conscious that her heart was beating faster than usual.

## II.

"You look tired," said Jim. "We'll go and have a cup of coffee before we leave the station. That'll rest you up a bit."

Wondering that Jim could think or talk of anything but the hat she was wearing, Dot nodded dumbly. Surely it couldn't be possible that he hadn't noticed it. Men are blind to lots of things, but he couldn't be so blind as all that. When they sat down Dot flashed a glance under the brim of her wonderful hat. It amazed her to observe that Jim's face was as composed as usual.

"How do you like it?" she asked.

"Like what?"

"Don't tease. I mean my hat, of course."

"Your hat?"

Jim put his head on one side. He



frowned a little. Also, he seemed to be a trifle puzzled.

"Don't see anything special about it," he said at last. "I've seen you in prettier ones."

Dot's eyes sparkled angrily. She tossed her head. Over Jim's shoulder she saw a mirror. She saw her face; the brim, the crown of her hat, and then—her eyes widened to a fixed stare of horror. A cry of alarm came from Jim as Dorothy's hands flew up and she tore off her hat.

"Gone—stolen—look! Cut off!" She pointed a trembling finger at the inch or so of quills stitched to the side of her hat. "And"—she went on, trying to stifle her sobs—"I—I didn't pay the grocery bill."

While Jim was forgiving and comforting the girl of his heart another Jim, of a different build and character, entered a squalid, untidy room, and a frowzy woman came to meet him.

"What luck?" she asked. "Do we eat?"

Jim grinned and chuckled craftily. "Sure we do. We eat and drink. Say, I'm going to work that line again. It's the softest I've ever struck. Got on at Jamaica and 'tween there and town I got a couple of pokes, a stickpin, and, when the lights went off, just as the train got into the depot, I nipped these off a dame's headpiece. Ain't they peaches?"

Jim took off his hat and held it toward Mrs. Jim. Curled within the

crown of the hat were the two feathers that had lured Dorothy to dearly-paid-for extravagance.

The woman gave one look at the feathers; then she came at her astounded smaller half with clawing finger nails.

"Take them things outer here," she yelled. "Take 'em away. Burn 'em. Do what you like with 'em. Don't you know them paradise feathers is the unluckiest things there is? Take 'em away."

Jim, the dip, backed toward the door. A little later a more unpleasant odor than usual rose from the junk-littered back yard. Fifty dollars' worth of feathers went up in smoke, and, between his sneezing, Jim muttered: "How's a feller to know what'll please a woman?"

Back in the railroad station Dorothy Franklin smiled wanly as she pinned on her shorn hat.

"You're a dear to have been so nice to me," she whispered.

"That's nothing," said Jim. "You've has a nasty bump, and I guess none of us are perfect. You wait a while and I'll get you another pair of those feathers."

The smile vanished from Dot's face. "Don't you dare," she exclaimed. "I never want to see a paradise feather again."

Jim Franklin didn't put it into words, but his thoughts formed the question just expressed by Jim, the dip.

## STOLEN AMERICAN CARS KILL SALES IN MEXICO

THE American consul at Juarez, Mexico, John W. Dye, recently reported to the department of commerce at Washington that stolen American automobiles are so crowding the Mexican market in the northern provinces that the legitimate automobile sales business has been seriously affected.

According to the report the stolen cars come principally from California and points near the Mexican border, but some have come from places as far away as Chicago. The stolen cars are sold for about half their market value, and legitimate business has suffered appreciably.



# Signed by the Green Pansy

by Ernest Pascal

Author of "Was Lillian Right?" etc.

## CHAPTER I.

### "GREEN PANSY'S" THREAT.

**W**ITH his white face more than usually haggard, with his thin, characteristic hand nervously playing with an ivory paper knife, Jerome K. Lane sat alone in his great library. The quickening dusk of an early November evening was rapidly plunging the vast room into almost complete darkness. A door opened noiselessly, and Mr. Branksom, the most private of private secretaries, entered the room.

"Lights, Branksom—lights!" The voice was nervous—almost irritable.

The secretary pressed the switches, and the great room was bathed in cunningly mellowed light.

"Have you heard from Paris?" the voice went on monotonously.

"Rothschilds have cabled," Branksom answered, as he laid some papers on the desk.

For a few moments there was silence as Lane wearily perused the documents. Then he sighed and leaned back in his chair.

"See to it that Ferguson is informed in Buenos Ayres of my distinct approval," Lane said languidly. "Cable back to Paris that we will proceed as we have already arranged—and for Heaven's sake do not let me be worried with any unimportant details until Monday. I am tired out. You know,

Branksom," he went on, a note of interest creeping into his tired voice, "I suppose in this city of New York there are thousands of fools who envy me—envy the position of the richest man in the world! I tell you that I am tired out. I repeat: see to it that no unimportant details are brought to me before Monday."

The secretary cleared his throat nervously. "I quite understand, Mr. Lane," he said as he stood by the desk, "but as a matter of fact, there is a young man waiting now to see you, a young man by the name of—of er—Browne! I would not have troubled you, only he was so insistent that you had actually spoken to him yourself!"

The older man looked up. "Browne? Are you mad, Branksom? Oh, wait a minute! It's quite true—I did speak to him. Send him in."

Mr. Branksom withdrew in that peculiarly noiseless manner which is almost an art with secretaries of the great ones in finance, and a moment later he ushered in a young man of perhaps twenty-seven years.

Lane glanced up, and a glint of humor lighted his old eyes, for Harold Browne advanced with such a sure step, with such self-confidence emanating from him; and Lane was more accustomed to young men who, metaphorically speaking, crawled into his presence as though hypnotized by the billions which were associated with his name. But there



was no crawling about Harold Browne. Of just over medium height, with a pleasant, rather than a good-looking, face, he stepped briskly across the huge room, and came to a halt beside the desk.

"Well, I took you at your word, Mr. Lane—and here I am."

"So I see." Lane smiled. "So I see. Now let me refresh my memory—and you may as well sit down, Mr. Browne. It was our banking friend, Fowler, who introduced us, wasn't it? And he told me that you had brought to such a wonderfully successful issue his case of the Prendergast emeralds. Am I right?"

"In every detail, sir. Mr. Fowler was good enough to say that I had done more than any other private detective he had ever known."

"Well," the other replied, "I have a somewhat more startling case for you this time. I wonder that I trouble about it, but I feel it my civic duty—and the police!" The thin, white hand dismissed the police as though they did not exist. "I suppose most people would be frightened," he went on, "but, believe me, Mr. Browne—or, believe me not—death or threatened death has ceased to scare me. Still, it is not without interest."

From a drawer in the desk, the financier withdrew a sheet of ordinary, yellow typewriting paper, such a sheet as is usually employed to make carbon copies of letters. On it were some typewritten words, and instead of the usual signature the letter was signed with an extremely well executed little pen-and-ink drawing of a pansy, executed in a startlingly green ink.

Browne took the paper and studied it intently. It began without a formal address, and was undated.

Your wealth has become a byword throughout the civilized globe and I propose to relieve you of the tiniest fraction of so much responsibility. I am only going to tax you the ridiculously small sum of one hundred thousand dollars a year. Such a sum will be paid yearly on the tenth of November.

On the morning of the tenth you will send some agent at half past seven in the morning with one thousand hundred-dollar bills tied up in brown paper, to the corner of Nassau and Wall Streets. There, there will be a blind man selling pencils—and all the pencils will be a bright green in color. Your agent is to place the package of bills in the blind man's tray, and hurry on his way. It is needless to add that if you fail to do as ordered—if your agent deviates in the least from these instructions—if you attempt any futile arrest of the blind man—if you, in short, fail in any way to carry out these instructions, you will be given exactly three weeks in which to make your peace with your maker. The arrest of the blind man will avail you nothing, and will sign your death warrant for the same day as that on which you are to pay the money—so you will merely be quickening your own doom. On the other hand, I guarantee you perfect safety until the tenth of November next year in exchange for your hundred thousand dollars.

It remains but to give you in the most businesslike manner my references. I ask you to look back on the past twelve months among your monied acquaintances. Then answer these questions:

1. Why did Fulton Ward, the copper king, run his automobile over a cliff in California?
2. Why did George McTane, the eminent lawyer, die so mysteriously from "typhoid fever?"

3. Why did Carrie Blenton, the richest woman in Pennsylvania, take her own life?"

I could multiply such questions, but the answer to all of them is the same. All these worthy people ignored my demand upon them or tried to have me detected. Very cordially yours, and expecting your messenger on the tenth—

At the end had been drawn the green pansy.

Minutely, Browne studied the flimsy sheet.

"I am not trying to pull any super-brilliant stuff, Mr. Lane, just to impress you; but I do notice one or two things that are pretty obvious about this letter."

"That," remarked the multimillionaire sententiously, "is quite interesting."

"I should say, first of all," continued Browne, "that the writer is an educated person—and yet one unused to writing much. For example, he or she says: 'On



the morning of the tenth you will send some agent at half past seven in the morning.' That in itself proves my contention, because the word 'morning' is used twice in the same sentence, and no one accustomed to writing would employ the same word twice in such close juxtaposition."

"Go on," said Lane, smiling. "It is rarely that any one succeeds in interesting me."

Browne smiled his thanks. "Again, it is perfectly obvious that the machine used is a small, portable one. I have made a study of type, and I know every machine on the market. Still, I must not take up your time. First of all, I wish to know exactly what you want me to do."

"To-day," remarked Jerome Lane in a conversational tone, "is the ninth of November. To be precise, it is twenty minutes past five in the afternoon. You have then fourteen hours and ten minutes before that appointment must be kept at the corner of Wall Street and Nassau. I think, Mr. Browne, that I will place myself unreservedly in your hands. The reward for catching this gentleman—or gentlemen, as the case may be—will be exactly the hundred thousand dollars that they expect me to pay to-morrow morning. Of course, Mr. Browne, I might go to the police; I might have my secretary call up Washington; I might ask the governor to make himself responsible—but I'm so tired. I assure you it is not a pose when I tell you that I look on at this little drama in which it seems I am the principal figure, always excepting the villain, as though I were a spectator. You are too young to understand how very tired I am. So, Mr. Browne, instead of asking me this Friday afternoon what I want you to do—I will place myself unreservedly at your orders. It's up to you to see that I am alive three weeks from to-day."

Harold Browne got up and paced

across the room. When he sat down again, there was a determined line about his mouth, a more determined tilt to his chin.

"It's a huge responsibility, Mr. Lane, and you have offered a huge reward. Still, my sporting spirit is up—and as long as you are game, I am perfectly prepared to do my utmost to protect you, while we will see if we can collar this bunch."

Mr. Lane smiled his approval, but smiled somewhat wearily, and not in the least as though his life were at stake. Then very slowly and languidly he extended a hand.

"Somehow I believe you will win," Lane said as Browne grasped his outstretched hand. "Now, what are your instructions?"

"First of all," demanded Browne, "how did you come to receive this letter?"

"It was yesterday—and, before I forget it, I was going to send for you, Mr. Browne, on quite a different matter. Still, when I got this letter yesterday, I determined there and then that I would leave myself in your hands."

"But how," asked Browne, a little impatiently, "did you get the letter?"

"I was driving down Fifth Avenue," Lane explained, "at about three o'clock yesterday afternoon. I had a board meeting to attend, and the traffic was stopped for an instant at Forty-second Street. The policeman had just recognized me, and had signed to Pierre—my French chauffeur—to go ahead, although he held the other up and downtown traffic—when a dirty hand—man's, woman's, or child's, I don't know—but I saw the dirt—came into the window of my car, and this paper fluttered to the floor. At first I did not pick it up, as I thought it was some begging letter, and we were well south of Thirty-fourth Street before I did so. Now you know as much about the affair as I do."



"Good," said Browne shortly. "Now, as to our fighting weapons. I haven't very much capital. I suppose I can have all the expense money I want?"

Lane smiled. Then, opening a drawer in the desk, he laid neat little piles of one-hundred-dollar bills on the shiny mahogany, piling them up and up as though he were a child building card castles.

"That," Lane said quietly, "totals up to one hundred and ten thousand dollars. I thought you might want to pay this gentleman, and then I added ten thousand for expenses. Help yourself."

Browne laughed. "It is something to be doing business with the richest man in the world. I suppose, though, that this is so much chicken feed to you. I'm going to take it all, Mr. Lane, simply because I have no plans. If, to-morrow morning, I feel that your life will be lost if I don't pay—I shall pay, and trust to luck and my wits to get it back afterward. Still, I don't expect I shall have to pay. May I have that brief case?"

Browne pointed to an ordinary leather brief case that lay on the desk. On Lane nodding his assent, Browne methodically packed away the hundred-dollar bills inside the case. Then he looked thoughtfully at his client. Lane was a small man—thin, almost to the point of emaciation, with sparse, gray hair, and a closely trimmed gray mustache and beard. Browne's eyes glinted with humor.

"I'm afraid my prescription is not going to be a very pleasant one," he began; "still, if it saves your life, I guess you won't mind. First of all, Mr. Lane, I want you to send for your secretary and tell him that you are coming with me on a little yachting trip. Then have your man pack a week-end suit case for you, and take care that he includes the oldest dress suit you possess. By the way, does your secretary or your manservant or your chauffeur—

in short, does any one—know of the threat to murder you?"

"Not a soul," the millionaire answered as he pressed an electric bell under his desk.

Browne sat back in his chair and waited while Lane gave instructions to his secretary, and until Lane's manservant, Dale, had placed a suit case in the library and had softly withdrawn. A few minutes later, and Harold Browne was speeding uptown in a taxicab, while the richest man in the world obediently sat beside him.

"It's lucky," Browne commented, as he patted the brief case containing the money, "that you have hardly ever been photographed. I suppose, for a great celebrity, yours is the least known face in America."

"That has its uses," Lane agreed. "Still, tell me. Are we really going yachting?"

"On the contrary," said Browne, with a smile, "we are first of all going to my own apartment."

Browne went on to explain how he lived on Seventieth Street and Central Park West in an apartment with his widowed mother and his sister Daphne. Then, as a man will when mounted on his favorite hobby horse, Browne, forgetting for the moment the importance of his companion, dilated at some length on this sister of his.

Daphne, it appeared to the somewhat amused millionaire, was the peachiest sister that ever a fellow possessed. Daphne was twenty-one—Heaven bless her! Daphne was as pretty as a girl on a magazine cover, with real, gold hair and great, violet eyes! Every fellow who ever saw Daphne fell in love with her. Then, not only was Daphne a peach, but according to her infatuated brother, Daphne was a prince of good fellows. And brainy! Why, he, Harold, had sometimes allowed Daphne to help him out in a difficult case, and not only was Daphne the only girl alive who



could absolutely keep a secret, not only was Daphne almost as good a detective as was Harold himself, but Daphne had the pluck of ten men. Once, on the case of the Joplin murder, it was Daphne who had fought her way down the stairs in the Third Avenue tenement house at the point of her very excellent Colt. But Harold was sorry—he had not meant to bore Mr. Lane. Still, every man had to have his hobby, and Daphne was Harold's.

Arrived at the apartment, Browne hurried his visitor through the lobby and into the elevator. Evidently, Lane mused, the young detective was making money, for the apartment house was a good one, and the elevator boy showed a well-tipped eagerness to be of service.

Browne opened the door of his apartment cautiously. "Come on," he whispered, "this way," and he led Lane into his bathroom.

"Did you ever shave yourself as a young man?" Browne asked, as he fitted a new blade into a safety razor.

Lane nodded as Browne, taking a pair of scissors, started to clip the beard and mustache of the richest man in the world.

It was a greatly changed Jerome F. Lane who later emerged from the bathroom, his somewhat sunken cheeks as freshly shaved as though no beard ever had grown there.

A clock chimed the quarter, and Lane looked at his watch.

"A quarter past six," he commented.

"You had better have some food with us, Mr. Lane, if you will," Browne remarked, "before you start on your new career—a career that I hope will not be a very long one."

At that moment the door of the apartment was opened and a girl paused for a second on the threshold.

"Hello, Harold!" she exclaimed cheerily. Then, catching sight of her brother's visitor, she glanced inquiringly at him.

"Let me introduce Mr. Langdon—my sister, Daphne." Browne smiled.

"How do you do, Mr. Langdon?" Daphne greeted him. "I suppose you like the name of Langdon better than Lane, don't you?"

"Now how in the world did you know who I was, young lady?" asked Lane.

"To begin with, Mr. Lane," the girl replied, laughing, "I have made it my business—as sometimes I help out my brother—to know the faces of all the prominent people I can. Then, Harold told me this morning at breakfast that he was going to talk to more millions to-day than I had ever heard of."

"Can you beat her—the little devil!" Her brother grinned delightedly.

"Mother's out—dissipating as usual," Daphne said, as she led the way into the living room. "She's gone over to Brooklyn to spend the night with Aunt Martha. It's just as well, now that Mr. Lane is here."

"Where's Nancy?" asked Harold, referring to the colored maid.

"Nancy is just tickled to death," Daphne explained with a giggle. "Her cousin is dead—up in Harlem—and Nancy is having one grand time at the funeral. I'll fix some supper myself."

Daphne busied herself at the table, clearing away a pile of magazines preparatory to laying the cloth.

"What's this?" asked her brother. Taking one of Daphne's little hands in his own, he pointed to a big diamond ring that gleamed on the third finger.

Daphne blushed and then laughed.

"I think I can play the detective here." Lane smiled as he sat down in a deep armchair. "I'm a regular Nick Carter—and something tells me that there is an engagement in the family."

"I had not meant to tell you while Mr. Lane was here," Daphne said. "Still, it's all settled. I am to be married in a few months."

"But who to?" demanded Harold.

"Why to David Hurd, of course—the



helpless darling!" Daphne summed it up.

"Well, I am—no, I'm hanged if I am! David's a very good fellow! Still, I don't know why you're marrying him. He is the most incapable, unbusinesslike, helpless——"

"And that's why I love him!" insisted Daphne. "What on earth would he do without me? Mr. Lane, I appeal to you." Daphne smiled. "If you were a girl, wouldn't you like to marry a dreamy darling of a singer, a man with a voice like an angel, who is capable of taking, say, the subway to Brooklyn, to find himself afterward on a Fifth Avenue bus going to Fort George? Don't you see the fascination?"

It was characteristic of both Harold and his sister that they accepted the man of so many millions with a frank friendliness that ignored any question as to the difference in their opinions. Enough for Daphne that Jerome K. Lane was her brother's guest.

So they chatted, and Lane found himself unbending more than was his wont. It was as they were taking their after-dinner coffee that Harold sprang his surprise on the financier.

Daphne was cleaning up in the kitchen, and Harold, first glancing at his watch, leaned toward Lane.

"I don't want to take any chances, Mr. Lane, and it is so typical of Daphne's influence that I have forgotten the business in hand for a moment. Still we ought to be off. It seems that you are without fear, but the situation is really very grave. My responsibility is enormous, and you have placed yourself under my orders."

"Quite so." Lane nodded gravely. It had been a relaxation for the financier, this simple meal with such charmingly simple people, and he regretted being pulled back to the realities of life. A lonely man was the millionaire, for Lane had never married, and he was without a blood relation in the world, so

that the atmosphere of Harold's home had doubly appealed to him.

"I wish that I could keep you here until I have queered this crowd," Harold went on. "Still, if I was watched coming to your house, this place is not safe for you. Mr. Lane, I want you to pose in a very humble position for a day or two; I want you to take a position as a waiter at the Hotel Vanastridge!"

"Are you serious?" asked Lane.

"Never more so in my life!" Browne assured him. "The idea came to me as I was talking to you in your library. First of all I thought of sending you to play golf, of telling you to forget all danger; but with the richest man in the world I dare not take a chance—and I ask you, Mr. Lane, who will think of looking for you—minus your beard—among the waiters of so large a hotel? Again, it will enable me to communicate with you without arousing the slightest suspicion. I realize how disagreeable it must be for you, but if you will only use your sense of humor it won't be so bad!"

Lane laughed dryly.

"I told you I was under your orders," he said pleasantly. "But how on earth are you going to get me the job?"

"That's too long a story," Harold said, as he rose from the table. "Not so very long ago I saved the life of Gaston Lefevre, the celebrated headwaiter at the Vanastridge. Gaston is French; I have only to ask him a favor, and the whole hotel is mine. I can guarantee that you will be well treated, Mr. Lane, and I shall ask him to see that you get a bedroom to yourself, although it will be in the servants' quarters."

Taking his leave of Daphne, and having first changed into an old dress suit that he had brought with him in the suit case, the multimillionaire accompanied Harold out of the apartment, and went down in the elevator with him.

As they crossed the pavement to a



waiting taxi, which Browne had summoned by telephone, a small boy passed nonchalantly by. Then, seeing Browne, he stopped to stare as he bit into a large banana that he was holding in his hand.

"Very dangerous," commented Lane, as he got into the cab. "Did you see that boy throw that banana peel on the sidewalk?"

But Browne did not hear him. At the moment he was wondering if he had been altogether prudent in leaving that large sum of money in his apartment.

The cab sped downtown and pulled up at the service entrance of the vast hotel. Hurrying Lane through the doors, Browne encountered Gaston, the headwaiter, as the latter was supervising the crowd of waiters.

"A word with you, my friend," Browne said after he had greeted the *maitre d'hôtel*. "This man Langdon is a friend of mine. I don't want you to ask any questions, but if you will do me a favor——"

"The favor—'e ees already accomplished!" Gaston interrupted him, beaming. "For you, my frien' Gaston Le-fevre make nothin' of favors!"

"Then Gaston," said Browne, "let Langdon be a waiter for a night or two—and see to it that no attention which can be noticed is paid to him—but let him down as lightly as you can. Then, if he could have a bedroom to himself, I——"

"Eet ees done! So! Mistaire Langdon you are engage'."

With a whispered word to the millionaire, Browne hurried out of the hotel. As Harold came out on the Avenue, he glanced downtown where the red light in the tower of the Metropolitan Building gleamed eight times. Eight o'clock Harold reflected; in eleven hours and a half he must meet the blind man who would be selling the bright green pencils at Wall and Nassau streets.

If only, Harold mused, as he turned up town he could get some information

as to the deaths of Fulton Ward, the copper king, or of George McTane, the lawyer, or of Carrie Blenton, the richest woman in Pennsylvania, then he might find some clew as to the identity of the enemy against whom he was working. At home, Harold kept a book of press clippings that dealt with such matters. Evidently, then, his best course would be to return home and devote an hour or so to study.

Hailing a passing taxi, Browne had himself driven home.

Having paid off the driver, he turned to cross the sidewalk, stepped on the banana peel which the small boy had thrown on the pavement, fell heavily to the ground—and the next moment a shroud of darkness rose up and blotted out his world.

## CHAPTER II.

### AT THE VANASTRIDGE.

WHEN Browne regained consciousness, he was on his own bed, and his nostrils were assailed by the pungent odor of chloroform. It was Daphne who was bending over him.

"It's all right, Harold, dear," Daphne was saying, and then it was that Harold noticed the doctor.

"My office is downstairs," the doctor explained, "and I had you brought up here, as the elevator boy told me you lived here. I gave you a whiff of chloroform to prevent you from coming 'round too soon. You've broken your leg, and I've set it for you—quite a simple fracture. You'll be right as rain in five or six weeks."

He fussed out of the room. Harold, to his surprise, felt amazingly well under the circumstances. Cautiously, his hand felt the splints and bandages in which the doctor had already set the broken limb. Then suddenly recollections of his trust flashed across him—remembrance of his great responsibility.



"What time is it?" he asked breathlessly.

Daphne, glancing at a little, gold wrist watch, told him that it was a minute past nine.

Harold's next question dealt with the brief case.

"I found it stuffed full with money after you had gone," Daphne answered. "It's quite safe. I put it in my room."

Harold breathed a sigh of relief. Then Daphne, sitting on the edge of the bed, looked steadfastly at her brother.

"You may as well tell me what all this is about. I have helped you before, and it looks as if I must help you again. Don't argue about it—tell me."

So Harold told of his interview with Lane, of the tremendous responsibility which he had so lightly assumed.

"It is not as though we had all the time there is," he concluded, "for some one has to meet the blind pencil vender at half past seven to-morrow morning. It seems that I shall have to pay and then chance getting the money back later."

"Pay? Pay nothing!" Daphne's clear young voice rang out as a challenge. "If a perfectly healthy young girl with her head put on right can't protect the richest man in the world from a gang of blackmailing murderers—especially when she can seek advice from her brother, the smartest detective in the United States—well, then, I'll eat my next Easter hat!"

Harold looked at her in admiration. "That's all very well," he admitted. "But it is not our risk alone. What would happen—how should I feel—if anything went wrong with Jerome K. Lane?"

But argument was futile. Daphne's mind was made up. She and she alone would protect Lane, and the best that Harold could get from her was a reluctant promise that she would first see the multimillionaire and obtain from

him formal consent to act as his guardian.

"I must get into evening dress," Daphne remarked once she had come to this agreement with her brother. "Then for the Hotel Vanastridge, and an interview with Langdon, the waiter!"

She was gone from the room an incredibly short time, for she was back—a delicious vision in her clinging, black velvet gown, above which rose the white wonder of her young shoulders—before the clock chimed the half hour. But on Daphne's pretty face lay an expression of bewildered perplexity.

"What's up?" asked Harold.

Daphne carried the telephone that stood on a little table at the foot of the bed and placed it so that it was within easy reach of her brother's hand before replying. Then she laughed. "A most extraordinary thing has happened," Daphne said as she stood looking down at her brother. "I'm not quite sure whether it's altogether proper to tell you. Still, the laundry came home this afternoon, and I opened the package before dinner. I always like white silk stockings with this dress, and I went to the pile of laundry just now to get some. There were three pairs—and one pair was marked."

"Marked? What do you mean?"

"Look!" exclaimed Daphne, as she handed a pair of silk stockings to Harold.

Eagerly he examined them—and there across the white silk top was the clear imprint of the green pansy.

"Well," said Harold slowly, "what do you know about this?"

"That," returned Daphne smilingly, "is what I propose to find out. Whoever it is knows that we are in on the scheme—and this is a warning to us to keep our hands off. Now I'm off to the Vanastridge. I know how hard it is for you, dear, but all you can do is to lie still and get well. I will phone you the second I have news."



Daphne, throwing around her shoulders an opera cloak with a high collar of black fox that formed as it were a frame for her flowerlike face, hastened down the corridor of the apartment, and stepped out into the hall. As she did so, she glanced back at her own front door—and there on the white enamel were printed, one above the other, three impressions of those mysterious green pansies! Evidently they wished to warn her beyond possibility of error of their perfect knowledge that the Browne family was in on the affair.

For an instant Daphne hesitated. Then she decided that it would be useless to tell her brother. It would only add to his uneasiness. Letting herself into the apartment again with her latch-key, Daphne passed into her own room, and, opening a drawer of her bureau, she took out the brief case full of money, and a small revolver. Slipping the latter into the deep pocket of her opera cloak, Daphne carried the brief case into her brother's room.

"I came back to give you this," she said.

Harold smiled up at her as he opened the case. "Here, you will need money," he said as he handed her five one-hundred dollar bills. Then he placed the case under his pillow. "Hand me my gun, Daphne. One never knows. It's in the pocket of my coat."

Daphne did so, and a few minutes later she was being driven in a taxi toward the Hotel Vanastridge.

The celebrated Florentine Room was at that time nearly empty of guests, for the dinner hour was long passed, and supper had not yet begun. Daphne walked up and down the hall twice, then learned what she wanted to know. Regally she swept into the dining room and chose a table that she knew was in the station assigned to Waiter Langdon.

Slowly Daphne drew off her long, white gloves, while she glanced around the room. A few couples were dotted

here and there in the big restaurant: a young man of decided Hebraic countenance sat at a near-by table and brazenly ogled Daphne. In reply, Daphne did not even honor him with her contempt. Her glance simply swept over him, and he was forgotten.

A man and a woman sitting at a table directly in front of Daphne and some half dozen tables away, caught and held Daphne's glance. The man was a thin, gray-haired, mild-looking person, while the girl with him was flauntingly beautiful, in her early twenties. She seemed to be arguing with the man, as though she were persuading him to do something against his will; and the man was persisting in his mild refusals.

But at this juncture in Daphne's meditations, the door that led to the service room was pushed open, and Jerome K. Lane, the richest man in the world, hurried in his waiter's garb across the floor to Daphne's table.

Respectfully he bent by her side as he tendered her the menu, and Daphne was hard put to restrain her smiles.

"Is anything the matter, Miss Browne?" Lane asked, as he paused by her chair.

"I came to tell you," Daphne said in a low voice, "that my brother met with an accident just outside our apartment. He's in bed with a broken leg—nothing very serious—but he insisted that I was to come and tell you."

"That's too bad," Lane said sympathetically. "But why did you come to tell me?"

"Mr. Lane," Daphne said earnestly, "I made my brother tell me the details of your case—and you know that I have often helped him. He refused to let me assume the responsibility, not because he does not trust me, not because he has not almost as much confidence in me as he has in himself, but because he fears for my safety!"

"And have you any fear yourself?" asked the millionaire.



Daphne's mocking laughter rang out before she could check it. "I have never feared anything excepting a wasp or a mouse in all my life!" she told him. Then, very seriously, she regarded her brother's client. "Mr. Lane," she asked, "are you content to let me take my brother's place? Are you content to let me stand between you and this gang—because, Mr. Lane, I am absolutely confident that I can bring the case to a successful issue."

Lane looked at her while he pretended to be busy with the silverware. "I am quite content to leave my case in such pretty hands," he whispered. "Has anything occurred of interest?"

"Yes," Daphne replied. "The most extraordinary thing has occurred. The man—the woman—the gang—whoever they are—have left their imprint behind them at my apartment."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"They were impolite enough," Daphne told him, smiling, "to imprint with the green pansy not only my front door, but a pair of my white silk stockings!"

"Then they know that you have been called in on my case!"

"Precisely, Mr. Lane. But as long as you are content to let me act for you, I am confident that even if I am forced to meet the blind man at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets to-morrow morning with the money, later I will recover it for you, and put these people behind the bars."

Lane looked at her with admiration in his eyes. "All right," he agreed. "From now on you boss the show. What do you want me to do?"

"I want you," Daphne said distinctly as the headwaiter passed by their table, "to bring me a plain omelet and an order of French fried potatoes."

Lane bowed and retreated behind the service doors. Shortly he returned, and, as he crossed the room, his eyes rested upon the couple whom Daphne had noticed.

As he placed her order before Daphne, he bent close to her ear.

"You see the elderly man with gray hair ahead of you, talking to the young girl?"

"Yes, I've been looking at them," Daphne answered.

"It is lucky that I am shaved and disguised, more or less," Lane went on, "for, although I do not know the girl—that man is my private secretary, Eric Branksom!"

Gaston, the headwaiter, hovered again, and Lane hurried away to his duties. Thoughtfully Daphne munched the food before her. Her low brow was puckered into a tiny frown. Was it possible that Branksom had any connection with the blackmailing letter? She strained her ears in a hopeless endeavor to catch what Branksom was saying to his beautiful companion. But they were sitting too far away, and at that moment Branksom, who had already paid his bill, rose from the table, and, preceded by the young girl, walked rapidly out of the room. Immediately Daphne decided what she should do.

It was essential for Daphne to have one more word with Lane before she followed—if it were not already too late—Branksom and his girl companion.

Gaston Lefevre again passed the table. Daphne raised her eyebrows and Gaston hurried to her side. "Please, Mr. Lefevre," Daphne said, smiling at him, "I am Harold Browne's sister. Would you be so kind as to send my waiter—Mr. Langdon—to my table at once?"

But assuredly Gaston was at the service of the sister of his friend—if he might call him so—Monsieur Browne!

Gaston hurried off, leaving Daphne sitting there drumming impatiently with her fingers on the table. Presently the headwaiter crossed the room to her side.

"An extraordinaire thing 'as 'appened, ma'mselle," he said excitedly, "but they tell me in the service room that this moment Mistaire Langdon re-



ceive' some message—an' without an if you please, or an excuse me, 'e 'as just thrown up his job an' leave the hotel!"

Daphne was amazed. She called for her check, and, when it was brought, a startled little cry escaped her. Below the total of her bill was neatly stamped, in vividly colored ink—the green pansy!

### CHAPTER III.

#### NEW COMPLICATIONS.

**O**BVIOUSLY, Daphne argued, there must be some connection between the secretary, Branksom, and the sudden disappearance of his employer. Besides, she had received warning that those who hid behind the pseudo-name of the green pansy knew of the millionaire's masquerading as a waiter; how else explain the green sign on Daphne's check? Surely the secretary must be in with the gang—and why did he leave so suddenly just after the millionaire must have been spirited away?

At least it meant action, and, slight as the clue was, it was the only one on which Daphne had to work. So, if she could only get outside the hotel in time, it was obviously up to her to follow the secretary and his pretty girl companion.

Hurrying through the lobby, Daphne cast quick glances on either side of her, but without avail. She spared a precious moment to inquire at the door from the taxi starter whether Branksom had already left; but too many gray-haired men accompanied by beautiful girls passed in and out of the huge caravansery for the starter to remember any particular couple. Impatiently Daphne swept by him. A cab hailed her—and then another—but she paid them no heed.

There was but one chance, and that a meager one. At Fifth Avenue and a busy, crosstown street the traffic might be held up, and in the block of traffic, Daphne might espy the conveyance in which Branksom and his companion

would be riding. But which way—uptown or downtown? Daphne decided that it was nearly an even chance—and yet uptown seemed more probable. She glanced at the watch on her wrist, and subconsciously noted that it was then ten minutes to ten—that in nine hours and forty minutes the appointment should be kept at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets.

Then, pushing her way through the evening crowds, and heeding not a curious stare or two that greeted so beautiful a girl on foot in evening dress all by herself, Daphne hurried on her way. And for once luck was with her! Daphne glowed with inward satisfaction as she noticed the hand of the detaining traffic policeman—and jammed in that uptown stream was a bright, purple limousine—brilliantly lit from the roof—and in that purple limousine sat Eric Branksom, the private secretary of the richest man in the world, while by his side lolled in luxurious ease the dark-haired girl whom Daphne had seen in the Hotel Vanastridge!

Daphne edged to the curb and looked about for a taxi. Although at least a dozen taxis helped to cram that traffic stream, not one of them was empty. But luck was again with Daphne, for, lounging on the driver's seat of a well-appointed brougham was a chauffeur in livery, and in the chauffeur's mouth was set at an impertinent angle a large, black cigar, proclaiming aloud to any thoughtful person that the owner of the car was not in the near neighborhood. Daphne smiled, and it happened that the chauffeur caught her inquiring glance. Mechanically his arm swept behind him as he opened the door of the luxurious coupé.

"I see you're without a taxi, miss," he said, grinning. "The boss has sent me home for the night—and I never object to making a dollar or two if I can."

In a twinkling Daphne's foot was on the low step. "Just the man I'm look-



ing for," she told him. "I'd sooner have you than a taxi—as you like money. You see that purple limousine ahead of you? Well, inside is my husband, and I am doing a little detective work. You follow that purple limousine, if he drives to the coast—and it's worth ten dollars an hour, with a minimum of twenty dollars."

"You're on, ma'am!" The fellow chuckled. "Gee! I hope I have to chase that husband of yours all night!"

Daphne got in and closed the door after her, and at that instant the policeman released the traffic, and the car purred smoothly away uptown in the wake of the purple limousine.

On went the purple limousine, and on purred the brougham in its wake. Up Fifth Avenue as straight as a line went the limousine with its pursuing attendant—up past millionaire's row and on beyond to that part of the Avenue where, extreme riches having apparently exhausted, the famous street grows somewhat shoddy in its higher numbers. On went the car, and on followed Daphne behind it. But where on earth could Branksom be going? It was improbable that so rich a man—for even the private secretary of Jerome K. Lane must be a wealthy man—would live so far uptown. His companion, too, looked far too expensive to live, say, above the eighties—and here they were at One Hundred and Fifth Street!

On still uptown they went, where the purple limousine swung sharply to the left and purred west on One Hundred and Tenth Street; then to the right on Lenox Avenue and still uptown. Daphne settled down for a long run. Her chauffeur evidently found no difficulty in keeping just the right distance between his brougham and the purple limousine. The next minute they were flying over a bridge, and the Island of Manhattan was left behind them.

Then onto the Grand Concourse, and the limousine quickened its pace. The

chauffeur at the wheel of the brougham pressed his foot on the accelerator, and the car leaped out like a living thing to keep that same even distance between it and the big machine ahead.

Daphne was beginning to enjoy herself; a job like the one in hand was to her sport-loving nature like a successful ball or evening party to the average girl of her own age. She loved, did Daphne, the sense of power—the sense of doing things—that this career of her brother sometimes permitted her. And this case, the case of the richest man in the world, appealed to her imagination. The green pansy had lent to what was, perhaps, an ordinary blackmailing scheme a touch of romance, and Daphne was the last girl in the world to turn up her nose at romance. In the excitement of it all, Daphne for the time was even forgetting her engagement to David Hurd, the—as Daphne expressed it to herself—"helpless darling!"

So the cars sped up the Concourse, and then to Daphne's consternation the brougham suddenly seemed to lose power, slowed up, and in a moment came to a stop beside a service station.

"I'm sorry, ma'am," the chauffeur said, putting his head in at the window, "but I never knew we would be coming this distance, and we are all out of gas. Keep your heart up, though; I'll catch 'em yet. Gas there," he bellowed to the attendant, "and for the love of Mike get a hustle on!"

The attendant bent to the pump, and the chauffeur again put his head in at the window. "I'd like some money, if it's all the same to you," he said.

For answer, Daphne handed him five five-dollar bills.

"Don't worry about money," she urged him, realizing how much the success of her scheme rested with this fellow. "There is the minimum of twenty I promised you, and you can buy all the gas you like with the extra five. Another ten if you catch that car."



With a satisfied smile the man took the proffered bills, and turned to urge greater speed on the panting attendant.

To Daphne it seemed in her great impatience that the tank would never be filled, but at length the chauffeur jumped to his seat, flung in the clutch, and the brougham glided away and picked up speed with every yard.

Daphne, leaning forward in the car, peered through the murk of the November night, but no consoling tail lamp gleamed to bring her comfort.

On sped the brougham, and, when they had been going four minutes—although it seemed half an hour to the impatient Daphne—they reached a crossroad. Again the car came to a stop.

"Which way shall I take? They are not in sight!" the chauffeur called out, and Daphne realized that she must make instant decision and again trust to her luck.

"To the right," she shouted, "to the right," and the car leaped forward along Fordham Road.

Another minute, and then Daphne realized that her judgment had been correct, for, under the light of a roadside lamp ahead of them, flashed the purple limousine.

"I told you I would pick 'em up," the chauffeur called back to her, but Daphne only urged him to greater speed.

On sped the purple limousine, eating up the miles as though they were yards, and Daphne settled herself down with a contented little sigh in a corner of the luxuriously fitted car.

It was as they were leaving Pelham behind them that the purple limousine slowed down, turned sharply to the left down a narrow lane, and then to the right through the gates of a small country estate. The brougham pulled up on the main road, and the chauffeur, descending from his seat, came to the door and looked in at Daphne.

"He's gone in there," he explained unnecessarily. "What are you going to do?"

Daphne, gathering her cloak around her, got out in her thin, satin slippers onto the muddy road. "Wait here for me—wait if you wait all night," she commanded him.

The chauffeur touched his cap, and Daphne slowly picked her way up the muddy lane. Turning in through the gates, Daphne gained the gravel driveway and noticed a big, one-storied bungalow a few yards away. The purple limousine was already driving around to a garage that stood at the left of the house. Daphne waited until she heard the doors of the garage close on the car, and then, leaving the walk for the lawn, she softly made her way up to the house. Lights came from three windows—which Daphne judged, and judged correctly, to be those belonging to the hall, the dining room, and the kitchen. The rest of the big, rambling bungalow was in darkness. As she looked, though, through the dining-room window, Daphne started back with a little expression of amusement. Mr. Branksom, the eminently respectable secretary of Jerome K. Lane, was kneeling by a low divan with his arms around the waist of his pretty companion, with whom he seemed to be pleading vehemently.

At that moment, Daphne noticed that yet another window far to the right of the house was illuminated for a moment. The shades were pulled down, and the lights went off again almost immediately, but not before Daphne had seen a shadow on the shade—and was more or less confident that that shadow belonged to the richest man in the world!

Instantly Daphne determined to get into the house. Making her way to the right, Daphne found a side door. Trying the handle cautiously, Daphne discovered the door to be unlocked. Very softly she opened it and found herself



in a dimly lighted corridor carpeted by a thick Oriental matting.

Down this corridor, then, Daphne tiptoed until she reached a door on the right. Entering here, she found what she expected—the drawing-room which led to the dining room, and was separated from that room by heavy portières of velvet. Unblushingly Daphne listened.

"But you are so sweet!" Branksom was saying. "How can I help it that I am a married man?"

"Well, why don't you get a divorce?" the girl answered with that accent which is so peculiar to Broadway. "Gee! Most girls would be insulted!"

"Insulted with a love like mine?" Branksom went on fatuously, and Daphne heard the little giggle of conquest that escaped from the girl's scarlet mouth. "I told you that I can't get a divorce! My wife lives out in the Middle West, and she has never given me cause."

"You have a nerve, haven't you? I wonder what old money-bags would say if he knew that his nice, respectable secretary was just crazy about poor little me? But I tell you, Eric, and I tell you straight, if you can't make that string of pearls a reality instead of a dream—well, I know lots of fellows who can."

Branksom whispered his reply, and Daphne could only guess as to its nature by the girl's next remark.

"I always said you old men were the worst!" She toned down the seeming harshness of her remark by another of her typical giggles. "But I do wonder what Lane will say if——"

Again Daphne lost the sense of her speech. Realizing that her position was a perilous one, and that a warmer clew seemed to await her in one of the bedrooms, Daphne tiptoed back along the passage, trying each door as she came to it. And each door was unlocked, and each room was both unlighted and

untenanted, until Daphne came to the door which she roughly calculated must belong to the room in which she had seen, against the shade, the shadow of Jerome K. Lane.

To Daphne's surprise, not only was there no light from the transom, but the door was locked. Bending down, Daphne tried the lock with a hairpin that she detached from the golden wonder of her curls.

There was no key in the lock, although the door resisted her efforts to open it. And as Daphne listened, she thought that she heard some one moving about in the room.

Going back along the corridor, Daphne extracted a key from one of the other bedroom doors. Returning to the locked door, she essayed the key. To her delight, the key fitted, and a second later Daphne had entered the room, closing and locking the door behind her. Daphne's hand felt for a switch. She found it by the door—and the room was bathed in light.

But the room was empty!

Daphne's glance took it all in: the luxurious furnishings, the Louis Seize bed, the thick, velvet-piled carpet. Still, lying on the bed was a man's well-worn dress suit and a stiff white dress shirt. Eagerly Daphne examined the coat. In the lining of the inside breast pocket was a small label that bore the name of 'Poole, Saville Row, London,' while below it, in ink, was the name of Jerome K. Lane!

So she had been correct. But where was the millionaire? Daphne was about to turn to the window, when her eye alighted on the dress shirt that lay beside the suit on the Louis Seize bed—and on the stiff, white bosom of the shirt was clearly marked the sign of the green pansy.

With a little cry of surprise, Daphne stood there holding the shirt in her hands. What on earth did it all mean? Wherever she turned the sign of the



green pansy was there first as though to mock her efforts.

Tossing the shirt aside, Daphne went quickly to the window that stood wide open. She looked out. The moon had risen, bathing the garden in its light. Below her the ground was only about four feet away, and at that little distance Daphne could see in the moonlight the print of footsteps in the soft mud of the flower bed beneath.

Instantly, scrambling through the window, Daphne let herself down into the garden. But the footsteps told her nothing except that they had been freshly made. Daphne was frankly in a quandary. For a few minutes she had no idea of what course of action to pursue.

Then Daphne noticed that a car had recently been turned on the soft turf of the lawn. But whose car? Daphne, hastening to the garage, peered through the window. A chauffeur was busy on the motor of the purple limousine. Evidently, then, the car that had so recently desecrated the grass of the lawn was not the limousine. Was it possible that Lane had been forcibly removed from his secretary's house? But where? And would it be wiser to try to force a confession from Branksom or to pursue the abducted financier? Daphne came to the conclusion that, as she acted without official authority from the police, Branksom would refuse to obey her. Even at the point of her gun he could easily throw her off the scent. No, Daphne decided that, mad as the attempt might be, she must try to pick up the trail of the multimillionaire.

Making her way out of the grounds and down the muddy, little lane, Daphne came upon the chauffeur with the brougham, who was patiently waiting for her on the main road.

"I half thought you might be in the big limousine—not that purple one, but another that pulled out a few minutes ago," the man remarked as he opened

the door of the brougham. "A big boat it was, and it passed me as silent as a cat."

"Which way did it go?" asked Daphne, as she got into the brougham.

"Toward the city," the man replied, as he closed the door on her.

"Fifty dollars if you catch them," Daphne said briskly, and the chauffeur sprang to his seat and pressed the starting switch.

Turning the car, the man drove rapidly toward New York. It was just before they turned into Fordham Road that a car coming up behind them honked imperiously for the right of way. The brougham swerved from the center of the road, and Daphne, looking through the window, saw the same purple limousine hurtle past, with its cut-out roaring as it swayed along the broad road. More—swiftly as the car passed the brougham, Daphne had time to glimpse a little drama that was going on within the soft luxury of the purple limousine. In it, Daphne's own chosen man—her formally accepted fiancé, David Hurd, the singer—was apparently holding down by force the struggling girl whom Daphne had first seen that night in the Vanastridge Hotel in the company of Eric Branksom!

Daphne clenched her little fists, and then flung up a soft, white arm across her eyes. It was as though some one had stabbed her, and, brief as that glimpse had been of the occupants of the purple limousine, Daphne knew without peradventure of misunderstanding that the man who struggled with the beautiful young girl was none other than he whom she had promised to marry.

Then Daphne's pride as well as her pluck came to her rescue; also her common sense; and Daphne determined that however damning the testimony of her own eyes was, she would not condemn David until she had given him an opportunity to clear himself—if clear himself he could. But where was Brank-



som? And how did David Hurd come to be mixed up in all this weird conglomeration of the affair of the green pansy?

For some minutes Daphne, oblivious to her actual surroundings, gave herself up unrestrainedly to her speculations. Then, as though suddenly realizing the fact that her chauffeur had turned at the crossroad, not toward New York, but in the opposite direction, and was now speeding along a totally unfamiliar road, Daphne, grasping the car telephone, spoke sharply:

"Where are you going?"

No answer came back. Either the fellow was pretending not to hear or there was something the matter with the speaking tube. Again Daphne spoke imperiously, but, getting no answer, she rose from her seat, and, letting down the front window, she clapped the fellow sharply on the shoulder.

"Where are you going?" she demanded again.

"Sit down and keep quiet or you may regret it," the fellow returned gruffly.

Obediently Daphne sank back among the cushions, but obedient only for a moment! This was a new twist to the affair, and Daphne was trained not to act before she had thought.

Her glance wandered up to the white silk canopy inside the car, and Daphne noted with a little sinking sensation the sign of the green pansy neatly impressed upon the roof.

So the car—the obliging chauffeur—were all part of the same mysterious plot! Still Daphne did not intend to submit quietly. Perhaps a gun judiciously prodded between the shoulders of the disobedient chauffeur would make him see reason!

Mechanically Daphne's hand went inside the deep pocket of her opera cloak. Hardly believing the feel of her own hand, she realized that her gun had been taken from her. In its place was a piece of yellow, typewriting paper. Daphne

withdrew it from her pocket, and even before she unfolded it she knew what it would contain.

And Daphne was correct. On the yellow, typewriting paper was nothing but a beautifully executed impression of the green pansy!

For a moment Daphne sat silent; she felt so entirely helpless; but then the car was mounting a hill, and the pace was slackening a little. Realizing that now she had her chance, Daphne stood up, opened the door as silently as she could, and then, facing the same way as the car was going, dropped to the road—ran a step or two, and fell.

The brougham sped on over the hill. Daphne rose to her feet and realized that, apart from a muddy dress, she was unharmed.

Pluckily, then, she turned toward New York and stumbled in her satin slippers down the hill. As she did so, Daphne heard the rumble of a passing train. Looking to the right, she saw the lighted cars pass on their way from New York. Daphne mounted a gate and surveyed the immediate neighborhood; she noted with a little feeling of exultation that below her to the right lay a small railroad station, to which a side road led the way.

Reaching it was a matter of two or three minutes, and Daphne, a great deal disheveled and distinctly an object of curiosity, walked into the general waiting room and ticket office. Glancing at the clock, Daphne saw that it was twelve minutes past midnight.

The ticket clerk raised inquiring eyebrows.

"When's the next train to New York?" Daphne asked curtly.

"Twelve-seventeen," the clerk informed her. "Arrive Grand Central twelve-thirty-seven. Is there anything else I can do for you?" The man's tones were almost impertinent, and Daphne realized how queer an object she must appear in her soiled evening gown.



"Yes," Daphne said abruptly. "A little civility and a ticket to New York!"

Sulkily the man passed her the ticket and her change.

Noticing a telephone booth at the end of the room, Daphne went in and dropped her money into the slot. Again and again she repeated that her Columbus number must answer, and Daphne just had time to hear the manager inform her that her apartment did not answer when her train came in. A perplexed little Daphne took her seat in a day coach.

What on earth had happened? Had not Daphne herself placed the telephone within Harold's reach? Why, then, did he not reply? Surely he could not sleep so deeply that he would not respond to the insistent ringing of the telephone bell? Of course it must be more work of those who had chosen for their insignia the mark of the green pansy.

To Daphne it seemed as though the local train literally crawled on its way to the Grand Central Terminal. Never did a local train move more slowly, never were stops at the intermediate stations prolonged for a more exasperating length of time!

But even local trains must arrive sooner or later, and as a matter of solid fact the cars came to a standstill at the terminus precisely on schedule time.

Daphne almost ran down the long platform on the lower level—up the inclined walk to the upper—and up the curved staircase to the entrance on Vanderbilt Avenue.

Breathlessly she flung herself into the first taxicab and rapped out the address of her apartment house.

"An extra dollar for speed," she said, and the taxi driver swung his car out onto Madison Avenue and speeded, via Forty-seventh Street, to Fifth Avenue.

With difficulty Daphne controlled her nerves, and yet she realized that she must have full command of herself if it were yet possible triumphantly to meet

the blind peddler at half past seven that morning.

Arrived at the apartment house, Daphne pressed a five-dollar bill into the driver's hand and, without waiting for her change, made one dash for the elevator.

The door yielded to her latchkey, and in another moment Daphne stood at the foot of her brother's bed.

Daphne's hands for a moment grasped the brass rail for support while she stared at her brother.

A pungent odor of chloroform still hung about the room, and Harold lay with his arms bound by bandages to the rails at the head of his bed, while more bandages swathed his face and acted as an effective gag.

Daphne sprang to the rescue. Quickly her nimble fingers released first the bandages that gagged him. To her relief, Harold spoke in his accustomed accents. Without explaining anything, he fired at her one exciting question.

"Look! Look!" he cried excitedly, before Daphne could unloose his hands. "Is the money under my pillow?"

Daphne thrust her hands under the pillow—to withdraw them empty.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Harold. "Then they have got away with the money!"

Daphne stared blankly at her brother, and then her eyes were caught and held by a device that was imprinted upon the white pillow under Harold's head!

Again Daphne saw the sign of the green pansy!

## CHAPTER IV.

### BOUND AND GAGGED.

VERY quietly Daphne moved across the room to the dressing table.

"Where do you keep the Yomans?" she asked lightly.

Harold grinned. "Under my handkerchiefs you will find a box." Daphne, rummaging, produced a box of Yoman



cigarettes. They cost a dime a piece, and it was a friendly custom between the brother and the sister to smoke one together on any particular crisis or celebration in life.

"I really feel that it is an occasion for a Yoman," Daphne remarked as she sat down in a low chair by the bed, after having placed a cigarette laughingly between Harold's lips and lighting it for him. "First of all, how is the leg—painful?"

"What an extraordinary girl you are, Daphne!" Her brother smiled as he spoke. "Here you and I—rather I—have lost the richest man in the world and a hundred and nine thousand odd dollars that belong to him, and you ask me how is my leg! Thank you very much, but the pain isn't as bad as you would think. The point is that it is now one o'clock—which leaves us six hours and a half before our Wall Street appointment, an appointment which we cannot keep without money. In all my professional career I have never known a case like this. Briefly, as time is valuable, what has happened to you?"

Daphne deftly gave her brother a résumé of all the more important incidents that had happened since she had left him four hours before to go down to the Hotel Vanastridge.

"Can you beat it?" her brother asked helplessly. "This case is beyond me. It all seems like a nightmare. I wonder what the devil Hurd had to do with it. Still, you trust him, Daphne?"

Daphne nodded. "Of course I want an explanation," she admitted, "but he is so incapable of helping himself that I hardly think he is to blame for anything. Now will you please tell me how it is that I find you gagged and bound?"

It seemed that Harold had been dozing on his bed, when, to his surprise, about five minutes past twelve—just before Daphne must have telephoned—his door had opened, and Jerome K. Lane

had entered the room breathlessly. He had just begun to explain that he had bribed the elevator boy to admit him with a pass key—an act that was all the easier because of the fact that the boy knew that Harold was lying inside with a broken leg, and that he had seen Lane in Harold's company that evening—when the bedroom door was pushed suddenly open, and, before Harold could get at his gun, he and Lane found themselves covered by two deadly-looking revolvers that were held by a short, stocky man who hid his face behind a green mask.

Still covering Harold, the newcomer had ordered Lane to stand with his face to the wall, and with his hands held above his head. Lane had obeyed with an alacrity that was almost amusing, in view of the tone that Lane had before taken as to his extreme weariness of living. Then the masked man had approached the bed, disarmed Harold, and had gagged and bound him. Next had come the odor of chloroform, and, when Harold had regained consciousness, so far as he could judge the room was empty. He had wriggled in a vain attempt to free himself from the bandages—and then Daphne had come in. As Harold had not heard the telephone ring, and as Daphne had telephoned at about a quarter past twelve, it must have been then that Harold had slipped under the influence of chloroform.

Daphne blew a ring of smoke toward the ceiling.

"I don't know what to do for the moment," she admitted frankly, "but as I shall probably have to go out again tonight, I had better get into some working clothes. First let me put your gun by you."

Placing the revolver, which she found near the door, beside his bed, Daphne went to her own room. In an incredibly short space of time she returned clad in a suit of gray whipcord, with a plain hat and a stout pair of walking shoes.



"Now food!" she said, and vanished from the bedroom into the kitchen, to return with a tray of sandwiches and coffee.

They had just finished eating—and they had not been long over it—when the bell from the front door trilled three times. Without hesitation Daphne went to the door and flung it open. Outside stood her fiancé, David Hurd.

"Come in," she said laughing, "for I imagine that you have a whole lot to explain." But Hurd was destined to postpone such explanation as he may have had, for, on entering Harold's bedroom, he turned to Daphne.

"Why do you hang a brief case way up there?" he asked.

Daphne, following with her eyes his outstretched finger, gave a little gasp of surprise. Suspended on a picture hook from the ceiling molding above the door, was the brief case.

"Get it down for me, David," Daphne said sweetly.

David dragged a chair to the door and, mounting to it, lifted down the brief case. "Why," he exclaimed, as he handed it to Daphne, "it's full of money!"

But Daphne was already rapidly running through the pile of neatly tied bundles of hundred-dollar notes.

"They've not taken a cent!" she said to Harold.

Then Daphne's eye rested on the inside, light-leather lining of the flap, whereon was stamped the sign of the green pansy.

"What do you make of it?" she asked, as she pointed to the device, but at that instant the telephone bell rang.

It was Daphne who went to the phone.

"Yes—who is it?" she asked, and it was Lane's voice that came over the wire—albeit in a strange, husky whisper.

"Speak up," she said. "I can't hear you. This is Daphne Browne."

For a moment she listened, and then

the connection was cut, or the man at the other end of the line had hung up.

"It's Lane," she said to her brother as she agitated the hook in a vain endeavor to get the number back. "I was cut off, central. Connect me with that number again."

Daphne waited, and then snapped back the receiver.

"Central says they hung up," she explained. "Still, we have this to go on. Lane said he was in a low café on Bleeker Street known as 'Beery Mike's.' I think he's a prisoner, but he spoke very incoherently. He wants us to hurry down there at once—and if he has been taken away, to ask for some one he calls 'Squint-eyed Jim.' Lane said we could trust him—and at any cost to get in touch with Squint-eyed Jim."

"Oh, curse this leg of mine!" Harold moaned. "I can't let you go down there alone, Daphne."

"I'm more or less in the dark," David put in, "but of course Daphne is not going alone."

Daphne looked at him and smiled, for she loved this David Hurd in spite of what she had seen that night. David drew himself up to his full height in mock solemnity, his gray eyes laughing in his handsome face.

"I forbid you to go alone," he said with a smile. "As my future wife——"

"I'm not so sure about that," Daphne flashed at him. "First you have to explain why you were struggling with that girl in the purple limousine. But I've no time now. Harold, don't be a fool! We can't see Lane murdered—and you know the tight places I've been in before, and come out of safely."

"Very well, then," the singer put in. "But if you go—wherever it is, I go with you."

"Come on, then," Daphne said curtly, as she strode to the door. "So long, Harold! Wait a jiffy, though—I have no gun."

"You will find another one of mine



in that desk," her brother told her, and, waiting only long enough to assure herself that the Colt automatic was properly loaded, Daphne hurried out of the room and of the apartment, eagerly followed by David Hurd.

Presently those two were driving downtown in a taxi. On the way Hurd, although seemingly anxious to give Daphne the explanation to which she was entitled, merely satisfied himself by the somewhat ambiguous one that the girl in the purple limousine was one in whom he was deeply interested, and instead, after much pressure, he persuaded Daphne to tell him something of her quest and of her adventures in the case which she now knew as that of the green pansy.

Beery Mike's proved to be an unsavory hole on Bleecker Street, with a side entrance on another street. There was about even the outside of the place an indescribable atmosphere that betokened the lowest forms of crime. It would take no great stretch of imagination to conceive of murders being plotted within its grimly, hospitable walls, and Daphne, fresh and dainty as some woodland violet, was inconceivably—emphatically—out of place in such surroundings. And yet, as Daphne left the cab and strode across the sidewalk, she did so with the same assurance as though she were about to call on some old friends in a part of the great city more fitted for such delicate prettiness.

The main doors at that hour—and it was just five minutes to two—were closed, and Daphne entered by the side door. It led into a tiny hallway, dark and noisome, some four feet square, and a door to the left led directly into the usual back room that is to be found in all such places as that conducted by Beery Mike.

And Beery Mike himself was eminently suited both by disposition and by physical appearance to be the host of his own café.

Sitting down at one of the dirty tables, Daphne produced a pencil, and, glancing at Mike, who stood by a little pigeonhole through which the drinks were pushed from the bar, she began to sketch him roughly on the back of an envelope which she borrowed from Hurd for that purpose. And Daphne was skillful with her pencil, so that in a few bold strokes the big, corpulent figure of Beery Mike, surmounted by his ill-shapen and hammerlike head, with the short, stubby nose and the great, bull neck, began to take shape upon the envelope.

Mike, glancing with intent suspicion at the neat orderliness of Daphne's gray whipcord suit and trim little hat, crossed the room ponderously, and deliberately stared over Daphne's shoulder at his own portrait.

Then his Homeric laughter shook the room.

"What d'you know 'bout that?" he bellowed. "Me ter the life. Say, kid, you certainly can handle a pencil."

"That's what I'm here for," Daphne fibbed, for her action had been deliberate and well thought out. "I'm sketching New York types for an English magazine. You don't mind, do you?"

"Youse sure it's fer an English magazine, and not fer any blamed N'York newspaper?"

"My word for it." Daphne smiled at him. "This is not going to appear in any American newspaper," and the smile won the day.

Daphne completed her conquest by presenting the sketch to Mike, and the latter, vain as many a better-looking man, was as pleased as a child with a new pair of shoes.

"The drinks is on me," he insisted boisterously, and, when he had brought them, he sat himself down at their table unasked.

"I was told by a pal of mine," said Daphne as she pretended to sip the whisky that Mike had set before her,



"that a friend of his—Squint-eyed Jim—would be just the person to help me out on this commission. You see, I need the money, and these little sketches bring me in as much as five dollars a piece."

"If I could make money as easy as all that," commented Mike, "dog-gone if I would ever work again. So yer want Squint-eyed Jim to show yer around?"

"Well, I'm a stranger in New York," Daphne answered him. "I come from the Middle West, and this pal of mine was insistent that Squint-eyed Jim was just the man for me."

Hurd said nothing, but contented himself with a nod of noncommittal approval.

"Well, sure," admitted Mike, "Squint-eyed Jim, outside his manners an' appearance, is certainly a perfect gentleman. He was round here a little time ago, but he seemed to have a wad on him, and he liquored up more than a little. Had a bit of a skate on him when he left here, so if he had any sense he went home. Lives over in the Bowery direction. I'll write out his address for you, then you might go an' look him up in the morning. Squint-eyed Jim never gets out much before noon. P'r'aps he may be willing to help you."

Daphne handed Mike her pencil, and he scrawled an address on a scrap of paper.

"'Twenty-seven Pinker's Alley—top floor front,'" read Daphne aloud. "Much obliged to you," and, when she had spent a minute or two in further conversation, Daphne yawned loudly.

"We had better be getting home," suggested David diplomatically.

Taking, therefore, a cordial farewell of Beery Mike, Daphne and David passed out through the side door to their waiting taxi. As they did so, a figure from the shadow of a near-by doorway, unseen by both Daphne and David, slunk out. The figure ran halfway round the block, jumped into a small,

touring car, and, as Daphne's taxi made its way toward the Bowery, the touring car kept a discreet distance behind it.

It was with some difficulty that Daphne, having dismissed her cab, found No. 27 Pinker's Alley; but, having found it, she experienced no trouble in obtaining entrance to that exclusive lodging house. The door was not even latched. Flashing a light from an electric torch, David led the way up the stairs, closely followed by Daphne.

Up the creaking stairs they went until they arrived at the top floor. The door of the front room was unlocked, but David knocked imperiously. At first there was no response, and then it was a decidedly alcoholic voice that bade them enter. It may as well be baldly set down that Squint-eyed Jim was as drunken a gentleman as any who could have been found in all of the Bowery district.

A squat, fat, white-faced little man was Squint-eyed Jim, and his eyes had clearly won for him his descriptive nickname. He lay on the outside of his bed fully dressed, and he propped up his head with one fat, pudgy hand as he tried to understand the meaning of this late visit.

"You know something of a gentleman who told you where we could find him," insisted Daphne.

But Squint-eyed Jim seemed to know nothing. Squint-eyed Jim did not wish to be disturbed. Squint-eyed Jim wanted to know what the something beginning with an "h" they meant by butting in on his slumbers. Squint-eyed Jim, in short, desired to be left to the enjoyment of those slumbers. Even the sight of money only aroused Squint-eyed Jim to the extent of extending a grasping hand before he rolled back on his side, and his drunken snores seemed to conclude the interview.

"Come on," said David tersely, "there's only one thing that can help us."



"What do you mean?" asked Daphne, as she followed David down the stairs and out onto the street.

"I noticed a drug store still open," David told her, as he grasped her by the arm and set off at a brisk walk, "and we must try to get something that will sober Squint-eyed Jim."

Entering the drug store, David gave emphatic orders.

"I learned this receipt at college," he told Daphne, and presently the two of them were out of the drug store again, while David carried with him a small bottle.

Once more in Squint-eyed Jim's room, David searched for a glass. Finding one, he poured into it half the contents of the little bottle, and then, sitting on the edge of the bed, David raised Squint-eyed Jim's head, and dragged him to a sitting posture.

"I thought," said David blithely, "that we would all have a little drink."

Mechanically Squint-eyed Jim grasped the tumbler that David held. As mechanically he drank, and then, in a somewhat cracked falsetto, he began to sing words to the effect that "They would all have another little drink—another little drink—and another little drink!"

"I have to hand it to your prescription," Daphne remarked a moment later, for the contents of the bottle had acted like magic upon Squint-eyed Jim's alcoholic brain.

Squint-eyed Jim dragged his weary feet to the floor, and sat blinking drearily at them; but on his face had come an expression of low cunning.

"Now I get you!" He smiled in an ingratiating way. "The swell gink told me about you. Have you got such a thing as a ten-spot in your jeans?"

"Sure," agreed David readily. "It's yours just as soon as we hear what you've got to say."

Squint-eyed Jim's celebrated eyes squinted horribly.

"Well, I'll take a chance on you," he

said after a little pause. He fumbled in a pocket of his frowzy vest. "Here you are," he said, as he passed Daphne a dirty paper.

Daphne, holding it to the flaring gas jet, examined it carefully. The message, such as it was, was written upon the back of a folder that advertised in screaming headlines the advantages of a new system for acquiring foreign languages. And the words were printed in an illiterate hand, much as a child of five might so print, in green crayon. The words, and there were not many of them, ran:

If you and your brother value your lives, take a tip and quit.

The message was signed with the now familiar sign of the green pansy.

Daphne read the message to David. It was, however, Squint-eyed Jim who spoke first.

"That weren't the paper the rich guy give me," he said, as he stared in amazement at Daphne. "It were something about bein' in trouble, an' there was an address on it—where, I disremember—but somewhere in the Forties."

Daphne sat down helplessly on the only chair the room boasted. The case was almost hopeless, and yet, had it not been for her luck, she would not have been able so successfully to stick to the trail of the vanished millionaire. She must not give up, both for the sake of the richest man in the world, and for her brother's professional reputation. Indeed, Daphne was not a little vain of her own reputation, and she knew full well that many persons had spoken of the successful operations of "The Brother and Sister Browne."

Even the promised ten-dollar bill did nothing to refresh Squint-eyed Jim's memory. All that Squint-eyed Jim knew was that he had spent a merry and remunerative evening at Beery Mike's; that a rich guy, whose description seemed to tally with that of Jerome K. Lane, had entered at some old time or



other, and that he was accompanied by two men who seemed, in Squint-eyed Jim's language, "to have the ropes on him;" that the rich guy had managed to edge to the far end of the room while the others kept a steady eye upon him, and that there he had switched out the lights. In the darkness, the rich guy had had rapid conversation over the telephone, and something akin to a general fight had taken place when the lights were switched on again. Also, the rich guy had given Squint-eyed Jim a paper to hand to some girl who would ask for it—and Squint-eyed Jim had been remunerated in a princely fashion. Afterward the two men had left, with the rich guy between them.

Realizing that no more was to be learned from Squint-eyed Jim, Daphne descended the stairs. As she did so, David, who was coming behind, threw a path of light for her from his electric torch, and the light illuminated a large sheet of paper that was pinned to a handkerchief. Daphne eagerly picked it up. An examination showed that the handkerchief was of expensive Irish linen on which were embroidered the initials "J. K. L."

On the paper was written hastily in Lane's writing—or so Daphne judged—the message:

Am held prisoner at point of gun. Help quick to 7 West 47th Street. For Heaven's sake hurry.  
J. K. L.

With a little gasp of pleasure Daphne imparted the news to her fiancé.

"Quick, David, a cab—if there is one. It looks as if we have no time to lose."

Outside, those two hurried several blocks before they chanced on a belated taxi. As it drew up to the curb at David's signal, Daphne jumped in.

"Seven West Forty-seventh," she ordered, "and five dollars if you make it in ten minutes."

The cab sped forward. At length it twisted its tortuous way out onto Fifth

Avenue, and, giving the engine all she could take, went up the thoroughfare like a streak of lightning.

Almost skidding at the corner of Forty-seventh Street and Fifth Avenue, the cab took the turn on two wheels, and came to a jerking halt at No. 7.

No. 7 proved to be an old-fashioned house of four stories that stood some thirty feet back from the sidewalk line, and this space had been utilized for the storage and display of many statues suitable for the ornamentation of the gardens of the rich.

Coldly those statues gleamed under the electric light shed by a near-by standard, and to the imaginative there was something sinister and eerie about the place—somewhat the same atmosphere as may be experienced in a country churchyard.

Telling the cab to wait, Daphne, followed by David, alighted on the sidewalk. As she did so, Daphne noticed that a huge limousine, painted a somber black, was drawn up on the same side of the street, a little farther west and facing Sixth Avenue.

Boldly Daphne passed into the garden between two statues. As she did so, there was a scurry of feet; Daphne was pushed roughly aside, and two men—half carrying, half dragging the richest man in the world—flung him almost bodily into the limousine, jumped in after him, and the great car lurched down the street.

Daphne drew her gun, but on second thought she returned it to her pocket. To shoot at the tires of the fast-disappearing car would, she knew, bring in the majesty of the law—and things were moving too quickly to be blocked and tied up by red tape. Instead, Daphne sprang into the taxicab. David jumped in after her.

"Follow that limousine," Daphne shouted. "Fifty dollars if you don't lose them, and another——" But Daphne's voice was lost in the scream-



ing of the clutch as the taxi driver flung it into gear and started in swift pursuit.

As the taxi darted down Forty-seventh Street going west, some one flung open a window in No. 7, and a voice shouted out into the night. But the words were lost, and Daphne settled down to yet another chase.

The tail lamp of the black limousine was just turning down Sixth Avenue as Daphne's taxi gained its full speed, and, as the taxi turned in pursuit, Daphne noticed with satisfaction that the big car was only a block or two farther downtown.

At Thirty-fourth Street the big fellow turned west.

"Where is he going?" asked David, as their taxi swung round in pursuit.

"I don't know," admitted Daphne, "but it looks to me like the Hoboken Ferry. I'll bet you they turn down Seventh or Eighth Avenue."

And so it proved, for the limousine turned south again on Eighth Avenue, and so on down to Twenty-third Street.

So the two cars sped west on Twenty-third Street, and then, when they were yet several hundred yards from the river, the hind wheel of Daphne's taxi emitted a dismal shriek, and the driver brought the car to a standstill with a flat shoe.

David leaped out and helped Daphne to alight. Then, thrusting a sum of money into the taxi driver's hand, they broke into a run, and plodded steadily in the wake of the limousine, which by now had reached the dock.

But as they ran they saw the big, black car swerve a little to the left, and then roll onto the Hoboken Ferry.

"I don't believe we will make it," panted out David.

Daphne, who always kept herself in the acme of physical perfection, answered easily: "At least we can try, David."

But just as they reached the dock they

were chagrined at sight of the ferry gliding out into the wide river.

Daphne swore, and she did it lingeringly, almost lovingly, as though she meant it.

The next instant she had turned to yet another taxi.

"We're driving about a bit to-night, aren't we?" David grinned as he heard Daphne order the man to take them to the Hudson Tubes at Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street.

Daphne did not answer until they were actually in the tube and going under the river.

"I believe that we shall be in time to get up with them," she said thoughtfully. "Unless—unless—they come straight back to New York on the same ferry. I wonder if Lane—and he seems pretty clever—will have had any means of communicating with us. I cannot tell why they were at No. 7 West Forty-seventh Street. One would have thought that they would have rushed him to some country house. I don't believe they will murder him, as that would kill the goose that lays the golden egg; and yet—" She became immersed in her thoughts.

"I can't understand why they did not steal the money," put in David. "We know that they had their hands on it in your brother's bedroom. You are sure that the notes—the bills—Lane gave you were genuine? You don't think he wanted you to pass counterfeit notes to the blind pencil vender?"

Daphne shook her head. "No," she said. "I examined them too carefully for that."

Daphne glanced at the clock as she left the tubes at Hoboken.

"A quarter past three," she said to David; "we've got to be successful soon. I intend to be in Wall Street in four hours and fifteen minutes."

Leaving the tubes, they hurried to the dock. But the ferry had already arrived.



Daphne fired rapid questions at a couple of loafers who hung around the entrance to the ferry.

Yes, a big, black limousine had come off the last ferry. Which way had it gone? It had headed in a northerly direction, and had been driven off at a terrific speed.

Daphne looked around her for a taxi, but there was none in sight.

"There's only one thing to be done," she remarked to David. "We must find a garage somewhere, and hire a speedy car. Come on."

Daphne crossed the street, but as she did so a hunchbacked man came cautiously toward her.

"Are you looking for anybody?" he asked, and his voice was not a pleasant one.

Daphne nodded. "Have you got anything for me?" she asked breathlessly.

For answer the hunchback produced an edition of a New York newspaper of the evening before. Daphne, taking it, stared blankly at the printed pages.

"Who gave you this paper?" asked Daphne sharply.

"A gentleman what come off the ferry slipped it into my hand with a five-dollar bill," the hunchback answered. "Kind of mysterious he was—and he didn't say much. Only he said, said he: 'If a young lady comes,' and he spoke all in a whisper, 'hand her this, and tell her,' he says—and this don't make no manner of sense, so I guess he was batty—'tell her,' he says, 'that a pin is a very present help in the time of trouble.'"

Daphne laughed triumphantly. "Follow me," she said, and then strode briskly into the Lackawanna Railroad Station. The hunchback and David followed her wonderingly.

Under the bright lights of the waiting room Daphne eagerly scanned the paper. As she expected, on the very first page tiny pin pricks were clearly discernible on close examination.

"Take these letters down, David," she

ordered, and, when she had finished detaching, a message was the result of her efforts, as Lane had carefully pricked with a pin each consecutive letter. Evidently his captors had allowed him to see the evening paper, and the millionaire had not wasted his opportunity. The message ran:

Follow by boat—Hudson River—going upstream—watch for white motor boat—hurry.  
J. K. L.

"Evidently they discussed their plans before Lane," Daphne remarked. Then she touched the hunchback.

"I want a speedy motor boat," Daphne said, and she flashed a roll of money under the hunchback's greedy eyes. "I want to take it out alone—and I want it now."

"That," remarked the hunchback, "will set you back just two hundred dollars, miss."

"I'll pay," Daphne snapped, "just as soon as I see the boat and have a look at her engines."

For answer the hunchback turned and silently led the way out of the station and down a dirty dock to a small shed.

There he held whispered conversation with a gentleman who appeared to be covered from head to foot in black grease.

"*Flirting Sarah* is the speediest boat of her size on the river," the greasy individual growled in a surly way, "and whoever says different lies—that what he does. *Flirting Sarah* ain't no ordinary boat, she ain't—an' two hundred's dirt cheap, with no questions asked. I don't haggle, I don't—but my price is two hundred and fifty or nothin'. Sweeter engines you never handled, an' if you know anything about motor engines, miss," he turned to Daphne, "as for the sake of *Flirting Sarah* I hope you do, you sure will appreciate this here boat."

"Less talk," said Daphne severely, "and the two hundred and fifty is yours if the engines are O. K. If I can't re-



turn her, give me your phone number, and I will ring you up to send for her. I shan't be far away."

*Flirting Sarah* on examination proved to be a rakish-looking motor craft of the thirty-foot class. A brief survey of her cylinders satisfied Daphne.

"Here you are," she said, as she peeled off the stipulated sum, with a bit over for the hunchback. "Let her go."

The man cast off as soon as Daphne had gone to the wheel, and the proprietor of the boat grinned in a satisfied way as he noted the professional manner in which Daphne handled her.

"As long as she don't steal her," he growled to the hunchback, "she sure won't come to any harm."

David, working under Daphne's instructions, attended to the engines, turning on an oil cock here and tightening up a grease cup there.

At a slow speed Daphne brought *Flirting Sarah* well out into the river. Then, throwing her helm over, she brought the bow of the boat upstream, and signaled to David to let her out.

The boat shot forward, and its bows cut through the oily water; there was no wind, although the morning was a chill one and damp.

Very little traffic moved on the river, and the little that did was headed seaward. Daphne increased the speed to the utmost limit of *Flirting Sarah's* capabilities, and when she was opposite about Fifty-sixth Street she saw ahead of her, in the darkness, the lights of a boat that was making considerable speed in the same direction as that in which *Flirting Sarah* sped.

"Shut her off for a minute," Daphne told David, and, as the boat went silently forward on its own momentum, Daphne listened. Came back to her the muffled *thud-thud* of the motor engine of the boat ahead.

"Bet you anything you like that that's the boat," Daphne shouted, as again her own engines began to throb.

The boat ahead, as though sensing the proximity of *Flirting Sarah*, cut a diagonal course in toward the Jersey shore; then it straightened out again, and the chase started in earnest.

Seventy-fifth Street on the opposite shore—Eightieth Street—and still Daphne drove her little carft in stern pursuit. Then the bitter realization that the pursued boat was gaining on them came home to Daphne.

"They are leaving us behind. Why, they have only just begun to let her out," David remarked as, leaving the engine, he came and stood by Daphne at the wheel. "And what does it matter, darling, when you look so adorable with your hair blowing all around you?"

His arms encircled her, and his lips sought Daphne's, but the girl turned her head away abruptly.

"No," she said; "David—no. I trust in you, and I believe in you—but I cannot help it—what I saw—you and that girl in the purple limousine."

"Listen, little one," he began, but at that moment Daphne cut him short with an abrupt gesture.

"Look," she cried, "look—and you must tell me all you have to tell another time—but look at them!"

Peering through the dark, David saw the lights of the other boat turn sharply in to the Jersey shore. For a moment it seemed as if the boat had come to a stop. Then quite mysteriously the boat disappeared.

"Have they doused the lights—or what?" demanded Daphne as she spun the wheel and steered straight for the spot where she had last seen the boat.

Turning toward the shore, Daphne slowed down. Some yards away from the shore itself a long, high wharf jutted out into the river.

"They didn't go on this side," David remarked.

"Nor on the other," Daphne speculated. "Anyway, here goes."

Daphne permitted the propeller to re-



volve a few times to obtain sufficient momentum. Then she shut off the gas, and glided neatly between the posts under the wharf. A narrow planking ran out a few feet above the water itself, and David, making fast to a post, sprang out on this.

"The other fellow is moored just ahead," he whispered, as Daphne joined him.

Cautiously Daphne walked along the slippery plank. Pulling her Colt, Daphne gingerly stepped aboard the boat which they had followed.

It boasted a small cabin. Daphne, first skirting around this, surveyed the deck. It was deserted. Then she made as though she would enter the cabin, but David was too quick for her.

"No, you don't," he said. "You don't risk your darling life while I am here," and, totally unarmed, he bent his head and stepped boldly into the little cabin.

But the cabin was as deserted as the deck.

"They've slipped us again," Daphne said, as she stowed away her Colt in the pocket of her trim little jacket. "We had better get on shore."

Leading the way, Daphne stepped from the boat onto the planking again, and moved toward the shore. About half way down the long wharf a slimy, green ladder went up to the wharf proper above them. Eagerly Daphne swung herself up this ladder, closely followed by David.

Arrived at the top, Daphne peered about her. The wharf was cluttered with huge packing cases. Daphne turned to face David, and as she did so a voice spoke out of the darkness.

"Kindly put your hands up—both of you!"

As Daphne heard the voice, as both she and David mechanically obeyed those cold accents, some one pressed the button of an electric torch and dazzled Daphne's eyes with a bright illumination.

Another light flashed out, and Daphne saw three men—well dressed and prosperous looking, so far as she could judge—but over the face of each was pulled a green, silk mask.

Daphne laughed defiantly, albeit she still kept her pretty hands above her head.

"Very dramatic," she said with a sneer. "Particularly do I like the green masks!"

"Cut out the gab," said some one, but as that instant two things happened.

Some one neatly dropped a noose over Daphne's hands and pulled tight on the cord, so that her arms were bound above her head; and, as for the second, David leaped on the man nearest to him, and Daphne left them struggling on the wharf.

Left them? Of a surety she left for the very good reason that two of her captors were pushing her forcibly toward the shore.

At the end of the wharf near the shore stood an ordinary wooden shed, and inside this building Daphne was unceremoniously hustled. Deliberately one of the men held her while the other adjusted the rope so that Daphne, with her arms bound behind her, was neatly trussed like a chicken ready for the oven. Then a gag—apparently a dentist's gag of soft rubber—was gently pushed into her mouth, and a silk handkerchief was carefully bound over her eyes.

"Why a pretty kid," one of the men remarked. "We ought to get a hustle on, though. But say, boy, won't the boss be tickled to death with such a classy prisoner?"

There was about the man's voice an offensive admiration that made the pulses pound indignantly at Daphne's temples. The cads, she thought bitterly. Not only was it humiliating enough to experience this binding at their coarse hands, but to be admired! Daphne seethed with anger.



But already Daphne was being pushed along the wharf. Soon she felt the roadway under her feet instead of the wooden flooring.

Some one spoke. "Start her up," he said, and Daphne heard the rhythmic purring of a motor engine. She guessed that it was probably the same car as the one they had pursued.

Daphne was lifted into the big car, and the two men got in beside her.

"Where is——" began one of them.

The other must have whispered his reply, for Daphne was unable to catch the import of the answer. The car rolled off, and Daphne did not know in what direction.

## CHAPTER V.

### DAPHNE IS CONVINCED.

FOR some time the car sped on its way, and then Daphne was conscious that it was being run onto a ferry-boat. So they were taking her back to New York!

Then, while they were making the ferry journey, one of the men laughed.

"Think," he said mockingly, "there are lots of people on the ferry, and not one of them knows you're here!"

Arrived on the New York side, Daphne felt rather than saw that the car turned to the right. Evidently, then, they were going downtown. Still, had they taken the Fort Lee Ferry or the Hoboken Ferry? Daphne was inclined toward the former conclusion. But afterward the driver of the car deliberately twisted his route, so that at one moment they were going uptown, and then the next they were going across town; before very long Daphne had not the faintest idea in which direction they were heading.

Presently the car stopped, and Daphne was forced out. Half walking, half carried, Daphne went up some steps, and she heard a door close behind her. Then two of the men—and Daphne did not

know how many there were in all—lifted her bodily and carried her up some stairs. Entering a room, Daphne felt herself being laid on a bed. Somebody attached her feet to the rail at the end of the bed, while another untied her hands from behind her, and retied them to the head of the bed.

"There, you little darling," one of them said, and laughed, "lie there and think for a bit. Call out for anything you want; that is, as much as the gag will let you!"

They went out of the room and closed the door behind them. For a time Daphne struggled in vain against the bonds that held her; she was in a very fever of indignation. Where on earth was David? Why hadn't she kept her Colt in her hand when she went up that slimy ladder?

So Daphne lay tossing and straining, but unable to unloose her bonds by the least fraction of an inch. Truly her captors had done the job thoroughly.

Then a tiny fear began to creep into Daphne's heart—and fear and Daphne hardly knew each other. What was this gang who had kidnaped her, who evidently had kidnaped Jerome K. Lane? While their object in kidnaping the financier was obvious, for what reason had they taken her? A thousand horrible thoughts forced themselves on the girl's brain.

But Daphne refused to speculate any longer—at least along that line of thought. Instead, under the silken bandage, her pretty brow was knitted into a frown of perplexity as she went over the amazing happenings of the last hours.

Then Daphne thought of the fast-fleeing moments. Idly she wondered what the time was. She guessed it to be about five o'clock, and at half past seven some one should at least meet—if not pay—the vender of green pencils at the corner of Wall Street and Nassau.

For a while she continued to toss and



struggle, and then, a calmer philosophy descending upon her, Daphne relaxed her tired muscles and waited for the next trick that fate might play her.

Of a sudden the door opened cautiously, and Daphne heard some one enter.

"My darling—are you hurt?"

It was David's voice that spoke, and Daphne thrilled to the wealth of love that vibrated in his accents.

Quickly his nimble fingers unloosed the bandage that blindfolded her, and then removed the gag.

"Tell me," he said again, "are you hurt?"

Daphne looked up at him, and her eyes were misty for a moment.

"Only my pride is damaged so far." She smiled up at him. "My pride as a professional detective—and my pride as a woman."

"Well, we will get even yet," David said tersely as he freed Daphne's arms and feet from the ropes that held them.

Daphne sat up and looked about her with no little amazement, for the room betokened on every side a lavish expenditure of both money in unlimited quantities, and tasteful skill that manifested itself in the delicate coloring, in the exquisite furniture that stood on the highly polished floor.

"Perhaps, Mr. David Hurd," Daphne said, smiling, "you will kindly explain where I am and how you happened to arrive in the rôle of the rescuing knight."

Lighting a cigarette, David sat down on the bed beside Daphne.

"Things have moved so swiftly tonight—or is it this morning?" David began, but Daphne would not let him continue.

"What is the time, David? I see by the light that dawn is breaking."

"Five minutes past five," David told her, "but listen to my story. I'm all mixed up after such a night—but it was quite exciting. I struggled with that

fellow on the wharf as they dragged you away, and then he pulled a gun and jabbed it into my ribs, so that I just had to be good. He tied me, then, to a post—and I found out afterward that he reached your car just before it left, for there were three men, counting the driver in front. I don't know who they were, of course."

"But how did you see the car?" asked Daphne.

"Simply because the poor boob tied me so badly," David explained, "that I was free a few seconds after I had heard the car drive off. It was headed toward the Fort Lee Ferry, so I dashed down the ladder, pulled out the old *Flirting Sarah*, and cut straight across to the New York side, where the ferry would arrive. I got there in plenty of time; I even had time to call up our surly friend and tell him to get his old boat, and there I was with a taxi already engaged and instructed when you people came off the ferry. My cab followed you, and judge my surprise when I saw it stop at a millionaire's residence on upper Fifth Avenue!"

"Then you mean I am in Lane's house now?"

"Exactly!" David nodded.

"Then how did you get in?"

"I hung around for a while. Then I saw a narrow passageway leading to the tradesmen's entrance at the back. I tried the door, and to my huge surprise it was open—that is unlocked. So I came in as though I had bought the house—this was about five minutes ago—and although I have peeped into several rooms, there doesn't seem to be a soul here. What they have done with Lane, I don't know. Anyway, I came upstairs as bold as brass, and at the fourth door I tried I found you—and that's all I know of it. All the same, although I don't pretend to be a professional detective, I have a strong hunch that I have a real clew. I want you to let me work it out alone, unless you



are ready to listen to my story of the girl in the purple limousine."

Daphne laughed. "I think I must trust you, David, a little longer," she said, "but I have work to do. Go on with your old clew, but forgive me if I treat it lightly. I have had experience with amateur detectives."

Then Daphne got up from the bed. She moved from the door, after a characteristically girlish movement, to one of the big mirrors, where she rapidly smoothed her hair and gave herself one or two deft little pulls and pats.

"I see they have taken my gun, but I'll chance it."

David looked up and laughed.

"I will ring you up if you will be at home," he began.

"I'm going there in a few minutes," Daphne said, as she walked out of the room. "Good luck to the amateur detective!"

Rapidly Daphne moved about the house, but after a cursory search, she was more or less convinced that the house was deserted and, going to the side entrance at which David had come in, Daphne walked boldly down the little passage and out onto Fifth Avenue.

A taxi discharged, later, a very tired little Daphne at her own door. Entering Harold's room softly, she saw that he was asleep, so, tiptoeing away, Daphne sought the invigorating influence of a cold shower before changing into other clothes.

Well, she reflected, as she put the finishing touches to her toilette, she had done her best, and her mind was too bewildered to attempt any more before half past seven. The only thing to be done was to pay the hundred thousand dollars to the pencil vender, and then, with more time at her disposal, to try to run down the gang later.

Still, tired as Daphne felt, her youth and the cold shower were all on her side; and so a little later, when she entered Harold's bedroom dressed in a

little street suit of tight-fitting, black velvet with a touch of violet deftly introduced here and there, and in a fashionable little hat of the same material that set off the golden wonder of her hair, it was a winsome enough girl who, gently stooping over her brother, woke him from his sleep.

"I hate to disturb you, dear," she said gently, "but it is half past six. In an hour I have to be on Wall Street—and there is nothing to do but pay."

Harold, rubbing his eyes, looked up at his sister.

"Gee!" he exclaimed. "You don't look as if you'd been up all night. But tell me the news, Daphne."

Very briefly, then, Daphne related all those amazing happenings that had taken place since, in David's company, she had left her brother for her descent on the café.

"And," she said, in conclusion, "I don't know whether your experience can point to anything, for I am frankly done. It all seems like a nightmare."

For a moment he did not reply, and when he did it was with a short laugh.

"I think we have to own," Harold remarked with a shade of bitterness, "that the case of the green pansy has beaten, for the time, the Brother and Sister Browne! Anyway, I've got to hand it to you for your pluck."

But at that moment the telephone by the bed rang sharply.

"It's David," said Daphne in response to her brother's inquiring glance.

She put down the phone with a little smile of patronizing amusement.

"The darling is so confident that he has a clew—that he has solved the whole thing," Daphne said, "I must humor him and meet him before I go down to Wall Street. I've just time if I hurry. David's still at Mr. Lane's house."

Shortly afterward Daphne again entered the residence of the richest man in the world by the tradesmen's door.

David met her in the hall.



"I don't think there's a soul here," he said mysteriously, "but come into the library. I've been working there ever since you left. And, oh, girl of mine, I've solved your trouble for you!"

His tone was so confident that Daphne conquered her doubts.

"Tell me, and tell me quickly," Daphne said, as she laid the brief case containing the big sum of money on the desk.

"First of all, look here," said David.

Daphne looked and saw neatly printed on the shining mahogany of the millionaire's desk the sign of the green pansy.

"I'm afraid that tells me nothing, David," Daphne said sadly, and David plunged into excited explanation.

Daphne, her eyes shining with excitement, listened with the eagerness of a child.

"And then," she said with enthusiasm, "I have always referred to you as 'that helpless darling!' Now you have solved the most difficult case I have ever been connected with! How can I thank you, David?"

She looked around at him with an adorable smile from her task, for Daphne was engaged in wrapping up a few books to look as much like a bundle of the hundred thousand dollars as possible.

"You can thank me," David said, smiling, "by listening to my explanation of the girl in the purple limousine."

"I will," said Daphne, "as soon as I have written a note to inclose with this parcel."

David came and stood over her while she wrote, and chuckled with evident pleasure at the words she employed.

When at last the note was written and inclosed in the package, Daphne glanced at her watch.

"You will have to be quick with your explanation, David," she said, "for I have to be in Wall Street very shortly. Let me see. Harold took this case on at twenty minutes past five yesterday aft-

ernoon, and I shall bring it—thanks to you—to a successful conclusion at half past seven this morning. Fourteen hours and ten minutes is not a bad record even for the Brother and Sister Browne. But go on, David, tell me about the girl in the purple limousine."

And David told, and, when it was all said, the girl in the purple limousine, together with Mr. Branksom, had had absolutely nothing to do with the case of the green pansy. Just by a curious trick of circumstances they had been the means of setting Daphne on the trail; but as for active participation in all those weird happenings, both the girl and Mr. Branksom had been as innocent as Daphne herself.

As for David's personal explanation—well, it was simple enough, and an old enough story. The girl, one Phyllis Moore, was the daughter of a woman who had been almost a second mother to David, and on her deathbed she had extracted from David the promise that he would guard Phyllis as though she were his own sister. And Phyllis was pretty—and Phyllis disliked work; and so she had been only too willing to listen to the kind of words that Branksom had been only too eager to pour into her ears.

And David had known all about this affair—and David had been watching the girl—and so, on learning that Phyllis had actually gone off to Branksom's house in Pelham, David, in his character of knight-errant, had pursued and had persuaded the girl at the last moment to return to New York with him.

But Phyllis was weakening at every moment, for her heart longed for those things which Mr. Branksom could purchase for her. David, therefore, had been reckless over money, and had promised Mr. Branksome's chauffeur a large bribe to take him back with Phyllis with all speed to New York, where David had handed Phyllis over to the stern care of an aunt of hers. But, on



the journey back, and just as they were passing Daphne in the brougham, Phyllis had regretted her step toward reformation, and had attempted to order the chauffeur to turn round and take her back to Mr. Branksom's. Then it was that David's artistically temperamental nerves had deserted him, and, in an excess of fury, and completely losing his temper, he had forced the girl, despite her struggles, to sit down and complete the journey with him.

Then David told Daphne that he had a premonition of her danger, and therefore had gone to her apartment at the unusual hour of twelve-thirty or so in the morning.

"And now," asked David, when he had finished his somewhat lengthy explanation, "am I forgiven, and will you marry me next week?"

For answer Daphne crept into his outstretched arms, and laid her head against his shoulder.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE TRUTH COMES OUT.

THE clock in the tower of Trinity Church was hovering between twenty-nine minutes past seven and half past as Daphne, accompanied by the jubilant David, came up from the subway on Broadway at Wall Street, and hurried down the latter thoroughfare that is so essentially connected with the word "money."

But instead of a hundred thousand dollars, Daphne clutched tightly a package that contained nothing more valuable than volumes from the library of the richest man in the world.

And there, on the corner of Wall and Nassau streets, stood an innocent-looking, old, blind peddler, whose only wares were a few packages of bright, green pencils.

"I beg you to note," said Daphne as she placed the package on his little tray, "that we are on time to the second, and

that the green-pansy gentleman will find a note inside the package."

With a mocking little laugh, Daphne turned on her heel, and a moment or so later the subway had again swallowed up her and David.

Arrived at the apartment, Daphne sent David off to her brother's bathroom to revive himself, as she had done, with the salving powers of cold water, and into the astounded ears of Harold she poured the solution to the problem of the green pansy.

Following this they all three breakfasted boisterously in Harold's bedroom. Great was the good fellowship among those three, and still more so was the laughter caused by Daphne's final "coup."

"It's wonderful! It's great!" exclaimed Harold from his bed. "It's well worth a broken leg. And the beauty of it all is, Daphne, that you were absolutely on time. Jove! Fourteen hours and ten minutes—going some, don't you think so?"

It was just before ten that Mr. Branksom rang up Miss Daphne Browne on the telephone. His employer, Mr. Jerome K. Lane, requested the pleasure of her company to lunch at the Fifth Avenue house, if that would be quite convenient to Miss Browne. Would one o'clock quite suit Miss Browne's appointments?

Miss Browne, it appeared, would be more than charmed to lunch at one o'clock with Mr. Lane, provided that she could be accompanied by her fiancé, Mr. David Hurd; and Mr. Branksom was perfectly confident that Mr. Hurd's appearance at lunch would greatly add to Mr. Lane's pleasure.

And when the servants had withdrawn after that celebrated meal, Jerome K. Lane filled his glass with an old liquor and pushed it across the table to Hurd.

Then, throwing back his head, Jerome



K. Lane laughed in a manner rare to any multimillionaire, let alone the richest one in the world.

"You certainly have won out, Miss Browne—thanks, as you insist, to Mr. Hurd; and I must insist on splitting with your fiancé and your brother the hundred thousand dollars as an appreciation of what you have done for me. No, don't refuse," he went on, raising a white hand. "I played the millionaire of fiction all last night; let me continue to-day. A hundred thousand dollars is literally nothing to me, and I've never given away such a sum before except to recognized organizations. So please! But what I want to know is how on earth you managed to find out that I, Jerome K. Lane, was the green pansy and none other?"

"It was David," Daphne admitted quite simply. "He was left alone in the house, and he explored your library—and, Mr. Lane, when one discovers that a serious millionaire, a man whose name is a household word throughout the civilized globe, has bought for himself every—or nearly every—detective story, mystery story, and all Jules Verne's works, and, moreover, that these were the only books in all the library looking as if they had been used—well, I ask you, what would one think? Obviously you, the richest man in the world, were bored with your riches. You had one hobby—detective stories—and you determined that it was worth a hundred thousand odd dollars to manufacture for yourself one glorious night in which you would play the leading part in a glorious mystery."

Again Lane laughed as he drew from his pocket the note that Daphne had inclosed with two detective stories instead of the hundred thousand dollars. He began to read it aloud, chuckling to himself.

MY DEAR MR. LANE: I feel perfectly confident that you will not be the blind venter because of your dignity, the morning hour,

5C—DS

and the celebrated financial corner that you have chosen for the rendezvous. Still, this is just to tell you that, thanks to my fiancé, I have discovered that you, assisted by your servants, are the green pansy. You led me a wonderful chase all last night, and I have to thank you for all the clever clues you left me, so that I should be enabled to follow on your trail. The money reposes on your desk in the library, less the expenses, which were quite heavy. Always cordially yours,  
DAPHNE BROWNE.

"I wonder," Lane said thoughtfully as he laid down the letter, "if you understand the psychology of all this. I think you do from your note, but here I am—old—bored—the richest man in the world; and nothing amuses me—nothing ever has, for years. Then I have this hobby. I adore detective stories, and I read every one I can lay my hands on. I heard of the celebrated Brother and Sister Browne—and last night was roughly planned out weeks ago. I never enjoyed myself more in my life, for I was not only to be the stage manager, the author of the play, and the persecuted victim, but I was to pit my wits against the smartest detectives of the day. That I lost does not matter two pins. I never had such a night in my life. My only regret is that your brother met with an accident. And I have one favor to ask—that you will all keep this safe from an impertinent press."

"Of course we will," Daphne agreed warmly. "and I think you have been frightfully sporting about this whole thing. But I cannot stay long this afternoon. I must get back to my brother. Tell me one or two things before we go."

"Ask away!" Lane smiled.

"Did Mr. Branksom have anything to do with this?" asked Daphne.

"Nothing whatever," Lane answered. "His affair with that girl was pure luck, and luck was largely with me last night, as it always is—as it always has been throughout life. I knew all about Mr. Branksom's private character, and I had



often been his guest at his Pelham house. The visit there was in the schedule that I mapped out, but it was sheer luck that he happened to be supping at the hotel where I was waiting. I entered his house without his knowledge, having carefully calculated that you would follow Branksom; and, of course, had Branksom not been there, I was prepared to leave you a clew as I did the rest of the night! How I laughed when I saw you out of the bedroom window when I so kindly gave you a glimpse of my shadow! Then your blackguard of a borrowed chauffeur jumped at the bribe I offered him—but I stipulated with him that you were not to be hurt. In fact more than once, Miss Daphne, particularly when you went down to Beery Mike's and to Squint-eyed Jim's, you were followed by one of my own private detectives who had instructions to protect you!"

David laughed delightedly. "Can you beat it?" he cried. "A detective followed by and protected by another detective!"

"But what about Fulton Ward, the copper king, and George McTane, the eminent lawyer, and Carrie Blenton, the richest woman in Pennsylvania?" queried Daphne. "They were real persons and they died in the way you stated in the blackmailing letter which you sent yourself."

"Quite so," admitted Lane; "they were real persons, and they died—only I didn't murder them! Everything else

can be explained by the fact that I arranged everything else. Every clew you found was carefully left by me—and, good Lord!—what fun I had putting that green pansy everywhere! Every person who spoke to you—Beery Mike, Squint-eyed Jim, although he nearly ruined it by getting drunk with the money I gave him, the hunchback with the pin-pricked newspaper—all of them were acting as I had told them. The same with the villains who bound and gagged you; and all the time I was riding beside Pierre, my chauffeur, when you were inside the limousine. Mr. Hurd thought himself very smart; but, of course, once he came in, I changed my plans a bit, and he was tied so that he could not help getting away. As for your brother, it was Pierre who came into his room; but I had first asked a doctor if chloroform could possibly hurt him. Yes, Miss Daphne," Lane summed it up, "everything that puzzled you last night, as well as every clew that led you on, was caused by me."

Mr. Branksom came noiselessly into the room, and Lane's expression changed to his usual one of utter weariness.

"There is a cablegram from Paris," the secretary began.

Lane waved him from the room. Then he rose and bowed to his guests.

"You will forgive me," he said. "I must return to being the richest man in the world, after a wonderful vacation of fourteen hours and ten minutes."

## AN ICE BOX FOR A CASH TILL

A CUSTOMER in a delicatessen store in upper New York City was recently much amazed to see the proprietor go into his ice box and pull out a cash box to make change. The money box was apparently concealed in the ice chamber of the refrigerator. When the customer exclaimed at this unusual place for keeping money, the shopman turned to the cash register and disclosed only a few nickels and dimes in the drawer.

Then he explained that the cash register was only for looks. He intends that if a holdup man comes into his shop, the joke shall be on the latter. "No thief," says the shopman, "would think of looking into the refrigerator. They are not smart enough to look in the ice chamber for cold cash."



# One Year's Wages

by Roy W. Hinds

Author of The "Simon Trapp" Stories, etc.

**A**S the day of freedom drew near Ambrose Gately found his nights assailed by an irritating sleeplessness. More than four years he had slept soundly of nights, his brain numb and dull after the day's weary and monotonous tasks. The prospect of the morrow had been no different from the prospect of all the past mornings, so there was no element of anticipation to keep him awake.

But, with only ten days to do, Ambrose Gately found himself thinking constantly of the outside. In day time, at work in the prison shoe shop, he dreamed dreams of the bright period which would soon come. His whole manner of life was to change. He was, of course, to step into the same world he had left only a little more than four years previously, but the time seemed a great deal longer than that to him. His life as a free man had grown dim. It lingered dreamlike in his consciousness, was something which he recalled with detachment. The harsh realities of the present made of the past a series of pleasant memories, and, strangely, Ambrose Gately's thoughts centered on the rosy spots of the past and not upon the hard knocks he had received. So the resumption of his days of liberty appeared in bright relief, dazzling; it represented his removal from the horrible present. These visions brought to Ambrose Gately a period of sleeplessness.

Lying in his bunk in the west cell house, he held mental conversations

with his friends on the outside, the men he liked and hoped to encounter. He drew fanciful pictures of situations in which he hoped to find himself. This kept his brain racing, and the nights passed in a series of unrestful and dream-filled slumbers and sudden awakenings.

In the bunk below another man slept peacefully—to all appearances. Gilbert Pless had yet a year to do; apparently his mind was free from worry or disturbing visions of happiness to come. Ambrose Gately listened to the regular breathing of his cellmate.

These men were friendly only to a mild degree. They tolerated each other. Outside, they would not have associated. Both were crooks to the bone. Each was determined to follow his unlawful pursuits once he got outside, but there was no chance of them working together. No planning or scheming for the future was done in that cell, except as each man schemed in his own mind.

Ambrose Gately was a plodding burglar, capable only of ordinary jobs. He possessed great physical strength and courage. To Gilbert Pless, a finished cracksman, Gately was an object of contempt. There was no sympathy between them, either mentally or professionally. Ambrose broke into small stores, usually in thinly populated districts, and his hauls were comparatively small. He lived in cheap lodging houses and traveled around the country on freight trains. Pless took his plunder from banks and city business houses. His jobs were skillfully planned and



executed, and were usually very profitable. He was coolly courageous, but physically he would have been no more than a plaything in the huge hands of Ambrose Gately. Gilbert Pless lived in good hotels and traveled around the country in Pullman cars. There was nothing in common between these men, no more than there is between a painter of landscapes and one who letters advertisements on barns and fences.

Ambrose Gately felt that Pless held him in contempt, and was just independent enough to ignore Pless. Their conversation rarely fell upon the business of breaking and entering. They talked of men and conditions inside the prison when they talked at all, but for the most part the three hours between "looking up" at six o'clock and "lights out" at nine were spent in silence, each man reading from a prison library book or whatever newspaper or magazine he could get. In the morning they moved about the cell silently. Each man worked in the shoe shop, but they were separated by the full length of the shop. In favorable weather the prisoners were turned into the yard on Sundays, and Pless sought out his friends, Gately his. On Sundays of storm or extreme cold, except at intervals in the mess hall, they were locked in together for all the long day and evening, and on these occasions their relations often bordered on surliness.

But for a week Ambrose Gately had been thinking a great deal about the man in the lower bunk. He lay awake now, and though his body was quiet and inert, his brain was alive with thoughts of the liberty that would soon come to him, interspersed with cogitations concerning Gilbert Pless.

Suddenly a whisper came from the bunk below. It did not startle Ambrose Gately, for his cellmate on previous nights had sounded that whisper.

"Ambrose."

For some reason or other, on this

particular night Ambrose chose to ignore the sibilant call. Furthermore, he feigned sleep. For the last six nights Gilbert Pless had called to Ambrose Gately, sometimes half a dozen times a night. Ambrose heretofore answered with a whispered word. Perhaps he thrust his head over the edge of the bunk and peered downward in the gloom. Pless would then ask him if he couldn't sleep, and utter a word of sympathy and advice such as: "Forget the outside, old man, and get some sleep. You'll shoot your nerves to pieces if you don't." Ambrose would then endeavor to fall asleep, and sometimes succeed. If he didn't succeed he was sure again to hear the whisper from below.

Ambrose Gately got an idea that Gilbert Pless wasn't sleeping very well himself. The man with a year yet to do looked haggard mornings. This was in marked contrast to his appearance up to a week previously. Pless hadn't been a man unstrung by his time. Like all thorough crooks, he took it stoically, and set himself to the task of preserving as much as possible his peace of mind and bodily health. He had eaten well and slept well up to a week ago.

This had not passed unnoticed to Ambrose Gately, and Ambrose Gately wasn't foolish enough to imagine that his cellmate was worrying over him. Most prisoners encounter the sleepless period just before their time expires, and some cases are rather pitiful; but Ambrose Gately knew that pity did not account for the mysterious whisper in the night. So he pretended to be asleep. He breathed deeply and regularly.

In a moment the whisper again came. "Ambrose."

Still Ambrose lay quietly, as though in slumber; whereupon he heard a stirring movement in the bunk below.

Before he saw him, Ambrose felt instinctively that Gilbert Pless had got out of his bunk. There had been no



sound of his feet on the rock floor, no sound except a movement in the bunk. Ambrose lay so that he could see Pless if he straightened up, and, not seeing him, had an idea that he crouched beneath the edge of the uppermost bunk.

A sleeper in the next cell snored loudly. Far up the corridor a man coughed. In the cell of Pless and Gately there was no sound except the regular breathing of Ambrose, who still pretended to sleep.

Presently Ambrose heard a rustling as of straw. He lay with his eyes wide open, for the cell was too dark for Pless to discern this, even if he had studied Ambrose's face closely. Ambrose peered into the gloom, but saw nothing. The rustling was only momentary. Soon, however, quite a different sound reached the ears of the man in the top bunk—a sound easy of definition, a noise that explained everything.

Gilbert Pless was engaged in sawing a bar in the cell door.

It was a sound that would not have awakened a sleeping man. It was merely a faint, rubbing sound—and Ambrose decided that his cellmate used a saw of the finest grade, thin and keen, and tempered so exquisitely as to cut through steel with no rasping or grating. Ambrose knew saws. He had used them in burglary, and once, years ago, he had cut his way out of a county jail.

The man at the cell door worked only at intervals. For several seconds at a time he was silent, listening, probably. No doubt he was pleased by the snoring in the next cell. Had Ambrose been three feet farther away the sound of the saw would have been drowned in that outburst. Ambrose noticed then that the heavy breathing in various cells, an occasional cough, and the rustle of straw when some one turned over, provided counternoise to the oper-

ations of his cellmate, making him comparatively secure against detection except by Ambrose himself. There were fifty cells along that corridor, with two men in each cell.

Gradually the import of the situation dawned upon Ambrose Gately. Gilbert Pless had figured in a previous attempt to escape. That was about a month before Ambrose came into the prison, and it accounted for Pless being at work in the shoe shop. Pless, who at that time had been inside about eight months, was employed as a clerk in the record room, for he was a well-educated man. The attempt of himself and cellmate to escape had cost Pless his "soft" job in the record room, with the privilege of choosing a cellmate, as well as his good time. The warden was determined that Pless should do his five years "flat," because, in the plot to escape, he had violated the trust reposed in him as a clerk with certain privileges by stealing a butcher knife out of the storeroom. This butcher knife he had turned into a saw.

Gilbert Pless had nothing to lose by an attempt to escape. His good time was gone, anyway. They would have to release him on the fifth anniversary of his incarceration in that prison. He could not be prosecuted for an attempt to escape in that State. If his escape were effected, he would then be liable to prosecution, but, once outside the walls, with a fair start he was willing to stake his chance for a complete get-away against the possibility of capture and prosecution. It meant, as he saw it, about a year more of freedom—and Gilbert Pless could steal a lot of money in a year's time.

Somewhat confusedly Ambrose Gately arrived at these conclusions. He had often discussed with other prisoners, but never with Pless, the chances and the penalties of escape and attempted escape. Lying quietly in his bunk as Gilbert Pless worked at the bar



in the cell door, Ambrose Gately arrived also at another conclusion—one that caused him to sit upright with a start.

His own good time was now endangered, and that was an appalling prospect.

Pless, at the door of the cell, straightened upward at the movement in Gately's bunk. The two men, in the gloom, thrust their faces very close together. Pless felt that Ambrose had penetrated his secret, and there was no use dissembling now.

"Well?" he demanded in a guttural hiss.

Ambrose stared stupidly. He could just make out the dim outlines of Pless' head and perceived nothing at all of the blank anger spreading over his countenance.

"What yuh doin'?" Ambrose whispered.

Pless did not answer at once. He was doing some quick thinking. Undoubtedly Ambrose knew what he was up to, and Ambrose's tone didn't convey anger or disapproval. Perhaps the man in the top bunk was too stupid to realize what this enterprise of the night meant to his own affairs.

"I'm not doing anything," Pless replied to gain time. He wasn't positive yet that Ambrose knew exactly what was going on.

"Yuh're sawin' out," Ambrose declared. "I heard yuh."

Pless' task was now to mollify any objection the other man might have. He must be handled very carefully.

"I know it," said Gilbert Pless. His voice held a faint pleading tone, an appeal for sympathy. "It's the only chance I have."

Ambrose meditated upon this. "How about me?" he inquired.

"It won't hurt you that I can see."

"They'll take my good time." His whispering tones were vibrant with alarm, with dread. "They'll think I

known all about it—helped yuh, maybe. That's what they done to Bill Banks when Fred Cutler sawed outa their cell."

"They can't prove that you knew anything about it," Pless argued. "They can't prove——"

"They ain't gotta prove it," Ambrose rejoined practically. "All they gotta do is say I did help yuh—and then I gotta prove I didn't. I couldn't prove I didn't know about it, sleepin' here together like we be; and they'll take my good time for not snitchin'."

Gilbert Pless thought he understood quite well the character of the man with whom he had to deal, and he took a different line.

"Well," he asked bluntly, "are you going to snitch?"

Ambrose rubbed the side of his head softly, contemplatively. "No," he returned; "I don't see how I can do that."

Pless was overjoyed, and a trifle bolder. "The best way out of it," said he, "is for you to go with me. I have a route that will put me outside the walls—and it's just as easy for two to make as one. It took me three months to shape things up, but I've got it fixed now. Got the saws a week ago—slipped into me by a friend. I'll guarantee to put you outside the walls, and then your good time won't make any difference."

"I'd be a fool to do that," Ambrose told him, "with only ten days to do. I can stay here for ten days and be free. If I run off I'll be hunted. If they catch me, I'll come back and do the rest of my five years flat; almost another year. Then maybe they'd try me for escapin', and send me back for another jolt." He paused. "Whyn't yuh wait," he suggested, "till I'm discharged and away from this place; it ain't but ten days, huh? Then yuh can make it away and not hurt me."

"I can't do that," Pless declared in an emphatic whisper. "I don't know



who they'll shove in this cell with me—maybe some snitch. If I knew I'd be alone for one night after you go out, I'd wait; but this joint is full up, and they'll chuck somebody in here with me the first night. I can't take a chance on a stranger."

"When yuh figurin' on makin' it?" Ambrose asked.

Gilbert Pless hesitated just a moment. "Not for four or five nights yet," he replied. "I can work only a few minutes each night. I've got one bar almost cut in one place. Got to cut it through in another place, too—and then I'll have to cut another bar in two places."

"Ye're pluggin' the cuts with soap, huh?"

"Sure. It's slow work. I can't make it for four or five nights."

This information had a soothing effect on Ambrose Gately. If premature discovery weren't made, there was no immediate danger. The delay would give him time to think, although he couldn't see any way out of the dilemma except to inform the prison officials of Gilbert Pless' plot. At any rate, he didn't have to take action at once. He lay down again.

"I wisht you'd hold off," Ambrose said, "till I'm outa here."

"I'll think it over," Pless promised. "I'll turn in now. I'm afraid to do any more to-night. I'll think it over."

Once more Ambrose heard the momentary rustling of straw, and he had an idea that Pless kept the saws hidden in his mattress. Pless worked a minute or so at plugging the bar, then crawled into his bunk. After a time Ambrose dropped asleep.

He did not examine the bars next morning. Glancing at them, he perceived no indications of Pless' operations. It was a mighty smooth job of plugging, and it wasn't at all likely that premature discovery would be made.

All through the day the situation

pressed heavily on the spirits of Ambrose Gately. If he were to save his good time, he saw absolutely no recourse except to snitch. The prospect of having to serve almost another year, now that he had depended so strongly on freedom within a few days, was inexpressibly dreary.

In the cell that night Ambrose and Pless passed only a few words, and nothing at all was said about the thing that lay uppermost in their minds. In his bunk Ambrose listened for Pless to resume his operations. Two hours passed without any sign of that, and Ambrose cheered himself with an idea that perhaps the other man had decided to wait until his escape would not injure his cellmate. Ambrose dropped asleep.

He was awakened by the gruff voice of a guard, standing, lantern in hand, outside the door of the cell. The guard blew a whistle, and other guards came on the run. There was a commotion of arousing and startled prisoners in near-by cells.

Gilbert Pless had escaped. He had lied to Ambrose about the stage of his operations the night before. The guards unlocked the cell and led Ambrose out. At that moment the huge siren screamed and wailed from the prison yard, a signal to the countryside for miles around that a prisoner had escaped.

The deputy warden, who soon reached the prison, sneered when Ambrose Gately declared he knew nothing about the flight of Gilbert Pless. He was exceedingly wroth, and as he could not, for the time being at least, take it out on Gilbert Pless, he did what seemed to be the next best thing; he took it out on Pless' cellmate.

As things transpired, Ambrose Gately did his five years flat, and the final year was a bitter experience. He was removed from the comparatively easy work in the shoe shop and assigned



to drudging tasks. Every day that he served of the time he should have been free was charged up in his memory to the account of Gilbert Pless.

When at length freedom came to Ambrose Gately, he drifted at once into his old manner of life. This led him into various parts of the country, an aimless wanderer preying where he could, and working at odd jobs when he had to.

In his travels he ran across many men with whom he could talk quite freely. Among these men he had a long acquaintance. With him, they belonged to the circle that moves and operates in the shadows. They were a caste apart from other classes of vagabonds, because they plundered. They never begged at back doors, and looked with scorn upon those who did. They had an understanding, and signs and token by which to recognize one another. Ambrose Gately's circle was a ring within the larger circle in which also moved the notorious crook known as Gilbert Pless.

Ambrose Gately roamed the country with a question on his lips: "D'yuh ever see anything of a feller called Gilbert Pless?"

His query was apparently casual and without trace of the bitterness in his heart. He may have been a man solicitous about the welfare of a friend. This question he asked of scores of men. He had grown accustomed to a negative answer. Gilbert Pless was known to some, but they hadn't seen or heard of him for years. At length, in Texas, Ambrose was stunned by an affirmative answer.

"Gilbert Pless?" a kindred spirit repeated. "I should say I do know him. He give me ten dollars in Chicago. About a month ago I met him; run into him on the street. We was friends years ago. He's going big in Chicago, I hear, with some fancy game. Smart guy, Pless."

Ambrose Gately laid his course for Chicago.

It was through a very old friend that he located Gilbert Pless. This followed a search of more than a month in Chicago.

"I don't tell everybody about Pless," the friend confided; "but I know you're all right. You say you're an old friend of his, and I believe it. He had lots of friends when he traveled in the shade; and he don't forget 'em, now that he's traveling in the open."

"D'yuh mean he's goin' straight?" Ambrose demanded.

"That's just what he's doing. Got a pool room out in Hawthorne. That's a suburb on the west side. It's a square joint, a regular pool and billiard hall—nice place; and I guess he's making money." The man lowered his voice. "I got a flash at the inside of his safe one day. It's a daisy. He's foolish to keep a roll in that box, but I guess he thinks none of the boys will touch him. Maybe he's right about that, if they know who owns the safe—but some day a stranger will come along and knock that safe flooey. Us fellows that know Pless wouldn't touch his place for the world, but everybody don't know him. He's good. Slips an old friend a ten-spot if he's down. Only a few of us know where Pless is planted, and we keep it mum. Don't say nothing about it, huh?"

"I won't tell nobody but Pless himself," Ambrose promised.

"That's right. He'll be glad to see you. His name now is Charles Redding, and he's in partnership in that pool room with a fellow by the name of Avery. If Pless ain't there, Avery can tell you where he is. But don't mention the name of Pless—ask for Redding."

The man who gave Ambrose this information, as soon as Ambrose had departed, made all haste to an office building in the financial district of Chicago.



On the sixth floor he entered the main office of Rockledge & Chaney, brokers. He had no difficulty in gaining a private audience with Mr. Rockledge.

Mr. Rockledge, a slender man with a brown Vandyke beard, greeted the visitor with a quizzical light in his eyes. The man drew close to the broker and spoke in a whisper.

"He's in town," he said.

"Whom do you mean?" Rockledge inquired.

"Ambrose Gately."

The broker's manner was quickly surcharged with activity. He reached for a telephone, but before lifting the receiver he turned his gaze upward to the visitor's face.

"You remembered the pool-room gag, did you?"

"I certainly did. I bet he's on his way out to Hawthorne now."

"How long ago did you leave him?"

"You got plenty of time to call Avery. Ambrose can't get there for half an hour yet."

The broker meditated. "I'm afraid I've forgotten Avery's telephone number. Look it up in that book, will you?"

Mr. Rockledge soon had Avery on the telephone.

"Do you remember," he asked, "of a conversation we had a year ago about a man named Gately?"

After a few moments Avery recalled the conversation.

"And do you remember what we discussed at the time?" the broker pursued.

"Yes," Avery declared. "I remember it very well."

"Every detail of it?"

"Everything."

"And is the situation favorable now?"

"Just the same as it was a year ago."

"Good! Gately, I think, will call on you very soon—perhaps in a few minutes. Freshen your mind up as quickly

as you can on every word of our conversation a year ago. The man that he inquires for, you know, is away for three months—traveling in the South. You may go through with everything in the manner I suggested a year ago."

"All right," Avery returned. "I remember everything—just like it happened yesterday."

Rockledge hung up the receiver and leaned far back in his chair with a sigh of relief.

"I'm glad this fellow showed up," he said. "We'll dispose of him now. He's the only man in the world that I've been worrying about. I know him, and I know he's unforgiving and patient. He's square enough. I wouldn't worry about him if he didn't have—well, I'll admit that he's got cause for revenge. No telling what he would do if he got onto the right track. I always felt that he would appear some day. I'm glad he's here. We'll finish our business with him for good. It's lucky that I arranged things a year ago, and I want to thank you and the other boys for the lookout you've kept."

"It wasn't no trouble at all," the visitor protested. "There ain't none of us went out of our way. We all knew Ambrose Gately, and it was a cinch that he'd come to our hangouts if he came to Chicago. Then there wasn't anything to do but steer him like you said."

Mr. Rockledge was grateful. "I'm lucky to have good friends, boys that won't work me," he said. "I don't worry about you fellows at all. The stiffs don't know anything about me—and the only man I fear is perhaps at this moment walking right into our little scheme."

He was right. Just then Ambrose Gately was nearing the pool room in Hawthorne.

Once inside, Ambrose took a swift look around. There was a game of pool in progress on one table. A listless spectator watched the game from



a chair. Behind a small cigar stand in front a small, bald-headed man read a newspaper spread out on the glass case. Ambrose decided that this man was Avery, the business partner of Gilbert Pless, otherwise known as Charles Redding. He approached.

"Mr. Redding around?" he asked.

"Mr. Redding? No," Avery replied, "Mr. Redding isn't in the city."

"That so? He'll be back in a day or so, huh?"

"Why, no; he won't be back for three months yet. Are you a friend of Redding's?"

"Yes."

"Well, Redding's health is bad. He's traveling in the South now. I expect he'll go out to California in a few days. but I don't know just where he'll be out there. Anything I can do?"

Ambrose meditated. "No," he replied; "I just dropped in to see Mr. Redding. I'll watch the pool game, I guess."

"Go ahead. Make yourself at home."

The idea that had haunted Ambrose Gately's mind for more than two years now began to take definite form as he sat in a chair watching the game of pool. He would make Gilbert Pless pay him for the year he had served in prison. It seemed perfectly right to him. It appeared as though he had done the year which Pless should have served. Pless should pay.

The longer he studied the various aspects of the pool room, the easier things looked. It wouldn't be a hard job for him to get inside the place as a burglar. There were two back windows and a back door. On each side of the door was an iron socket, and leaning against the wall near by was a heavy, wooden bar. Undoubtedly this bar was placed across the inside of the door at night. But the windows—they were easy. Iron rods crossed them about half way up, but those rods would not deter

Ambrose Gately more than a minute. He decided that either of the back windows was a cinch.

His heart leaped with joy as he studied the safe. It was a safe of the old type, undoubtedly. He could open it with a drill, a hammer, and a pair of pliers. He had opened many such safes in that way. It was just such a safe as he had found in scores of country grocery stores. He hoped that the man who directed him thither had given him the right hunch about a large sum of money being carried in the safe as a rule. He felt somehow that events were shaping themselves, and he had a great deal of confidence in the contents of that safe. He didn't care to loiter too long in the vicinity, and perhaps be "spotted" by a "dick." He must trust to luck, the same streak of luck that brought him there, so far as the contents of the safe were concerned. He departed from the pool room, spent a few minutes in an inspection of the neighborhood, and then went back into the city, very well satisfied.

Late that night Ambrose Gately accomplished his task. He got away from the pool room with a bundle of money. In his room in a cheap hotel in the city he counted the proceeds of the night. He could hardly believe his eyes. The safe had yielded five thousand dollars. It made a bulky stack of bills of various denominations, and Ambrose decided that Pless and his partner never banked their money. He had indeed been led by fate—luck, he called it. Gilbert Pless had paid.

Ambrose couldn't resist the temptation of writing a letter. For a long time he was in doubt as to how to address it. His experience in such things was limited. At length he put it in an envelope and addressed it "Chas. Redding," at the street address in Hawthorne, and wrote in big, painfully formed letters on the envelope. "For-



werd Pless." Gilbert Pless would get it, he decided. That was the sauce which made Ambrose's revenge delightfully sweet.

He hurried away from the city.

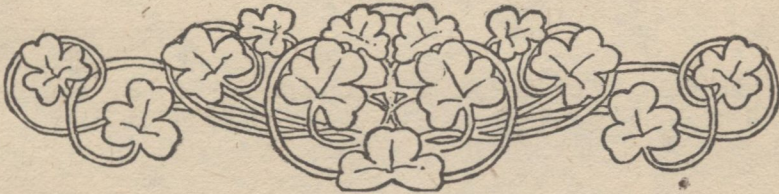
Next morning Avery notified the police that the safe in his pool room had been robbed. "They only got about three dollars," he added.

But late that afternoon Avery told quite a different story to Rockledge, the broker, in the latter's private office.

"He got his pay," said Avery, "just as you said he would. I planted five thousand in the safe, and he came and got it. A clean job, too. He'll make it 'getting away, all right; don't worry. Oh, yes; here's a letter that came to the place just before I left. Guess it's for you. Ain't you the mysterious Mr. Redding, eh?"

Avery chuckled, and handed the broker the letter mailed in the night by Ambrose Gately. The broker read it, and chuckled, too. He tossed the scrawled sheet to Avery.

"Cheap enough," Mr. Rockledge commented. "For five thousand dollars I dispose of a bitter enemy, a man who knows all about me and my past. He's through searching now for Gilbert Pless; and he's in a softer frame of mind. You see, in the letter he says he collected a year's wages from Gilbert Pless. Well, Ambrose had the money coming to him. He never made that much money in a year in his life, and it's a big haul to him." The broker mused. "I always pitied Ambrose," he went on. "I had to leave him in that cell. I couldn't explain things to him. And still I had to appear here in Chicago on a certain date under my right name of Rockledge if I wasn't to lose that inheritance. I'm glad I squared up with Ambrose; I'm glad I satisfied him without letting him in on my secret. And now, Avery, we can continue the business of traveling in the open—you with your pool room, and me with my business here. Thanks for helping me out."



## TO SAVE MOTHER GIRL SAYS SHE FIRED FATAL SHOT

**I**N the superior court of Everett, Washington, a young girl of fifteen years of age tried to save her mother from the charge of murder by declaring that she fired the fatal shot. The girl is Treva Pole, and she testified that she fired the second and third shots which killed Gus Danielson in the home of her mother, Mrs. Bertha Wilkes. The girl was accused as an accessory to the crime, but the woman was on trial for the death of Danielson.

The girl's story closely tallied with that of her mother, until she reached the point where her mother declared she had become unconscious in her struggle with Danielson. Here Treva testified that she picked up the revolver which Danielson had dropped and "squeezed" it twice when she saw Danielson come toward her. "Why didn't you tell me?" demanded the mother, who became hysterical.

When the jury had been sent from the room the judge declared that he believed the girl innocent. "The real tragedy," he said, "did not take place at home; it has taken place here. That woman has put her up to it," he declared to the attorney for the defense.



# Room for Romance

by Henry Leverage

Author of "Author and Realist," etc.

**N**EITHER romance nor satisfaction was stamped on Charles Elliott's features when he turned up his coat collar and slushed through snow that cluttered the street in front of the First National Bank Building at Ravenwold. The sign on the bank announced that on account of Sunday and holidays the small-town institution would be closed for three days. Information gained from the clerk of the town's one hotel qualified the sign. Said the clerk: "No use waiting around. All the bank people have gone on a hunting trip. Come back Tuesday."

Leaving the settlement of Ravenwold, Charles Elliott detoured through snow banks, climbed picket fences, and descended at length to a railroad cut where a green-set semaphore shone like a light in an apothecary's window. The railroad station was locked. A second offending sign that evening roused Charles Elliott's ire. It read: "No trains until morning. Wreck up the road."

Grimly Charles Elliott set off down track for a junction eight miles away—eight snow-cutting, knee-tiring spans through a brutal night.

At a turn of the road the jutting ledge of black rock blotted out the view toward Ravenwold; ahead appeared a yellow fire set between a chilly-looking box car and a pile of ties at a switch. Three men crouched for warmth around

this fire. They rose menacingly when Charles Elliott appeared.

They saw a short, stout, gray-mustached man bundled to the ears in black. He saw a trio of flint-eyed roadmen. Mutual distrust leaped the distance between the intruder and the group of three. Said one raspingly:

"Nix crackin' wise, pals. This fellow looks like a railroad 'tec'."

"I'm anything but that," explained Charles Elliott. "I'm cold as the devil. Do you mind if I warm myself at your fire?"

Charles Elliott sat down on the end of a tie, opened his coat, thrust forward two water-soaked shoes, and began rubbing life into numbed fingers. He blew in his palms with a frosty explanation:

"There's a wreck up the road. I'm stumped! I have business in Ravenwold, but it seems everybody there's gone hunting—that is, everybody I wanted to see."

The three roadmen clustered beyond the fire; one came forward lurchingly. "Say, bo, we don't know who you are. You look like a railroad 'tec' to us. We're death on railroad 'tec's—eat 'em for breakfast!"

Charles Elliott looked up. "I've nothing to do with railroads, friend, except to travel on them when they're running. I'm in the banking business."

"Eh?"

"I'm interested in banks."

Had the can of mulligan stew over the



fire exploded, there would have been no more excitement shown among the burly knights of the road. They gathered like evil pards and whispered each to each; hard-browed glances were shot in Charles Elliott's direction. Presently two of the trio came forward and stood one on each side of the wooden tie.

"Me name's 'Frisco Slim,'" explained the right-hand roadman. "Me pal's monica is 'Big Ed' Delaney. The one over there is 'Little Dick' Norris. We're interested in jugs—banks—like you are."

Concernedly Charles Elliott looked around the world of down-driving snow. Then he rose and pushed forward a friendly hand.

"Banks," he admitted, "have occupied my time for many years. I had a little job over in Ravenwold—one that wouldn't have taken me long to do—but the bank's cashier and president have gone deer hunting, or whatever they shoot in this section. So as I said, friends, I'm stumped! I can't open the vault of the Ravenwold First National without assistance. I've got to have it opened in order to get at the cash."

Big Ed Delaney ran experienced eyes over Charles Elliott's stocky figure. He appraised a square jaw and resolute mouth. "Be you a stick-up?" he queried.

"Sometimes." Elliott laughed. "My name is well known to the Federal Reserve people at Washington. A lot of money has passed through my hands."

Little Dick Norris came around the fire. "Did you just leave Ravenwold?"

"Yes," answered Charles Elliott.

"Then," said Little Dick, "you can put us wise to a few things. How much cash do you figure is in the First National crib? What kind o' a night watchman have they got? Is the burg dead after one o'clock?"

"Hold on!" roared Big Ed Delaney. "This fellow may be a copper! How do we know for sure who he is?"

Warmth of adventure glowed in Charles Elliott's eyes. The burly trio, the leaping, yellow flames, the savory stew—all sent a feeling through the stranger's frame that was akin to something new in life. He shot a glance between the ankles of two of the roadmen. There, half covered by snow, rested a number of pinch bars, a can of black powder, a set of drills, and a huge brace to which was attached a bright-linked chain. Yeggmen carried such instruments for opening the largest of vaults.

"I'm not a policeman," explained the stranger. "Far from it! I'm in the same game as you men are—taking stock of the contents of strong boxes. My line is more of the stand-and-deliver kind. I go right in, brace the cashier—and, believe me, lads, he's got to come clean, or I'll put him where he'll never be heard of again. D'you remember what happened to the cashier of the Second National Bank of Frankfort, Adams County, this State?"

Big Ed Delaney, after a moment of thought, said: "Naw!"

"Well," declared Charles Elliott, "he was short sixteen thousand dollars when I got done with him."

Truth was in the intruder's glance as he stared at the three yeggs; a feeling crept around the fire of comrades met in strange surroundings. Big Ed, Little Dick, and Frisco Slim dished out the hobo mulligan, opened a bottle of "white mule," and treated the newcomer with all respect due a kid-gloved crook.

Three drinks from the bottle of mixed alcohol and water warmed Big Ed Delaney into a confessional mood. "We're blasters!" he imparted to Elliott. "We rip open big strong boxes for excitement. They call us yeggmen or petermen or cracksmen."

Charles Elliott nodded comprehensively. "There hasn't been much excitement since the war," he admitted. "That's why there's so much crime and bad booze—people want diversion.



Were you thinking of opening the vault of the Ravenwold First National tonight?"

Frisco Slim looked at Little Dick; Big Ed upended the bottle and gulped out:

"Sure! Want to come along and help us?"

Out came Charles Elliott's watch; he slanted it toward the flames. Then he studied the down-driving snowflakes, the wilderness of white, the two shining lines of steel rails that stretched from nowhere to nowhere. No train would be along until after dawn; the junction where a train might be boarded, was fully seven miles away.

"I've got nothing else to do," said he coolly. "I don't mind seeing the inside of that vault. I know the town of Ravenwold well. It's asleep."

"Sure!" gasped Big Ed. "These jerk-town burgers are all asleep after twelve. We've got black powder, drills, and gats. You must carry a gat—if you're a stick-up, stranger."

For answer Charles Elliott displayed an automatic and two extra clips of cartridges. "I'm well armed. Suppose we walk over toward Ravenwold. I might help you open that vault without using force. Then we won't wake up the town."

"Suits us!" declared all the yeggs.

The last remnant of the trio's suspicions were lulled when the stranger with a grim laugh lifted the can of black powder, tucked it under his arm, and started climbing the railroad embankment. "You men are going to save me three or fours days," he said to Big Ed when that yegg, laden with pinch bars and drills, gained his side. "I work by schedule. I was going to clean out the First National's vault Saturday, but it's closed. There's no use me waiting around—we can do it just as well tonight, perhaps better."

Growled out Big Ed:

"The kale goes four ways—remember that!"

"Certainly. There ought to be all of twenty-three thousand six hundred dollars in cash. I took the trouble to look over their January statement. You see I work by information, and that's why I'm a success in my own business."

Snow flurries, wind, and a lost trail caused Big Ed to curse the world in general and his own lack of luck in particular. Little Dick and Frisco Slim floundered in the tracks made by Charles Elliott; the first straggling edge of Ravenwold was reached; a dog barked. Big Ed laid down the pinch bars.

"How are we goin' to get in the bank building?" he asked Charles Elliott.

"I noticed a way. Follow me!"

A little whistle of romantic interest issued from the stranger's lips; he seemed more amused than concerned. Once he waited for the clumsy cracksmen, who made as much noise as an awkward squad. "I never went through a vault at night," said he, "but from all indications it must be easy. Suppose you boys wait here; I'll go between those two buildings and see if I can pry a window open. That's the bank!"

Big Ed gripped Charles Elliott's sleeve in a hasty grab. "Remember—no double crossing, bo. You may be a good gay cat, but we're death on coppers. See that you walk straight."

Charles Elliott walked straight enough to suit any one engaged in crime. He deposited the can of black powder beneath a window, got onto it, ran his palms over the sash, tried high up, then turned toward Big Ed, who was creeping through the snow on hands and knees.

"A little jimmy would turn the trick."

The yegg gave his sleeve a shake; a tiny crowbar fell on the ice. Picking it up, he handed it to the stranger, who pried at the window sill.

"Look out for bugs," warned Big Ed. "Listen an' see if you hear a buzzer ringin'. Some of these windows have wires attached to them—some haven't."



"This one hasn't," remarked Elliott.

He got off the powder can and waved a hand. "Help yourself. I sprang the lock."

Big Ed Delaney, Little Dick, and Charles Elliott squeezed inside the bank building, while Frisco Slim, huddled at the street corner, stood watch. A flash lamp spotted the floor; its rays circled the bank vault. Big Ed got ready a formidable array of burglar tools.

"Wait," whispered the stranger. "These small-town banks often have their combination numbers hidden around the cashier's or president's offices. Suppose I search the desks."

"Go to it!" said Big Ed, passing the search lamp.

Thoroughly searching every open drawer, prying open the locked ones with the point of the small crowbar, Elliott announced a discovery. "Come here," he called to Big Ed. "Look out for that grilled work. Don't stumble over the waste basket. Here are a series of numbers pasted on the bottom of a drawer. They look like the combination to the vault. That'll save us breaking things up and awakening the town with a blast."

"Saves a lotta drillin', too," agreed Big Ed. "Four times on the left to sixteen, three times to the right to seventy-five, twice to the left to fifty, onst to the right to thirty-eight. Sounds good to me."

"Try it!"

Over the floor crawled the big yegg. Little Dick held a tiny flash lamp so that the vault's dial was revealed. The spindle turned. Big Ed cursed and tried again. He pushed down viciously on the handle. Suddenly a click was followed by a dragging sound. Little Dick started dancing a jig.

"That's fine," commented Charles Elliott. "But the inner door will have to be forced. We haven't the combination for that."

"Aw, these small-town kiesters are

dead easy!" exultantly stated Big Ed. "Dick, pass me the brace and drill. I'll spring this door in ten minutes—or eat it."

A concerned frown darkened Charles Elliott's forehead as Big Ed selected a diamond-tipped drill, dipped it in oil, and started defacing the enameled surface of the inner door. The drill's chips dropped to the floor. A second and longer drill was passed to the yegg by Little Dick; at length the drill went through, and the lock was sprung with a twisted piece of wire.

"I'll go in," suggested Elliot. "Hold the flash light so I can count the cash. It's in those tin boxes."

"Count all you want!" muttered the big yegg. "We'll watch you."

Framed by the bank's vault doorway, two hard-browed faces peered at Charles Elliott when he sat down and began opening tin boxes and sorting their contents, which consisted of small and large bills, silver, and a few gold pieces. Once he got up, opened a ledger, and consulted a cashier's notation; then he was sprawled on the floor with the cash. Suddenly he looked full into the white light of the flash lamps.

"Correct," said he. "Exact to a dollar."

"How much?" asked Big Ed.

"Twenty-five thousand two hundred and fifteen dollars and seventeen cents. The bank's reserve has increased since their January statement."

"You talk like a business man." The pleased yegg grinned as he spoke. "Put the kale in a box an' let's mooch—which is underworld lingo for get-away. You silk-stocking guys don't use the same language we do."

Charles Elliott selected one of the largest boxes, emptied it of canceled checks, sorted the bills, and crammed them under a lid which he clicked shut. Rising, he moved through darkness for a step or two then he glided out of the vault. Big Ed and Little Dick glared



hungrily at the box under the stranger's arm.

"Come on," said Charles Elliott. "Lock both doors so that no one will notice they've been opened. Pick up your tools. I'll wait outside the window."

Little Dick collected the tools, wiped away any possible finger prints with his sleeves, and, after lifting the powder can, he followed Big Ed, who was close behind Charles Elliott.

Whistling signals called Frisco Slim from the street. This yegg came slouching alongside the building and fastened a drilling pair of eyes on the box under the stranger's arm.

"All set," said Big Ed. "We'll let our friend carry the kale till we get to a good place to divide it. The hoosiers in this burg get up early, so we better make tracks."

Charles Elliott led the way, followed in Indian file by Big Ed, Frisco Slim, and Little Dick, who staggered under the weight of many heavy tools. Snow had covered the former footprints; the morning frost was a compelling thing.

It was breaking dawn when the railroad track came in sight miles nearer the junction than Ravenwold. The stranger had guided the trio by a back trail filled with obstacles in the shape of fences, frozen ponds, and specter-haunted roads where branches reached detaining hands.

"Where the devil are you going?" asked Big Ed at length.

Charles Elliott turned, shifted the tin box, smiled at the chilled yeggs, and said: "It isn't much farther. We better keep walking along the track until we come to the yard switches this side of the junction. There we can catch a freight for the West—where I want to go."

"When do we split the cash?" Little Dick asked between chattering teeth.

Charles Elliott answered: "At the first switch. We can build a fire there,

get warm, and divide the cash. Each man's share ought to be six thousand three hundred and three dollars and seventy-nine and a quarter cents."

"He figures like a bookkeeper," grumbled Big Ed.

Green shone a semaphore for a clear track in the junction yard. The stranger began increasing his stride from a fast walk to a run. He drew away from Big Ed, who lurched after him.

"Hold on!" cried the yegg. "Hey, you, where you goin' with our cash?"

The tail end of a freight train began snaking down the yard; a little red caboose was at the train's end. Charles Elliott reached for this method of escape and secured a hold on a handrail. He swung aboard the caboose; Big Ed managed to wrap a pair of arms around the rear coupler. He crawled upon the platform and glared at Elliott. "Say, bo, you thought you could get away with it, but you can't! Gimme that box!"

"Gladly," was the stranger's answer. "Here it is. You boys have saved me three days' wait at Ravenwold. I can make out my report now and certify that the accounts of the First National Bank are correct."

The train gained speed. Big Ed swayed and measured the fast flying belt of cinders alongside the track. The box came open; he glanced inside it. "Empty! You've double crossed us!"

"Hardly that," said Charles Elliott romantically. "The cash, all of it, is safe in the bank's vault. I switched boxes. You see, you didn't guess the particular business that detained me at Ravenwold while the president and cashier were away hunting. I'm not a stick-up."

"What are you?"

Charles Elliott pushed Big Ed down the caboose steps and forced him from the train. The baffled road man rose in time to hear the stranger's voice.

"I'm connected with the Federal Reserve—in the capacity of a national bank examiner!"



# Lucky Luck

by Arthur Mallory

Author of "Black Valley," "Moonshine," etc.

**I**NSTINCTIVELY Mary Mooney patted her sleek black hair and set both slender hands against her belt, writhing upward into her clothes after the fashion of modern young women. A brighter color rose into her smooth cheeks; beneath lowered, sooty lashes, her dark-blue Irish eyes sparkled demurely.

The mysterious Mr. John Smith, "swellest" guest of the Hotel MacIvor, was approaching the cigar stand, and Mary leaned invitingly toward him, over its showcase, awaiting his pleasure.

"Yes, Mr. Smith?" she murmured, smiling a shade less impersonally than she did at the average customer.

It was not that she had any real interest in the man, Mary would have told you. No, but he was tall, handsome, distinguished, and there was about him an aura of romance, of mystery, heightened by his prosaic name, which, she was convinced, was assumed.

For more than a week Mr. John Smith had occupied the best suite in the MacIvor; in a town less sophisticated than Buffalo, or a hostelry less cosmopolitan than the MacIvor, it would have been called the "bridal suite." He had appeared from nowhere in particular, swinging a slender Malacca stick, wearing the tiniest and blackest of tight-waxed mustaches and a look of world-weary, nonchalant melancholy. He had his own valet; he had a Sharpe-Speare motor car, bought the day after his arrival and driven by a very correct

French chauffeur called Jules. He had no ostensible occupation, but he met all his obligations promptly, from an apparently inexhaustible roll of crisp, new bills. He never cashed a check, never sent or received a letter, never used the telephone except for service calls.

All this Mary knew from cashier, telephone girl and bell boys; and, like the rest of the hotel's personnel, she wondered mightily who Mr. John Smith might really be. "A confidence man, a grafter," declared Isobel Rolfe, the phone girl; but Mary preferred to believe him a millionaire—perhaps Johnnie K. van Alstyne himself—living incognito for some romantic purpose. She had found a bleared photograph of Johnnie K. in a Sunday supplement, wherein the eye of faith might have discovered a faint likeness to Mr. John Smith, but Isobel only laughed.

"Not a bit like him," she asserted. "And what would Johnnie K. van Alstyne be doing at the MacIvor, all alone? He knows lots of people in Buffalo; somebody would have spotted him the first day. Why, right here in the house there's R. P. Woodruff and old Mr. Speare."

Mary Mooney remained unconvinced. "He's somebody important, anyhow," she declared. "Look at the money he spends! What? Well, Isobel Rolfe, if you know so much—if he's a con man and everything, why isn't he trying to con somebody?"

And so the argument ran on from day to day, as inconclusively as such



arguments always do. Dick Corrigan, the hotel detective, only shook his red head and looked wise.

"I've had an eye on that buck," he declared. "You'll do well, Miss Mooney, t' keep him at his distance."

"I told you!" exclaimed Isobel. "He's a crook!"

"I said nothin' of th' kind," declared the detective promptly. "Do not be misquotin' me." For the wise hotel detective is cautious in discussing guests of the house. "I meant only it is plain to be seen the likes of him is no good company for honest girls, wherever he got all th' coin he's spendin' so free."

"He's always been a perfect gentleman with me," said Mary almost regretfully. "Never a word out of him, only 'Good morning' or 'Good evening,' maybe."

Corrigan scowled. "He better be," he grumbled.

And so this morning Mary Mooney smiled cordially at Mr. John Smith. He was so romantic-looking, and he was rich, too. Besides, there was Dick Corrigan over in the lobby corner, scowling at her. He needn't think she cared for his black looks! After two years at the cigar stand in the lobby of the MacIvor she could look out for herself she guessed. Anyway, Mr. Smith was a perfect gentleman.

"Yes, Mr. Smith?" she asked softly.

Mr. Smith did not so much as look at her. "One of those Flor Finas, please," he murmured.

Mary brought out the box, her color a trifle higher. He *should* notice her, whether he would or not.

"Twenty-five cents straight, Mister—Van Alstyne!" said she, clearly.

The other started convulsively, and the quarter in his hand dropped to the glass counter, with a sharp, ringing sound. He stared at her, and the points of his tiny waxed mustache stood awry. Then he snatched a cigar, turned, and hurried out of the lobby.

"Well!" murmured Mary pensively. "What do you think of that?"

She replaced the box of cigars, closed the show case, and fumbled after Smith's coin, staring toward the revolving doors.

Corrigan, still scowling, started across the lobby, running a hand through his thick, red hair. "Was he tryin' t' get funny?" he demanded.

"Why, no! Of course not! It was just——" She flushed, and the quarter slipped from her nervous fingers and dropped to the floor behind the counter.

"Oh, fiddle! Now you've made me drop it. It's rolled under the show case, too. Now, Mr. Corrigan, you'll have to help me find it."

Nothing loth, the stalwart, red-haired detective came around the end of the counter, and presently the two were crouched behind its high screen, completely concealed from the lobby, while they searched for that elusive coin.

"You know, Miss Mooney—M-Mary! I—I—— That guy didn't say nothin' he shouldn't, huh? If he did, I'll bean 'im!"

"Why, Mr. Corrigan! How—how silly. There! See if you can reach that corner; I thought I saw something."

She stooped lower, pointing; her sleek, black hair almost touched those crisp red curls. Dick Corrigan did not grope in the corner, however. Instead, his firm, capable hand captured hers and held it.

"Why, why, Mr. Corrigan—Dick! Wh-what are you doing?"

"Nun-nothin'," he said huskily. Then more boldly: "Yes, I am. Listen, Mary, dear!"

Mary listened, swaying imperceptibly toward him, as they crouched there, hidden from all curious eyes by the high cigar counter. It was a small space anyway; perhaps she could not draw away.

"Y-yes—Dick!"

"M-Mary! Listen! I—I—aw, darn



it, girlie, I'm rotten at this soft stuff; but I like you awful well, honey. I I—love you. W-will—can't you—aw, say, let's get married, huh?"

Mary laughed softly and swayed closer. Her hand lay in his, relaxed, at ease. It turned a bit, curling warm little fingers into his palm.

"You—you're a bum Romeo, boy," she whispered, "but I kinda like you that way. Lookit! There's that quarter now!"

Dick Corrigan refused to "lookit." Instead he caught her close in his strong arms. In that narrow space there was no escape; so Mary very sensibly attempted none, but settled herself more comfortably for a satisfying kiss.

It was cut short, however, by the timid rapping of a coin upon glass, and Mary Mooney disengaged herself and rose, blushing furiously, to meet the mild, incurious gaze of Mr. Billings. Dick Corrigan, with a face as red as his hair, groped after the forgotten coin.

Mr. Billings of room No. 903 was as uninteresting as Mr. Smith was romantic. He, too, was young and tall, passably well made and not ill looking; he wore a tiny mustache and carried a Malacca stick. But he was colorless where the other was vivid; instead of blasé sophistication, his mild brown eyes expressed timid apology. He was self-effacing, yet obvious; reserved, without the suggestion that he had depths to conceal. Mary knew all about him; he worked in a Main Street store and helped the hotel cashier with his books of evenings, receiving free lodging in return. He occupied the MacIvor's cheapest room, as John Smith did its most expensive suite; he smoked domestic cigarettes instead of Smith's imported cigars. That expressed the difference between the two men.

Mary served Mr. Billings mechanically, and he departed, scarcely noticed, as Dick Corrigan straightened behind the show case, bringing with him the

dropped coin. Mary Mooney took it, her hand lingering in her lover's, as she hesitated to ring up the sale.

"I—I hate to lose it, Dicky," she whispered. "Dear old quarter! Look what it did for us!"

She fumbled for her purse, but Corrigan stopped her masterfully. "Nix, now! Let me!" He brought a coin from his own pocket. "Here, honey, ring that one up, and we'll just keep the other for a luck piece."

He took it from her and opened his pen knife. With the point of its smallest blade he cut two sets of initials across the cheek of Miss Liberty: "M. M.—R. C."

"There, girlie! If it hadn't been f'r that quarter bringin' me back in here, right close an' outa sight an' all, I don't know as I'd have got up nerve t' tell you. Keep it, honey; it's a lucky quarter—f'r me, anyways."

Mary took it back and kissed it slyly, with a sidelong glance to set any man's heart beating faster. "For me, too," she whispered. And the light in her eyes moved Dick Corrigan to catch her hand recklessly, regardless of the crowded lobby.

"Let's—let's drop another one!" he suggested.

The girl blushed deeper. "No, Dicky, you mustn't! Be sensible, dear boy! Folks are looking at us now. Go on outside where you belong." And, with a pretty little air of proprietorship, she pushed him out.

He stayed close by, however, leaning upon the show case. "I—you know, girlie, it just got my goat, watchin' you smile at Smith like that. I—I must be jealous, I expect. You don't care nothin' about him, do you, honey?"

"Who? Mr. Smith? Oh, fiddle! Why, Dicky boy, him an' Mr. Billings looks just alike to me. I—I was just trying to make you jealous, Dicky."

Corrigan sighed, completely satisfied. If she cared no more for Smith than



for Billings, he need have no uneasiness. Peter Billings was no man to fill the eye of a pretty girl.

"When will you marry me, girlie?" he demanded eagerly. "Are you willing to take a chance, the way things is? You know I ain't got much; only my pay here, forty a week an' board. I expect they'd make us a rate f'r you t' stay on, too, huh?"

She blushed divinely. "Oh, Dicky, not so soon! Not right away like that! Why, I haven't any clothes!"

"Huh!" He scowled. "I know I ain't got much. I'm a piker, side of Mr. John Smith an' th' likes o' him." He was hasty tempered, this Richard Corrigan, as his red head promised.

"Now, Dicky—dear!" The girl gazed at him, and put out an impulsive hand. "Don't talk like that. I—I'm ready—I—I want you just like you are!"

In his turn Corrigan softened; they talked on and on, after the fashion of new-plighted lovers, gazing with rapt eyes into a roseate future.

"I could keep right on at th' counter for a while," ventured Mary timidly, "until we got started."

"Aw, nix! I guess I c'n support me a wife. An' besides, once I c'n get goin', I'm a-goin' t' quit this hotel stuff an' start me a agency f'r myself. 'Richard Corrigan, Private Investigator' on th' door in gold letters. I gotta good trainin', honey."

"Uh-huh! And me in the outer office, Dicky, to answer questions and look after the books and all; and maybe talk over cases with you, dear. I do think it's so exciting, detective work! I—I could help sometimes, couldn't I?"

Corrigan nodded. "If I just had a little more—another thousand dollars, maybe, and rep—why, I'd start in tomorrow. Folks don't know me, girlie. If I was to clear up some big case once, it'd give us a grand start."

Mary Mooney's eyes wandered to the

news stand which flanked her booth. A big, black headline leaped out at her:

## **BLACK KELLY ROBS BERNHEIMER STORE?**

### **New Reward Offered by Chamber of Commerce!**

She caught her lover's arm across the counter. "Oh, Dicky, look! Just suppose you—you and I—could catch Black Kelly! See here!" She reached over after *The Morning Mail*. "With this new one from the Chamber of Commerce, there's twenty-five hundred dollars offered for him. That would set you up in fine shape, Dicky, and give you the reputation you're after, too."

Fired with a new and personal interest in the bandit, Mary and her lover read *The Morning Mail's* story of his last exploit. Black Kelly, thus nicknamed by a reporter, because he favored a derby hat and black mask for business wear, had entered the clothing shop of Mr. Moses Bernheimer, on Main Street near Lafayette Square, at midday; and had departed thence, five minutes later, carrying with him the contents of the till.

It had been a holdup characteristic of the lone bandit who was staging a one-man crime wave in the city of Buffalo. During the past month, *The Mail* went on to say, Black Kelly had robbed sixteen stores, one every other day. Most of them had been comparatively small, like Bernheimer's; but he had cleaned out Sullivan & Moran's jewelry shop and visited Hall, the silver-smith, bringing his total income for the month up to something more than nine thousand dollars. The newspaper account suggested that, unless his necessary expenses were higher than one would expect, he would be compelled to pay a surtax, in addition to his normal income tax next spring.

Black Kelly's methods were always the same, simple, straightforward and effective. He drove up in a flivver with



all its curtains raised, dismounted, leaving his engine running, and entered the selected shop at once. He wore khaki overalls, like a garage mechanic, and a derby hat, from whose sweatband hung a mask made of a black silk handkerchief. Several mulcted shopkeepers had noticed that the edge of this mask was weighted, apparently with shot. He paid his calls at midday, unerringly selecting a time when the shop was practically empty; entering, he stuck a pistol into the proprietor's abdomen and collected the contents of the till. He rarely waited to order a safe opened; within five minutes he was out again, and before help could be summoned he was away in his car, indistinguishable from the thousand other flivvers on the streets of Buffalo. No one had ever so much as caught his license number, for the plates were always covered with mud—though no doubt he changed his number daily. Certainly he seemed to have overlooked no precaution. At the end of thirty-two days he was no nearer capture, and the reward for his apprehension had been increased until it now totaled twenty-five hundred dollars.

"Just suppose we caught Black Kelly!" repeated Mary, thrilled at the idea.

Corrigan was less enthusiastic. "Huh! Fine chance we got t' do that! He ain't likely t' hold up th' MacIvor, is he?"

"We-ell—maybe not. But you can't tell. Anyway you could pick out some store he hasn't been to and spend your noontime there every day and wait for him."

"Lots o' stores in Buffalo," he pointed out. "Lots o' folks lookin' f'r Kelly, too. Like as not he'll change his time o' comin', now everybody expects him at noon."

"Well," she replied impatiently; "we can talk about it, anyway. There's no harm making up plans, is there? Just

think of all we could do with that money!"

The glow of her dark-blue eyes was so radiant, and the plans she "made up" were so pleasing, that Corrigan lingered at the cigar stand until the manager sent for him.

He was back in fifteen minutes, looking perplexed. "Whaddayuh think, girlie? Old Denby shows me a letter jus' now from the feller that calls himself John Smith. First one he's got since he come. An' it was addressed plain enough, 'Mr. John Kingsley van Alstyne—typewrit', too. An' th' 'van Alstyne' was crossed out with a pen an' 'Smith' wrote in over it! Whaddayuh know about that?"

Mary giggled excitedly. "I just told you! I knew all the time he was Johnnie K. under an assumed name!"

"Ye-ah, or else some slick con man tryin' t' fix it so as his come-on will think he's Johnnie K. van Alstyne, under an assumed name. More likely he's a fake workin' it so as folks will think he's Johnnie K., keepin' under cover here, without his ever really sayin' he is. Nobody'd have nothin' on him then. Looks like a pretty smooth piece o' work t' me; an' old Denby thinks so, too. Told me t' keep a clost eye on him. It don't stand to reason Johnnie K. van Alstyne would be here like this."

But the topic, which had been absorbing enough this morning, failed to hold them now. In a moment Dick Corrigan was assuring his lady that he'd never look twice at any other girl.

"When did you first know, Dicky?" she asked. "When did you first find out you l-loved me?"

"Why, girlie, th' very first day I set eyes on yuh. I left th' force in Chi an' came on here last year; an' my very first mornin' you come in with a bit o' white fur round your neck, an' I thought, 'Gee, there's a little queen!'"

"You remember that old ermine scarf! It was a horried thing, just imi-



tation, Dicky." But her eyes shone with delight.

"Imitation or not, it looked good t' me. Some day I'll be buyin' you the genuine, honey girl. You'd ought to wear white furs always. Well, I gotta be gittin' on th' job, girlie. I hate to go! Gotta make th' bank with th' cashier, an' then they's that gink in seven-forty-three to be eased out quiet; he's back three weeks now. An' I gotta appear against Slippy Harris, th' dip I picked up here las' week. Likely I won't see you again till time you get off; but I'll be here then with bells on to see you home, girlie!"

And he departed reluctantly, leaving Mary to gaze after him. She served her occasional customers absently, glancing often at the lobby clock. Nearly noon! There'd be time, if she hurried. She'd just eat a charlotte russe or something; she wasn't hungry, anyway. Dicky liked her in white furs, did he? That horrid old imitation-ermine thing! Just wait, she'd show him something! He was such an old, red-headed dear, and she did want him to think she looked nice!

So, prompt on the tick of twelve, she slipped out of her booth and left the cigars in charge of the bell-boy captain, while she went "out to lunch." She hurried by the little bakery, scarcely answering the hails of the other girls already entering it. They must eat without her to-day; if she had time she'd get a bite later.

Hurrying across Lafayette Square to the big savings bank on the corner she entered it, made out a blank, and took her place in the line. Wasn't it lucky she'd brought her bank book to-day!

Five minutes later her savings account was slimmer by ninety-nine dollars and fifty cents; no use of taking out more than she really had to. Clutching her hand bag tightly she went on toward Genessee Street, almost running. Just suppose it had been sold!

It hadn't. As she came into sight of the dignified window of Papillion Frères, furs, she relaxed with a tiny, satisfied sigh. There it was in the window, just as soft, as enticing, as purely white as she remembered it—a fur neck piece of Siberian fox—price, the salesman had told her yesterday, ninety-nine fifty, marked down for this January sale from a hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Just a little neck piece! It seemed a big price; but not to-day; to-day she was happy; to-day she could afford to celebrate, and Dicky liked her best in white fur. Full of joyous determination she danced into the shop.

The place was empty, save for a single salesman. It was a small, exclusive shop, which catered to fashionable trade and handled no cheap furs. Even such a sale as this was a novelty at Papillion's; and the atmosphere of the place was so overpowering, the superciliousness of the salesman so impressive, that poor Mary felt a bit timid. But she took heart, gripping her hard-earned money.

"I—I c-came to buy that piece in the window," she announced; "the white-fox neck piece."

Even now she was half afraid he would tell her it was sold; but no. The transaction was completed in two minutes; Mary was clasping the fur about her slim throat, reveling in its soft warmth against her chin, and fumbling in her purse for its price.

"Ninety-five, six, seven, eight, nine—and a half."

The clerk raised an eyebrow in polite apology. "Sorry, madam; the price is ninety-nine seventy-five," he murmured. "Sorry, but we have only one price, you see, and this is a very special-bargain."

Mary flushed bright red; her hands shook. To think that she should appear to be haggling about a quarter, in Papillion's, of all places! She felt impossibly cheap.



"M-my mistake," she mumbled, bitterly embarrassed. "I—I just misunderstood. Ninety-nine seventy-five, of course!"

Filled with chagrin and anger at her own absurd embarrassment she fumbled blindly in her purse, found a quarter and thrust it out. As the salesman accepted it and walked toward a little cashier's desk, the purchase price now complete, Mary saw a small automobile, all its curtains up, stop at the curb outside.

A man emerged; a tall man, wearing khaki-colored mechanic's overalls. He had on a derby hat, and one hand held a handkerchief before his face, as though he suffered from a cold. Before the girl could speak a warning, before she had even time to clarify her vague feeling of apprehension, he was in the doorway. His hand dropped; a black silk handkerchief dropped also, to swing from the band of his hat, overing his face completely. He came on, his eyes gleaming through round holes cut in the cloth, and the hand which had shielded his face sought a pocket and came forth carrying an automatic pistol. All his movements were swift, alert, practiced.

The suave salesman turned and emitted a curious, wheezy gasp—a sort of squawk. All his poise, his genteel arrogance had vanished; he cowered before the newcomer's threatening gesture.

"It's Black Kelly!" he exclaimed.

"The same," replied the stranger crisply. Mary Mooney started. His voice seemed vaguely familiar. She groped for a likeness.

"Black Kelly," repeated the stranger. "You know what I'm after. Move now!"

He gestured with the pistol, and the salesman tottered on stumbling feet back to the cashier's desk. Black Kelly followed, careful to keep his back toward the street. In passing he spoke briefly to the frightened girl.

"You're safe enough, miss, if you keep real quiet!"

Mary obeyed implicitly. She was still racking her brain to place that voice. And, before she realized the situation, before it was clear to her mind that she was offered the dreamed-of chance to capture Black Kelly, the man was backing toward the door, stuffing bills and coin into a pocket as he went. He had reached the door, still facing them. Mary stared with all her eyes, struggling to identify him, to note his appearance. She saw only a tall, broad-shouldered man, shapeless in his baggy overall suit, wearing a battered derby. The black silk cloth over his face swung a bit to his breathing; she could see that its lower hem was weighted. His pistol still menaced them. His left hand, holding a handkerchief, came up to his face. Deftly he pushed up the mask, tucking it inside his hat, while the handkerchief shielded his features from the girl. She fancied the merest glimpse of a dark mustache. Two or three shots pattered to the floor.

"If you move, I shoot!" declared Black Kelly, and Mary was convinced that he told the truth.

Then he was gone. Handkerchief to face, he stepped across the walk and into the car. One would have said he had a bad cold or a toothache and wished to shield himself from the January wind. The flivver roared, moved out from the curb, lost itself in the procession of cars around the corner on Main Street. Strive as she might, Mary could not read its mud-covered license number. She turned back to the erstwhile supercilious salesman. He was still white and shaking.

"You'd better call the police," she suggested. "Though he's clean away by this time."

"Oh, yes, yes!" replied the other. "Dear, dear, dear! What shall I do? What will Mr. Papillion say?" He wrung his hands.



"Huh?" asked Mary. "Cheer up, it's all over now! Just think, he might have killed you."

She was conscious of a rather pleasurable excitement. She had seen Black Kelly; had witnessed a robbery; and it hadn't cost her a cent, either. Wasn't it lucky she'd had the fur all bought and paid for! The bandit might have taken all her money, too! She knelt by the door to pick up three of the BB shot, which had dropped from the hem of Black Kelly's handkerchief mask. They might be a clew, she thought vaguely. Then, while the salesman was still trying to collect himself and find hat and coat, a tiny thrill of anxiety came over her. Oh, dear—had she—

Hurriedly groping in her purse she turned out its few remaining coins and examined each, in a tremor of fear. She looked them over again and again; her eyes filled with tears.

In her embarrassment over the mistake in price she had paid out her luck piece—her own, own quarter, with Dicky's and her initials cut into it! Her luck piece was gone, and Black Kelly had it!

"Look here!" She gripped the agitated salesman by an arm and shook him vigorously. "Look here, man! Come alive!" All her erstwhile timidity was gone; now she felt immeasurably superior to this timorous coward. "Did that Kelly clean you out? Did he get everything in the till? The money I just paid you, and all?"

The man nodded miserably. "Every cent! Oh, what will Mr. Papillion say to me? Will he take it out of my pay, do you suppose?"

"Of course not! You weren't to blame. I can tell just how it all happened. You'd better call up police headquarters right away. If you don't report the robbery you *will* be in bad."

"Dear, dear!" said the salesman and paused to hang up his hat and coat again. "I never thought of that!"

When he went to the telephone to report Black Kelly's visit, Mary Mooney went out to fetch the nearest policeman. In five minutes she returned; and thereafter she and the tremulous salesman told and retold their tale to a uniformed patrolman, to a plain-clothes detective from headquarters, to half a dozen reporters, to the shop's owner, and to a growing crowd of curious ones.

At last, after having given her name and address to every one who asked for it, Mary managed to get away and hurried back to the MacIvor, fifteen minutes late and still hungry.

The bell-boy captain met her, and his scowl covered the whole of his homely face. "Takes you an awful while to eat, seems to me," he said.

But her explanation softened him at once; and all that afternoon Mary held little court, telling employees and guests alike of her thrilling experience. Only Richard Corrigan failed to appear; Mary watched for him eagerly, torn between the desire to tell him all about it and to show him the shot she had saved, and the reluctance to confess that she had lost the luck piece already.

Eventually he returned and listened attentively, while she retold her story, polished now and made dramatic by many repetitions. His interest was all she could ask; his brown eyes darkened with concern, and he caught her hand awkwardly.

"He—he didn't try to get fresh with you, girlie? He didn't pull nothing rough? If he did, I—I'll *kill* him! Aw, gee, Mary, you might have been shot. After this you ain't to go round alone any more; you hear?"

His masterful air was very comforting and Mary sighed softly. "I—you'd have looked after me, wouldn't you, Dicky? But look at my new neck piece!"

Dancing away to the cloak room she returned presently with a saucy toque upon her sleek, black hair and the new



white fox fur about her throat. "Like me this way, Dicky boy?"

He squeezed her arm. "Like you! Come along out of here, girlie; let's go where I can *tell* you!"

So they went out and home. And there, as Corrigan was reluctantly making his last farewell, she mustered up courage to confess.

"You—you know our luck piece, dear," she faltered, twisting his coat button. "We-well, I—I was so flustered with that holdup and everything, I—I j-just paid it out for my fur and never thought. And now Black Kelly's got it, and it's g-gone!"

Corrigan growled and disengaged her clinging hand. "Humph!" said he. "You musta cared a whole lot about it t' hand it over to some slick counter jumper half an hour after we fixed it up! Maybe if your handsome crook, Johnnie K. Smith, had given it to yuh, you'd have been more careful."

"Oh, Dicky boy!" she exclaimed tearfully.

But he would not be cajoled, and they parted in anger, for Mary, too, had a healthy temper. Presently it flared up.

"All right for you, Mr. Corrigan!" she flung over her shoulder. "If that's all you care about me you can go right back to the hotel. I don't want you round. And you needn't bother to buy that ring, either. For all you say about him, Mr. Smith would have more manners."

"Yah, Smith!" he said. "Likely your precious Smith is Black Kelly himself!"

But Mary was gone. She slammed the door viciously, rushed upstairs, and flung herself upon her bed to weep. The new white neck piece, cause of all this trouble, she tore off and threw angrily upon the floor.

"Lie there!" she said. "Horrid old thing! And—and he said he l-liked me in white furs, too!"

But a job is a job, though one's heart

is broken; so next morning found Mary in her accustomed place behind the cigar counter at the MacIvor Hotel, rather subdued, rather pink about the eyes, but attending to business as usual. Richard Corrigan hung about the opposite corner of the lobby, as far away as possible, and frowned morosely at her.

Poor Mary! Her mind was not upon her work. She sold old Mr. Speare Pittsburgh stogies for Havana perfectos; and when the mysterious Mr. Smith stopped for his morning cigar, she did not so much as look at him.

This morning, however, the man of mystery seemed more communicative. He hesitated over the selection of a smoke, coughed uneasily, and at last asked: "Miss—Miss Mooney, isn't it?"

Mary looked up, wondering. Dick Corrigan was eyeing her from his corner, and a perverse pride rose into her throat. She'd show him! She smiled very prettily upon her customer. "Yes, sir," she murmured demurely, "Mary Mooney."

"Ah, Miss Mooney, may I ask, how did you find me out?"

"Find you out?"

"Why, yesterday, you called me by name."

A flood of excitement brought the red into her cheeks; her eyes sparkled. For the moment Dick Corrigan was forgotten.

"Why, you mean—you mean you really are Johnny K. van Alstyne?"

The other looked puzzled. "I supposed you had recognized me."

"I—I was just guessing. Are you really? And what are you doing here, all alone at the MacIvor, Mr. Van Alstyne?"

A gruff, cynical voice cut across his reply. During the little colloquy another man had approached the cigar stand; a blocky, blue-serge-clad man, wearing square-toed shoes.

"Van Alstyne, hey? What's the game?"



"Good morning, Mr. Flynn," said Mary. "Sergeant Flynn, this is Mr.—ah, Mr. Smith. Did you want me again, Mr. Flynn?"

The detective eyed Mr. Smith sourly. "W'y, Mary, I did come to ask yuh a bit more about Black Kelly; but, first off, let's see about this here Smith feller. I thought I heard you callin' him Van Alstyne?"

Mary hesitated, but the mystery man made no reply. He fidgeted with his walking stick and stared down at the ground, very red in the face.

"I—I don't know." Then she took the bit in her teeth. After all, she'd known Detective Sergeant Flynn all her life, and who was this stranger? She remembered Dick Corrigan's hints, his accusations of last night.

"Why, Mr. Flynn, he's registered as Mr. Smith, but yesterday he got a letter addressed to Johnnie K. van Alstyne, and the name had been crossed off and Smith written in. And just now he as good as told me he was Johnnie K. van Alstyne, too."

Sergeant Flynn raised a skeptical eyebrow. "Johnnie K., huh? Why, Johnnie K. is down to Palm Beach right now. I read it in th' paper on'y yestiddy. Been some con man makin' out t' be him in Cleveland, too; we got th' flash at headquarters las' night. Is he runnin' bills here to th' hotel? I gotta see about this. Who are you, anyways, feller?"

Mr. Smith eyed him coolly enough. "You'll find my name on the hotel register," he answered. "This young lady addressed me as Van Alstyne yesterday; I had just stopped to ask an explanation when you interrupted."

Patently he had decided to face the matter out. His eyes did not drop before Flynn's truculent stare.

"You better come clean, feller!" said the detective.

Mr. Smith shrugged. "I have noth-

ing to explain. And now, if you are quite through with me——"

"I have a mind to run ye in," replied Flynn.

"I'd advise against it, Mr. Flynn. You might find yourself in very serious difficulties."

And, after a moment's heavy thought, the detective seemed to agree. At any rate he turned on his heel.

"I'm goin' to look yuh up, feller," he stated portentously. "An' if I find you been gettin' into anybody—— Stick around now, till I see th' manager."

A gesture called Corrigan, already eaten up with curiosity, and the hotel detective hastened across the lobby.

"Watch this bimbo, Dick," ordered the headquarters man, "till I look him up." Then he departed toward the manager's office, muttering to himself.

The mysterious stranger leaned nonchalantly against the show case, clipping the end from his cigar. Corrigan, red and lowering, stood beside him, carefully avoiding Mary Mooney's wistful gaze. And Mary, behind the counter, waited in mingled trepidation and eagerness. The unimportant Mr. Billings approached apologetically, dime in hand, for his matutinal package of cigarettes. The sight of him apparently jogged Mr. Smith's memory, for he fumbled in a pocket.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Mooney; the money for my cigar." He proffered a coin, a worn quarter, and Mary took it mechanically.

Billings hung back, waiting his turn; he seemed oddly ill at ease. The burly detective sergeant was just emerging from the hotel manager's office. Suddenly Mary Mooney, staring absently down at the coin in her hand, emitted a queer, whispered scream, half frightened, half elated.

"Oh, Dicky, Dicky, it's our luck piece!" And then, all in a breath: "Dicky! Dicky! Grab him—hold him! It's Black Kelley!"



Mr. Smith stared at her in amazement. Corrigan gripped his shoulder roughly. The unimportant Mr. Billings began to fade gradually away, muttering something about "coming back later." Some intuition swept over Mary's excited mind, some chord of memory vibrated faintly to the sound of his voice.

"Stop him—hold him, too!" she exclaimed. "Hang on to Billings!"

Corrigan stared at her, uncomprehending. Oddly it was Mr. Smith who acted. Jerking suddenly away from his captor he made one wild lunge and seized Billings by the side of his coat.

Wild confusion broke out. Billings, galvanized into astonishing ferocity, tore loose, ripping the pocket from his coat, and swung a huge fist at Mr. Smith. A rain of BB shot pattered from his torn pocket and spread over the floor; a black silk handkerchief trailed by one corner and Mary saw that there were holes in it.

Billings and Smith were fighting furiously. Corrigan leaped into action; Sergeant Flynn, tugging at his hip, galloped toward them.

In thirty seconds it was over. Billings, subdued, stared down at handcuffed wrists; and Mr. Smith, seeing his opponent secured, submitted with a good grace to be handcuffed likewise.

"Now, then," asked Detective Flynn, between bewilderment and anger, "whatever is this rough-house about?"

"It's Black Kelly," said Mary, "Black Kelly, the bandit—see? And the reward belongs to me—me and Dicky Corrigan! Every cent of it!"

Flynn scratched his head. "Ye-ah," he drawled. "He is Black Kelly, ye say. But which of them is him, Mary, and how do ye know?"

She pointed impatiently at Billings. "Can't you see? He's got the derby hat on, right now; you look in the band of it and see if there aren't pin pricks there or something."

Corrigan obeyed. "They's holes in th' sweat band, right enough."

"Of course! That's where he fastened his mask. And the mask—look, it's hanging out of his pocket this very minute!"

Flynn snatched the silk handkerchief and held it up. There were two holes cut in its center, and a few shot still remained in the hem.

"I bet you'll find the overalls in his room," Mary went on, "or maybe in the car he drives."

"Yeah," repeated Flynn, "but this other one now, where does he come in?"

"I don't know, unless he's in it, too. Look here, Mr. Smith, or whatever your name is, where did you get that quarter you just gave me?"

Smith seemed rather chagrined. "I got it from Billings last night, shooting craps. Oh, what a fool I am! If I'd only known!"

"There!" said Mary triumphantly. "Yesterday noon Black Kelly held up Papillion's, you know. I was there, and I'd just bought a fur neckpiece, and I gave the man this quarter by mistake. It—it was my luck piece, with my initials and somebody else's cut into it, see? Well, when Mr. Smith paid it back to me over the counter just now, I knew it right away, and so I thought he must be Black Kelly; and I just yelled."

"Huh?" asked Sergeant Flynn, giving his prisoner a shade. "Well, Mr. Billings-Black Kelly, we got yuh right, this time—open an' shut. But, say, who are you, anyways—you Smith feller? Come on an' turn loose; I'd hate for to run ye in, too, for a material witness."

Smith flushed deeper. "Why, gentlemen—and Miss Mooney," he replied, "I am John K. van Alstyne. You see, down at Palm Beach I made a bet with Archie Purcell. We were reading about this Black Kelly, and I bet I could come up here to Buffalo and catch him single-handed. You've lost me five thousand dollars, young lady. At that I was



getting warm. I was getting quite chummy with Billings, and I think I'd have had it out of him within the week. Oh"—meeting Flynn's dubious look—"I can prove my identity easily enough. Just send a wire to Palm Beach, or get Mr. A. K. Joralemon. He's in Buffalo, isn't he? He can identify me."

"We-el, I be blasted!" exclaimed the puzzled officer. "Well, we got Black Kelly, anyways; an' we'd oughta be able to send him up *right* on this. But, say, Mr. Van Alstyne, seems like a funny way to play detective: bridal suite, an' Sharpe-Speare auto, an' callin' y'rself John Smith."

"Why," explained Van Alstyne, "I

was disguised, you see. Detectives always wear a disguise, don't they?"

"Huh!" exploded Flynn. "I—I see. Well, Mary, you win; I'll see you get th' reward for yourself."

Mary was not listening. One hand caressed the recovered luck piece; Dick Corrigan held the other and whispered ardently into a convenient ear. One heard the far-off tinkle of wedding bells.

"Huh!" repeated Flynn. He unlocked Mr. Van Alstyn's handcuffs. "Sorry, Mr. Van Alstyne," he apologized. "No hard feelings? Right! Good day, sir. Come along, Black Kelly, till I call the wagon; an' no funny business, either—yuh hear?"



## WOMEN JUDGES IN THE COURTS OF GERMANY?

CONSIDERABLE interest has been aroused in the report of a debate which occurred some months ago at the Medical Jurisprudence of Berlin, and which concerned the question, "Are Women Fit to Become Judges?" Well-known physicians and law experts took part in the discussion. The Potsdam law court was represented by Judge Stadelmann, who opposed the admission of women to the bar. He referred to the psychic and physical disposition of women as compared with men, and gave it as his opinion that women cannot be expected to consider the facts of a case either in a perfectly unbiased viewpoint or without emotional influence.

The woman's side of the question was eloquently defended by Doctor Margaret Berent, a well-known woman lawyer. In her address she quoted several times from Plato, who, she said, advocated that women take part in all State functions. In her opinion a law court is so important a part of public life that to exclude women from taking part in its functions is to stamp them as citizens of a lower grade. As an answer to Judge Stadelmann's statement that women judges would endanger justice, she pointed out that both local and foreign experience had proved the contrary to be true.

Doctor Albert Moll, a familiar figure in German courts, rather inclined toward the middle course in the debate. It was his opinion that the ability and qualifications alone should decide the fitness of an applicant for the position of judge. While he thought that women do not possess the ability of men to think abstractly, and that they were subject to more frequent and more serious illnesses, he considered that the nervousness with which many judges are afflicted was more likely to jeopardize the public's confidence in justice, than it could be jeopardized by the susceptibility of women judges to the influence of emotion. It was also Doctor Moll's opinion that women have the gift of a keen intuition which enables them, even better than men, to put themselves in the position of the parties of a case. He concluded his address by advocating that women be allowed to act as jurors and judges.



# The Doings of Dion

## ROBBING THE ROOST

by John D. Swain



AS if in answer to his oratorical question, the black cat turned herself about within the space of a buckwheat cake, slid down the dormer window, and jumped lightly to the ledge below. A second later the tip of her tail waved a good-by to the man perched upon the chimney top.

Dion nodded thoughtfully. "An open window," he hazarded. "Servants' quarters, probably."

Even so his problem was hardly solved. Cool-headed and steady nerved as he was, there was little about the situation that appealed to him. Even to get down to the dormer meant a perilous slide on smooth tiles, and nature had not fashioned him like an India rubber feline!

There was nothing to be gained by remaining upon his perch, at any rate; and the prospect grew no pleasanter with reflection. He decided to enjoy one little smoke before making the attempt; searching for his cigarette case he made the disagreeable discovery that the arduous journey up the chimney throat had caused his automatic to fall from his coat pocket. Somewhere far below it lay buried in inches of soot in the baronial fireplace. Well, nothing would tempt him to repeat the trip to get it! After all the gat had done him no good when he had been made prisoner, and with luck he might liberate himself without resort to force or threat.

He finished his cigarette, tossed the stub in a long, flat arc over into the

Rue Marboeuf, and, after removing his shoes and slinging them about his neck, let himself gingerly down the rough surface of the chimney. Clutching its sturdy sides he stood for a moment upon the ridgepole before slipping down upon his stomach; then, with fingers gripping the ridge, his feet extended downward toward the little dormer window, he began his perilous descent.

The tiles felt disquietingly slippery, the pitch was even steeper than it had seemed from above. He drew a long breath and let go. Flattened out on the tiles like a lizard, palms and feet spread to offer every possible resistance, it nevertheless seemed to him that he shot down with the speed of a toboggan. He had no time to wonder whether his aim had been correct, before he struck the narrow dormer; and, momentum carrying him along, his desperate fingers brought him to a stop only when both ankles already extended out and over the pavement, a hundred feet below.

It was more difficult, if less dangerous, to reach the window ledge than to slide down to the dormer itself. Only after a good deal of anxious planning and some violent contortions did he manage to make it, and to clutch the firm casement. Here he paused again, listening anxiously. From within came a gentle and reassuring snore. His moving-picture act had not disturbed the slumber of the person who inhabited the little attic room. Without further delay he let himself through the narrow opening and onto a bare floor.

Within it was pitch dark. Only the



heavy breathing from one side gave him his orientation. He knew, at least, what to avoid! Moving in the opposite direction, and with infinite pains not to upset with foot or hand anything that might be loose and noise-making, he came at length to a door with a wooden button. It stood ajar, and it did not squeak as he opened it far enough to admit his body. He found himself in a large closet thickly hung with garments which exhaled a cheap perfume. Realizing that he was wasting time in a maid's clothes press he carefully retraced his steps and continued his circuit of the wall. Presently he came to another door locked on the inside; it took him some time to open this noiselessly. When he had done so he was in a bare hall. From the well far below a faint light crept up. Without hesitation he began descending its spiral stairway.

The doors leading off from the hall below were all closed, and neither light nor sound escaped from them. Here, he guessed, were the guest rooms of the mansion; and, with scarcely a look about, he kept on to the next landing.

Perhaps there is really a blind instinct which tells us when we are in an empty apartment; certainly Dion had felt this on the floor above. Here, while there was no actual noise, he sensed the nearness of human beings. No lights shone from the cracks beneath the doors; but at the far end of the hall, through ground glass, a very faint ray attracted his attention. Instead of proceeding downward through the house he glided toward this little patch of light and came presently to a large and very modern bathroom, evidently added within recent years, since it contained many novelties in the way of needle showers, pressed-glass tubs, electrical massage vibrators and curling tongs, medicine and lotion cabinets, luxuries not often to be had even in the best hotels on the Continent.

Dion closed and bolted the door. In a full length mirror he had caught sight of himself and realized that, whatever the risk, he must wash up before venturing out on the streets. From head to foot he was smeared with soot, and his eyes stared through the greasy film. Only the palms of his hands remained white.

Hastily, yet without noise, he stripped off coat and cap, shaking them all over the immaculate floor tiles. Then, using a beautiful silver-mounted whisk brush, he dusted himself carefully, finishing by wiping his shoes on a linen towel bearing a hand-worked monogram in baby blue. Dropping another towel into a bowl to stifle the sound of the running water, he filled it and with plenty of soap changed himself from jet black to mild brunet. There was nothing he could do about his collar. Five minutes later, leaving the bathroom a frightful mess, he was back in the hall.

Again he changed his mind about continuing on down the stairs. At his left, as he turned from the bathroom, a heavy, white-paneled door stood ajar. He listened, but could hear no sound from within; but at this instant, from the room next beyond, a faint snore for the second time that night assailed his ears. There was about this one an indescribable gentility, a sort of feminine reserve, that convinced him that he was listening to little Madame Delyce. He tiptoed to her door and held his ear to the jamb. No further sound rewarded him; but through the keyhole there stole to him the faint, disturbing perfume that he had previously noted in her presence. Yes, it was unquestionably Madame Delyce who, serene in the belief that her prisoner was safely immured in a cellar built to withstand sieges, was here taking her virtuous repose.

Now a burning curiosity as to what might be in the adjoining room, car-



ried Dion back to it against his better judgment. It might be madame's dressing room; in which case there might well be found in it some little souvenir of the occasion to be taken away and cherished! He tested the door, found that it hung on oiled pinions, and stole within.

There was no light whatever here; and he dared not use his pocket torch until he had made sure the chamber was untenanted. It took a good while to make the unfamiliar rounds, during which he discovered an empty bed, made up, and about a thousand large, heavy chairs, tables and cabinets, all with very sharp angles. When he had returned to his starting point he unhesitatingly flashed on his light and saw at once that he stood in the chamber of a gentleman of taste, and with the means to gratify it. Most welcome of all he beheld an open closet door which revealed a variety of suits upon their hangers.

Closing the door he bolted it. The pleasant thought came to him that he would here change from his ruined and sooty New York suit into something a little more modish and certainly much cleaner! And here, also, he should be able to find some clean linen.

He had little fear of being disturbed, and while he worked he took time to discriminate among the garments. Finally he stood clad in a beautiful shirt with pleated bosom, a French collar about which clung an exquisite gray-silk cravat, a frock suit, such as he had seen scores of times upon the boulevards and yearned for, and a top hat which could have been designed by none save a Parisian. With regret he found that the unknown gentleman's foot was quite a bit narrower than his own; and he was obliged to content himself with a renewed polishing of his boots, using a satin muffer he found. Some gold-mounted military brushes improved him further; and he felt that he could now move out of the house unmolested, so

evidently correct and distinguished a gentleman being above suspicion!

Dion, after emptying his pockets and draping his discarded clothes carefully upon the hanger from which he had ravished the frock suit, now made a very rapid survey of the drawers in the room. This was work in which he was thoroughly proficient; and his industry was rewarded when, in a secret compartment of a writing cabinet, he found a neat packet of "*billets de banque*," the fascinating pink and yellow and blue bank notes of France. He skinned them over rapidly and saw that he had some five thousand francs. This was a delightful and unexpected balm to his feelings, and he freely forgave Madame Delyce for dropping him down the chute so unceremoniously. He found nothing else of value, but his dress shirt was fitted with a set of beautiful pearl cufflinks with studs to match. He wished that he might have found a revolver; but, as he cautiously slipped out into the hall once more, he felt that he had much to be thankful for!

In the vestibule there loomed up for the first time a possible obstacle to his peaceful departure. Upon a cushioned chair by the inner door, sound asleep, sat the ascetic-looking serving man who had admitted him. It was certain that he could not know that any one would be trying to get out; doubtless he was waiting up for the return of some belated inmate, possibly the gentleman whose clothes Dion was wearing. If he proved to be a light sleeper, it would be necessary to slam him with all due force on the point of his austere chin. Dion clenched his left hand in readiness for this lethal touch as he inched past him.

The fellow did not awaken, however; no further thrills attended Dion's departure. Two minutes later he was striding vigorously up the Rue Marboeuf toward the Champs Elysées, a figure which would rouse in any gendarme feelings of confidence and re-



spect. It was not quite eleven when he reached his hotel; an hour almost provincial for an unattached young gentleman to betake himself to bed in Paris!

When the eyes of the clerk beheld his guest, who had gone out clad in a humble sack suit and cap, return quite the *boulevardier*, he betrayed the liveliest surprise, but his eyes had beheld stranger and far more exciting things. He bowed profoundly, as Dion passed his desk, and admired him exceedingly.

The little elevator was still clattering back to the landing when Dion put his key in the lock; as he flung it open he was nearly carried off his feet by the rush of some one hurling out! They jammed the opening, swayed a moment, and then with a violent push Dion sent the stranger back into the room, found the switch beside the door, and threw on the lights. His eyes distended with surprise, as he found himself looking into the startled face of the debonair young man, the companion of the fair Madame Delyce.

Felix Rigaud seldom took an active part in the operations of the *Société Anonyme de la Haute Finance*. When he did so, it was usually to exercise his undoubted talents as a killer; on occasions, when the matter was very urgent and the homicide seemed essential to the welfare of the society, he would not hesitate to act.

To-night he had broken his rule because he felt that none of his underlings could so completely undertake the task of finding the jewels, and especially the diamond necklace, whose capture by the impudent Yankee invader had so outraged the criminal band. He was perfectly certain that Dion would not carry them on his person when he visited the establishment on the Rue Marboeuf, even if he came at all. He was equally sure, since Dion was a stranger but newly arrived, that he would conceal them somewhere in his room.

When Madame Delyce had sprung the trap that landed Dion in the cellar, the leader had lost no time in setting out for his hotel. That the prisoner could escape did not even occur to him. There was no other entrance to the cellar than the opening in the floor, and that, even if it could be reached, was covered with a metal plate securely bolted. That the brick screen before the fireplace had been rather flimsily constructed he did not know, nor would he have been much concerned had he known. The possibility of worming one's way up the chimney, and then managing to descend from the steep-pitched roof, he would have dismissed with a shrug. No other fault was to be found with his logic, save that it was unsound!

It had been the simplest of matters to gain access to Dion's room. Rigaud was a gentleman of engaging presence who could, and often had, wandered at will over public and private houses to which he had not been invited. No servant would dream of questioning him. His mere presence was a compliment. It had been ridiculously easy to pick the lock which was an old-fashioned one. There was not even an inside bolt; so the intruder had locked it with the same skeleton key that had opened it.

Dion himself, all unsuspecting that he had a visitor, had given Rigaud an instant's warning when he thrust his key into the lock. When Rigaud recognized him he was equally surprised to behold him at liberty, and to note that he was clad in one of his own well-tailored suits.

Although Rigaud was one of the most successful man-killers in France, he had not come here to add to the tally of his victims; but it took him only a second to recover his aplomb and to flash from its sheath his favorite weapon, a lithe, needle-pointed stiletto, which was not merely noiseless, but which made so tiny a puncture that a fatal wound



would be followed by scarcely enough crimson stain to mark a handkerchief.

Keenly Dion regretted the loss of his automatic. The knife is not the weapon of the Anglo-Saxon, and, even had he been carrying one, his use of it would have been clumsy indeed in comparison to the finished Latin science with which Felix Rigaud handled his deadly eight inches of polished steel. It was doubtless fortunate for him that he did not have any knife at all!

Neither wasted any time in conversation. Rigaud moved first, leaping like a cat, his stiletto held in readiness to be thrust upward and into the softer part of Dion's body, where it would do the most good and run no risk of breaking off or being deflected by a rib. Such a blow is also more difficult to parry.

Dion gave ground, hands up in boxing fashion, his eyes never leaving the bright, almost merry ones of the killer. He had no plan, but he knew that, unless he managed to grasp the other's wrist or to knock him cold, he would probably within a few hours be lying at ease on the marble slab of the morgue, while a little stream of ice water played over him! Its counterpart in cold perspiration now began to gather upon his forehead and trickle down over his eyes.

Rigaud followed him up warily, feinting rapidly with his steel, seeking to confuse him and, upon the right opening, to finish the business with one deadly upward jab. In the end it was by no Anglo-Saxon science of sparring, but rather by his almost uncanny genius for sensing the psychology of a given situation, that scored for Dion the first point. Knowing well that a Frenchman will bear you no malice for attempting to murder him, yet will follow you for years to avenge an insult, the young American suddenly spat in the face of his would-be slayer.

The result was astonishing. With a scream of rage, losing completely his intelligent wariness, Felix Rigaud

leaped in, lashing out with hands and feet at once, like an unbroken colt. Dion side-stepped and, as Rigaud lunged by, seized the beautiful silk tile, which still graced his head, and smashed it down over Rigaud's brow. The stiff brim scraped much good skin from his nose and remained firmly wedged about his chin, as he frantically sought to wrench it off. It was easy for Dion to tear the stiletto from Rigaud's fingers, and it would have been easier still for him to disable him, while Rigaud remained blinded by the imprisoning hat; but Dion was too good a sportsman to do more than throw him and pinion his arms. He did not even do this, as it chanced; for, as he reached out to embrace him, a dry, emotionless voice sounded at his back:

*"Pattes en air! Hands up!"*

Whirling about he saw that his door stood open, and was even then being closed by a little, elderly gentleman who stood regarding them, his mild eyes somewhat belied by a very short, ugly, blue gat which he held in one thin, but steady, hand. Dion stepped back, too surprised to speak, even as Rigaud managed to break the tough brim of his hat and tear it off, together with some more skin.

Just a flicker of recognition shone in Rigaud's eyes, as he beheld the little old gentleman with the automatic; but he joined Dion in raising his hands and silently waited for the visitor to speak.

Arnault Lâpierre had at odd moments, while waiting for some crony to make a move over the chessboard, or while sipping a *grenadine* before his favorite boulevard café, devoted much thought to the young American who had been mysteriously visited by Rapin some days before. The situation puzzled him. Dion had attempted nothing against the peace or security of the Parisian populace; Lâpierre had informed himself as to that. Rapin, too he had under more or less careful obser-



vation, since at the time he was engaged in no assignment for the *Service de la Sûreté*. But what were Dion's relations with the Paris underworld? Why had Rapin seemed to be angry when he left him?

To-night, wandering more or less aimlessly about the vicinity, he had beheld something of greatest interest. Felix Rigaud, on whom the police had been able to "get" nothing as yet, but whose dossier, carefully preserved at the prefecture, was sufficiently lurid, was observed by Lapierre, while he was yet distant some quarter of a mile from Dion's hotel. The little man had followed him and without difficulty had traced him to Dion's room. Posting himself around the corner of the hall, some half dozen doors above, he had patiently waited developments.

When Dion himself returned and immediately upon entering his quarters went into action, the sound of the struggle warned Lapierre that it was time for somebody to look into the matter. The door of the room was not even locked, and he had entered just after Rigaud had been gloriously extinguished beneath his own modish tile.

Lapierre now motioned both men to be seated.

"Is it that I interrupt a rehearsal, messieurs?" he inquired gently. "Or am I fortunate in arriving in time to prevent a felony? You, Monsieur Dee-on"—he turned toward the young American—"are at least in your own castle. Is this visitor a burglar?"

The old inviolable law of the underworld forbids a crook to appeal to the police. He will bide his time and impose his own crude justice. Rigaud knew this as well as did Dion, and he was neither surprised nor especially grateful when the latter replied:

"On the contrary, sir, this gentleman was visiting me by appointment, and we unfortunately lost our tempers."

Lapierre smiled dryly. "Was he not a little ahead of his appointment?"

Dion nodded. "That is true; or rather, I was a little late, having been—er—detained. I have no charges whatever to make. I regret that we have disturbed you!"

He looked keenly at Lapierre, wondering who he was. The hotel detective, possibly; perhaps a guest, alarmed by the row. In any case he felt that it would be wise to imprint his features and carriage upon that gallery he bore in his brain. It might be useful knowledge!

"What Monsieur Dee-on says is perfectly true," declared Rigaud. "With permission I will take leave, with my regrets that I for a moment forgot his eminent hospitality!"

"I think it a very good idea," Arnault Lapierre said. "Doubtless you will find that your young temper has cooled when you awake."

Making no further comment he turned and left the room. Rigaud followed upon his heels, with a salute to Dion, which abated nothing from the deadly hostility between them, but recognized one who had observed the code of their clan.

As soon as he had locked his door Dion hurriedly examined his secret hiding place in the leg of his brass bed. It was empty! Rigaud had had time to discover and remove all the jewels.

Dion at once went downstairs and requested from the sleepy clerk the package left earlier in the evening. He thrust it into his pocket and entered the half-filled café; and at a table apart he ordered a sirop and a siphon. While sipping his drink he examined the parcel and found his treasures intact.

The evening had not been wholly unprofitable, he reflected. True, he had lost the bulk of his jewels; but they represented the less valuable stones, and their disposal had caused him much worry. He still had the choice pieces;



above all he had five thousand francs in cash, which he sorely needed. He had exchanged an indifferent suit for a very fine one, even though he had unhappily been obliged to ruin the hat. The pearl links and studs in his—or Rigaud's—shirt were worth something, too. And, not to be ignored he had scored a grand laugh on the *Société Anonyme*! He yawned contentedly.

"Wonder who the old bird was?" he asked himself. "Looked sort of innocent, but there was something about him—shucks! I'm going to call it a day."

Felix Rigaud, who knew perfectly well who the old gentleman was, did not dare return either to the pompous mansion on the Rue Marboeuf, nor to the quaint little home just off the Rue St. André des Arts. He felt sure that he would be followed, and he knew that Lapierre could "tail" him while remaining himself invisible. So he sought a near-by hotel and went to bed to toss about and speculate and rise to smoke

innumerable cigarettes, and then attempt once more to get a little sleep.

Naturally he was anxious to find out just what had happened, how Dion had managed to escape, and what damage he might have done in the process. Meanwhile he consigned him to ten thousand devils, as he thought of the ignominy with which he had been treated. Dion had spat in his face, jammed his own hat over his face and taken most of the skin from his nose, and in general made him and all of them look like village-orchard robbers rather than a hand-picked organization of the craftiest minds in Europe!

He fell asleep, more than ever determined that, just as soon as possible, this upstart immigrant must be put out of the way. The mild annoyance he had felt at first had been transfused into a burning hatred. As a menace to them and because of his insolent contempt in flaunting them single-handed, he must die! And the hand of Felix Rigaud must be the one to deal the blow.

**Watch for John D. Swain's next narrative giving further exploits of Dion.**



## HOBOKEN TEACHER SENT TO JAIL AS SHOPLIFTER

**F**OR the second time within a year Rose Guinan, a school-teacher, of Hoboken, New Jersey, pleaded guilty to the charge of shoplifting. The plea was entered before three justices in special sessions, and an indeterminate sentence was imposed.

According to the testimony of May Magnin, a probation officer, Miss Guinan, who is a woman fifty-two years old, was paroled in her custody last May, when she was arraigned on a similar charge in the same court. The justices at that time were impressed by her statement that if she were sent to prison she would lose her position in Public School No. 4, and would lose her pension, to which she would be eligible in about a year.

At that time Miss Magnin explained to the court that the teacher had been known to the New York police for several years as a shoplifting suspect. Two years ago she had been arrested in New York for selling articles on street corners. At the time of her arrest last May a number of letters were alleged to have been found in her bag, addressed to prominent men in New York, containing appeals for money to aid in sending a destitute school-teacher away to the mountains to be treated for her health. In addition to owning her own home in Hoboken, Miss Guinan is said to have a summer house on Long Island.



# The Devastating Angel

by Edgar Wallace

Author of "Jack o' Judgment," "Stamped in Gold," etc.

## SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

A FORTUNE will come into the hands of Jean Briggerland and her father if they get rid of James Meredith, Jean's cousin. They kill a suitor of Jean and throw the guilt on Meredith. Later they kill him, but not before he has made a will leaving everything to his bride of a few minutes—formerly Lydia Beale.

It now becomes the aim of the Briggerlands to do away with Lydia. Several attempts to kill her in "accidental" ways are thwarted by an old man called "Jaggs," who was hired as her protector by Jack Glover, junior member of the law firm which defended Meredith.

At Cap Martin, on the Riviera, where Lydia and Jean and her father are the guests of Mrs. Cole-Mortimer, Morden, Jean's chauffeur, makes it plain to her that he feels she is in his power. Jean determines to do away with him. She has a quarrel with Morden, in which she gets possession of his initialed revolver. She means to make her final attempt to win fortune and revenge on the following day.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### STEPNEY IS DISAPPOINTED.

HERE was laying in Monaco harbor a long white boat, with a stumpy mast, which delighted in the name of *Jungle Queen*. It was the property of an impeccable English nobleman who made a respectable income from hiring out the vessel. Mrs. Cole-Mortimer had seemed surprised at the reasonable fee demanded for two months' use, until she had seen the boat the day after her arrival at Cap Martin.

She had pictured a large and commodious yacht; she found a reasonably sized motor launch with a whale-deck cabin. The description in the agent's catalogue that the *Jungle Queen* would "sleep four" was probably based on the experience of a party of young roisterers who had once hired the vessel. Supposing that the "four" were reasonably drunk or heavily drugged, it was possible for them to sleep on board the *Jungle Queen*. Normally two persons

would have found it difficult, though by lying diagonally across the "cabin" one small-sized man could have slumbered without discomfort.

The *Jungle Queen* had been a disappointment to Jean also. Her busy brain had conceived an excellent way of solving her principal problem, but a glance at the *Jungle Queen* told her that the money she had spent on hiring the launch—and it was little better—was wasted. She herself hated the sea, and had so little faith in the utility of the boat that she had even dismissed the youth who attended to its well-worn engines.

Mr. Marcus Stepney, who was mildly interested in motor boating, and considerably interested in any form of amusement which he could get at somebody's else expense, had so far been the sole patron of the *Jungle Queen*. It was his practice to take the boat out every morning for a two hours' sail, generally alone, though sometimes he would take somebody whose acquaintance he had made, and who was des-



tined to be a source of profit to him in the future.

Jean's talk of the cave-man method of wooing had made a big impression upon him, emphasized as it had been, and still was, by the two angry red scars across the back of his hand. Things were not going well with him; the supply of rich and trusting youths had suddenly dried up. The little games in his private sitting room had dwindled to feeble proportions. He was still able to eke out a living, but his success at his private séances had been counterbalanced by heavy losses at the public tables.

It is a known fact that people who live outside the law keep to their own plane. The swindler very rarely commits acts of violence. The burglar who practices card-sharping as a side line is virtually unknown.

Mr. Stepney lived on a plausible tongue and a pair of highly dexterous hands. It had never occurred to him to go beyond his own sphere, and indeed violence was as repugnant to him as it was vulgar.

Yet the cave-man suggestion appealed to him. If his confidence had been rather shaken by Jean's savagery and Lydia's indifference, he had not altogether abandoned the hope that both girls in their turn might be conquered by the adoption of the right method.

The method for dealing with Jean he had at the back of his mind. As for Lydia—Jean's suggestion was very attractive. It was after a very heavily unprofitable night spent at the Nice Casino that he took his courage in both hands and drove to the Villa Casa.

He was an early arrival, but Lydia had already finished her *petite déjeuner*, and she was painfully surprised to see him.

"I'm not going to swim to-day, Mr. Stepney," she said, "and you don't look as if you would, either."

He was dressed in perfectly fitting

white duck trousers, white shoes, and a blue nautical coat with brass buttons; a yachtman's cap was set at an angle on his dark head.

"No, I'm going out to do a little fishing," he said, "and I was wondering whether, in your charity, you would accompany me."

She shook her head.

"I'm sorry. I have another engagement this morning," she said.

"Can't you break it," he pleaded, "as an especial favor to me? I've made all preparations, and I've got a lovely lunch on board. You said you would come fishing with me some day."

"I'd like to," she confessed, "but I really have something very important to do this morning."

She did not tell him that her important duty was to sit on the Lover's Chair. Somehow her trip seemed just a little silly in the cold, clear light of morning.

"I could have you back in time," he begged. "Do come along, Mrs. Meredith! You're going to spoil my day."

"I'm sure Lydia wouldn't be so unkind."

Jean had made her appearance as they were speaking.

"What is the scheme, Lydia?"

"Mr. Stepney wants me to go out in the yacht," said the girl, and Jean smiled.

"I'm glad you call it a yacht," she said dryly. "You're the second person who has so described it. The first was the agent. Take her to-morrow, Marcus."

There was a glint of amusement in her eyes, and he felt that she knew what was at the back of his mind.

"All right," he said in a tone which suggested that it was anything but all right, and added: "I saw you flying through Nice this morning with that yellow-faced chauffeur of yours, Jean."

"Were you up so early?" she asked carelessly.

"I wasn't dressed; I was looking out of the window—my room faces the



Promenade d'Anglaise. I don't like that fellow."

"I shouldn't let him know," said Jean coolly. "He is very sensitive. There are so many fellows that you dislike, too."

"I don't think you ought to allow him so much freedom," Marcus Stepney went on. He was not in an amiable frame of mind, and the knowledge that he was annoying the girl encouraged him. "If you give these French chauffeurs an inch they'll take a kilometer."

"I suppose they would," said Jean thoughtfully. "How is your poor hand, Marcus?"

He growled something under his breath and thrust his hand deep into the pocket of his reefer coat.

"It is quite well," he snapped and went back to Monaco and his solitary boat trip, flaming.

"One of these days——" he muttered, as he tuned up the motor. He did not finish his sentence, but sent the nose of the *Jungle Queen* at full speed for the open sea.

Jean's talk with Morden that morning had not been wholly satisfactory. She had calmed his suspicions to an extent, but he still harped upon the letter, and she had promised to give it to him that evening.

"My dear," she said, "you are too impulsive—too Gallic. I had a terrible scene with father last night. He wants me to break off the engagement; told me what my friends in London would say, and how I should be a social outcast."

"And you—you, Jean?" he asked.

"I told him that such things did not trouble me," she said, and her lips drooped sadly. "I know I cannot be happy with anybody but you, Francois, and I am willing to face the sneers of London, even the hatred and scorn of my father, for your sake."

He would have seized her hand, though they were in the open road, but she drew away from him.

"Be careful, Francois," she warned him. "Remember that you have a very little time to wait."

"I cannot believe my good fortune," he babbled as he brought the car up the gentle incline into Monte Carlo. He dodged an early morning tram, missing an unsuspecting passenger who had come round the back of the tram-car by inches, and set the big limousine up the palm avenue into the town.

"It is incredible, and yet I always thought some great thing would happen to me; and, Jean, I have risked so much for you. I would have killed madame in London if she had not been dragged out of the way by that old man, and did I not watch for you when the man Meredith——"

"Hush," she said in a low voice. "Let us talk about something else."

"Shall I see your father? I am sorry for what I did last night," he said when they were nearing the villa.

"Father has taken his motor cycle and gone for a trip into Italy," she said. "No, I do not think I should speak to him, even if he were here. He may come round in time, Francois. You can understand that it is terribly distressing; he hoped I would make a great marriage. You must allow for father's disappointment."

He nodded. He did not drive her to the house, but stopped outside the garage.

"Remember, at half past ten you will take Madame Meredith to the Lover's Chair. You know the place?"

"I know it very well," he said. "It is a difficult place to turn; I must take her almost into San Remo. Why does she want to go to the Lover's Chair? I thought only the cheap people went there——"

"You must not tell her that," she said sharply. "Besides, I myself have been there."

"And who did you think of, Jean?" he asked suddenly.



She lowered her eyes.

"I will not tell you—now," she said and ran into the house.

Francois stood gazing after her until she had disappeared, and then like a man waking from a trance he turned to the mundane business of filling his gas tank.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### OLD JAGGS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF.

LYDIA was dressing for her journey when Mrs. Cole-Mortimer came into the salon where Jean was writing.

"There's a telephone call from Monte Carlo," she said. "Somebody wants to speak to Lydia."

Jean jumped up.

"I'll answer it," she said.

The voice at the other end of the wire was harsh and unfamiliar to her.

"I want to speak to Mrs. Meredith."

"Who is it?" asked Jean.

"It is a friend of hers," said the voice.

"Will you tell her? The business is rather urgent."

"I'm sorry," said Jean, "but she's just gone out."

She heard an exclamation of annoyance.

"Do you know where she's gone?" asked the voice.

"I think she's gone into Monte Carlo," said Jean.

"If I miss her will you tell her not to go out again until I come to the house?"

"Certainly," said Jean politely and hung up the telephone.

"Was that a call for me?"

It was Lydia's voice from the head of the stairs.

"Yes, dear. I think it was Marcus Stepney who wanted to speak to you. I told him you'd gone out," said Jean. "You didn't wish to speak to him?"

"Good heavens, no," said Lydia.

"You're sure you won't come with me?"

"I'd rather stay here," said Jean truthfully.

The car was at the door, and Morden, looking unusually spruce in his white dust coat, stood by the open door.

"How long shall I be away?" asked Lydia.

"About two hours, dear; you'll be very hungry when you come back," said Jean, kissing her. "Now be sure you think of the right man," she warned her in mockery.

"I wonder if I shall," said Lydia quietly.

Jean watched the car out of sight, then went back to the salon. She was hardly seated before the telephone rang again, and she anticipated Mrs. Cole-Mortimer and answered it.

"Mrs. Meredith has not gone in to Monte Carlo," said the voice. "Her car has not been seen on the road."

"Is that Mr. Jaggs?" asked Jean sweetly.

"Yes, miss," was the reply.

"Mrs. Meredith has come back now. I'm dreadfully sorry. I thought she had gone into Monte Carlo. She's in her room with a bad headache. Will you come and see her?"

There was an interval of silence.

"Yes, I will come," said Jaggs.

Twenty minutes later a taxicab set down the old man at the door, and a maid admitted him and brought him into the salon.

Jean rose to meet him. She looked at the bowed figure of old Jaggs; took him all in, from his iron-gray hair to his dusty shoes, and then she pointed to a chair.

"Sit down," she said, and old Jaggs obeyed. "You've something very important to tell Mrs. Meredith, I suppose."

"I'll tell her that myself, miss," said the old man gruffly.

"Well, before you tell her anything, I want to make a confession." She smiled down on old Jaggs, and pulled up a chair so that she faced him.

He was sitting with his back to the



light, holding his battered hat on his knees.

"I've really brought you up under false pretenses," she said, "because Mrs. Meredith isn't here at all."

"Not here?" he said, half rising.

"No. She's gone for a ride with our chauffeur. But I wanted to see you, Mr. Jaggs, because——" She paused. "I realize that you're a dear friend of hers and have her best interests at heart. I don't know who you are," she said, shaking her head, "but I know, of course, that Mr. John Glover has employed you."

"What's all this about?" he asked gruffly. "What have you to tell me?"

"I don't know how to begin," she said, biting her lips. "It is such a delicate matter that I hate talking about it at all. But the attitude of Mrs. Meredith to our chauffeur, Morden, is distressing, and I think Mr. Glover should be told."

He did not speak, and she went on.

"These things do happen, I know," she said, "but I am happy to say that nothing of that sort has come into my experience. Of course, Morden is good looking, and she is young ——"

"What are you talking about?" His tone was dictatorial and commanding.

"I mean," she said, "that I fear poor Lydia is in love with Morden."

He sprang to his feet.

"It's a lie!" he said, and she stared at him. "Now tell me what has happened to Lydia Meredith," he went on, "and let me tell you this, Jean Briggerland, that if one hair of that girl's head is harmed, I will finish the work I began out there," he pointed to the garden, "and strangle you with my own hands."

She lifted her eyes to his and dropped them again, and began to tremble; then turning suddenly on her heel she fled to her room, locked the door, and stood against it, white and shaking. For the second time in her life Jean Briggerland was afraid.

She heard his quick footsteps in the

passage outside, and there came a tap on her door.

"Let me in," growled the man, and for a second she almost lost control of herself. She looked wildly round the room for some way of escape, and then as a thought struck her she ran quickly into the bathroom, which opened from her room. A large sponge was set to dry by an open window, and this she seized; on a shelf by the side of the bath was a big bottle of ammonia, and, averting her face, she poured its contents upon the sponge until it was sodden; then with the dripping sponge in her hand she crept back, turned the key, and opened the door.

The old man burst in; then, before he realized what was happening, the sponge was pressed against his face. The pungent drug almost blinded him; its paralyzing fumes brought him to his knees. He gripped her wrist and tried to press away her hand, but now her arm was round his neck, and he could not get the purchase.

With a groan of agony he collapsed on the floor. In that instant she was on him like a cat, her knee between his shoulders.

Half unconscious, he felt his hands drawn to his back, and felt something lashing them together. She was using the silk girdle which had been about her waist, and her work was effective.

Presently she turned him over on his back. The ammonia was still in his eyes, and he could not open them. The agony was terrible, almost unendurable. With her hand under his arm he struggled to his feet. He felt her lead him somewhere, and suddenly he was pushed into a chair. She left him alone for a little while, but presently came back and began to tie his feet together. It was a most amazing single-handed capture; even Jean could never have imagined the ease with which she could gain her victory.

"I'm sorry to hurt an old man."



There was a sneer in her voice which he had not heard before. "But if you promise not to shout, I will not gag you."

He heard the sound of running water, and presently with a wet cloth she began wiping his eyes gently.

"You will be able to see in a minute," said Jean's cool voice. "In the meantime you'll stay here until I send for the police."

For all his pain he was forced to chuckle.

"Until you send for the police, eh? You know me?"

"I only know you're a wicked old man who broke into this house while I was alone and the servants were out," she said.

"You know why I've come?" he insisted. "I've come to tell Mrs. Meredith that a hundred thousand pounds have been taken from her bank on a forged signature."

"How absurd," said Jean. She was sitting on the edge of the bathtub, looking at the bedraggled figure. "How could anybody draw money from Mrs. Meredith's bank while her dear friend and guardian, Jack Glover, is in London to see that she is not robbed?"

Old Jaggs glared up at her from his inflamed eyes.

"You know very well," he said distinctly, "that I am Jack Glover, and that I have not left Monte Carlo since Lydia Meredith arrived."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### FOR FORTUNE AND SELF-PROTECTION.

GENERALLY Mr. Briggerland did not enthuse over any form of sport or exercise. His hobbies were confined to the handsome motor cycle which not only provided him with recreation, but on occasion had been of assistance in the carrying out of important plans formulated by his daughter.

He stopped at Mentone for breakfast

and climbed the hill to Grimaldi, after passing the frontier station at Pont St. Louis. He had all the morning before him, and there was no great hurry. At Ventimille he had a second breakfast, for the morning was keen, and his appetite was good. He loafed through the little town with a cigar between his teeth, bought some curios at a shop, and continued his leisurely journey.

His objective was San Remo. There was a train at one o'clock which would bring him and his machine back to Monte Carlo, where it was his intention to spend the remainder of the afternoon. At Pont St. Louis he had had a talk with the customs officer.

"No, m'sieur, there are very few travelers on the road in the morning," said the official. "It is not until late in the afternoon that the traffic begins. Times have changed on the Riviera, and so many people go to Cannes. The old road is almost deserted now."

At eleven o'clock Mr. Briggerland came to a part of the road he knew, and found a hiding place for his motor cycle—a small plantation of olive trees on the hillside. Incidentally it was an admirable resting place, for from here he commanded an extensive view of the western road.

Lydia's journey had been no less enjoyable. She, too, had stopped at Mentone to explore the town, and had left Pont St. Louis an hour after Mr. Briggerland had passed.

The road to San Remo runs under the shadow of steep hills through a bleak stretch of country from which even the industrious peasantry of northern Italy cannot win a livelihood. Save for isolated patches of cultivated land, the hills are bare and menacing.

With these gaunt plateaus on one side and the rock-strewn seashore on the other, there was little to hold the eye save an occasional glimpse of the Italian town in the far distance. There was a wild uncouthness about the scenery



which awed the girl. Sometimes the car would be running so near the sea level that the spray of the waves hit the windows; sometimes it would climb over an out-jutting headland, and she would look down upon a bowldered beach a hundred feet below.

It was on the crest of a headland that the car stopped. Here the road ran out in a semicircle, so that from where she sat she could not see its continuation either before or behind. Ahead it slipped round the shoulder of a high and overhanging mass of rock, through which the road must have been cut. Behind it dipped down to a cove hidden from sight.

"There is the Lovers' Chair, *mademoiselle*," said Morden.

Half a dozen feet beneath the road level was a broad shelf of rock. A few stone steps led down, and she followed them. The Lovers' Chair was carved in the face of the rock, and she sat down to view the beauty of the scene. The solitude, the stillness which only the lazy waves broke, the majesty of the setting—all brought a strange peace to her. Beyond the edge of the ledge the cliff fell sheer to the water, and she shivered as she stepped back from her inspection.

Morden did not see her go. He sat on the running board of his car, his pale face between his hands, a prey to his own gloomy thoughts. There must be a development, he told himself. He was beginning to get uneasy, and for the first time he doubted the sincerity of the woman who had been to him as a goddess.

He did not hear Mr. Briggerland when he came round the shoulder of the hill, for the dark man was light of foot. Morden's back was toward him. Suddenly the chauffeur looked round.

"M'sieur," he stammered, and would have risen, but Briggerland laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Do not rise, Francois," he said pleas-

antly. "I am afraid I was hasty last night."

"M'sieur, it was I who was hasty," said Morden huskily, "it was unpardonable."

"Nonsense!" Briggerland patted the man's shoulder. "What is that boat out there—a man-o'-war, Francois?"

Francois Morden turned his head toward the sea. Briggerland pointed the ivory-handled pistol he had held behind his back, and shot him dead.

The report of the revolver thrown down by the rocks came to Lydia like a clap of thunder. At first she thought it was a tire burst, and hurried up the steps to see.

Mr. Briggerland was standing with his back to the car. At his feet was the tumbled body of Morden.

"Mr. Brig—" she gasped out, and saw the revolver in his hand. With a cry she almost flung herself down the steps as the revolver exploded. The bullet ripped her hat from her head, and she flung up her hands, thinking she had been struck.

Then the dark face showed over the parapet, and again the revolver was presented. She stared for a second into his benevolent eyes, and then something hit her violently. She staggered back and dropped over the edge of the shelf—down, straight down, into the sea below.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

GLOVER ARRIVES TOO LATE.

**P**ROBABLY Jean Briggerland never gave a more perfect representation of shocked surprise than when old Jaggs announced that he was Jack Glover.

"Mr. Glover!" she said incredulously.

"If you'll be kind enough to release my hands," said Jack savagely, "I will convince you."

Jean, all meekness, obeyed, and presently he stood up with a groan.

"You've nearly blinded me," he said, turning to the glass.



"If I'd known it was you——"

"Don't make me laugh!" he snapped. "Of course you knew who it was!" He took off the wig and peeled the beard from his face.

"Was that very painful?" she asked sympathetically, and Jack snorted.

"How was I to know that it was you?" she demanded. "I thought you were a wicked old man——"

"You thought nothing of the sort, Miss Briggerland," said Jack. "You knew who I was, and you guessed why I had taken on this disguise. I was not many yards from you when it suddenly dawned upon you that I could not sleep at Lydia Meredith's flat unless I went there in the guise of an old man."

"Why should you want to sleep at her flat at all?" she asked innocently. "It doesn't seem to me to be a very proper ambition."

"That is an unnecessary question, and I'm wasting my time when I answer you," said Jack sternly. "I went there to save her life, to protect her against your murderous plots!"

"My murderous plots?" she repeated, aghast. "You surely don't know what you're saying."

"I know this"—and his face was not pleasant to see—"I have sufficient evidence to secure the arrest of your father, and possibly yourself. For months I have been working on that first providential accident of yours—the rich Australian who died with such remarkable suddenness. I may not get you in the Meredith case, and I may not be able to jail you for your attacks on Mrs. Meredith; but I have enough evidence to hang your father for the earlier crime."

Her face was blank—expressionless. Never before had she been brought up short with such a threat as this man was uttering, nor had she ever been in danger of detection. And all the time that she was eying him so steadily, with not a muscle of her face moving, her mind

was groping back into the past, examining every detail of the crime he had mentioned, seeking for some flaw in the carefully prepared plan which had brought a good man to a violent and untimely end.

"That kind of bluff doesn't impress me," she said at length. "You're up against it when you have to invent crimes to attach to me."

"We'll go into that later. Where is Lydia?" he said shortly.

"I tell you I don't know, except that she has gone out for a drive. I expect her back very soon."

"Is your father with her?"

She shook her head.

"No. Father went out early. I don't know who gave you authority to cross-examine me. Why, Jack Glover, you have all the importance of a French examining magistrate." She smiled.

"You may learn how important they are soon," he said significantly. "Where is your chauffeur Morden?"

"He is gone, too; in fact he is driving Lydia. Why?" she asked with a little tightening of heart. She had been just in time, she thought. So they had associated Morden with the forgery!

His first words confirmed this suspicion.

"There is a warrant out for Morden, which will be served as soon as he returns," said Jack. "We have been able to trace him in London, and also the woman who presented the check. We know his movements from the time he left Nice by aeroplane for Paris to the time he returned to Nice. The people who changed the money for him will swear to his identity."

If he expected to startle her he was disappointed. She raised her eyebrows.

"I can't believe it is possible. Morden was such an honest man," she said. "We trusted him implicitly, and never once did he betray our trust. Now, Mr. Glover," she said coolly, "might I suggest that an interview with a gentle-



man in my bedroom is not calculated to increase my servants' respect for me? Will you go downstairs and wait until I come?"

"You'll not attempt to leave this house?" he said, and she laughed.

"Really," she said a little contemptuously, "you have no authority whatever to keep me from leaving this house, and nobody knows that better than you. But you needn't be afraid. Sit on the stairs if you like until I come down."

When he had gone she rang the bell for her maid and handed her an envelope.

"I shall be in the salon, talking to Mr. Glover," she said in a low voice. "I want you to bring this in and say that you found it in the hall."

"Yes, miss," said the woman.

Jean proceeded leisurely to the rearrangement of her attire. In the struggle her dress had been torn, and she changed it for a pale green silk gown. Jack, pacing in the hall below, was on the point of coming up to discover if she had made her escape when she sailed serenely down the stairs.

"I should like to know one thing, Mr. Glover," she said as she went into the salon. "What do you intend doing? What is your immediate plan? Are you going to spirit Lydia away from us? Of course I know you're in love with her."

His face went pink.

"I am not in love with Mrs. Meredith," he lied.

"Don't be silly," she said practically; "of course you're in love with her."

"My first job is to get that money back, and you're going to help me," he said.

"Of course I'm going to help you," she agreed. "If Morden has been such a scoundrel, he must suffer the consequence. I'm sure that you are too clever to have made any mistake. Poor Morden! I wonder what made him do it, because he is such a good friend of

Lydia's, and seriously, Mr. Glover, I do think Lydia is being indiscreet."

"You made that remark before," he said quietly. "Now perhaps you'll explain what you mean."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"They are always together. I saw them strolling on the lawn last night till a late hour, and I was so scared lest Mrs. Cole-Mortimer noticed it, too——"

"Which means that Mrs. Cole-Mortimer did not notice it. You're clever, Jean! Even as you invent you make preparations to refute any evidence that the other side can produce. I don't believe a word you say."

There was a knock at the door, and the maid entered, bearing a letter on a salver.

"This was addressed to you, miss," she said. "It was on the hall table. Didn't you see it?"

"No," said Jean in surprise. She took the letter, looked down at the address, and opened it.

He saw a look of amazement and horror come to her face.

"Good Lord!" gasped out Jean.

"What is it?" Jack said, springing up.

She stared at the letter again, and from the letter to him.

"Read it," she said in a hollow voice. He complied.

"DEAR MADEMOISELLE: I have returned from London and have confessed to Madame Meredith that I have forged her name and have drawn £100,000 from her bank. And now I have learned that Madame Meredith loves me! There is only one end to this—that which you see——"

Jack read the letter twice.

"It is in his writing, too," he muttered. "It's impossible, incredible! I tell you I've had Mrs. Meredith under my eyes all the time she has been here. Is there a letter from her?" he asked suddenly. "But, no! It is impossible—impossible!"

"I haven't been into her room. Will you come up with me?"



He followed her up the stairs and into Lydia's big bedroom, and the first thing that caught his eye was a sealed letter on a table near the bed. He picked it up. It was addressed to him in Lydia's handwriting, and feverishly he tore it open.

His face, when he had finished reading, was as white as hers had been.

"Where have they gone?" he asked.

"They went to San Remo."

"By car?"

"Of course."

Without a word he turned and ran down the stairs out of the house.

The taxi that had brought him in the rôle of Jaggs had gone, but down the road, a dozen yards away, was the car he had hired on the day he came to Monte Carlo. He gave instructions to the driver and jumped in. The car sped through Mentone, and stopped only the briefest while at the customs barrier while Jack pursued his inquiries.

Yes, a lady had passed, but she had not returned. How long ago? Perhaps an hour; perhaps less.

At top speed the big car thundered along the sea road, twisting and turning, diving into valleys and climbing steep headlands, and then, rounding a corner, Jack saw the car and a little crowd about it. His heart turned cold as he leaped to the road.

He saw the backs of two Italian gendarmes, and, pushing aside the little knot of idlers, he came into the center of the group and stopped. Morden lay on his face in a pool of crimson, and one of the policemen was holding an ivory-handled revolver.

"It was with this that the crime was committed," he said. "Three of the chambers are empty. Now at whom were the other two discharged?"

Jack reeled and gripped the mud-guard of the car for support; then his eyes strayed to the opening in the wall which ran on the seaward side of the road.

He walked to the parapet and looked over, and the first thing he saw was a torn hat and veil. He knew they were Lydia's.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### UNDER ARREST.

FROM his place on the quay at Monaco, where Mr. Briggerland was killing time, he saw the *Jungle Queen* come into the harbor, and he watched Marcus land, carrying the lines in his hand.

As Marcus came abreast of him he called, and Mr. Stepney looked round with a start.

"Hello, Briggerland," he said.

"Well, have you been fishing?" asked Mr. Briggerland in his most paternal manner.

"Yes," admitted Marcus.

"Did you catch anything?"

Stepney nodded.

"Only one," he said.

"Hard luck," said Mr. Briggerland, smiling. "But where is Mrs. Meredith? I understood she was going out with you to-day."

"She went to San Remo," said Stepney shortly, and the other nodded.

"To be sure," he said. "I had forgotten that."

Later he bought a copy of the *Nicoise* and learned of the tragedy on the San Remo road. It brought him back to the house a visibly agitated man.

"This is shocking news, my dear," he panted out as he entered the salon. He stood stock-still at the sight of Mr. Jack Glover.

"Come in, Briggerland," said Jack without ceremony. There was a man with him, a tall, keen Frenchman whom Briggerland recognized as the chief detective of the Prefecture. "We want you to give an account of your actions."

"My actions?" said Mr. Briggerland indignantly. "Do you associate me with this dreadful tragedy—a tragedy," he said, "which has stricken me almost



dumb with horror and remorse? Why did I ever allow that villain even to speak to poor Lydia?"

"Nevertheless, m'sieur," said the tall man quietly, "you must tell us where you have been."

"That is easily explained. I went to San Remo."

"By road?"

"Yes, by road," said Mr. Briggerland, "on my motor cycle."

"What time did you arrive in San Remo?"

"At midday, or it may have been a quarter of an hour before."

"You know that the murder must have been committed at half past eleven?" said Jack.

"So the newspapers tell me."

"Where did you go in San Remo?" asked the detective.

"I went to a café and had a glass of wine; then I strolled about the town and lunched at the Victoria. I caught the one o'clock train to Monte Carlo."

"Did you hear nothing of the murder?"

"Not a word," said Mr. Briggerland, "not a word."

"Did you see the car?"

Mr. Briggerland shook his head.

"I left some time before poor Lydia."

"Did you know of any attachment between the chauffeur and this other guest?"

"I had no idea such a thing existed. If I had," said Mr. Briggerland virtuously, "I should have taken immediate steps to bring poor Lydia to her senses."

"Your daughter says that they were frequently together. Did you notice this?"

"Yes, I did notice it, but my daughter and I are very democratic. We have made a friend of Morden, and I suppose what would have seemed familiar to you, would pass unnoticed with us. Yes, I certainly do remember my poor friend and Morden walking together in the garden."

"Is this yours?" The detective took from behind a curtain an old British rifle.

"Yes, that is mine," admitted Briggerland without a moment's hesitation. "It is one I bought in Amiens, a souvenir of our gallant soldiers——"

"I know. I quite understand your patriotic motive in purchasing it," said the detective dryly, "but will you tell us how this passed from your possession?"

"I haven't the slightest notion," said Mr. Briggerland in surprise. "I had no idea it was missing. I'd lost sight of it for some weeks. Can it be that Morden—but no; I must not think so evilly of him."

"What were you going to suggest?" asked Jack. "That Morden fired at Mrs. Meredith when she was on the swimming raft? If you are, I can save you the trouble of telling that lie. It was you who fired, and it was I who knocked you out."

Mr. Briggerland's face was a study.

"I can't understand why you make such a wild and unfounded charge," he said gently. "Perhaps, my dear, you could elucidate this mystery."

Jean had not spoken since he entered. She sat bolt upright on a chair, her hands folded in her lap, her sad eyes fixed now upon Jack, now upon the detective. She shook her head.

"I know nothing about the rifle, and did not even know you possessed one," she said. "But please answer all their questions, father. I am as anxious as you are to get to the bottom of this tragedy. Have you told my father about the letters which were discovered?"

The detective shook his head.

"I have not seen your father until he arrived this moment," he said.

"Letters?" Mr. Briggerland looked at his daughter. "Did poor Lydia leave a letter?"

She nodded.

"I think Mr. Glover will tell you, father," she said. "Poor Lydia had an



attachment for Morden. It is very clear what happened. They went out to-day, never intending to return——”

“Mrs. Meredith had no intention of going to the Lovers’ Chair until you suggested the trip to her,” said Jack quietly. “Mrs. Cole-Mortimer is very emphatic on that point.”

“Has the body been found?” asked Mr. Briggerland.

“Nothing has been found but the chauffeur,” said the detective.

After a few more questions he took Jack outside.

“It looks very much to me as though it were one of those crimes of passion which are so frequent in this country,” he said. “Morden was a Frenchman, and I have been able to identify him by tattoo marks on his arm as a man who has been in the hands of the police many times.”

“You think there is no hope?”

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

“We are dragging the pool. There is very deep water under the rock, but the chances are that the body has been washed out to sea. There is clearly no evidence against these people except yours. The letters might, of course, have been forged, but you say you are certain that the writing is Mrs. Meredith’s.”

Jack nodded.

They were walking down the road toward the officers’ waiting car, when Jack asked:

“May I see that letter again?”

The detective took it from his pocket book, and Jack stopped and scanned it.

“Yes, it is her writing,” he said and then uttered an exclamation.

“Do you see that?”

He pointed eagerly to two little marks before the words “Dear friend.”

“Quotation marks,” said the detective, puzzled. “Why did she write that?”

“I’ve got it,” said Jack. “The story! Mademoiselle Briggerland told me she was writing a story, and I remember she

said she had writers’ cramp. Suppose she dictated a portion of the story to Mrs. Meredith, and suppose in that story there occurred this letter. Lydia would have put the quotation marks mechanically.”

The detective took the letter from his hand.

“It is possible,” he said. “The writing is very even. It shows no sign of agitation, and of course the character’s initials might be ‘L. M.’ It is an ingenious hypothesis, and not wholly improbable; but if this were a part of the story, there would be other sheets. Would you like me to search the house?”

Jack shook his head.

“She’s much too clever to have them in the house,” he said. “More than likely she’s put them in the fire.”

“What fire?” asked the detective. “These houses have no fires; they’re central-heated—unless she went to the kitchen.”

“Which she wouldn’t do,” said Jack thoughtfully. “No, she’d burn them in the garden.”

The detective nodded, and they returned to the house.

Jean, deep in conversation with her father, saw them reappear, and watched them as they walked slowly across the lawn toward the trees, their eyes fixed on the ground.

“What are they looking for?” she asked with a frown.

“I’ll go and see,” said Briggerland, but she caught his arm.

“Do you think they’ll tell you?” she asked sarcastically.

She ran up to her own room and watched them from behind a curtain. Presently they passed out of sight to the other side of the house, and she went into Lydia’s room and overlooked them from there. Suddenly she saw the detective stoop and pick up something from the ground, and her teeth set.

“The burned story,” she said, “I never dreamed they’d look for that.”



It was only a scrap they found, but it was in Lydia's writing, and the pencil mark was clearly visible on the charred ashes.

"'Laura Martin,'" read the detective. "L. M. And there are the words 'tragic' and 'remorse.'"

From the remainder of the charred fragments they collected nothing of importance. Jean watched them disappear along the avenue, and went down to her father.

"I had a fright," she said.

"You look as if you've still got it," he said. He eyed her keenly.

She shook her head.

"Father, you must understand that this adventure may end disastrously. There are ninety-nine chances against the truth being known, but it is the extra chance that is worrying me. We ought to have settled Lydia more quietly, more naturally. There was too much melodrama and shooting, but I don't see how we could have done anything else. Morden was very tiresome."

"Where did Glover come from?" asked Mr. Briggerland.

"He's been here all the time," said the girl.

"What?"

She nodded.

"He was old Jaggs. I had an idea he was, but I was certain when I remembered that he had stayed at Lydia's flat."

He put down his tea cup and wiped his lips with a silk handkerchief.

"I wish this business was over," he said fretfully. "It looks as if we shall have trouble."

"Of course we shall," she said coldly. "You didn't expect to get a fortune of six hundred thousand pounds without trouble, did you? I suppose we shall be suspected. But it takes a lot of suspicion to worry me. We'll be in calm water soon for the rest of our lives."

"I hope so," he said without great conviction.

Mrs. Cole-Mortimer was prostrate and in bed, and Jean had no patience to see her. She herself ordered the dinner, and they had finished when a visitor in the shape of Mr. Marcus Stepney came in.

It was unusual of Marcus to appear at the dinner hour except in evening dress, and she remarked the fact wonderingly.

"Can I have a word with you, Jean?" he asked.

"What is it, what is it?" asked Mr. Briggerland testily. "Haven't we had enough mysteries?"

Marcus eyed him without favor.

"We'll have another one, if you don't mind," he said unpleasantly, and the girl, whose every sense was alert, picked up a wrap and walked into the garden, with Marcus following at her heels.

Ten minutes passed, and they did not return; a quarter of an hour went by, and Mr. Briggerland grew uneasy. He got up from his chair, put down his book, and was half way across the room when the door opened and Jack Glover came in, followed by the detective.

It was the Frenchman who spoke.

"M'sieur Briggerland, I have a warrant from the Prefect of the Alps Maritimes for your arrest."

"My arrest?" spluttered the dark man, his teeth chattering. "What—what is the charge?"

"The willful murder of Francois Morden," said the officer.

"You lie!" shouted Briggerland. "I have no knowledge of any——"

His words sank into a throaty gurgle, and he stared past the detective. Lydia Meredith was standing in the doorway.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### LOVE WINS WITH MARCUS.

FOR Mr. Stepney the morning had been doubly disappointing; again and again he drew up an empty line, and at last he flung the tackle into the well of the launch.



"Even the fish won't bite," he said, and the humor of his remark cheered him. He was ten miles from the shore, and the blue coast was a dim, ragged line on the horizon. He pulled out a big luncheon basket from the cabin and eyed it with disfavor. It had cost him two hundred francs. He opened the basket, and at the sight of its contents he was inclined to reconsider his earlier view that he had wasted his money, the more so since the maitre d'hotel had thoughtfully included two quart bottles of champagne.

Mr. Marcus Stepney made a hearty meal, and by the time he had dropped an empty bottle into the sea he was inclined to take a more cheerful view of life. He threw over the débris of the lunch, pushed the basket under one of the seats of the cabin, pulled up his anchor, and started the engines running.

The sky was a brighter blue, and the sea held a finer sparkle; he was inclined to take a view of even Jean Briggerland that was more generous than any he had held.

"Little devil!" He smiled reminiscently as he murmured the words.

He opened the second bottle of champagne in her honor—Mr. Marcus Stepney was usually an abstemious man—and drank solemnly, if not soberly, her health and happiness. As the sun grew warmer he began to feel an unaccountable sleepiness. He was sober enough to know that to fall asleep out on the ocean was to ask for trouble, and he set the bow of the *Jungle Queen* for the nearest beach, hoping to find a landing place.

He found something better as he skirted the shore. The sea and the weather had scooped out a big hollow under a high cliff, a hollow just big enough to take the *Jungle Queen*, and deep and still enough to insure her a safe anchorage. A rock barrier interposed between the breakers and this

deep pool which the waves had hollowed in the stony floor of the ocean. As he dropped his anchor he disturbed a school of fish, and his angling instincts re-awoke. He let down his line over the side, seated himself comfortably in one of the two big basket chairs, and dozed off.

It was the sound of a shot that woke him. It was followed by another and a third. Almost immediately something dropped from the cliff and fell with a mighty splash into the water.

Marcus was wide awake now and almost sober. He peered down into the clear depths and saw the figure of a woman turning over and over. Then as it floated upward it came on its back, and he saw the face. Without a moment's hesitation he dived into the water.

He would have been wiser if he had waited until she floated to the surface, for now he found a difficulty in regaining the boat. After a great deal of trouble he managed to reach into the launch and pull out a rope, which he fastened round the girl's waist and drew tight to a small stanchion. Then he climbed into the boat himself and pulled her after him.

At first he thought she was dead, but, listening intently, he heard the beating of her heart. He searched the luncheon basket for a small flask of liqueurs which Alphonse, the head waiter, had packed. This he put to her lips and poured a small quantity into her mouth. She choked convulsively, and presently opened her eyes.

"You're among friends," said Marcus unnecessarily.

She sat up and covered her face with her hands. It all came back to her in a flash, and the horror of it froze her veins.

"What has happened to you?" asked Marcus.

"I don't know exactly," she said faintly. And then: "Oh, it was dreadful, dreadful!"



Marcus Stepney offered her the flask of liqueurs, and when she shook her head he helped himself liberally.

Lydia was conscious of a pain in her left shoulder. The sleeve was torn, and across the thick of the arm there was an ugly, raw wound.

"It looks like a bullet mark to me," said Marcus Stepney, suddenly grave. "I heard a shot. Did somebody shoot at you?"

She nodded.

"Who?"

She tried to frame the word, but no sound came. Then she burst into a fit of weeping.

"Not Jean?" he asked hoarsely.

She shook her head.

"Briggerland?"

She nodded.

"Briggerland!" Mr. Stepney whistled, and as he whistled he shivered. "Let's get out of here," he said. "We shall catch our death of cold. The sun will warm us up."

He started the engines going, and safely navigated the narrow passage to the open sea. He had to get a long way out before he could catch a glimpse of the road; then he saw the car, and a bicycle policeman dismounting and bending over something. He put away his telescope and turned to the girl.

"This is bad, Mrs. Meredith," he said. "Thank Heaven I wasn't in it."

"Where are you taking me?" she asked.

"I'm taking you out to sea," said Marcus with a little smile. "Don't get scared, Mrs. Meredith. I want to hear that story of yours, and if it is anything like what I fear, then it would be better for you that Briggerland thinks you are dead."

She told the story so far as she knew it, and he listened without interruption until she had finished.

"Morden dead, eh? That's bad. But how on earth are they going to explain it? I suppose," he said with a smile,

"you didn't write a letter saying that you were going to run away with the chauffeur?"

She sat up at this.

"I did write a letter," she said slowly. "It wasn't a real letter; it was in a story which Jean was dictating." She closed her eyes. "How awful," she said. "I can't believe it even now."

"Tell me about the story," said the man quickly.

"It was a story she was writing for a London magazine. Her wrist hurt, and I wrote it down as she dictated. Only about three pages, but one of the pages was a letter supposed to have been written by the heroine, in which she said she was going away as she loved somebody who was beneath her socially."

"Good Lord!" said Marcus, genuinely shocked. "Did Jean do that?"

He seemed absolutely crushed by the realization of Jean Briggerland's deed, and he did not speak again for a long time.

"I'm glad I know," he said at last.

"Do you really think that all this time she has been trying to kill me?"

He nodded.

"She has used everybody, even me," he said bitterly. "I don't want you to think badly of me, Mrs. Meredith, but I'm going to tell you the truth. I'd provisioned this little yacht to-day for a twelve-hundred-mile trip, and you were to be my companion."

"I?" she said incredulously.

"It was Jean's idea, really, though I think she must have altered her view or thought I had forgotten all she suggested. I intended taking you out to sea and keeping you out there until you agreed——" He shook his head. "I don't think I could have done it, honestly," he said, speaking half to himself. "I'm not really built for a conspirator. None of that rough stuff ever appealed to me. Well, I didn't try, anyway."

"No, Mr. Stepney," she said quietly,



"and I don't think, if you had, you would have succeeded."

He was in his frankest mood, and startled her later when he told her of his profession, without attempting to excuse or minimize the method by which he earned his livelihood.

"I was in a pretty bad way, and I thought there was easy money coming. That rather tempted me," he said. "I know you will think I am a despicable cad, but you can't think too badly of me, really."

He surveyed the shore. Ahead of them the green tongue of Cap Martin jutted out into the sea.

"I think I'll take you to Nice," he said. "We'll attract less attention there, and probably I'll be able to get in touch with your old Mr. Jaggs. You've no idea where I can find him? At any rate, I can go to the Villa Casa and discover what sort of yarn is being told."

"And probably I can get my clothes dry," she said with a little grimace. "I wonder if you know how uncomfortable I am?"

"Pretty well," he said calmly. "Every time I move a new stream of water runs down my back."

It was half past three in the afternoon when they reached Nice, and Marcus saw the girl safely to a hotel, changed his clothes, and brought the yacht back to Monaco, where Briggerland had seen him.

For two hours Marcus Stepney wrestled with his love for a girl who was plainly a murderess, and in the end love won. When darkness fell he provisioned the *Jungle Queen*, loaded her with petrol, and, heading her out to sea, made the swimming cove of Cap Martin. It was to the boat that Jean flew.

"What about my father?" she asked as she stepped aboard.

"I think they've caught him," said Marcus.

"He'll hate prison," said the girl. "Hurry, Marcus! I'd hate it, too!"

## CHAPTER XL.

## A PACT IS SEALED.

AFTER the momentous events at Villa Casa, Lydia took up her quarters in a quiet hotel in Nice, and Mrs. Cole-Mortimer stayed on to chaperon her.

Though she had felt no effects from her terrifying experience on the first day, she found herself a nervous wreck when she woke in the morning, and wisely decided to stay in bed.

Jack, who had expected the relapse, called in a doctor, but Lydia refused to see him. The next day she received the lawyer.

She had only briefly outlined the part which Marcus Stepney had played in her rescue, but she had said enough to make Jack call at Stepney's hotel to thank him in person. Mr. Stepney, however, was not at home—he had not been home all night; but this information his discreet informant did not volunteer. Nor was the disappearance of the *Jungle Queen* noticed for two days. It was Mrs. Cole-Mortimer, in settling up her accounts with Jack, who mentioned the "yacht."

"The *Jungle Queen*?" said Jack. "That's the motor launch, isn't it? I've seen her lying in the harbor. I thought she was Stepney's property."

His suspicions aroused, he called again at Stepney's hotel, and this time his inquiry was backed by the presence of a detective. Then it was made known that Mr. Stepney had not been seen since the night of Briggerland's arrest.

"That is where they've gone. Stepney was badly smitten with the girl, I think," said Jack.

The detective was annoyed.

"If I'd known before, we could have intercepted them. We have several destroyers in the harbor at Villafrance. Now I am afraid it is too late."

"Where would they make for?" asked Jack.



The officer shrugged his shoulders.

"Heaven knows," he said. "They could get into Italy or into Spain, possibly Barcelona. I will telegraph the chief of the police there."

But the Barcelona police had no information to give. The *Jungle Queen* had not been sighted. The weather was calm, the sea smooth, and everything favorable for the escape.

Inquiries elicited the fact that Mr. Stepney had bought large quantities of petrol a few days before his departure, and had augmented his supply the evening he had left. Also he had bought provisions in considerable quantities.

The murder was a week old, and Mr. Briggerland had undergone his preliminary examination, when a wire came through from the Spanish police that a motor boat answering the description of the *Jungle Queen* had called at Malaga, had provisioned, refilled, and put out to sea again, before the police authorities, who had a description of the pair, had time to investigate.

"You'll think I have a diseased mind," said Lydia, "but I hope she gets away."

Jack laughed.

"If you had been with her much longer, Lydia, she would have turned you into a first-class criminal," he said. "I hope you do not forget that she has exactly a hundred thousand pounds of yours; in other words, a sixth of your fortune."

Lydia shook her head.

"That is almost a comforting thought," she said. "I know she is what she is, Jack, but her greatest crime is that she was born six hundred years too late. If she had lived in the days of the Italian Renaissance she would have made history."

"Your sympathy is immoral," said Jack. "By the way, Briggerland has been handed over to the Italian authorities. The crime was committed on Italian soil, and that saves his head from falling into the basket."

She shuddered.

"What will they do to him?"

"He'll be imprisoned for life," was the reply, "and I rather think that's a little worse than the guillotine. You say you worry for Jean; I'm rather sorry for old man Briggerland. If he hadn't tried to live up to his daughter he might have been a most respectable member of society."

They were strolling through the quaint, narrow streets of Grasse, and Jack, who knew and loved the town, was showing her sights which made her forget that the perfumery factory, the mecca of the average tourist, had any existence.

"I suppose I'll have to settle down now," she said with an expression of distaste.

"I suppose you will," said Jack, "and you'll have to settle up, too; your legal expenses are something fierce."

"Why do you say that?" she asked, stopping in her walk and looking at him gravely.

"I am speaking as your mercenary lawyer," said Jack.

"You are trying to put your service on another level," she corrected. "I owe everything I have to you. My fortune is the least of these. I owe you my life three times over."

"Four," he corrected, "and to Marcus Stepney once."

"Why have you done so much for me? Were you interested?" she asked after a pause.

"Very," he replied. "I was interested in you from the moment I saw you step out of Mr. Morden's taxi into the mud, but I was especially interested——"

"When?" she asked.

"When I sat outside your door night after night and discovered you didn't snore," he said shamelessly, and she went red.

"I hope you'll never refer to your old Jaggs adventures. It was very——"

"What?"



"I was going to say horrid, but I shouldn't be telling the truth," she admitted frankly. "I liked having you there. Poor Mrs. Morgan will be disconsolate when she discovers that we've lost our lodger."

They walked into the cool of the ancient cathedral and sat down.

"There's something very soothing about a church, isn't there?" he whispered. "Look at that gorgeous window. If I were ever rich enough to marry the woman I loved, I should be married in a cathedral like this, full of old tombs and statues and stained glass."

"How rich would you have to be?" she asked.

"As rich as she is."

She bent over toward him, her lips against his ear.

"Tell me how much money you have," she whispered, "and I'll give away all I have in excess of that amount."

He caught her hand and held it fast, and they sat there before the altar of St. Catherine until the sun went down and the disapproving old woman who acted as the cathedral's caretaker tapped them on the shoulder.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### IN AFRICA.

THAT is Gibraltar," said Marcus Stepney, pointing ahead to a gray shape that loomed up from the sea.

He was unshaven, for he had forgotten to bring his razor, and he was pinched with the cold. His overcoat was turned up to his ears, in spite of which he shivered.

Jean did not seem to be affected by the sudden change of temperature. She sat on the top of the cabin, her chin in the palm of her hand, her elbow on her crossed knee.

"You are not going into Gibraltar?" she asked. He shook his head.

"I think not," he said, "nor to Algiers. Did you see that fellow on the

quay yelling for the craft to come back after we left Malaga? That was a bad sign. I suppose the police have instructions to detain this boat, and most of the ports must have been notified."

"How long can we run?"

"We've got enough gas and grub to reach Dacca," he said. "That's roughly an eight days' journey."

"On the African coast?"

He nodded, although she could not see him.

"Where could we get a ship to take us to South America?" she asked, turning round.

"Lisbon," he said thoughtfully. "Yes, we could reach Lisbon; but there are too many steamers about, and we're certain to be sighted. We might run across to Los Palmas—most of the South American boats call there; but if I were you I should stick to Europe. Come and take this helm, Jean."

She obeyed without question, and he continued the work which had been interrupted by a late meal—the painting of the boat's hull; a difficult business, involving acrobatics, since it was necessary for him to lean over the side. He had bought the gray paint at Malaga, and happily there was not much surface that required attention. The stumpy mast of the *Jungle Queen* had already gone overboard; he had sawed it off with great labor the day after they had left Cap Martin.

She watched him with a speculative eye as he worked, and thought he had never looked quite so unattractive as he did with an eight days' growth of beard and his shirt stained with paint and petrol. His hands were grimy, and nobody would have recognized in this scarecrow the elegant habitué of those fashionable resorts which society frequents.

Yet she had reason to be grateful to him. His conduct toward her had been irreproachable. Not one word of love had been spoken, nor until now had their



future plans—for it affected them both—been discussed.

"Suppose we reach South America safely?" she asked. "What happens then, Marcus?"

He looked round from his work in surprise.

"We'll get married," he said quietly, and she laughed.

"And what happens to the present Mrs. Stepney?"

"She has divorced me," said Stepney unexpectedly. "I got the papers the day we left."

"I see," said Jean softly. "We'll get married—" then stopped.

He looked at her and frowned.

"Isn't that your idea, too?" he asked.

"Married? Yes, that's my idea, too. It seems a queer, uninteresting way of finishing things, doesn't it? And yet I suppose it isn't."

He had resumed his work and was leaning far over the bow intent upon his labor. Suddenly she spun the wheel round, and the launch heeled over to starboard. For a second it seemed that Marcus Stepney could not maintain his balance against that unexpected impetus, but by a superhuman effort he kicked himself back to safety, and stared at her with a blanched face.

"Why did you do that?" he asked hoarsely. "You nearly had me overboard."

"There was a porpoise lying on the surface of the sea asleep, I think," she said quietly. "I'm very sorry, Marcus, but I didn't know that it would throw you off your balance."

He looked round for the sleeping fish, but it had disappeared.

"You told me to avoid them, you know," she said apologetically. "Did I really put you in any danger?"

He licked his dry lips, picked up the paint pot, and threw it into the sea.

"We'll leave this," he said, "until we are beached. You gave me a scare, Jean."

"I'm dreadfully sorry. Come here and sit by me."

She moved to allow him room, and he sat down by her, taking the wheel from her hand.

On the horizon the high lands of northern Africa were showing their saw-edge outlines.

"That is Morocco," he pointed out to her. "I propose giving Gibraltar a wide berth and following the coast line to Tangier."

"Tangier wouldn't be a bad place to land, if there weren't two of us," he went on. "It is our being together in this boat that is likely to cause suspicion. You could easily pretend that you'd come over from Gibraltar, and the port authorities there are pretty slack."

"Or we could land on the coast," he suggested a moment later. "There's a good landing, and we could follow the beach down and turn up in Tangier in the morning. All sorts of odd characters turn up in Tangier without exciting suspicion."

She was looking out over the sea with a queer expression in her face.

"Morocco!" she said softly. "Morocco. I hadn't thought of that!"

They had a fright soon after. A gray shape came racing out of the darkening east, and Stepney put his helm over as a destroyer smashed past on her way to Gibraltar.

He watched the stern light disappearing; then it suddenly turned and presented its side to them.

"They're looking for us," said Marcus.

The darkness had come down, and he headed straight for the east.

There was no question that the destroyer was on an errand of discovery. A white beam of light shot out from her decks and began to feel along the sea. And then, when they thought it had missed them, it dropped on the boat and held. A second later it missed them



and began a search. Presently it lit the little boat, and it did something more—it revealed a thickening of the atmosphere. They were running into a sea fog, one of those thin, white fogs that come down in the Mediterranean on windless days. The blinding glare of the searchlight blurred.

*Bang!*

"That's the gun to signal us to stop," said Marcus between his teeth.

He turned the nose of the boat southward, a hazardous proceeding, for he ran into clear water and had only just got back into the shelter of the providential fog bank when the white beam came stealthily along the edge of the mist. Presently it died out, and they saw it no more.

"They're looking for us," said Marcus again.

"You said that before," said the girl calmly.

"They've probably warned them at Tangier. We dare not take the boat into the bay," said Stepney, whose nerves were now on edge.

He turned again westward, edging toward the rocky coast of northern Africa. They saw little clusters of lights on the shore, and he tried to remember what towns they were.

"I think that big one is Cutra, the Spanish convict station," he said.

He slowed down the boat, and they felt their way gingerly along the coast line until the flick and flash of a lighthouse gave them an idea of their position.

"Cape Spartel," he identified the light. "We can land very soon. I was in Morocco for three months, and if I remember rightly the beach is good walking as far as Tangier."

She went into the cabin and changed, and as the nose of the *Jungle Queen* slid gently up the sandy beach she was ready.

He carried her ashore and set her down; then he pushed off the nose of

the boat and maneuvered it so that the stern was against the beach, resting in three feet of water. He jumped on board, lashed the helm, and started the engines going; then wading back to the shore he stood staring into the gloom as the little *Jungle Queen* put out to sea.

"That's that," he said grimly. "Now, my dear, we've got a ten-mile walk before us."

But he had made a slight miscalculation. The distance between himself and Tangier was twenty-five miles, and involved several detours inland into country which was wholly uninhabited, save at that moment it held the camp of Muley Hafiz, who was engaged in negotiation with the Spanish government for one of those "permanent peaces" which frequently last for years.

Muley Hafiz sat drinking his coffee at midnight, listening to the strains of an ornate gramophone which stood in a corner of his square tent.

A voice outside the silken fold of his tent greeted him, and he stopped the machine.

"What is it?" he asked.

"We have captured a man and a woman walking along by the sea."

"They are Riffi people. Let them go," said Muley in Arabic. "We are making peace, my man, not war."

"These are infidels; I think they are English."

Muley Hafiz twiddled his trim little beard.

"Bring them," he said.

So they were brought to his presence, a disheveled man and a girl, at the sight of whose face he gasped.

"My little friend of the Riviera," he said wonderingly, and the smile she gave him was like a ray of sunshine to his heart.

He stood up, a magnificent figure of a man and she eyed him admiringly.

"I am sorry if my men have fright-



ened you," he said. "You have nothing to fear, madame. I will send my soldiers to escort you to Tangier."

And then he frowned.

"Where did you come from?"

She could not lie under the steady glance of those liquid eyes.

"We landed on the shore from a boat. We lost our way," she said.

He nodded.

"You must be she they are seeking," he said. "One of my spies came to me from Tangier to-night and told me that the Spanish and the French police were waiting to arrest a lady who had committed some crime in France. I cannot believe it is you—or if it is, then I should say the crime was pardonable."

He glanced at Marcus.

"Or perhaps," he said slowly, "it is your companion they desire."

Jean shook her head.

"No, they do not want him," she said. "It is I they want."

He pointed to a cushion.

"Sit down," he said and followed her example.

Marcus alone remained standing, wondering how this strange situation would develop.

"What will you do? If you go into Tangier I fear I could not protect you, but there is a city in the hills"—he waved his hand—"many miles from here, a city where the hills are green, mademoiselle, and where beautiful springs gush out of the ground. There I am supreme master."

She drew a long breath.

"I will go to the city of the hills," she said softly, "and this man"—she shrugged her shoulders—"I do not care what happens to him." She said this with a smile of amusement for the pallid Marcus.

"Then he shall go to Tangier alone."

But Marcus Stepney did not go alone. For the last two miles of the journey he had carried a bag containing the greater part of five million francs that the girl had brought from the boat. Jean did not remember this until she was on her way to the city of the hills, and by that time not even money interested her.

THE END.



## BANDITS HOLD UP DOCTOR

A SHORT time ago Doctor Ely Morgan, of Hartford, Connecticut, found two men in his waiting room about eight o'clock at night. No other patients were present at the time, and the doctor, wishing to answer their request for medicine, left his office to get some supplies at a near-by drug store. On his return he found his office door closed. When he opened it he was pounced upon by the intruders, who pinned him to the floor and searched his pockets for the large sum of money he was carrying. During his absence the robbers had gone through his desk and taken securities worth seventy-five thousand dollars. The cash on the doctor's person had amounted to more than two thousand dollars.

As the bandits darted through the door to the street they struck the physician, who is a man seventy-two years old, over the head and dazed him. The two robbers, neither of whom was over thirty, were seen to escape in a big limousine carrying a Massachusetts license. Three men were in the car beside the actual holdup men. A general alarm was sent throughout the State by the police, together with a description of the men.



# Great Escapes

WHEN TWENTY-SEVEN MEN  
ESCAPED FROM LEAVENWORTH

*by Edgeworth Downer*

Author of "New Tricks in Bank Robbery," etc.

**B**ETWEEN four and five o'clock on the afternoon of November 7th, 1901, twenty-seven men escaped from the United States penitentiary, then in course of building, just northwest of the somnolent little city of Leavenworth, in Kansas. Why the number of fleeing convicts was not five hundred instead of a score and seven must remain a mystery, for the stockade of the prison was breached and the way lay open for a wholesale delivery. But numbers cut no great figure in this affair. The successful mutiny at Leavenworth on that hazy afternoon of Indian summer remains the most interesting American example of what is sometimes termed a "crush-out." Nothing quite like it has happened before or since, and in addition it was circumstanced with strange elements and romantic incidents such as place it quite apart.

The men who made this spectacular escape had been building their own prison about them, and it was their structure that they broke and penetrated. But this is only one of a set of conditions which must be made clear before the drama of that memorable day can be understood.

Before the beginning of this century men convicted in the Federal courts of crimes against the United States were sentenced to various State's prisons, for the reason that there were then no Federal civil prisons. There was a military

prison at McNeill's Island on the Pacific coast and another at Fort Leavenworth, but these had been reserved for offenders against the military law.

In 1900, however, after legislation had been put through Congress, work was begun on a Federal prison at Leavenworth. A high plot of ground was selected, lying northwest of the city and southwest of Fort Leavenworth, and here several hundred convicts, brought from the old military prison at Fort Leavenworth, two and one half miles away, began to excavate and to erect. High and heavy walls were thrown up, surrounding a plot of about twenty acres on the north, west, and east sides. The south side of this big enclosure was not to be walled, but was to be faced with the administration buildings of the prison and two jutting wings of the cell houses. Consequently this face of the enclosure was closed during the construction with a high stockade of heavy planks, topped with thick strands of barbed wire and surmounted at intervals with towers, or guard platforms, where keepers armed with rifles stood on duty all day while the convicts toiled inside at the construction of their new house of confinement.

The natives of this region soon began to see the strange sight of a long, quadruple file of prisoners in blue-gray prison suits filing out of the great gates of the old military prison in the early hours of every weekday morning, and



being marched two and one half miles, through the fort, across the pleasant, rolling countryside, through woods and copses, across a little stream, and to the gates of the prison under construction, where they went in through gates in the stockade and took up their tools. At the head and foot of this unlovely procession, and at positions along its length, walked the keepers with their rifles slung in their arms—about thirty of them to four or five hundred convicts. Late in every afternoon this parade went back to the old prison in the fort, where the prisoners were fed and locked into cells for the night.

These convicts quarried the stone for their new prison from the limestone ledges of near-by hills. They burned their own prison brick from clays taken out of the river bluffs, and they cut their own timber from the woods on the government land. Altogether it was an interesting experiment. So the huge new prison went up. In the fall of 1901 the three walls were complete, and work was far advanced on some of the cell blocks; but the high-boarded stockade with its guard towers was still in place on the south front.

Naturally all the work done by these convicts had to be carefully watched and constantly inspected. For this reason most of the guards employed at the new prison site were really mechanics, competent to direct and judge the work of the penal men. These guards carried revolvers and rifles while they marched with their men from the old prison to the new, but when they arrived at the stockade they gave their arms into the keeping of the sentinels in the towers, going among the working convicts unarmed save for clubs or canes. This was a precaution taken to prevent convicts from overpowering some keeper and procuring firearms.

During all the months and years that this building had been going on, there was a subtle feeling among guards and

prisoners and even among the residents of the near-by city that sooner or later there would be some sort of mutiny and wholesale escape. Perhaps it was the novelty of the proceeding that suggested this idea; possibly it was those strange marches back and forth from one prison to the other, or the paucity of guards; but it is certain that the fear of such an outbreak pervaded the thinking of many. The prison officials felt for a time that an attack on the procession might be attempted by confederates of some of the imprisoned men. This seemed the most likely point for such an attempt. Consequently the guards were doubly well armed as they marched out and in, and all letters sent or received by the convicts were most carefully examined by the prison censor, to be sure that no plots were being hatched through the mails.

Yet it was in just this manner that the plan was formed and put into execution, and here is the first focal point in this very remarkable history.

The men in the old prison at Fort Leavenworth at the time were of two sorts, military convicts from the army, and civil prisoners from Oklahoma and Indian Territory, which had not yet been admitted to the Union. These were mostly rough frontier fellows who had broken the law in many degrees, from running whisky to the Indians to committing banditry and murder. There was among them a liberal sprinkling of genuine desperadoes, and the prison warden knew this only too well.

Military prisoners could not be used in the building of the new prison for some technical, legal reason; so it was these men from the wild territories who were marched out every day to erect this great, walled house to contain them and their successors for many years to come. Such men would hardly be experts in cipher or concealed writing. There were few technically trained prisoners among them, and the propor-



tion of forgers and similar kinds of criminals who might be expected to know some of the tricks of writing, was low.

Nevertheless Warden R. W. McClaughry and his assistants were constantly on the lookout for some type of secret letter, and they occasionally intercepted unimportant missives of this sort. Most readers of this magazine

be familiar with letters and telegrams written in criminal jargon, such as, "Please tell John Gatts to stir himself for me," meaning "Please try to get guns—gatts—into this prison—stir—for me." Such crude things were readily detected and turned back.

It will be apparent that the opportunities of a prisoner to use any complicated piece of secret writing are most limited. There are chemicals with which one may write invisibly. The recipient needs merely to expose the sheet to the fire, as in Poe's tale, "The Gold Bug," or to treat it with certain other chemicals which immediately make the hidden words visible. But such substances are rarely to be found inside great prisons, and the chance of a convict's coming into possession of them is most remote. Yet the prisoners who erected the Leavenworth prison managed to write a long invisible message, or several of them, to confederates on the outside. How they did it is the point.

After the crushout of November 7th, and after some of the fleeing men had been recaptured, the officers of the prison began to piece out the details of the plot and its method of execution. They found that the whole thing had been the work of no one man but of several prisoners. The recognized leaders were Gus Parker, Gilbert Mullins, Bob Clark, Turner Barnes, and Arthur Hewitt, all white men, and Frank Thompson, a giant negro, whose part seems to have been mainly physical. Hewitt is given credit for formulating the plan of action, and he prob-

ably wrote the invisible message that made the escape possible.

On their marches to and from work the convicts were allowed to talk and jest as they liked. Marching along in their file of fours, the father of the plot first whispered to his neighbor a hint of his plan. The second man listened and suggested. They deliberated about taking other men into their confidence, and decided to talk it over at work inside the stockade.

That day at lunch time, when the men were sitting about in groups bolting the sandwiches and coffee provided for them, the schemers began elaborating the plan. They discussed the advisability of taking this or that man into the plot. They calculated the chances of one method and the other. The next day they invited a third man to sit into their conference, and so further advice and suggestions were obtained. The problem of first importance was the procuring of outside aid and support. Which of the prisoners had connections that could be relied upon to carry out instructions promptly and precisely? Who could get money that was needed for the flight after the break had been made?

All these things and others had to be worked out furtively and extremely slowly. Before another man could be taken into the plot he had to be sounded carefully and with the utmost deliberation. It took weeks to determine the worth of this man or that. Conversations had to be carried on in snatches and whispers, a word or a phrase here and there when the keeper's back was turned and other prisoners were out of the way.

But after at least eight months of this careful preparation, the plotters considered themselves ready for an essay. On the following Sunday, when the prisoners were permitted to write letters to the world outside, Arthur Hewitt took a sheet of hard, linen paper



and a clean pen point. He dipped it into the ink and wrote carefully, in widely spaced lines, an ordinary letter of greeting and news. It probably read something like this:

DEAR JIM: It has been a long time since I've had a chance to write you, but you know what the regulations are. There's not much news to tell you from a place like this, except that I'm as well as can be expected under the circumstances. I'm working with the gang that's putting up the new prison, and that takes me out in the air a lot, which is better than sitting inside the walls. If you can send it to me I'd like a little pipe tobacco. The stuff we get in prison is too strong. If you want to send me a few dollars, that would be welcome, too, so I can get little things for myself. I'll pay you some time, but not soon, as I still have seven years to go. Sincerely, et cetèra.

A harmless letter of this sort, almost a standard form in prisons, would go by without great scrutiny.

But the plotting convict was not done with his note. He now cleaned and wiped his pen point carefully, so that no trace of ink remained on it. Next he wet the pen point with saliva and wrote a message in spittle in the wide intervals between the inked lines of his letter. What he wrote must have been something like this:

Ready first week November. Dig under stockade, third post from southwest corner, and leave guns and bullets, so we can scratch them out. Work at night. No guards on stockade then.

It must be remembered that this note was never recovered, and that these are merely theoretical reconstructions of it, based on deductions from the circumstances and the later confessions of some of the recaptured men.

The confederates on the outside came at night, when the site of the new prison was all but deserted, dug a hole at the third stockade post, counting from the southwest corner of the enclosure, cut their way under the palings, and there secreted three heavy revolvers with some extra ammunition. They filled in the

hole, covered their digging with sod and leaves, and went away.

But how did they read this strange note? The reader is asked to make the experiment for himself. If he will take any hard-finished sheet of what is called linen paper and a clean pen, and will then write a few words distinctly in saliva, he will see that the writing is entirely invisible once it has dried. Let him then take a small sponge and saturate the same in ink, rubbing it rapidly over the surface of the paper. The whole sheet will, of course, be inked, but his saliva writing will show up distinctly blacker than the rest and clearly legible. This happens because the surface of the paper has been broken and softened wherever the saliva-soaked pen point passed.

In this manner the mutinous prisoners at Leavenworth forwarded their instructions to their pals without the walls, and in this way the dramatic crush-out was managed.

On the afternoon of November 7th there were between four hundred and fifty and five hundred convicts in the stockade, and work was going ahead in the usual routine way. Here men were digging and leveling; there they were piling up bricks, hauling stone, making mortar, and erecting steel. Nothing about the scene suggested the approaching events.

A guard remembered afterward that shortly before four o'clock Gus Parker had excused himself and gone off toward the corner of the stockade, carrying his shovel on his shoulder. He had returned in a few minutes and gone on with his work. The guard saw nothing to be suspected in the man's actions.

Four o'clock passed. The guard on the main western tower took out his watch and breathed with relief to find that the day of vigil was nearly over. At four-thirty the whistle would blow, and the convicts would be herded into the steel counting cage just under his



tower, to be tallied off before the march home was begun. By half past five the whole crew would be back in the fort prison, and it would be called another day.

At ten minutes after four o'clock Frank E. Hines, the superintendent of construction, W. F. Carroll, a masonry foreman, Harmon Bono, the brick foreman, and Arthur Trelford, captain of the guards, were lounging in the little frame office of the superintendent. A convict opened the door and stepped in. No one paid much attention, for the prisoners often came there to speak with the officers. Another convict followed, and then a third. Suddenly the officers looked up in response to a curt command, and stared into the muzzles of three revolvers. Gus Parker, Frank Thompson, the huge negro, and one other convict who has not been identified, had the weapons.

"Well, boys, we want you," said Parker, menacing Hines, the chief officer present. "Just step outside here, and don't make any fuss."

The officers complied with little delay.

"Now you boys just line up there in front of us, and do as we tell you, or you'll get hurt," said Parker again.

With the four officers before them as a screen, the armed convicts marched toward the west gate and the counting cage, hiding their weapons in their shirts as they went. The guard in the tower, watching the officers approaching in a leisurely way with three prisoners, saw nothing to be alarmed about, and smoked indolently. The officers were taken inside the counting pen and held there while two of the armed prisoners scaled into the tower. There the somnolent guard was covered and disarmed before he had a chance to resist. His rifle and the revolvers of four or five other guards, which were left in his charge during the day, were captured. These were quickly dealt out to others of the

conspirators, who now rushed to join their fellows. The guard from the tower was made to join the captives and act as part of the human screen behind which the convicts now advanced on the second guard tower, on the southwest corner of the enclosure. The guard on the distant northwest corner perceived that something was wrong, and began to fire at the crowd of five officers and about thirty convicts, but he soon saw that he was more likely to hit officers than rioters, and ceased firing.

Guard C. E. Burroughs, in the southwest tower, saw the storm approaching and opened fire also, but he was shooting directly at the officers screening the advancing convicts, and could do nothing. The prisoners, on the other hand, returned a heavy fire and brought this brave officer down with a shot through the neck. Instantly they scaled his tower and seized arms for four or five more men.

Delaying not a moment, the prisoners advanced on the south tower, in the center of the stockade, where Guard Joseph B. Waldrup was stationed. This man was a good marksman and a determined officer. He began firing as soon as he saw the convicts coming, and dropped one of their number dead in his tracks; but the next moment he received a revolver ball in the hip and a few seconds later, as he raised himself to fire again, he was shot through the forehead and fell mortally wounded. The arms in his tower were also seized, so that there were now weapons for eighteen or twenty men in the hands of the prisoners.

The convicts, again victorious, began to advance on the southeast tower, subjected to a long-range fire from the guards in the east, northeast, north, and northwest towers. Bullets were falling among them, and Engineer Hines saw that a desperate fight would follow, in which all the officers were likely to be



killed. He called on the convicts to make a break while there was a chance, and pointed out to them an old entrance in the stockade. The leaders of the men saw his point, procured timbers, and quickly battered down this old gate. The prisoners were free of their own prison.

A shout went up from the four-hundred-odd other men who had watched the triumph of their comrades without offering to join in the fight.

"Come along. We're free!" the mutinous crew shouted, but the great mass of the prisoners did not heed. Twenty-seven men poured through the hole in the stockade, and retreated westward along the highway leading to the open country. They still kept four of the officers prisoners, and used them as a shield in this final retreat. Captain Trelford, knowing that he would certainly be shot to death by the convicts in revenge for discipline he had used, made a dash for freedom at the last moment and managed to get away under a heavy fire. He was wounded in the leg, but he saved his life.

Not far from the prison was a spot where farmers, driving into Leavenworth from the adjacent rural districts, left their teams tied during the day. These the convicts seized at once and drove out of the town and away into the gathering dusk. The leaders had carefully waited until the last moment so that night should fall upon them as soon as possible after the escape. This forethought stood them in good stead now, for they were not long out of prison before the deep autumnal twilight closed upon them and blotted them out.

In the prison the danger of a wholesale flight was not yet past. The four hundred and more convicts were milling and cheering. They might attempt to leave en masse at any moment. The wounded guard captain called all his remaining men together, distributed what

weapons were left, and posted them at the hole in the stockade, meanwhile telephoning to the main prison for reinforcement.

The wife of a prison guard, living half a square from the front entrance to the new penitentiary, heard the firing and saw the excitement. She telephoned to the commandant at Fort Leavenworth at once, and that ready officer immediately threw a troop of the Third Cavalry into the saddle and sent his hundred horsemen galloping for the penitentiary. The military arrived at half past five and took possession, and with their coming the danger passed.

One convict and one guard were dead, four guards were wounded, and twenty-seven prisoners had flown.

In the gathering night the pursuit began. The cavalry, soon relieved of its vigil at the prison by the arrival of other keepers, steamed out across the country westward in small detachments, scouting through the measureless darkness of a moonless autumn night among the hills and woods of eastern Kansas. Posses of citizens, groups of police officers from Leavenworth and smaller neighborhood towns, little bunches of farmers, and even be vies of schoolboys armed with target rifles joined in the man hunt. The blackness was punctuated with cries and shots and the jabbing notes of the cavalry trumpet.

At headquarters in the fort, at the prison, at various police stations, the telephones rang intermittently through the night, reporting that convicts had held up a farm house here or there and forced the farmer to give up clothing and food and arms. Here a clothing store in a sleeping village was burglarized, and there a restaurant was held up by the hungry fugitives. Every new report sent out another group of posses to go skirmishing idly and timidly through that endless, black void in search of desperate, armed men. Such was the chase of the twenty-seven.



It was apparent to experienced officers what the plan of the convict leaders must be. They were all men from the wild Indian Territory. It was there they had friends, and it was there, in the tangles of the Osage Hills, that they might find sure retreat. But these lay two hundred miles from Leavenworth by a direct aerial route.

The easy stretches of eastern Kansas lay in between, with two important rivers to cross, dotted with cities and towns and villages, and mapped complete with prosperous farms, mostly connected by telephone with settled places in every direction. The hopelessness of such a retreat must strike every one, and it certainly bore in upon the fugitives before they had gone many miles. Their only hope lay in scattering, lying concealed as best they could for some days, and then attempting to get off into various directions singly or in pairs. The questions of food, clothing, and money had to be solved. How to do this with every policeman on the lookout for hundreds of miles around, with every farmer armed and ready, with every citizen watchful, was a problem too great to solve. Once more it was not so hard to get outside the walls as to get past the barrier of civilization. It is impossible to go into the details of this great pursuit. Only striking details of it can be picked out here and there to show what it was like.

The morning after the escape a posse at a little town called Nortonville, thirty miles from Leavenworth, surrounded a band of five convicts—four white men and a negro boy of sixteen—in a barn, and opened fire on the fugitives. The convicts, only two of whom were armed, fired a few shots and then ran out of ammunition. The posse closed in and began to pour a heavy rifle fire into the barn, in spite of signals of surrender from the prisoners. Seized by something between rage and panic, the posse continued to shoot into the barn for

something like half an hour, until it was felt that all the prisoners must be past mischief. When the leaders of the mob at length entered the barn they found two men dead, two wounded, and only the negro boy unharmed. He had clung to a rafter in the top of the barn while the men on the ground were shot down.

At the end of the first full day of pursuit twelve of the twenty-seven had been taken dead or alive. The next day the huge negro, Frank Thompson, was likewise surrounded by a posse. He had left the rest of the convicts, and was making a lone try for liberty. By some tremendous exertion he had covered more than a hundred miles in forty-eight hours, going much of the distance afoot after a stolen horse caved in under him. He put up a bitter fight and was not captured until a superficial bullet wound in the head had lain him out.

In the neighborhood of Topeka came perhaps the most thrilling and surely the most ludicrous incident of the pursuit. Here the sheriff of the county and a deputy stumbled upon Gilbert Mullins and Lot Southerland, the former one of the leaders of the conspiracy, and apparently a fellow of resource. Southerland was unarmed and Mullins' revolver was empty, so that the convicts tried to run for it when the sheriff and his deputy surprised them. They rushed for a farm house under fire from the officers, and sprang into the kitchen before the officers were near enough to see where their prey had gone. Mullins hid behind the door with his empty pistol and resolved upon a bold stroke.

The sheriffs, approaching cautiously, took it for granted that the convicts had fled around the house and might use it for a cover from which to fire. Accordingly the two officers walked into the kitchen door, intending to come out by the front entrance and take the convicts from behind. But they were barely inside the kitchen before they found themselves looking into Mullins' empty



but impressive revolver. They put up their hands and were quickly disarmed by Southerland, who gave one of their loaded pistols to Mullins. The farmer, attracted by the commotion, came down the stairs of his home with a shotgun, but he, too, looked into leveled revolvers, and the sheriff, frightened almost out of his wits, begged him not to shoot and endanger lives. So the farmer yielded up his gun and all the ammunition in the house.

At this critical juncture a squad of eight uniformed policemen arrived from Topeka and took up positions outside the house, where the convicts, the sheriffs, and the farmer still were. Mullins immediately informed the sheriff that if the police attacked or opened fire he—the sheriff—would be shot to death. Mullins then forced the frightened sheriff to confer with the police and get them to promise safe passage to his captors. He had promised Mullins and Southerland their lives, he said, and his word must be kept. The police agreed.

The next moment Mullins and Southerland emerged from the house with the sheriff before them and the deputy sheriff and the farmer behind them as a screen. In this fashion they passed between the rows of policemen, so close, as one of them said afterward, "that I could have grabbed Mullins' arm." Once past the policemen, the convicts forced their captives to run, and in this fashion they put half a mile between themselves and the police. Here they came upon a farm wagon and a team of horses. They swiftly requisitioned this and drove off in a lather, waving a disdainful hand at the frightened sheriff.

But the pursuit was now too close upon them, and all Mullins' courage and artfulness was vain. Two days later he and Southerland and another prisoner, who had meantime joined them, were surrounded in a copse, where they were trying to cook a stolen chicken. They fired a few shots in an attempt to in-

timidate the oncoming officers and farmers. Then they used discretion and hoisted the white flag. They were taken unwounded, for this posse was in command of an experienced officer, and was not allowed to do indiscriminate killing.

So, one and two and three at a time, all but five of the fugitives were caught within a week or ten days of the flight. They were locked back into the old military prison with ball and chain at their ankles and bitter bread to eat. After a time they were taken into the Federal court to answer a charge of murder for the killing of Guard Waldrup. It was at first supposed that there would be a wholesale hanging of these guilty convicts, but the jury found that it was not possible to determine which of them had formed the plot, who had fired the fatal shot, or even who had been armed or unarmed. By way of compromise all of the leaders were sentenced to serve life terms in prison, and some of them are still there, paying for that wild and memorable afternoon.

But the fever of escaping had not burned out in them. Once while they were waiting trial it was found that Mullins and Thompson and others had managed to file the hand-cuffs with which they were secured while being taken to and from court. The discovery came not a moment too soon, for the men were already outside the prison in the van used to take them to court.

On another occasion a few days later the watchful officers found that armed confederates of four of the chief prisoners were lounging about Leavenworth, where they planned to shoot down the guard and liberate the convicts as they were going into the courthouse. A strong guard of police prevented the execution of this plan, but it was necessary to keep up this extreme watchfulness throughout the trial, and there was no peace till the sentence had been passed and the conspirators locked back into the prison for life.



# Headquarters Chat

**T**URNING backward to a couple of recent issues in which the subject of spiritualism came up, we take pleasure in printing the following letters apropos of that discussion:

"DEAR EDITOR: May I butt in on your talk about spiritualism? Let me say, in the first place, were you to ask me whether I believe in spiritualism, my answer would be 'no,' or at least to the effect that I know nothing much about it.

"Nevertheless, I think you are taking a rather narrow view of the subject, and Doctor Poate has, for a medical man, been rather strong in his assertions in premises he knows not of. That there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in the philosophy of most of us is only too true. Doctor Poate, as a physician, must know that this is true, that a great deal is beyond explanation. May I give you the facts in an actual occurrence?

"My mother was a great believer in what she called fortune tellers. My father was often amused at her faith in them, and considered the few dollars she spent that way as innocent amusement. Not satisfied with that, however, she insisted on my father going with her several times. They relate one tale of the woman refusing to talk to my father, telling him he had no faith in her science; and, while she was trying to get his name, asked him to leave. He laughingly explains it by saying that he was saying over and over again in his mind, as she was trying to read it, the name of 'Patrick McLaughlin,' when a glance at his face told her that his name could not be anything like this.

"My daddy tells another story, however, on himself. Absolutely without faith in spiritualism, he relates the following: 'I went with your mother to one of these crazy fortune tellers. At the time your Aunt Becky was not feeling well, and had taken a little vacation from her work. Mother had her fortune told, and then she insisted I had to talk to the woman. Looking at me for a moment, she smiled and told me that I did not believe in it, but that some day I would. "Your name is Max?" she asked. "Yes," was the answer. "Who is Becky?" "My wife's sister," I replied. "I can see her now," the woman went on; "she is not well. She is going to get worse. I can see you, Max, at her home. An old lady talks to you as you enter the house for a casual visit. Becky is sick, the doctor has been sent for. She asks you to stay. The doctor comes; he asks you to come up to the room where Becky is. He sends for a nurse, but asks you to stay with him. At length he tells you he cannot wait for the nurse, and asks you to help him. An operation is necessary immediately. You stay; you help him sterilize his instruments as he directs you. It is all right; she will recover. She will die, however, within a few years, but from an entirely different sort of disease."

"I laughed at it, as I heard through my grandmother that Becky was getting better and coming home shortly. She did, and we thought nothing more about it. Some months later, however, I called at my grandmother's and incident for incident, just as described then, all that she foretold took place—not some of them, but every one. My wife's sister did recover, but she died, as foretold, of tuberculosis a few years afterward."

"I acknowledge I do not believe in spiritualism; but I say to others who feel as I do, we should be fair and say we do not know. Psychoanalysis and many other things were laughed at for years, and still are; but they are used



daily in one form or another, and successfully. Who knows what presentiments are? Who knows but that there are many things undreamed of by us, all around us? Even animals use senses we cannot use successfully. How, therefore, can we be so positive that all are 'cracked' who seem to believe things occur that we cannot see? If we disagree with spiritualists, that is our right; but to attempt to write up their affairs with lack of knowledge, in a spirit of mockery or contempt, is unfair.

"I can only say I do not know, I am not convinced. I refuse to say, however, that because I know that many are fakes, all are fakes, or even most of them. In the ranks of all new things, fakers flock. Let us not condemn without scientific examination of the case; and in this case there is much expert, scientific evidence on both sides, too deep for me to understand—and for most of us.

(Doctor) J. MARCUS POLAK.

"Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."

"DEAR EDITOR: If I had the honor of knowing Doctor Ernest M. Poate personally, I should ask him for a diagnosis of the kink in the minds of certain persons who, having read and enjoyed his wonderful stories, fly into a rage and fly at his head, so to speak, the moment he writes in his own way concerning their particular hobby. I have never known Doctor Poate to 'knock' any religion.

"As for spiritualism, I have never given that matter serious thought. It is unthinkable that my mother, a woman of sound judgment who filled a large place in my life, would, if she could speak to me now, choose to come to me through the presence of a paid medium.

"And these highly intelligent men who are held up to us as authorities on the subject are all well paid for their books and lectures, are they not? Doubtless some believe part of what they write, but I would rather think that it is merely a business proposition with them. If there were not so much fame and money connected with the subject, the whole thing would seem more real to me.

"I know a wealthy, educated man whose only child was taken by death some four years ago. After grieving for a year he thought of consulting a medium, and the result is that now he and his wife are untiringly searching out every medium of note from Quebec to San Francisco. And the souvenirs these two poor souls pay those people for are heartbreaking to behold. I have seen heaps of them, such as slates written upon by a girlish hand which they firmly believe to be that of their daughter. They have paid some twenty thousand dollars for a summer home in a colony of spiritualistic mediums. Their daughter's spirit is so far removed from them that it cannot even protect its loved ones from such persons.

"The authors who write for your magazine are all good, and no doubt each has many admirers; but Ernest M. Poate suits my individual taste in fiction, and I call him splendid. The only criticism I have to offer is that his stories are much too few and far between.

(Mrs.) E. G. H.

"St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada."

"DEAR EDITOR: In your last Headquarters Chat we find what Mrs. Grace Thompson, of Detroit, has to say about spiritualism. Now I am not famous, and haven't the name of Sir Oliver Lodge or others mentioned, but fifteen years of experience on spiritualism in practical form have finally brought me to a decision on the subject.

"Here is what I have to say. The evidence in many cases is faked; no doubt about that. The evidence brought by the rest does not come from the spirits of the dead. The spirit or astral body which appears or is supposed to appear consists of—as acknowledged—vibrations. Some compare it to the smoke of the life fluid of the human body. While a person is alive, this astral body



exists; that is an established fact. When a body dies, however, the life fluid coagulates and decomposes, as does the rest of the body. That process takes away the very basis of the astral body which disappears as smoke does after one pours water on a fire. There cannot be an astral body of a dead person. Such reasoning is not sound.

"On the other hand, some of the phenomena of spiritualism are absolutely true. Try magnetized water. I am sure you will get quite a surprise. And do not forget that human magnetism will tip the scales at more than a thousand pounds. Another fact: Place a human being behind a double wall of glass, the space between being filled with water or a saline solution. The astral body will be seen surrounding the physical body. If you put the person beyond the double wall in a trance the astral body will disappear at the time the spirit becomes visible. What about that?"

A. C. BESSER.

"Minneapolis, Minnesota."

Always remember that the Headquarters Chat is a meeting place for the readers, where they are free to express their views on any subject which seems of common interest to a majority. Therefore, we welcome opinions on this subject, as on any other.



## A LONDON CRIME MYSTERY EXPERT

THAT science to-day plays a large part in the investigation of crime no one conversant with modern crime methods will deny. No matter what the nature of the crime, great experts are always available to assist in its elucidation. In a case of murder or suspected murder there are three London experts who are usually called in to help in the solution of crimes that take place in the British capital. These men are: Doctor Spilsbury, the pathologist, Sir William H. Willcox, the poison expert, and Mr. Webster, the analyst. At exhumations Doctor Spilsbury is invariably present. He holds the post-mortem examinations and describes the conditions of the organs. If the presence of poison has been traced either by Sir William Willcox or Mr. Webster, Sir William is usually called upon to detail the effects of the poison found. The home office appoints these three experts, and their services are at the disposal of the police wherever they may be required.

Doctor Spilsbury is credited with a real genius for reconstructing a murder, and he is much interested in the investigation of crime. In London he is said to have solved more mysteries than any other man.

The case of George Smith, the man who murdered three of his wives by drowning them in a bathtub, puzzled him very much. In each instance the murderer had declared that his wife had fainted in the tub, and was drowned in her unconscious state. In support of his statement no marks were ever found on the dead women, there were no signs of a struggle, no one in the house heard cries, and there were no splashes of water on the floor.

The home office had requested Doctor Spilsbury to conduct the exhumation of the bodies. The doctor was much puzzled to know how Smith could drown three women without leaving any trace of a struggle. Accordingly he decided to find out. Then he requested two nurses to put on their bathing suits and to meet him in the bathroom. There he conducted a series of experiments which soon convinced him how easy had been the murderer's task.



# What Handwriting Reveals



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.

RAY E. TOWER.—You may be a good mining man, for you have some of the ardor and caution required by such work; but your real talent is for the writing of essays and articles. By instinct you are a student, with an analytical and accurate mind, and it is only when so exercising that mind that you are really happy.

Dear Madam:

I have  
interested in you de  
some time, and see  
just what my hand  
reveal has prompted  
you to analyze it

I would estimate your personality as having the kind of charm that would be felt only after some progress in friendship had been made.

MEDICO.—Yes, "pathological conditions" do show in the handwriting. This person is influenced by long-continued depression. I don't care how happy the life has seemed to be; there is secret cause for sorrow. If I were you, I would try a change of scene. Send the patient to some other household, but not to a sanitarium. This writer is not at all insane, and I would believe that treatment on that basis was a mistake. The physical condition is not bad; it is all a matter of the mind. If it were possible for you to get into the real confidence of your patient, you could elicit a confession, I think. And I am sure that this



would help. What she needs is to get that burden off of her mind that she has carried by herself for so long. Sorry that you would not send me your name and address. I assure you that I have many a serious family secret in my files, and that no one sees them but myself.

SANDY.—I agree that the writing of poetry is not always a sign of literary ability. It is oftener the sign of musical feeling. Mark you, not of talent; not necessarily. Your handwriting shows, however, something of the peculiar "swing" of those who are endowed with musical talent, and from the formation of your capitals I would think that you had persistence and ambition enough to develop what you have.

*I am not staying  
at my present  
dress, I am asking  
to put this in  
department.  
Sincerely,  
"Sandy."*

Your nature is a very ardent one.

G. H. S.—This is not "the next issue," is it? Can't help it—the editor absolutely refuses to give me all of the magazine! Well, about your writing, now: you are very stubborn, and yet you have a weak will. That's a bad combination—apt to get you into scrapes and leave you there, since you lack the driving power that you ought to have. You are affectionate, but selfish, in which you are like most of us, and you have a personality which is not under your own control. Generally speaking, I should say that you had good impulses, but that you were more inclined to follow the bad ones. You have courage and more than the usual pride.

DOROTHY T.—Why, you'd make a pretty good wife, Dorothy; in fact, most girls make good wives for some man. There's the whole thing, so far as you and the majority of women are concerned. They are wonderful wives when they marry the right man, and poor or only so-so with any one not the right man. So far women have married so much for other reasons than love that there is a great deal of justice in the wail that many men put up as to wifehood. We hope, don't we, that when the pressure of economic conditions, and of a silly idea that a woman has no right to exist unless married, have worn off, we shall have women marrying for love only? Well, you, with your extreme sensitiveness and your latent independence and your dislike for too close contact with humans, are one of the women who positively cannot afford to marry any but the man with whom you are really in love. That being the case, you had better get to work, for the right man may not show up in this incarnation! Get



into library work. You will love it. The specimen which you inclose shows that the writer is a person of good taste, mildness of disposition, and almost total lack of ardor; a friend, perhaps, but a great disappointment as a suitor to a person of your temperament.

H. J. O.—Seventeen is rather early for real literary talent to make its appearance, but it can be said that, as a general thing, when the desire shows itself so early, there is a real predisposition to the accomplishing of it later in life. Anyway, you are on the right track in beginning with journalism. A word here. Don't bother with being taught that—you just go and get a job as a cub reporter or as an office boy on the paper. Your handwriting shows that yours is a character in which reflectiveness is strong, and that your mind is poised and balanced, though as yet immature—another reason for thinking that you may be successful, as that is quite characteristic of the youth of many authors.

LOUISE BAILEY.—That degree of concentrativeness which is innate with you is exceedingly valuable and rare. Most of us have to struggle to pin our whole attention to the thing in hand, but that is an instinct with you. You are reserved, cautious, and not demonstrative of your feelings.

*your very interesting  
in the Detective story  
re, and was very much  
d.*

*Sincerely yours  
Louise Bailey*

I should rate you as the ideal confidential secretary, and I hope that some one as hard worked as I am will be lucky enough to get you.

W. H. B., Toronto.—Lack of definiteness in your ambitions and a consequent lack of definiteness in your mental processes are the two weaknesses of your nature that you most need to remedy. I should say that your breezy and pleasant personality was one of your best assets, and that you had better look to that as the key to the line of work you should follow. You are affectionate enough, but I am sure that you have never known what it was to act unselfishly, even toward one whom you love; and until you have learned to do that, any character reader will regard you with sad disapproval.

*Louise Bailey*



# 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.

Owing to the great number of inquiries concerning the Workman's Compensation Act, this department for several weeks will consist of replies to those inquiries. Employees contemplating legal action and depending on this department for advice as to the same, should send in a stamped and self-addressed envelope with an explicit letter of instructions and information.

## The "Family Purpose" Doctrine

THE use of the automobile has become so universal that a whole body of laws has had to be incorporated in the code. It is well for citizens to know something of these, especially as to what is known as the "family purpose" doctrine, concerning the owner's liability for his car and those who drive it. Parents who have a young family should carefully estimate this liability before they buy a car.

Denuded of much of its legal phraseology, the family purpose doctrine charges the owner of an automobile, purchased and maintained for the pleasure of his or her family, with liability for injuries inflicted by the machine while members of the family were using it for their own pleasure. The doctrine rests on the theory that the car was being used for the purpose for which it was purchased and kept, and that the person operating it was acting as the owner's agent or servant in using it.

Illustrative of the position taken by some of the courts with regard to the doctrine, it has been stated that where a father provides an automobile for the use of his family, the use is within the scope of his business, analogously to the furnishing of food or clothing or ministering to their health. As recognized by some courts, the doctrine applies whether the member of the family was driving the car alone or was accompanied by other members of the family or by guests. Other courts have drawn a distinction between two lines of cases, recognizing and applying the doctrine where a car was kept for family purposes which, at the time that the injury occurred, was occupied by members of the owner's family who were being driven in his car by his child—but refusing to recognize or apply the doctrine where the owner's child alone was using the car for his or her own purposes when an injury was inflicted.

The Tennessee court, however, sustains the doctrine, and had some very pertinent remarks on the case of *King vs. Smythe*, tried there last year:

"It seems to us . . . that if a father purchases an automobile for the pleasure and entertainment of his family, and, as in this case, gives his adult son, who is a member of his family, permission to use it for pleasure except when needed by the father, it would seem perfectly clear that the son is in the furtherance of this purpose of the father while driving the car for his own pleasure. It is immaterial whether this purpose of the father be called his business or not. The law of agency is not confined to business transactions. It is true that an automobile is not a dangerous instrumentality so as to make the owner liable, as in the case of a wild animal loose on the streets; but, as a matter of practical justice to those who are injured, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that an automobile has excessive weight, that it is capable of running at a rapid rate of speed, and that, when so moving on the populous streets of a city, it is dangerous to life and limb, and must be operated with care. If an instrumentality of this kind is placed in the hands of his family by a father, for the family's pleasure, comfort, and entertainment, the dictates of natural justice should require that the owner be responsible for its negligent operation, because only by doing so as a general rule can substantial justice be obtained.

"A judgment against an infant son or daughter without support and with-



out property, who is living as a member of the family, would be an empty form. The father, as owner of the automobile and as head of the family, can prescribe the conditions upon which it may be run upon the roads and city streets, or he can forbid its use altogether. He must know the nature of the instrument and the probability that its negligent operation will cause injury and damage to others. We think that the practical administration of justice between the parties is more the duty of the court than the preservation of some esoteric theory concerning the law of principal and agent. If owners of automobiles were made to understand that they will be held liable for injury to person and property occasioned by their negligent operation by infants and others who are financially irresponsible, they will doubtless exercise a greater degree of care in selecting those who are permitted to go upon the public streets with such dangerous instrumentalities. An automobile cannot be compared to golf sticks and other small articles bought for the pleasure of the family. They are not used on public highways, and are not of the same nature as automobiles."

While this doctrine is still very new, it has already secured such a hold in modern law that those who are the owners of automobiles would do well to reckon with it. There are many practical considerations in favor of it, chief of which is the fact that it relieves the injured person from the difficult task of meeting the owner's claim that, upon the occasion in question, the car was not being used for his business or pleasure. It is also a safeguard for the public thoroughfares in its tendency to insist on responsibility being assumed.

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## AUTHOR OF POISON PEN LETTERS FOUND AFTER THREE YEARS

**I**T is thought that the person who for three years terrorized the residents of Tulle, in the Department of Correze, France, by writing "poison-pen" letters, has at last been found. She is Mademoiselle Laval, a sister of a captain of the gendarmerie. The letters were written during a period of three years, and were the direct cause of breaking up many happy homes and of bringing untold misery to countless others.

For the most part the letters dealt with the disclosure of "family secrets" which in some cases were not even known by the present generation of the family itself; other letters would be addressed to husbands, telling them of the adventures of their wives, while still others would be addressed to the wives, telling them of infidelities of their husbands. One favorite method of the writer, who signed the letters "The Tiger's Eye," was to direct a slanderous letter to one person, requesting that person to pass it on to another, and so on until it came at length to the person whose misdeeds were disclosed in the letter. The malicious campaign grew until no one in the town felt safe. Even those who had nothing to fear from their own records, lived in terror lest lies might be written about them. Three persons are known to have gone insane, one to have committed suicide, and many to have left town.

Ordinary methods to learn the source of the letters were unavailing. Detectives, clairvoyants, and even a hypnotist could offer no clew after having worked for months on the case. At length Doctor Locard, a graphologist, took up the investigation. After a careful study of the letters, two hundred in all, which involved a comparison with the handwriting of hundreds of suspects, he announced his belief that Mademoiselle Laval was the guilty one. It was with great difficulty that he managed to obtain a specimen of Mademoiselle Laval's handwriting, but when he did secure it, he assured the magistrate that he would have no difficulty in showing that the writing in the letters and that of Mademoiselle Laval was identical.





# *Finger-print Department*

*conducted by  
Benjamin Call*

Any one interested in any phase of finger printing will receive advice from Mr. Call and his associates, upon a statement of their needs. Experts, in doubt as to the details of a case on which they are engaged, will be given prompt and careful attention.

All communications requiring a reply must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope. Mr. Call particularly invites letters and inquiries which may be published in this department.

## **The Possibilities of Finger Printing**

**I**DENTIFICATION—absolute, complete, and unquestioned—has never been possible in this human world until the finger-printing system was introduced, well within the memory of men still young. Up to that time not only the courts, but all of private and public life, were full of cases of mistaken identity.

The famous "Man in the Iron Mask" could never have remained a mystery if modern ways of finger printing prisoners had been in vogue. If finger prints had been taken of the royal family of France, we would know to-day whether or not the ill-fated Dauphin lived among us as a man named Williams—something that has engaged the attention of historians for generations, but on which there can be no absolute conclusion. His finger prints alone would settle the matter if there had been prints of those of the young Dauphin at the time that he disappeared from the sight of those who knew him as he was.

A celebrated case in England, that of the claimant to a great estate who lost his suit for recognition, could not have existed if there had been the system of finger printing all the members of important families. He was seemingly recognized by a sister, repudiated by others of the family. Even the old family servants were at odds in their belief as to whether he was or was not the heir to the estate who had run away to Australia in his wild youth. It cost the estate a great sum to contest his suit; the lawyers who backed the unknown, who had no money, lost even more, and the crown, which tried to settle it, was also at an expense—to say nothing of the grief and worry of the family, which longed for their son and brother but feared to take to themselves an impostor. All this could have been saved by the simple expedient of comparing the finger prints of the young man who went away from a high position in English society



to roam the world, and of the man who came back to plead that he had returned. He claimed that he had changed in the years that he had been away, but that he remembered all his early associates, and this he proved. The question was, had he met the real heir out in the Australian bush and heard those details from him?

The insurance companies have paid over many a good dollar to widows who thereupon slipped off to join the "dear departed" in some quiet corner of the world where he waited, very much alive. And there was that queer case in Scotland, in which a man went to the war in 1810 and came back after Waterloo to be received without a question by his wife and friends. Years after, as he was dying, he confessed that he was a distant cousin of the real man, who had been killed on the field of battle. They had always been all but identical in appearance, and the dying man had wrested a promise from his cousin that he would make the impersonation and save the woman whom they had both loved from being bereft of a protector.

The use of finger prints as a general means of identification, apart from the identifying of criminals, is not even faintly understood as yet—no, not even by those who are dealing with the subject. The identification of those who die away from all who know them will be possible when finger prints are taken of every citizen, as is now done by our southern neighbor, Argentina.

R. J. Hill, of the Boston department of correction, has had a case or two recently which demonstrated the use that finger prints are to the world in general. A youth who died in the city hospital on December the ninth of last year was unidentified; the body continued to lie in the morgue unclaimed until the State identification bureau, in the person of Mr. Hill, reported that the finger prints of the youth had been identified, that he had a sister in New Orleans, and that he had had something of a criminal record. The sister was notified, and one of the mysteries of a great city was cleared up.

Mr. Hill also had the good fortune to find the finger prints of John Vinisky, a man who was picked up by the Springfield police, and who created a sensation by escaping from the prison hospital in his night clothing. What is more, he succeeded in staying at large for quite a time, dressed airily in a blanket and some rags for his feet. He was put into the hospital because when arrested he fell, or seemed to fall, into a coma in which he remained for days, despite the fact that the doctors stuck pins in his feet to see if he were shamming. Mr. Hill identified the prints of this man within fifteen minutes of receiving them, although he had a collection of one hundred thousand to look through.

This man was "Two-gun Smith" who had served three prison terms, and but for the identification he might have managed to get off with a very light sentence on the score of illness.

### ANSWERS TO READERS' QUERIES

MARCUS.—It is one thing to think that you can identify a man, and another thing actually to do it. The print that you send me is too faint to be positively identified. You would never be able to get a conviction on this evidence, although I grant that there is a marked similarity, and that the presumption is of identity. This will not get you anywhere in a court, though, and to try to present such evidence is doing yourself and the profession actual harm. Never go into court with evidence that is not complete. A moral certainty is not a real certainty. You must be able to show that the processes of your reasoning cannot be refuted.

ИДАО.—Captain Michael P. Evans, of the Chicago board of identification, has designed a card which is said by all to be a most satisfactory one. It is printed on medium white paper, and on one side it contains spaces for the front



and profile photographs, with a chart for Bertillon measurements, and spaces for the date, name, signature, and remarks. The finger-print record is on the other side. It has the name of the bureau where the print was taken, a space for the name of the expert, and for the date, name, card number, finger print, and formula in numerical values.

ROSCOE F. E.—Twins do have a great similarity in their patterns, but there is no real difficulty in telling one from the other. There might be the possibility of a mistake if there were only one impression from each by which to judge; but there could not be any such possibility if all fingers on both hands were taken.

MENDENHIEM X.—Try ordinary talcum powder if you are short of other kinds. It sometimes works very well. You have a poor camera. It will really pay you to get a real good one.

**IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE:**

**THE MYSTERY OF THE  
EMPTY FLAT**

Which plainly shows the value of coming back and  
sticking to it.

By **CHRISTOPHER B. BOOTH**

**THE INNOCENT GHOST**

Could you blame the child?

By **ARTHUR MALLORY**

**THE UNSPOKEN NAME**

What's in a name? All the good or evil this side of the moon.  
You can't guess which, in this instance, but Mr. Landon will  
eventually satisfy your curiosity.

By **HERMAN LANDON**

**AND OTHER STORIES**

**ORDER YOUR COPY IN ADVANCE**



# UNDER THE LAMP

## CONDUCTED BY HENRY A. KELLER

### The Incomplete Alphabet

CHARLEY JOHNSON was in prison. He was sentenced to ten years or more for burglary. But hardly had his term begun before he came to be known as "The Nut." At the end of six weeks prison guards and fellow convicts alike were "on" to the fact that Charley spent almost all of his spare time in his cell, occupied in the queerest of ways—writing out the alphabet again and again thousands of times, and tearing up the papers upon which these alphabets were written, so as to have every letter on a separate piece of paper.

If the men who observed him thought him a little unbalanced mentally, Charley did not care. He knew perfectly well what he was about, and he was in full possession of all his faculties.

Charley was a member of a small band of men who made a business of professional burglary. Three of the band's six best men went out one night on a job, and one of them carelessly wore a shoe with a characteristic hole on the left sole. This in itself was not disastrous, but the fellow stepped into some tar drippings outside the burglarized building after the job had been done. The police, already suspicious of the band to which Charley belonged, went to its reputed headquarters with a print of the perforated sole in plaster. They gained admittance by forcing an entrance, and they found the place deserted; but a search revealed a shoe with the characteristic mark. The headquarters served not only as a meeting place, but a temporary dwelling for those of the criminals who chose to use it as such. The police search also brought to light one package of the several in negotiable bonds that were stolen. They had clinched their case.

Now the head of this organization, be it known to the disgrace of the men who stoop to such practices when intrusted with the public weal, had a "pull" with the department. He got off, but public opinion clamored for a conviction, and he had to produce "the guilty party." And the wearer of the shoe was the band's best safe man. He could not be spared. So the leader picked out the newest member to be the "paw," and the lot fell to Charley. He was turned over to the police, tried, convicted, and sentenced.

But before he was taken into custody he and his chief had a long confab. The chief told Charley exactly what would happen to him. Also, he told him that it would not be long after his conviction until his escape from the penitentiary would be arranged. The chief took care of his followers. As a preliminary step to Charley's delivery from jail, taken even before he was turned over to the police, he was shown the code system used by the band. He was instructed to allow himself to become known in the prison as one who toyed with letters on paper. So was the way made easy for the chief of the burglar band to smuggle into him messages that prison officials' strict censorship would not allow to get by otherwise.

And now to get to the messages Charley received from the outside after his conviction. The chief was a wise man. In working out his system of secret communication, instead of basing it on a positive production such as a substitution or transposition cipher might be, he used the *absence* of letters in a given collection of them, to convey his messages.

Bear in mind that every letter received for prisoners, was read carefully for hidden messages; also, every visitor's gifts were most carefully inspected—those rare ones that were allowed to be passed on to the men serving time; and remember, too, that visitors were watched while talking with those they came to see. Further, the particular State penitentiary where Charley was confined,



had a reputation for freedom from deliveries and crush-outs, which it guarded scrupulously.

The most difficult part of the chief's plan was the smuggling of letters on separate pieces of paper into the prisoner's hands. These the prisoner would take to his cell and there examine. What could be more natural, since he already had thousands of cut-up pieces of paper in his cell? Or what could be more plausible, should he be caught in the corridors, or even in the visitors' room, with them on him; for was he not already known as a nut who spent all of his spare time with these things?

Now you will see the wisdom of the chief's plan, when you learn that Charley once was caught in the corridors with about fifty pieces of lettered paper in his hand. An attempt was made to make them produce a message, but the attempt failed. The message was not on the lettered papers, which almost made up two complete alphabets; it was made up of the letters which were *not* there. But luckily the authorities did not catch on.

Every visitors' day saw one of the chief's men at the prison. And every one who came brought Charley a small collection of lettered slips of paper. Every incomplete alphabet was on paper of a different size or color, a size or color to an alphabet—this for Charley's convenience. And all the papers were concerned with a message the chief had to give Charley.

Here are those incomplete alphabets which were delivered to Charley on the last visitors' day preceding his escape from the pen. Imagine each letter on a separate piece of paper. The first step has been done for you, inasmuch as every incomplete alphabet has been sorted out of the bunch and put with the others of its size and color. Now see if you can work out the chief's message:

GLZAQCPDJFTOVIYSKUHWMN  
PBKWHSMYQVCXLGZOTJRIDNUF  
AXHRFPWIWBLQIJZCGNSVKOTE  
FEKRHXBMVSPGYLZAWTICJUQ  
LGTNDWJQVHBRUEXICKMSPFO  
DLPVZIJQYRWCKHXEQMBUNSG  
VEZIQBGLWSAKFPYTÑHMCJXD  
AMDXKSZHL EUPBYNJWC IQVTG  
EHLRLRGUXIDOQZFNJSVKWCA

In the cipher in last week's issue five cipher alphabets were used. They are these: A—c, e, g, i, k; B—d, f, h, j, l; C—e, g, i, k, m; D—f, h, j, l, n; E—g, i, k, m, o; F—h, j, l, n, p; G—i, k, m, o, q; H—j, l, n, p, r; I—k, m, o, q, s; J—l, n, p, r, t; K—m, o, q, s, u; L—n, p, r, t, v; M—o, q, s, u, w; N—p, r, t, u, x; O—q, s, u, w, y; P—r, t, v, x, z; Q—s, u, w, y, a; R—t, v, x, z, b; S—u, w, y, a, c; T—v, x, z, b, d; U—w, y, a, c, e; V—x, z, b, d, f; W—y, a, c, e, g; X—z, b, d, f, h; Y—a, c, e, g, i; Z—b, d, f, h, j.





# 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.

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," etc. cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

**AMY B.**, of Ottawa, Canada.—Please write to mother, father, and sister. They are all heartbroken at your absence. C. has left the farm and is living at 221 Cobban Street, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Write to her for all you want to know. She will understand and explain, and will help you. Come or write.

**HUGHES, JAMES.**—He left home six years ago, and was last heard of in New York City three years ago. He is twenty-four years old. His mother would be very happy to hear from him, and will be grateful for any news of him. Mrs. Richard Hughes, 139 Bangor Street, Bangor, Pennsylvania.

**TROJAN, EDWARD**, formerly of Cleveland, Ohio. He went overseas with Company F, 331st Infantry. A friend is very anxious to hear from him and will greatly appreciate any information regarding his present address. L. Rubin, care of this magazine.

**DALE, HARRY.**—He was last heard of in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is asked to write to his brother, who will be glad to hear from any one who knows where he is. A. W. Dale, Box 207, Kimmersburg, Pennsylvania.

**COWELL, CHARLEY WALTER.**—He left home in 1905, and was last heard of in Pacific, Missouri. His children would be glad to hear from him, and will be grateful for any information that will help them to communicate with him. Wagg, care of this magazine.

**WOODARK.**—My father, Mike Woodark, died about 1900, and I have been told that he died in Sheridan, Wyoming, but I have no definite information. The flood of 1903 destroyed all my mother's papers, and she does not remember the details. I was too young to know anything. My father had a brother named Charley Woodark, who was last heard of in Albany, New York. I would be very happy to hear from some of my father's relatives. Eva Woodark Richardson, care of this magazine.

**HARRISON, JAMES**, known as Horisk. He is about twenty-three years old, five feet six inches tall, with dark hair and blue eyes. He was last heard of in Chicago in 1920. His brother is anxious to find him, and will appreciate any information. William Harrison, care of this magazine.

**NAFF, FRED A.**—Please write to an old friend of the 137th Aero Squadron, Post Field, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. David Naff, P. O. Box 1253, Tucson, Arizona.

**HADELL, WILBER.**—Please write to your old pal at once. Any one knowing his address will do a favor by writing to Jack Turner, care of this magazine.

**MORICAL, LEVI.**—He was last heard from at Twin Falls, Idaho. Any one who knows him will do a kindness by asking him to write to H. M., care of this magazine.

**HEPTNER, WALTER B.**—He left San Dimas, California, about ten years ago. He is twenty-nine years old, five feet ten inches tall, with brown hair and blue eyes, and was last heard of in Los Angeles about three years ago. Any information that will help to find him will be greatly appreciated by his old father, Mr. O. D. Heptner, 114 North West Fifth Avenue, Visalia, California.

**WILLIAMS, ROBERT.**—He was last heard from in Toledo, Ohio, in 1903. He is about sixty years old. Also his daughter EMMA, who was married in 1903 to Arthur Brown in Fostoria, Ohio. Any information about these people will be gladly received by James S. Williams, care of this magazine.

**SHATSWELL, RICHARD C.**, often called "Fatty" on account of his weight, which was two hundred and sixty-seven pounds. His brother would like to hear from him, and also from any of his mother's relatives. Her name before marriage was Hattie Teichman, and it is thought that she was brought up near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, by some church people. Any one who can give news of them will do a kindness by writing to John Shatswell, care of this magazine.

**HAMILTON, EUGENE.**—He was last heard of in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1915. He served in the U. S. "Nebraska," and his home was in St. Louis. His old pal would like to hear from him or from any one who can give him news that will help to find him. G. Mack, 4047 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

**ST. ROY, N. C.**—Please write to me. You know that we all love you and are much worried about you.—Your sister, M. J. P., Wynne, Arkansas.

**GRADY, EDITH.**—She used to live at Williamstown, Kansas, and left there in 1920, with her father and mother. A friend, who has not heard from her since that time, would be grateful for any information that would help to find her. L. T. P., care of this magazine.

**MEYERS, BERT.**—Please write at once. I will forgive you. Bernice, care of this magazine.

**KRHUT, JOHN M.**—He was last heard of at Arwood, Kansas, in 1919. His mother is very ill, and information as to his whereabouts will be most gratefully appreciated. Please write to his brother, Philip J. Krhut, care of this magazine.

**ALICE ELOISE.**—Am very anxious to hear from you. Have been looking for you for over a year. Write to me soon in care of this magazine.—H. L. W.

**ERESHNATER, ELLA B.**—She was last heard of in New York City, seventeen years ago. She was a good dancer and roller skater. She may be known as Ella B. Miller. Any one who knows her address, or who can give any information about her will do a kindness by writing to a friend, R. L. M., care of this magazine.

**MORAN, JACK.**—He was last heard of with the Walter L. Main Shows, where he worked in the menagerie. Any news of his whereabouts will be greatly appreciated by Frank Sebolt, 645 Maclay Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**BROWN, VERNON.**—He is fourteen and a half years old, about five feet five inches tall, with brown, curly hair, blue eyes, a face complexion, and weighs about one hundred and twenty pounds. There is a small scar on the side of his nose and he is left-handed. He left his home on May 3, 1921. He has always wanted to join the Scouts and be a messenger boy, so if any one in these organizations should see him and will notify his family, the favor will be very much appreciated. His sister Doris and his brothers, Jay, Kenneth, and Harry, all want him to come back. His mother is sick and hopes that he will see this and write to her at once. They will all go to California as soon as he is found. Any information that will help to get this boy back to his home and family will be most gratefully received. Please write to Mrs. Glen Rogers, care of this magazine.

**HAYES, ALBERT.**—His sister has not heard anything about him for twelve years, and would be very glad indeed if she could get some news of him. He is about five feet seven inches tall, with light hair, fair complexion, and brown eyes. Any information from persons who have known him will be most gratefully received. Mrs. G. R. Weak, Route 2, Malvern, Iowa.

**CALVIN, ALVIN C.**—He was last heard of two years ago at Fort Wayne, Indiana. His mother's estate cannot be settled until he is found, and it is hoped that he will see this and write at once to his sister, who will be grateful for any information that will help to find him. Mrs. L. Lee, 1015 1-2 Franklin Street, Tampa, Florida.

**REYNOLDS, ARTHUR.**—Please write to your friend who soldiered with you in Germany in Company H, Fiftieth Infantry. James C. Nannatter, R. R. 6, Box 107, Muncie, Indiana.

**PRINCESS.**—Letters do not reach you at your old address in Arizona and California. Please write to Little Brown Mouse, same address.

**SAUSELEIN, WILLIAM.**—He went away twenty years ago, and has not been seen since. At that time his family and children were living in Altoona, Pennsylvania. His daughter would be glad to get some news of him, and would like to hear from any aunt or uncle or other relative, or from any one who can tell her what has become of her father, and will greatly appreciate any information. Mrs. E. M., care of this magazine.

**REBECK, HOWARD.**—He is asked to write to his sister, who is very anxious to hear from him. Letters sent to his last known address in Minneapolis, Minnesota, are always signed for, but not in his handwriting. Any one who knows his whereabouts, or who can give any news of him whatever, will do a great favor by writing to Mrs. G. M. Mitchell, care of this magazine.

**ROWE, ARTHUR W. T. and JOHN M.**—Their sister left England about sixteen years ago, and went to Winnipeg, Canada. Her brothers were in England when she last heard of them. She is very anxious to find them and will be most grateful for any information that will help her in her search. Mrs. Lillian Rowe H., care of this magazine.



**DALE, ALFRED.**—He is about fifty years old, tall, fair, with blue eyes, and was last seen about twenty-four years ago, when he left his home at Battersea, England, leaving three children, Albert, Nellie, and Maud. His wife and Albert have been dead for years, and his daughter Nellie hopes that he will see this, or that some one will tell him of it, as she has tried very hard to find him, but so far without success. She will be most grateful for any information that will help her to know where he is or what has become of him. Mrs. Nellie Murray, care of this magazine.

**RUMERY, H. WILLARD.**—There is a letter for you at this office. Please send your address or write to R. L. H., at Boston, Massachusetts.

**HEALY.**—About twenty-five years ago, Martin and Sarah Healy were put in a home in South Norwalk, Connecticut. They would be very glad if they could get some information regarding their relatives, and will be most grateful to any one who can help them to find their people or to know something of them. Sarah Healy, care of this magazine.

**HAMPEL, MAX.**—He left Alma, Texas, in August, 1900, when he was about eighteen years old. He has auburn hair and brown eyes. It is probable that he is working on some railroad. He has two sisters and two brothers, who would like very much to hear from him, and who will be grateful for any information that will help to find him. Pete Hampel, care of this magazine.

**PERRY, FLORIE P.**—When last heard of she was a nurse in the State Hospital at Kings Park, Long Island. A friend would like to hear from her or from any one who knows her address. C. F. Mosel, R. D. 2, Box 358, Portage, Pennsylvania.

**CONE, ORRIE HALE.**—He is thirty-three years of age, about six feet tall, and has dark hair and complexion. He is a carpenter by trade. His mother died in 1898, and his brother has not heard from him since. He hopes he will see this and write to him, and will be glad to hear from any one who can give him news of his brother. Charles D. Cone, care of this magazine.

**MAYE, G. STELLA.**—Curly is in the same position as in 1919, and will be unable to help until about Christmas, 1922. Please send your present address in care of my mother at Hayward.—Lawrence.

**CLAUDE.**—I freely forgive you for everything. Please write to me in care of this magazine.—J. H. T.

**WILLIS, SAM.** who was in Company B, 325th Machine Gun Battalion. Write to me. I have just returned from the Philippines and India, and found you gone. I have something to tell you. L. R. G., Murphysboro, Illinois.

**FEATHERBY, GUY ELMER,** and his wife, **CHRISTIANA.**—They were last heard of in Denver, Colorado, in 1920. Guy is about twenty-nine years of age, six feet tall, with blue eyes and sandy hair. His sister Winnie would be glad to hear from him or from any one who knows his whereabouts. Mrs. Winnie Elliott, 700 Bradley Street, Owosso, Michigan.

**ARNOLD, PAUL.**—He is about nineteen years old and was last heard of in Piedmont, West Virginia, on September 7, 1921. He is asked to write to P. Bohon, 216 Aurora Street, Terra Alta, West Virginia.

**BRYANT, DOCTOR J. C.**—He left his home to go to Dallas, Texas, on May 25, 1921. He did not get there, and has not been heard of since. He is about six feet, one inch tall, with light-brown hair, weighs about two hundred and forty pounds, and is sometimes known as John Campbell. Any information that will help to find him will be greatly appreciated by J. C. B., care of this magazine.

**LANGSTAFF, RUBEN.**—When he was quite young he was taken from the Harrison Avenue Home for Destitute Children to Dell Rapids, South Dakota, to a mission school, and, it is believed, was adopted into a family, but no trace of him can be found, and his adopted name is not known. He is about thirty-three years old. His cousin, who has been trying for years to find him, would be very grateful for any helpful information. May T. Murphy, care of this magazine.

**OKERBURG, RAGNAR.**—He was born in Sweden, and was last heard from in Billings, Montana, about three years ago. He is thirty years old, tall, husky, with light hair and complexion, and is an expert shoe-machine worker and salesman. His old friends in Somerville would like to hear from him. Curtis F. Day, 38 Browning Road, Somerville, Massachusetts.

**LEWIS, WILLIE and ELLEN,** of San Antonio, Texas.—They lived with their aunt, Mrs. Annie Gartley, in St. Petersburg, Florida, for one year, and were sent to their father at Washington, D. C., in 1900. They were then seven and five years of age. They are asked to write to their cousin, who has often wondered where they are and would be very happy to hear from them or from any one who can give their present address. F. G. K., care of this magazine.

**SHOEMAKER, MRS. ROSIE.**—She is about forty-six years old, and was last heard of in Louisville, Kentucky. Any one knowing her present whereabouts will do a great favor by writing to John D. Shoemaker, R. F. D. 6, Box 16, Fremont, Ohio.

**MARTIN.**—When I was about seven years of age my mother left me with an uncle named McDowell, in Michigan, and I have not heard from any of my people since. I had five sisters, Mary, Katie, Maggie, Lizzie, and Carrie. My mother's name was Lizzie and my father's was George Martin. Any information that will help me to find some of my relatives will be most gratefully appreciated. Eddie Martin, care of this magazine.

**BOREN, LAUDA.**—Last seen in Dallas, Texas, on January 4, 1917. She is asked to write to her sister, Blanche McDonald, 118 North Thirteenth Street, Temple, Texas.

**ALEXSIN, MARY L. GIBBS.**—She was last heard from in Columbia, South Carolina, in March, 1921. She comes from Augusta. Her father is making every effort to find her, and will greatly appreciate any information that will help in his search. Please write to Mrs. G. E. Scoggins, 1692 Broad Street, Augusta, Georgia.

**WILBURTH, HARRY L.**—He left his home in Milwaukee on February 5, 1916, for Olean, New York. His mother is heartbroken at his long absence, and will be most grateful for any information that will help her to find her son. Mrs. L. Wilburth, 119 South Bay Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**RAWLEY, DAN SULLIVAN.**—He formerly lived at Belleville, New Jersey, and was in the laundry business. It is believed that he is in Newark at present. A friend from Milltown would like to hear from him or from any one who can give his address. Milltown, care of this magazine.

**PALMER, FRANK.**—He married Ella Ketcham in Wyoming about forty-one years ago, and lived at one time near Dayton. He disappeared about thirty-seven years ago, leaving two little girls, Minnie and Mary Augusta. The younger daughter would be happy if she could get news of him, and would be glad to hear from any relatives named Ketcham or Frisbee. Mrs. James Bouchee, 220 S. L Street, Livingston, Montana.

**CUMMINGS, CRAWFORD RANDOLPH.**—He is forty years of age, and left Chicago twelve years ago. He was last heard of in Springfield, Missouri, eight years ago. His first wife's name was Belle. They had two little girls. His second wife's name was Ida. His mother is seventy-two years old and is seriously ill. She is grieving for her son, and hopes to see him before she is called away. Any news will be gratefully received by his sister, Emma Jane, care of this magazine.

**MEYENHOFER, LENA.**—She lived at 85 Wooster Street, New York City, in 1872-73. Any information that would help to find her, or her relatives, will be appreciated by Myron F. Donovan, 92 Roosevelt Avenue, Corona, Long Island.

**SHEATZ, JOHN CARSON.**—He served in the war in Company C, 163rd Infantry, and is said to have come back from France. He has blue eyes, brown hair, and fair complexion. A friend who has not seen him for five years, and who has important news for him, would like to hear from him at once, or from any one who knows his address. M. L. Elkin, 14 King Street, Carrollton, Georgia.

**ALLEN, TESSIE,** formerly of Glen Cove, Long Island, and last heard from in Bridgeport, Connecticut, is asked to write to J. Donohue, Westbury, Long Island.

**ATTENTION.**—The following men are asked to write to their old buddy, who has lost trace of them and would be glad to hear from them, or from any one who knows where they are. **JACK FILLMORE, "SHORTY" MARION, GEORGE ST. LOUIS, LESTER TUBBS, ED PAPE, ZEKI LEVY, "TENOR JACK" DEVINE, and LE ROY HENRY.** H. A. Griffin, care of this magazine.

**HARRIS, AGNES.**—She left her home in May, 1921, and her mother has been unable to find any trace of her. She is five feet seven inches tall, seventeen years old, with medium light-brown hair and blue eyes. She may be with persons who would have a bad influence on her, and any one who has seen her, or who can tell anything of her whereabouts, will do a great kindness to the girl and to her mother by writing to Mrs. Hannah Harris, care of this magazine.

**McCALPIN, JAMES, MAX or MARY.**—Their last known address was Robinson Street, North Side, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where they were living about ten years ago. Any one who can give information as to their present whereabouts will do a favor by writing to J. H. S., care of this magazine.

**CONNELL, BROOKS H.**—He was last heard from while he was a soldier in the Fifty-fifth Artillery at Camp Lewis, Washington, in March or April, 1921. His letters are now returned marked "discharged." He is about six feet tall, has dark-brown hair and eyes, and one front tooth is slightly broken off. There is news of great importance awaiting him, and he is asked to write to T. L. C. T., care of this magazine.

**IBERMULLER, MILDRED HELEN.**—When last seen she was fourteen years old and five feet one inch in height. Any information leading to the discovery of her present whereabouts will be greatly appreciated. L. M. S., care of this magazine.



**JAMISON, JAMES.**—He is a painter and musician, and was last heard of in Philadelphia. Any one who knows where he is or can give any news of him, will do a great kindness by writing to L. D., care of this magazine.

**BRADY, PAUL.**—He was last heard of in Rochester, New York, with the Kinsey Stock Company. He is asked to please write at once to Earl Lahmon, Mechanic Street, Utica, Ohio.

**ATTENTION.**—Sailors who occupied Barracks 948-E, Camp Farragut, Great Lakes, Illinois, from January 10 to 30, 1919, are asked to write to a disabled sailor who will be very happy to hear from them. Lawrence K. Hyde, 3324 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**CHAPMAN, W. H.**—His last address was Walla Walla, Washington. Any one who can give information as to his present whereabouts will do a great favor to his wife and two little girls by writing to Mrs. F. Manus, Route 3, Everson, Washington.

**SMITH, MOSES.**—He was born and brought up in Valdosta, Georgia. When he was grown up he went to Jacksonville, Florida, and lived there for some years in connection with Ritzwoller's mercantile business. He was last heard from in Moody, Texas, about twenty-seven years ago. He is now about sixty-five years old, of medium height, well educated and refined, and has very dark eyes. His sister, who is sick, is very anxious to find him, and will be grateful for any news of him, living or dead. Mrs. Georgia Smith Bacon, 1307 North Patterson Street, Valdosta, Georgia.

**COX, JAMES.**—About nineteen years ago his father was killed in Altoona, Pennsylvania, by a train. His mother disappeared, and James was sent to a home in Johnstown, same State. Later he was adopted, but no trace of him has been found since. He was four or five years old when he was adopted. His brother Joseph would like to find him, and will be glad to hear from any one who can give news of him. Joseph Cox, care of this magazine.

**ARNESSEN, MARTIN.**—He was a newspaper editor in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1880. His wife, Bertha, died in 1891, and his son, who was then two years old, was placed in a home. The father was never heard from after that, nor any of the other children, a boy and two girls. He would be glad to hear from them, or from any relatives of his family, and would be most grateful for any information that would help him to communicate with them. Melvin Arnold Arnesen, care of this magazine.

**WESTMORLAND, JOHN.**—He was brought up on a farm near Neosho, Missouri, and later worked as a section hand on the railroad in Beggs, Oklahoma. He is about thirty years old, with gray eyes and dark hair, and is supposed to have some Indian blood in him. Any one who knows his address will do a favor by writing to H. E. C., care of this magazine.

**BAYLOR, THOMAS.** who was last heard of in New York City, and **CLOANN, PRICE.** who was last heard of in Washington, D. C. Cloann is asked to write to his sister and mother. Any information as to the present whereabouts of these two will be appreciated by Laura Skinner, care of this magazine.

**VAN FLEET.**—I was placed in the children's home at Paulding, Ohio, and was adopted by Benjamin Flory when I was seven years old. My mother's name was Viola, and I had a sister named Bertha. Any information that will help me to find my relatives will be most gratefully received. John Van Fleet, care of this magazine.

**MAYES, JOHN.**—When last heard of he was in the care of a Mrs. Miller, of St. Louis, Missouri. He was the son of Harry Mayes, and is now about twenty-three years of age. Any information regarding him will be gladly received by Edward Mayes, 1798 West Hill Street, Louisville, Kentucky.

**NORTON, J. C.**—Please write. I have not heard from you since July, 1921. My address is still the same.—Ellen D. N.

**ANDERSON, LILLIE MAUD.**—She married William Leeming, of Saskatchewan, and was last seen in Toronto, Canada, in 1912. Any one who can give news of her will do a great favor by writing to her mother, Mrs. M. Anderson, 705 Charlotte Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

**MURRAY, GEORGE.**—About 1916-17 he was manager of a business at Forty-ninth Street and Seventh Avenue, New York City. Any one who knows his address will do a great kindness by writing to P. P. W., care of this magazine.

**HUMBLE, CURLEY A. D.**—Please write to your old buddy of 1918, who will be glad to hear from you. Varna Little, 46 Thompson Street, Newnan, Georgia.

**WING, ABIGAIL WALLS.**—She left Oberlin, Ohio, some thirty years ago, and went to Cleveland, where all trace of her was lost. Any one who can give information that will help to find her, or to know what has become of her, will do a great kindness by writing to Mrs. Harry Wing, care of this magazine.

**VALENTI, JOSEPH.**—He was last heard of in Buenos Aires. He is married and has two children. His nephew is very anxious to find him, and will be grateful for any helpful information. Joseph Mozzott, 209 Beach Eighty-eighth Street, Rockaway Beach, New York.

**FEACK, LILLIAN ROSE.**—She left her home in Toledo, Ohio, on March 28, 1921. She is seventeen years old, five feet four inches in height, fair, with medium-dark hair. She was last seen in Detroit. Any one who can give information as to her whereabouts, will do a great favor by writing to her sister, Mrs. Elmer St. Charles, 7369 Grinnell Street, Detroit, Michigan.

**DAVIS, DAISY LEE.**—She was last heard of in Denver, Colorado, in 1919. She is thirty-nine years old, five feet nine inches tall, with golden hair and blue eyes. Any one knowing her whereabouts will do a great favor by writing to her sister, Mrs. Ella Poffenberger, Route 3, Roanoke, West Virginia.

**CAUDLE.**—Twenty-five years ago the daughters of Edward R. Caudle, of Muscatine, Iowa, were placed in a convent at Westfield, Indiana, when their mother died, and shortly afterward the elder one, who was three years old, was adopted by a family named Ellis, of Cleveland, State not given. She is now married to a man named Dunlap. The younger sister, who was only one year old at that time, does not remember her at all. Her own father is in failing health and would be very happy if he could see his daughter again, and it is hoped that she will see this and write to him without delay. E. R. Caudle, 101 East Front Street, Muscatine, Iowa.

**SEAL, JOHN.**—Your cousin would like to receive some news of you and of your sisters, and hopes you will see this and write soon. A. P. Farn, care of this magazine.

**BOYD, CHARLES A.**—He left Columbus, Ohio, in 1909, and, when he worked as a blacksmith. Any information about him will be appreciated by George L. Boyd, 8 Spencer Street, Delaware, Ohio.

**CONNOR, NIKLOS POLEN.**—He was last heard of in Yakima about 1912. His children, Alma, Daniel, and Edna, would like to hear from him, and would be most grateful for any news that would help them to find him. Mrs. H. W. Anderson, P. O. Box 550, Yakima, Washington.

**CONNELLY, THOMAS B.**—His last known address was Idaho Falls, Idaho. His sister would be glad to hear from him and will greatly appreciate any information that will help her to communicate with him. Miss Phoebe Connelly, "The Examiner," San Francisco, California.

**DURAND, REX.**—He was in the 119th Field Artillery in Waco, Texas, and was expected to leave for France when he became ill with pneumonia and died, it is thought in New Jersey. A friend would like to communicate with any of his relatives, or some of his army friends. M. B., care of this magazine.

**CULVER, JIM.**—Any one who knows his whereabouts will do a favor by writing to K. P. Hayes, 950 Campbell Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

**SHANNON, JOHN PATRICK.**—He was born in Philadelphia about 1852, and was sent to St. John's Orphan Asylum when he was a small boy. His son would like to hear from some of his father's relatives, and will appreciate any information as to where they live. John F. Shannon, 1516 Cherry Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

**BALLOND, CHARLIE.**—He was last heard of in England. He is asked to write to his old friend, M. W., care of this magazine.

**FORREST, PLUMER.**—In 1915 he was staying with a man named Tom Orim, near Kennett, Missouri, and has not been heard from since that time. He is fifteen years old. His half brother would like to hear from him, or from any one who knows where he is. Floyd Forrest, care of this magazine.

**YORK, RICHARD ALLEN.**—He went away in 1917 and was last heard of when he joined the army in December, 1918. His mother died on the 6th of January, 1919. No word has been received from him, and his mother will greatly appreciate any information that will help to know his whereabouts. Bryan York, Fire Department, Fourth Street, Amarillo, Texas.

**ELLERS, EDWARD.**—He left Stockholm, Sweden, with his wife, for New York, in 1890. Relatives and friends have never heard from them, and every effort to find them has failed. A near relative will appreciate any information that will help to know what has become of them, as he would very much like to communicate with them. John Carlson, 224 East Sixty-fifth Street, New York City.

**McCLURE, THEO.**—She was last heard of in Denver, Colorado, two years ago. She is twenty-one years old. Any one knowing her address will do a favor by writing to R. L. Adam, Route 2, Stockton, Missouri.

**CANNING, RALPH.**—Your mother is greatly worried about you. Please write to her, or to your friend, John Bakken, 3010 Fourth Street, S. E., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**THORNE, ALFRED,** who worked in Texas County, Missouri, about twenty-eight years ago, and is supposed to have moved to Kansas some time later. Any information as to his present address will greatly oblige, R. T., care of this magazine.



Magazine



# DRAW

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