

STREET & SMITH'S

MAR. 28, 1931

Detective Story Magazine

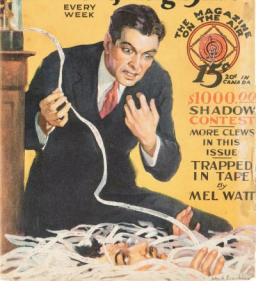
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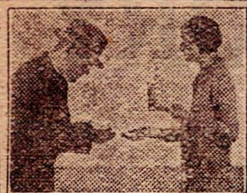
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MORE CLEWS
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ISSUE

**TRAPPED
IN TAPE**
By
MEL WATT



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Always worrying over money. Always skimping and economizing—going without the comforts and luxuries that every man **DESERVES** for his family and himself.



The Time Clock—a badge of hawk-like supervision and The Rut. A constant reminder that one is "just another name on the pay-roll."

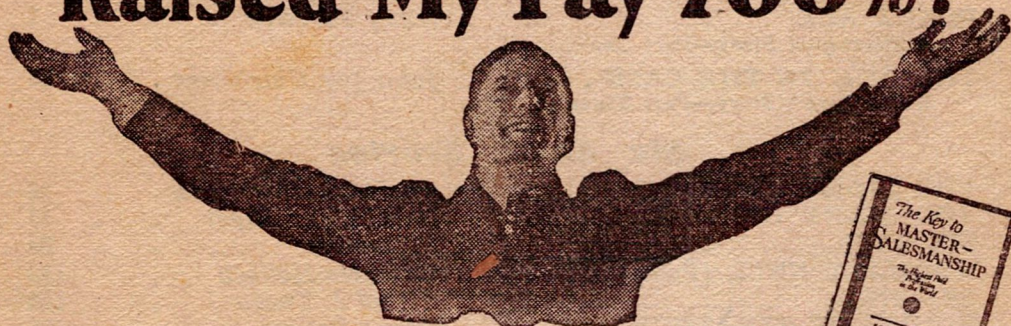


Human cogs in a great machine. No chance to meet people, travel, or have interesting experiences. A long, slow, tiresome road that leads nowhere.



Always wondering what would happen in case of a "lay-off" or loss of job. No chance to express ability—no chance to get ahead. **COULD** there be a way out?

I Said "Good-bye" to It All After Reading This Amazing Book—Raised My Pay 700%!



Where Shall We Send Your Copy—Free?

WHEN a man who has been struggling along at a low-pay job suddenly steps out and commences to earn real money—\$5,000, \$7,500, or \$10,000 a year—he usually gives his friends quite a shock. It's hard for them to believe he is the same man they used to know—but such things happen much more frequently than most people realize. Not only one, but **HUNDREDS** have altered the whole course of their lives after reading the amazing book illustrated at the right.

True, it is only a book—just seven ounces of paper and printer's ink—but it contains the most vivid and inspiring message that any ambitious man can read! It reveals facts and secrets that will open almost any man's eyes to things he has never even dreamed of!

Remarkable Salary Increases

For example, R. B. Hansen of Akron, Ohio, is just one case. Not long ago he was a foreman in the rubber-curing room of a big factory at a salary of \$160 a month. One day this remarkable volume, "The Key to Master Salesmanship," fell into his hands. And from that day on, Mr. Hansen clearly saw the way to say "good-bye" forever to low pay, long hours, and tiresome routine! Today he has reaped the rewards that this little volume placed within his reach. His

salary runs well into the 5-figure class—actually exceeding \$10,000 a year!

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A Few Weeks—Then Bigger Pay

There was nothing "different" about any of these men when they started. None of them had any special advantages—although all of them realized that **SALESMANSHIP** offers bigger rewards than any other profession under the sun. But, like many other men, they subscribed to the foolish belief that successful salesmen are born with some sort of "magic gift." "The Key to Master Salesmanship" showed them that nothing could be farther from the truth! Salesmanship is just like any other profession. It has certain fundamental rules and laws—laws that you can master as easily as you learned the alphabet.

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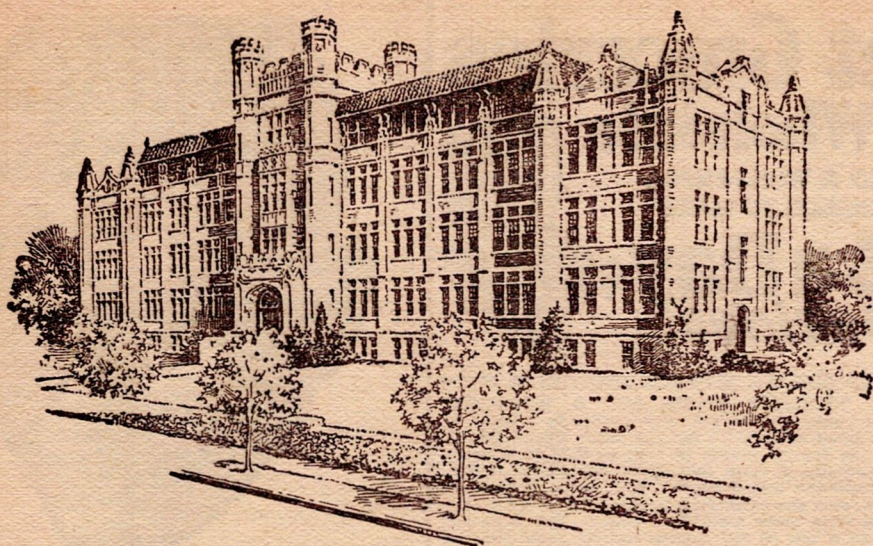
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Publication issued every week by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y. Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Vice President and Treasurer; George C. Smith, Jr., Vice President; Ormond V. Gould, Secretary. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Entered as Second-class Matter, September 4, 1917, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, \$7.50. Foreign, \$8.50.

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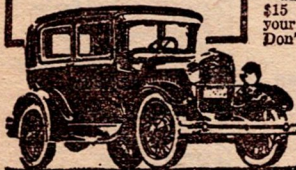
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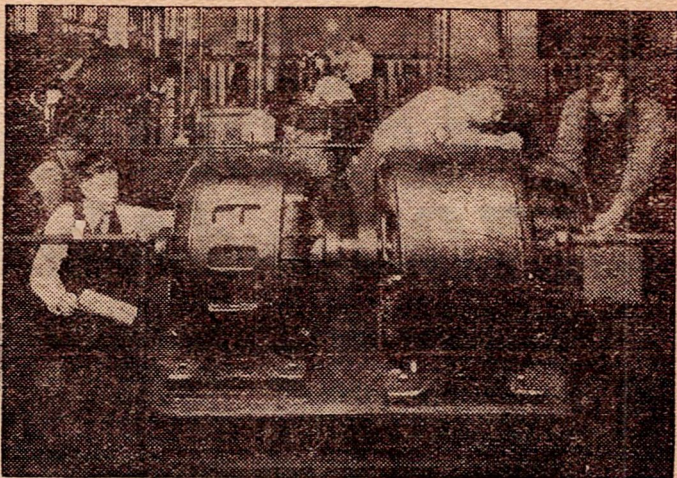
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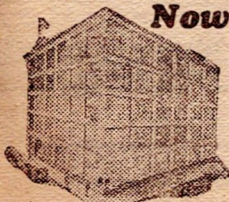
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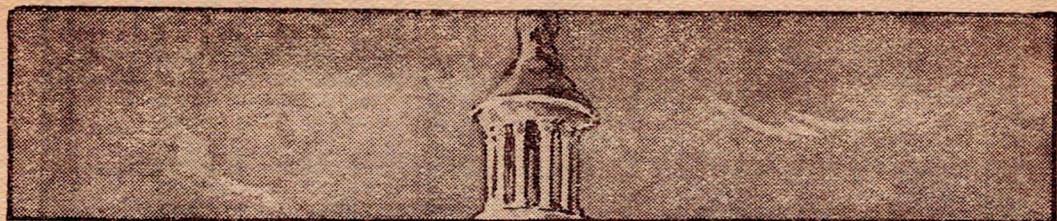
AGENTS WANTED

STOMACH TROUBLE

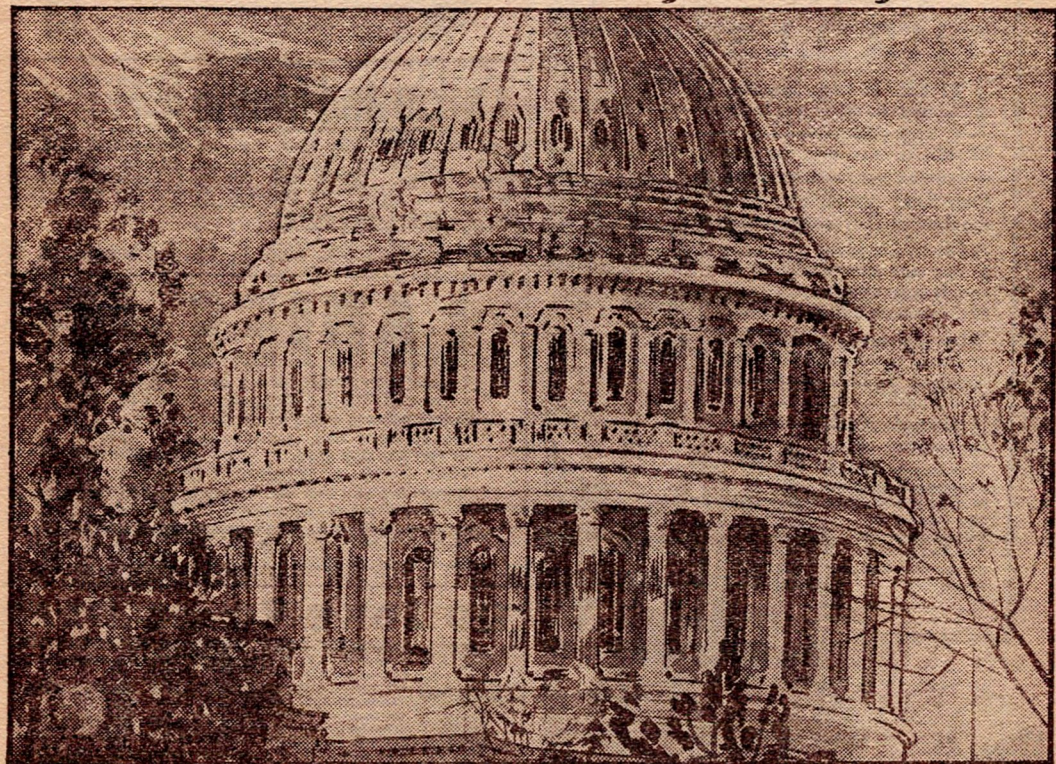
Thousands of sufferers, many cases of years standing, after using the Udga Treatment report amazing recovery. Relieves you of pain, vomiting and other discomforts. Improvement steady and rapid. The Udga Treatment is highly recommended for Ulcers, severe chronic Gastritis, Acidosis, Dyspepsia, Indigestion caused by hyperacidity or faulty diet. 30 Day Trial with DEFINITE GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION or Money Refunded. WRITE for FREE valuable book on Stomach Sicknesses and letters of praise from former sufferers. \$1,000.00 Reward to guarantee truth of our testimonials. Write Today! **UDGA COMPANY** 2287 Dakota Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

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Price, Twenty-five Cents per Copy



-how clever are your Eyes?



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you can win is \$495.00 and the largest \$3,600.00. On simple evidence of promptness, the first prize winner will receive \$2,000.00 cash as an extra reward just for being quick! Think of that. Now look sharp! Can you see at least three visions of the hidden presidents? If your eyes are clever enough to find three or more of them, cut out only the faces and send to me with your name and address. Someone who has sharp, clever eyes to qualify and is quick, can win three thousand six hundred dollars. It might as well be you. If you pass this test, are quick and make the prize winning standing, this offer will bring you a prize of three thousand six hundred dollars in cash. Duplicate prizes will be paid in case of ties. Answers can be accepted only from persons living in the U. S. A. outside of Chicago.

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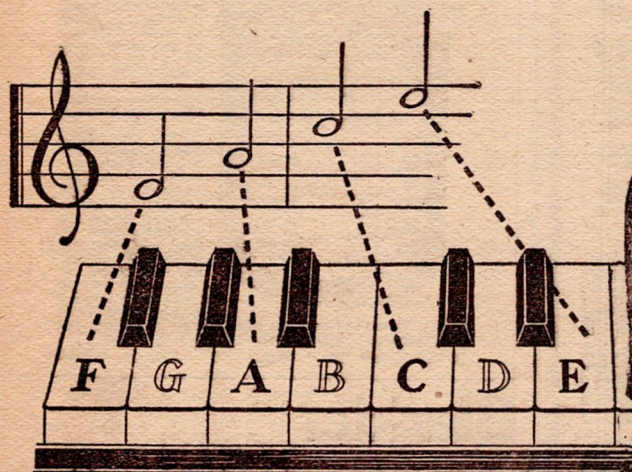
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To those who think Learning Music is hard-



PERHAPS you think that taking music lessons is like taking a dose of medicine. It isn't any longer!

As far as you're concerned, the old days of long practice hours with their horrid scales, hard-work exercises, and expensive personal teacher fees are over and done with.

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Read the list of instruments to the left, decide which you want to play, and the U. S. School of Music will do the rest. Act NOW. Clip and mail this coupon today, and the fascinating Free Book and Free Demonstration Lesson will be sent to you at once. No obligation. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 3593 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

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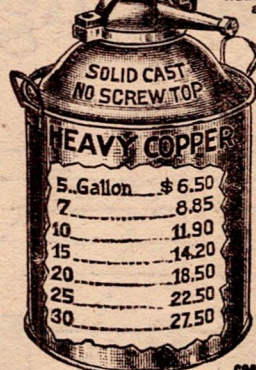
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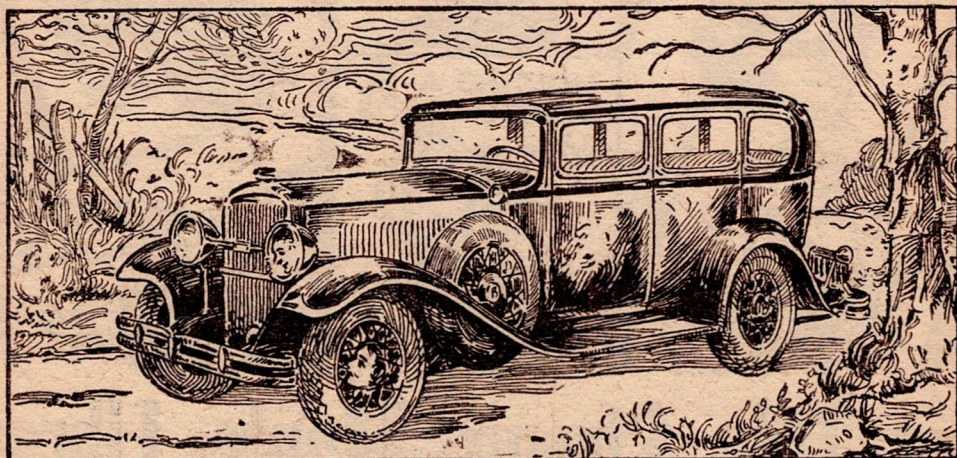
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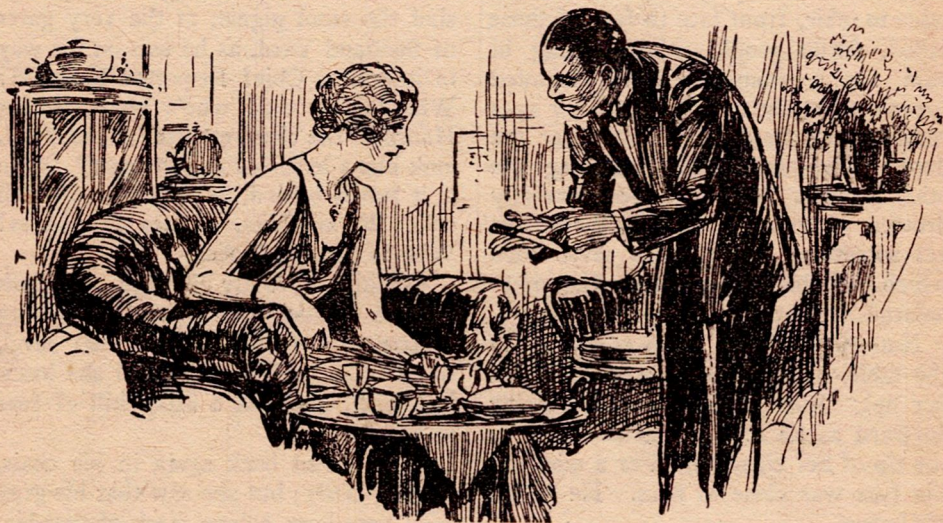


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Black Ace

OUTSIDE THE VULTURES GATHERED, WAITING FOR
THE MINUTE TO STRIKE.



By Barry Perowne

CHAPTER I.

TRAPPED!

I MAY be quite wrong," Rick said gently, "but I've an idea—just a sort of premonition—that there's going to be trouble before long!"

Sitting opposite him at the little table, Nan looked up sharply from the cigarette she was tapping on a shapely thumb-nail.

"What do you mean, Rick?"

The broad-shouldered, lean-faced, tanned young man opposite her nodded almost imperceptibly in the direction of a discreet doorway on the far side of the gleaming, brilliantly lighted dance floor.

"Don't look round in too much of a hurry," he said tranquilly. "But, when

you do, take a look at the three gentlemen sitting at the table on the left of the door, and at the four gentlemen sitting at the table on the *right* of the door. Ask yourself if they look like natural-born butterflies of pleasure—or even like tired business men. To me they look like gentlemen with a stern, set purpose in life!"

He chuckled softly, leaning back in his chair, watching her with gray, whimsical eyes. By not the smallest outward sign did Nan betray any excitement. There was no heightening of her delicate color, no movement of her sweet lips, no widening of her blue, level eyes. If anything, she seemed a little bored—but, nevertheless, her heart was beating more quickly than usual, for, when Rick looked his laziest, she knew that there was something afoot.

She turned casually in her chair, covering a tiny yawn with three slim fingers. The musicians were tuning up their instruments, and the disconnected notes cut through the hum of conversation from the tables about the dance floor. Nan's blue eyes flickered from table to table, from face to face of those jaded, futile people, who, seeking in vain for a moment's thrill, haunted Loitz's night club. Fleeting, her eyes rested upon those seven men near the door. They sat silent, watching the other patrons. Well-mannered, correctly dressed in evening clothes, there was yet something about those seven men which set them apart from the other habitués of the night club.

Nan turned back again carelessly to the table, putting her cigarette between her lips. Rick struck a match, leaning forward as he held the small flame to the tip of her cigarette. For a moment, his face was close to hers. He raised his brows.

"Well?"

"Police," Nan said softly, puffing at her cigarette.

"The boiled shirt brigade," Rick said. "I don't recognize any of 'em. Provincial cops, I expect, brought up specially. Folks get to know the metropolitan men."

He shook out the match and dropped it into an ash tray. But, with his elbows on the table, he remained leaning forward, looking into her eyes.

"I suspect," he said, his lips scarcely moving, "I suspect that this is not going to be an ordinary booze raid. Something tells me that they're here for the same reason that we're here."

"The Black Ace?" Nan whispered.

The orchestra swung with a sudden crash of sound into "Singin' in the Rain." The dance floor began swiftly to fill with couples. Through the medley of noise, Rick's voice came softly to Nan:

"Who is the chief of the Loitz mob?"

Gaspar Loitz is only a figurehead. Who is behind Loitz? Who is the man who supplies half the drug fiends in London with cocaine and opium? Who is the man who killed Anson Burke, the gunman, and got away with a cargo of 'snow' Burke had smuggled in? Who shot the stool pigeon at the very gates of Scotland Yard, as he was on his way to interview Chief Inspector Hansard? Who is the man who's been making Hansard, the cleverest 'tec' at the Yard, look like a babe for months past? Who is it leaves behind, at the scene of each crime he commits, an ace of spades? Who is the Black Ace?"

Coming so softly through the clash of the music, there was something bizarre and frightening in that level, quiet voice, and, well though she knew her chief, Nan felt a little chill of fear at her heart.

Rick leaned back again in his chair, smiling lazily; but she saw that his gray eyes were keen, taking stock of that big, garish room and of all who were in it. His eyes signaled her attention to a man who sat alone at a table near the orchestra dais, smoking a Russian cigarette, long and yellow. His face was clean-shaven, handsome; his dark hair, parted in the middle, was brushed flat above a high forehead; his eyes were dark and piercing. He sat facing the seven men near the door. Nan recognized him vaguely. She looked questioningly at Rick.

"Hansard?"

Rick nodded.

Excitement quivered in Nan. If Chief Inspector Hansard were here, there could be no doubt that designs were afoot against the liberty of that killer from the dark who was called the "Black Ace." For between the Black Ace and the Scotland Yard man there existed a feud so deadly that the death of one or of the other could be its only termination.

A shadow fell suddenly across the

table between Nan and her chief. She looked up quickly, startled. A small, wizened man in evening dress smiled down at her, bowing profoundly. His black hair was plastered down in a fringe above his small, dark, glittering eyes; his complexion was olive-hued, pitted with smallpox; his mouth was thick-lipped and cruel, twisted in an ugly, habitual sneer.

"So I have-a da honor to entertain da Honorable Roderick Leroy, criminologist, and hees lady asseestant, Signorina Nan Fergus, yes? Eh, *buono!* You like-a da cabaret, no?"

"We didn't see it, Loitz," Rick said lazily. "We came in late."

The Italian glanced quickly about the room and leaned confidentially toward Rick.

"Presently dere vill be trouble," he said. "Da Chief Inspector Hansard, he ees here already vit his dress-suit squad!"

"So I see," said Rick. "Aren't you scared?"

"Scared?" The Italian chuckled cunningly. "Vat for I get-a da scare? I sell a few dreenks after hours, so? But, yes! My patrons, dey vill be arrested and fined! I, also! But vat mattaire? Da police, dey vill not close me up—no, no! Dis place is too valuable to dem; dey t'ink-a da Ace comes here—dat I vork for heem. Dey t'ink-a to catch heem here von time. Puh! Vat mattaire? I know not'ink of da Ace. As for da fine—puh! Eet ees not'ink!"

Rick puffed a little cloud of cigarette smoke into the air, watching it writhe upward and disappear.

"They'll get you one day, Loitz. Hansard's a smart man. He knows you're crooked. He knows that half the drugs in London are distributed through you. He knows the Ace is behind you. You want to watch out, Loitz!"

"Puh!" The Italian spread his hands derisively. "He has not'ink on me—no

proof—only da lies of stool pigeons. Me, I am a smart man!"

"Not you, Loitz," Rick said insultingly. "If all your brains were put in an egg cup, the bottom would still be visible to the naked eye! The brains of your outfit is the killer the papers call the Black Ace. You're just the thick-wit who obeys orders! If Hansard didn't think you'd make a break one day, and lead him to the Ace, you'd be breathing good, healthy Dartmoor air this minute!"

The Italian's lips twisted cruelly.

"So? Vell, leesten, Signor Honorable Rick Leroy! Be varned! Your habeets, dey are not liked! Eet ees vell known you haunt-a da East End, da Pool of London, in disguise. Eet ees common knowledge you know-a every hide-out east of Tower Bridge, and every crook in da game! Your book, 'Criminal Secrets,' put-a da vind up many deadly men! You are not a policeman, maybe; you are only—vat ees eet you call yourself?—a student of criminology! So! Neverdaless, you are more dangerous dan dat Hansard yonder! Von day, you get a bullet"—he pressed a thick forefinger against Rick's stiff shirt front, over the heart—"right dere!"

He straightened, watching Rick with narrowed eyes.

Nan's heart was racing but no sign of excitement showed on her sweet face. She glanced casually toward the lone man at the table near the orchestra dais. Chief Inspector Hansard was watching Gaspar Loitz. Nan looked back again at Rick.

Her chief was smiling lazily at the ceiling. "You're anxious to get me out of the way, Loitz, aren't you?" he said easily. "But I shall get you first—and the Black Ace! Tell the Ace that, with my compliments, will you?"

Even as he spoke, the orchestra fell silent. There was a little desultory clapping, and then the patrons began to return to their tables. The clock over the

doorway pointed to ten minutes to one. Gaspar Loitz bowed politely, smiling.

"Good night, Signor Leroy. Good night, Signorina Fergus."

But, for all his smile, his eyes looked murder at Rick as he turned away.

If Rick noticed that glance, he gave no sign of having done so. He was watching the occupants of the table on his left. One of them, a girl with sleek dark hair, green eyes, and a scarlet slash of a mouth, was being helped into her evening cloak by a young man with a bored expression and a receding chin. The two moved together toward the door.

Rick's glance flickered swiftly about the room. At his table near the orchestra dais, Chief Inspector Hansard crushed his Russian cigarette into the ash tray before him; he took up the glass at his side and held it critically to the light. Glancing swiftly in their direction, Rick saw the men at the tables to either side of the door stiffen slightly, as at a signal.

Gaspar Loitz, too, had seen that sudden quickening of the attention of the men near the door. Rick, looking about for the Italian, saw him move quickly, watching the men at the door, toward the orchestra dais. He disappeared behind it.

Rick's lips tightened. He leaned across to Nan, speaking swiftly and very low:

"Listen! As soon as that girl and fellow reach the door, the row'll start! Loitz is behind the orchestra dais. No doubt, he's got a bolt hole there for the patrons he doesn't want caught—his drug customers. I expect he'll turn out the lights the second Hansard shows his hand! We don't want Hansard to catch us. He doesn't like us, Nan—can't make us out. If he gets a chance, he'll run us in like anybody else. Be ready and stick tight to me! Watch now!"

Nan watched.

The girl with the green eyes reached the door. Her cavalier made to open it, but, before he could do so, one of those silent men at the table on the right of the door rose quickly and laid a hand on the young man's arm, saying something in a low voice. The young man started; the girl clapped a hand to her mouth.

"Now for it!" Rick said grimly.

Even as he spoke, the lights went out. The room was plunged into sudden darkness. But one light was left—a tiny red eye, casting no effulgence whatsoever; high up in the wall opposite Rick's table.

A woman screamed shrilly through the dark. A table went over with a crash. Instantly, the room was in a tumult. The patrons were on their feet, milling about wildly, seeking the door. A woman's voice shrieked hysterically:

"A raid! A raid!"

In the panic rush for the door, a man blundered against Nan's chair, almost overturning it. She leaped up. A hand gripped her arm.

"All right, Nan! Here!"

It was Rick. He drew her back against the wall, clear of the frantic crowd.

"Listen!" He was speaking swiftly, quietly, close against her in the darkness. "You see that red light? It's over the orchestra dais. It can only be there to show Loitz's star patrons where the bolt hole is. We're going to borrow his bolt hole. Stick tight!"

Gripping Nan's arm, he began cautiously to work his way round the room, keeping close to the wall to avoid being caught in the surge of the panic-stricken crowd.

Above the din, a voice shouted authoritatively:

"Keep your seats! Keep your seats!"

But the frightened crowd paid no heed. Three crashing blows sounded against the locked door. Some one, in

a frenzy of fear, was flinging himself against it, seeking to burst it open.

"Lights! Lights!"

Rick was behind the orchestra dais, now, under that little red signal eye. With one hand, he kept his grip on Nan's arm; with the other, he felt along the wall in the darkness. His hand touched nothing.

A thrill of triumph leaped through him. He had been right. This was Loitz's bolt hole! Cautiously, feeling his way, he stepped forward, holding Nan's arm. His foot struck heavily against something solid, almost tripping him. He caught himself up.

"Stairs!" he whispered. "Steady, Nan!"

Very carefully, they began to mount the stairs. The darkness was intense. Behind them, they could hear the shouting of the imprisoned crowd. It grew fainter as they mounted.

The stairs ceased abruptly. They were on a level floor. His groping hand told Rick that a solid wall confronted him. He stood quite still, listening; Nan was rigid at his side, her breath held. It was very quiet now; they were in pitch darkness.

"This is queer," Rick whispered. "No sign of Loitz's people. I'm going to strike a match."

He released her arm, fumbling in the pocket of his dinner jacket. A match scraped; the dark rolled back before the tiny, uncertain flame. They were standing on a small landing. At its end was a blank wall. There was one door on their left, one on their right. The match burned Rick's fingers; he dropped it hastily. The darkness leaped back at them.

"We'll try the door on the right," he whispered. "Come on!"

He gripped her arm again, groping for the door. The handle rattled under his touch. Every nerve in him was strung taut, on the alert. Gently, he turned the handle, trying the door. It

opened easily. The room beyond was in darkness, but from a skylight in the ceiling a faint, bluish light found ingress. Dark shapes of furniture bulked about the room. A table stood under the skylight.

Rick released Nan's arm.

"The skylight—that must be Loitz's little bolt hole," he said softly. "We'll see!"

He climbed up onto the table. Far above him he could see, through the skylight, one or two stars glittering. The skylight was open a few inches. He pushed it right back till it was wide open, balancing. Then, gripping the edge of the roof, he pulled himself up, climbed out onto the leads. Lying flat, he held down both hands through the aperture.

"O. K., Nan," he called softly. "Come on!"

She climbed onto the table and gripped his hands. He pulled her up beside him onto the roof.

"All right?"

"Fine," she whispered.

Rick looked about him. The roof was quite flat; the chimneys bulked darkly in the faint light. He walked to the low, three-foot parapet which flanked the roof. Away to the left, the lights of Shaftesbury Avenue stained the darkness; to his right, Regent Street cast a faint effulgence into the night sky. The hooting of a taxi, afar off, sounded eerily through the stillness. He looked down over the parapet. The wall of the building fell away sheer to the narrow, ill-lighted Soho street on which it fronted. Over the discreet entrance to the night club one solitary lamp burned yellow. Clearly, escape from that side was out of the question. He turned to Nan.

"Wait here for a minute. I'll have a look round."

He moved away, and the black bulk of a chimney hid him. Close to the skylight, Nan waited, listening. There was

no sound from the room below. After two minutes, Rick returned, somewhat puzzled.

"We've made a blind bolt, Nan. There's no way off this roof. Loitz must have some secret door, opening off the staircase itself. I'm going back in for another look round. You wait here."

He lowered himself again through the skylight, dropped down lightly to the table. Very silently, going on tiptoe, he groped his way across the dark room to the door. He opened it, peering out. The little landing was still in darkness; no sound came to his ears. He moved out softly onto the landing, sliding one hand along the wall. His questing feet found the stairs. He began cautiously to descend them.

Somewhere in the dark below him there sounded a low, muffled report. He checked, listening, his breath held. An indistinct humming sound came to him through the dark; it ceased abruptly with a little click. The silence closed down again.

For a moment, Rick waited, motionless, on the stairs. There was something sinister going on down there in the dark. That report had been like the cough of an automatic fired some distance off—or, alternatively, like one fired close, but muffled by a silencer. He could not tell. He laid a hand on his hip pocket. Something bulked hard there—and it wasn't a flask! He grinned slightly in the dark, and crept on down the stairs.

Just ahead of him he saw suddenly a faint glow of light. It came round a bend in the stairs. Rick stopped, listening. Even as he did so, there was a muffled report behind him. Something thudded viciously into the wall at his right.

He whirled round, flinging himself flat on the stairs, whipping out his pistol. From the top of the staircase some one had fired, with a silencer-fitted pistol,

at his silhouette against that faint glow of light.

The killer fired again. The bullet bit into the wood of the stairs, an inch from Rick's head. Rick saw the stab of flame from the killer's gun. He leveled his pistol at the spot whence that point of flame had come. He fired—twice, in quick succession—and let himself slide back, on his stomach, round that bend in the stairs. He came within the radius of the light. The angle of the wall sheltered him. He got to his knees, crouching close against the wall, his pistol tight in his hand.

There was no sound from above—no movement. For a full minute, Rick waited, taut and ready. The killer made no move. Rick glanced about him. The light came through a narrow, oblong opening, just large enough to admit a man, in the wall opposite him.

Rick nodded grimly, tight-lipped. Without doubt, that was Loitz's way out. It had been closed when he had mounted the stairs with Nan. Since then, some one had opened it. He remembered that low, humming sound—the click with which it had ended—that could have been made only, he told himself, by the opening of this secret door.

He glanced backward, down the stairs. They were in darkness—evidently deserted. But he knew that at any second he might be taken in the rear by more of Loitz's killers—that he might be caught between two fires. Crouching, his pistol ready in his hand, he dodged across the stairs through that narrow opening.

He found himself in a long, blank-walled corridor, lighted by one electric light pendent from the middle of the cobweb-festooned ceiling. Under the light, a man in evening dress lay sprawled on his back on the bare, dirty boards.

Rick moved forward cautiously, his pistol menacing that still, sprawling figure. But the man made no move, and

suddenly Rick saw the red stain of blood on the fallen man's shirt front.

He glanced back toward the narrow opening in the wall. No one showed there. He bent down over the fallen man, looking at his face. He was quite dead.

"Snide Lehmann!" Rick muttered. "Now, who in Hades croaked you?"

For a moment, he stood looking down at the figure on the floor—all that remained of "Snide" Lehmann, gunman, safe breaker, and ex-member of the Loitz mob. Rick nodded slowly, frowning in thought. He glanced round, whirled quickly, gun in hand.

He was too late.

From the narrow opening in the wall, Chief Inspector Hansard had him covered.

"Drop that gun!"

CHAPTER II.

HIGH STAKES!

HER association with Rick Leroy—first as his secretary, and later as his active assistant—had led Nan Fergus into many queer and dangerous situations. It had also strengthened her nerves to a degree unusual in a girl, and had created in her a complete faith in her chief. She knew that Rick was notably capable of looking after himself. There were times when he disappeared from his chambers in Half Moon Street for weeks on end, sending no word as to his whereabouts. At first, because Rick had come to mean a good deal to her, she had been troubled by these prolonged absences. She had learned to know that he always came back.

Even yet, though it was two years since he had seen her turned away, penniless, jobless, and without a friend, from the stage door of a theater, and had helped her, she found him something of a mystery. That he was the scapegrace son of a certain eminent

nobleman, she knew; that, from some source or other, he derived a considerable income, she knew also. But she had no idea whence that income came. The plate on the door of the chambers in Half Moon Street read: "Hon. Roderick Leroy, Criminologist." But, though she had known a few people to seek Rick's aid in various difficulties—as, for example, the beautiful Lady Blanche Jadell, who had been hounded by a blackmailer to the verge of suicide—Nan had never known him to accept one penny in return for his services.

The publication of his book, "Criminal Secrets," had brought him a great deal of notoriety. For many weeks thereafter, there had been an almost continuous stream of callers at the chambers in Half Moon Street. The callers were, for the most part, of a curious character. There had been, for instance, a gentleman of Dutch extraction called Gerard van Kamp, who had displayed an uncharitable lust for Rick's instant demise.

With Gerard, Rick had been compelled to deal harshly. Likewise, there was a lady by the name of "Stiletto Annie" Gurney, who had sought Rick's removal by means of a Mills bomb, but had been thwarted in her unworthy ambition by the bomb's reluctance to explode. Life at the chambers in Half Moon Street was not without its moments of excitement.

On the other hand, there had presented themselves from time to time at the chambers certain gentlemen of deadly aspect who, claiming to be Rick's friends, had fraternized with him in a comradely fashion, imbibed great quantities of his whisky, smoked a great many of his cigarettes, shaken his hand with almost tearful affection, and gone their ways with repeated promises to return should the police not complicate things.

The police looked askance at Rick. They did not like the company he kept,

they did not understand how any blameless man could know so much about the underworld of London as Rick's book showed that he knew, and they deplored those frequent absences of his. Many times, they had had him tailed, and always they had lost sight of him, overlooking the fact that he had once been on the stage and that he knew more about make-up than did the man who invented it. Their failure to keep him in sight for an instant longer than he wanted them to, infuriated the police against Rick. But Rick only laughed, being a young man with a sense of humor.

The sudden manifestations of criminal activity which accompanied the début of that super-crook the papers called the Black Ace, interested Rick profoundly, and he had come here with Nan to-night because he wanted, he had told her, to take a look at the lair of the Ace's lieutenant, Gaspar Loitz.

Now, waiting on the roof, Nan wondered what was happening in the dark building beneath her. Because of her confidence in Rick, she was not worried, until she heard that first muffled report. She stiffened then, cautiously peering down through the open skylight, into the dark room beneath, listening intently.

A minute passed—two minutes. Abruptly, even as she made to step back from the skylight, that muffled report was repeated—more loudly, yet seeming still to be some distance away. Close on its heels, the short, sharp bark of an automatic shattered the silence—twice, in quick succession.

Nan's mouth was dry; her heart was beating slowly and heavily. She was rigid, listening. But the silence had closed down again—grim, brooding, sinister.

Was Rick in trouble down there? Had he come up against any of Loitz's thugs? She thought of the cold, deadly ferocity she had seen in the eyes of

Gaspar Loitz, and a little shudder of fear shook through her. She laid a hand on her thigh. Tucked into the top of her silk stocking, under her garter, was a tiny, pearl-handled automatic—a gift from Rick. She slipped it from its hiding place and gripped it tightly. She would give him five minutes, she decided, if he didn't show up by then, she would follow him. He might be glad to see her. She waited, counting the seconds.

A car swung into the street below. She heard the rasp of gears—heard the car draw up outside the night club. There was a sudden babel of voices. Nan guessed that the police had got the lights going again—had phoned for that pleasant vehicle, the Black Maria. There would be a great searching of pockets this night for bail!

She heard the police car drive off. The silence seemed heavier—more deadly. Three minutes, she reckoned, had gone. There was no sign of Rick.

She peered down into the dark room under the skylight. No sound came to her.

Four minutes!

He should have been back by now. Something had gone wrong.

Five!

Nan's lips set grimly. Slipping the automatic into a small pocket in the lining of her evening wrap, she lowered herself carefully through the skylight, dropping down onto the table.

It was very quiet, very dark, very still.

A faint sound came to her ears as she opened the door and stepped out onto the landing. She froze, peering into the dark, listening. Very softly, there came to her through the darkness the sound of a man breathing.

Every nerve in her was tingling. The breathing seemed to come from just in front of her. Some one was there! She felt for her automatic, thrust it forward, her finger quivering on the trigger.

"Who's there?"

Just in front of her, some one moved suddenly, brushing against her outstretched arm. She set her teeth against the cry which sprang to her throat.

Somewhere close in the darkness, a door creaked faintly. Whoever the night prowler was, he had gone, Nan guessed, into that room opposite the one from which she had just emerged.

She hesitated, trying to still the laboring of her heart. Who was the night prowler—the silent man in the dark? Had he anything to do with Rick's failure to return?

She waited for some sound from within that room. None came. No light showed beneath the door.

Nan lowered her pistol at last. Probably, her thoughts ran, the prowler had been one of Loitz's drug clients who, seeking that secret exit, had lost his way.

She groped with her foot for the stairs, found them, and began cautiously to descend. Rounding a bend of the stairs, she saw ahead of her a faint light. A mutter of voices came to her. She crept on down the stairs. In a moment, she saw the narrow, oblong opening whence the light and the voices came.

"A fouled pistol in your hand—a dead man at your feet! It looks bad, Leroy!"

"Appearances are deceptive, inspector," another voice said easily.

It was Rick! The blood stormed to Nan's head. She slipped the pistol back into the pocket of her wrap, and, careless now of going quietly, ran down the last few stairs. She stepped in through that narrow opening.

"Rick!"

He turned his head quickly, looking at her. He was standing with his back to the wall of that narrow, dingy corridor. Chief Inspector Hansard, his pistol at the alert, stood facing Rick across the body of Snide Lehmann. Two men in dinner jackets—assistants

of Inspector Hansard's—stood to either side of their chief.

Rick smiled ruefully, with a little eloquent shrug.

"Rick! What—what does this mean?" Nan panted.

"It means," said Chief Inspector Hansard grimly, "that the Honorable Rick Leroy is under arrest for the murder of Snide Lehmann!"

Her breath coming short and hard, Nan looked at Rick. So slightly that it was almost imperceptible, he winked his left eye. Nan understood. It was an old signal between them. She was to attract attention to herself.

"Arrested! Murder! Rick! Oh, Rick!" she cried, and suddenly, with a little moan, she swayed forward and collapsed in a crumpled heap on the floor.

The two plain-clothes men started toward her. Inspector Hansard's eyes wavered from Rick for a second.

In that second, Rick acted. Leaping forward, he swung his fist at the light, smashing the bulb. Instantly, the corridor was in pitch darkness.

"Keep still! Don't move!" That was Inspector Hansard, shouting urgently through the dark. "Listen! Listen!"

There was a tense silence in the corridor. Nan lay quite still on the floor, her heart pounding. Along the corridor, at the end farthest from the opening, there was the sound of a slight stumble.

"There he goes!" Inspector Hansard roared. "After him! After him!"

There was a rush of feet along the corridor, away from Nan. She heard Hansard shout:

"Stairs! Careful!"

The sound of the chase grew fainter. She rose to her feet in the darkness, groping her way along after Rick and his pursuers. Her foot brushed against something on the floor. She shuddered. Snide Lehmann!

She reached the end of the corridor. To her left was a long, steep flight of stairs, dimly seen in the pale glow from a street lamp whose light entered through an open doorway at the foot of the staircase. Through the doorway, Nan could see the cobbles of what appeared to be an alley.

She stood listening for a moment. No sound came to her ears. She began to descend the stairs. For herself, she felt no fear. The police had nothing on her; if she had been in any danger from them, Rick would never have left her. But for Rick himself—she was afraid for Rick. Rick was up against it!

Rick was. At that moment he was racing along the dark, narrow alley which flanked Loitz's night club. To either side of him were blank walls—no place to hide, no way of escape. He could hear Inspector Hansard and his men no more than twenty yards in the rear.

He pounded round the corner of the alley, came out into the narrow street on which the night club backed. Not ten yards away, drawn up against the pavement, was a long, low, powerful car, with only its side lights brightly burning.

Two men stood beside the car—one in plain clothes, the other a uniformed policeman. Hansard's car!

Hearing Rick, the two men swung round quickly to face him. They were not quite quick enough. Before they had time to brace themselves against his charge, he was upon them, striking out with both fists.

The man in plain clothes went hurtling back against the wall of the building, slumped down, and lay still on the pavement. The policeman took Rick's fist at the side of the head and staggered back, fighting to keep his balance.

Rick leaped into the driving seat of the car and pressed the self-starter. The engine screamed into life. Rick en-

gaged the gears hastily. The car started forward with a jerk.

Recovering his balance, the policeman leaped onto the running board and raised his truncheon to strike down at Rick's head. Rick released the wheel, driving his right to the attacker's chest. The man lost his grip and fell sprawling in the road. The car swerved wildly. Just in time to prevent it from crashing into a building, Rick got his grip again on the wheel.

He glanced round. Chief Inspector Hansard and his men were racing after the car, shouting.

Rick smiled grimly and slipped into second gear. The car leaped forward with a rapid gathering of speed. The pursuers dropped behind.

Tense at the wheel, Rick swung the car into Shaftesbury Avenue, turned down Wardour Street, and soon was sliding through that network of narrow, dark, deserted streets which backs upon Covent Garden.

With a deep breath of relief, he sat back, snapping on the headlights.

The thought of Nan came into his mind. He smiled a little, very tenderly. She was a great girl. She had turned up just in the nick of time. Another minute and Hansard would have had the handcuffs on him. All the time the inspector had been talking to him, Rick had been looking about him for a way of escape. He had spotted that staircase at the far end of the corridor—had guessed that that was Loitz's bolt hole. Nan's opportune arrival had given him the chance he needed to make a dash for it.

For Hansard once to have got him behind bars would have been fatal; the evidence against him was overwhelming. As the long police car slid through the silent city, speeding eastward, Rick tried hard to unravel in his mind the mystery of the killer with the silencer pistol.

If, indeed, the murderer of Snide

Lehmann had been the same man who had shot at Rick from the top of the stairs, how exactly had that man got to the top of the stairs? Rick had been on the stairs himself at the moment of hearing the first muffled report—the report of the shot that must have killed Snide Lehmann.

The killer could not have passed Rick on the stairs; he could only have got to the top landing by some other staircase, and, if that were so, why had he opened the secret door? To that, Rick told himself, there could be only one answer: There had been two men at work. The man who had shot at him—Rick—was not the murderer of Snide Lehmann. Who, then, was the murderer? The thought leaped unbidden to his mind:

“The Black Ace!”

He stiffened suddenly in his seat, his hands gripping tighter on the wheel. Fifty yards ahead along the narrow street through which the car was sliding, the figure of a man leaped out into the glare of the headlights, holding up both hands. It was a uniformed policeman!

Rick trod down hard on the accelerator. The car plunged forward with a roar, bumped up onto the pavement, shot past the policeman, and boomed onward.

Rick's face was grim.

“Got the dragnet out after me already, have you, inspector?” he muttered. “Well, I'll give you a run for your money! If I land the murderer of Snide Lehmann, I'm cleared! If I don't—if you get me first——” He shrugged slightly, his gray eyes glittering. “It comes to this: The police are after me; I'm after the Black Ace! It's him or me, and there are high stakes on the result—it is one or the other—his life or mine!”

The car swung into that dark, sinister labyrinth of streets which lies along the Shadwell Basin.

CHAPTER III.

WATCHING EYES!

CHIEF INSPECTOR HANSARD selected a long, yellow, Russian cigarette from the box on his desk, and pushed the box across to the grim, square-set man who sat opposite him.

“Smoke, sergeant?” he said. “You'll like those cigarettes. I have them made for me specially—my one extravagance.”

Detective Sergeant Angus Mackenzie shook his heavy, grizzled head.

“I'll no be smokin' now, sir, thank ye.”

“As you will.” Hansard shrugged, struck a match, lighted his cigarette, and, inhaling deeply, leaned back in his chair. Through the drifting mist of tobacco smoke, his dark, keen eyes were on Mackenzie's face. “Well, sergeant, what's the divisional surgeon's report on Snide Lehmann?”

“Nothin' now, sir—shot through the heart,” the sergeant said grimly.

“You've got the bullet?”

“Aye, we have that, sir. The surgeon found it lodged against the left shoulder blade. The bone was splintered. The bullet was fired from a Webley automatic.”

“Good! How about the girl?”

“Was released an hour ago, at nine a. m. sharp, accordin' to your orders.”

“You didn't question her—didn't frighten her in any way?”

“The girl,” said Sergeant Mackenzie heavily, “was treated wi' every courtesy and consideration. I told her she'd been held for a few hours as a matter of form, pendin' inquiries concernin' yon sink of iniquity, Loitz's night club—so-called. She was released wi'out bail, no questions asked.”

The inspector drew deeply on his cigarette.

“You've got her tailed?”

“Aye! Lister an' Rourke are so close on her heels a mon'd think they was debt collectors.” The sergeant laughed

dryly. "But yon's a bonny chit, wi' more in her head than a pair o' blue eyes. And I'm sure she'll guess why she's been released. If she knows where Leroy's hidin', she'll no lead us there, or I never summed up a female right yet."

"How about Leroy? Anything new on him?"

"Nothin' new," said the sergeant. "He's Lord Culvershaw's son; ye know that. He quarreled wi' his respected parent on the question of enterin' the dye-manufacturin' trade, an' upholdin' the family tradition, and was invited to get to Hades out o' the house. He went on the stage an' was in a fair way to makin' good when he quit—found it too monotonous, I asoom. He played polo for England against America, served as a private in the Foreign Legion, got back alive, an' set up as an alleged criminologist. Since then, his behavior's been highly questionable. Ye know all that."

The inspector smiled thinly.

"Yes, sergeant, I know all that. And here's something else: I've suspected for a long time that his criminology's just a blind. The publication of that book of his was a bit of sheer impudence—bravado." He leaned forward across the desk, his dark eyes narrowing. "Who else are we up against whose actions are always stamped with just those characteristics—brazen impudence and reckless bravado?"

Sergeant Mackenzie's teeth came together with a snap.

"The Ace—the Black Ace!"

Hansard nodded.

"The Black Ace, sergeant! You've said it! Where does Leroy get his big income from? Certainly not from his father. Why can't we keep him tailed? How is it he's acquainted with some of the deadliest crooks in town? He's been up to something crooked, sergeant, ever since he started this criminology

stuff. And now he's gone too far. We've got him!"

"Snide Lehmann!" the sergeant said softly.

"Exactly, sergeant—Snide Lehmann." Hansard leaned back in his chair smiling broadly. "That's where Leroy tripped up; he killed Snide Lehmann. We've got him for that, anyway; we've got something substantial on him at last. Once we get him in our hands now, we'll be able to pin the Ace's work on him; you'll see. Once we get him where we can cross-examine him, the rest'll come! And, unless I miss my guess badly, we shall find that the Honorable Roderick Leroy and the Black Ace are one and the same man! Why——"

The telephone on his desk shrilled suddenly. He broke off, taking up the receiver.

"Hello? . . . Yes, Chief Inspector Hansard speaking. . . . Yes, yes! Well?" He listened. Sergeant Mackenzie, watching, saw his chief stiffen suddenly. "Where? . . . Well, I'll be——" He caught himself up. "All right! I'll send Mackenzie down."

He returned the receiver to its hook. Triumph blazed in his hard, keen eyes. He looked across at Mackenzie.

"Remember what I said a second ago, sergeant—that impudence and bravado stamped all the Ace's work?"

"Aye," Mackenzie said stolidly.

"Well, they've found the car Leroy made his get-away in last night—my car, sergeant! And how about this for cold-drawn nerve? They found it left quietly and considerably outside the river police station, Limehouse! Is that the Ace's touch, or is it not?"

"It is," the sergeant replied.

Hansard crushed the stub of his cigarette into an ash tray on the desk. He reached for another cigarette.

"We've got him located now, sergeant—more or less. Limehouse or Shadwell—somewhere around there. Now I——"

Again the telephone jarred across his words. He took up the receiver.

"Hello? . . . Yes, speaking! That you, Rourke? . . . Eh?" His voice hardened. "Eh, is that so? Watch her, Rourke. Don't lose her. Tell Lister to take the other two. . . . Good!"

He jammed down the receiver, and for a moment sat thinking. Mackenzie watched him. He knew that his chief had received news of import, that he was thinking that news over, examining it from every angle under the microscope of that clever, subtle, ruthless mind of his. Mackenzie said nothing. Though torture would not have forced the dour Scotsman to admit as much, there were times when his chief daunted him. Mackenzie had a natural kindness; he knew that mankind was not so bad as a lifetime of police work made it appear on the surface. But he knew there was no kindness in Chief Inspector Hansard. To Hansard, mankind was something to crush and to destroy, like an evil growth. He was a brilliant and a terrible man, and Angus Mackenzie admired and dreaded him.

Hansard spoke abruptly:

"What do you know about Haley Burke, sergeant?"

"Little enough," said Mackenzie. "Anson Burke was his brother. Up to six months ago, Haley was in the States, serving a sentence for blackmail in the Pennsylvania penitentiary. He's crooked, but he's not the dangerous, clever devil his brother Anson was."

Hansard nodded.

"How about Thaydis Allain? D'you know her?"

"Aye," Mackenzie said soberly. "An' I know vipers when I see 'em—an' yon's one!"

"Didn't she used to run with Anson Burke and his bunch?"

"Aye, she did that, sir, till the Ace left his visitin' card on Burke, no flowers by request. A Eurasian, she is—

half Greek, half Mongol—an' she's deadly."

"What's her line, sergeant?"

"Nothin' we can put a thumb on," the sergeant said heavily. "But I know this. Thaydis Allain loved Anson Burke the way tigresses love their young. When the Ace killed Anson, he made an enemy that won't be content wi' a mere eye for an eye, if she gets a chance; she'll do things to him that—well, that only a woman like Thaydis Allain and no one else could think of."

"I can," Hansard said grimly. "Bad as that, is she? Well, d'you know where she is this minute, sergeant? She's with the Fergus girl in Leroy's chambers in Half Moon Street! And Haley Burke's there, too! That was Rourke on the phone; he's just seen them go in, and he reported right away." Hansard leaned across the desk, his narrowed eyes on the sergeant's face. "Thaydis Allain's after the Ace, you say. Suppose she's discovered somehow that Leroy's the Ace, wouldn't that explain her visit with Haley Burke to Leroy's chambers?"

The sergeant's jaw set grimly.

"I know nothing about that, sir. But, if Thaydis Allain's in it, there's devil's work afoot!"

Hansard leaned back in his chair.

"Everything comes to our net, sergeant, soon or late! Leroy's doomed! He can't beat Scotland Yard. Nobody can beat the Yard, sergeant! Hey? We've got him! We've got him cold!"

He laughed sardonically, and proceeded to give his orders.

But Chief Inspector Hansard was not the only person in London that morning who wondered what business had brought Thaydis Allain and Haley Burke to the Honorable Rick Leroy's chambers in Half Moon Street. Nan Fergus had been in no more than half an hour, had had time only to make a hasty toilet in Rick's bathroom—she

herself lived at the Park View Hotel, just round the corner, but she had come on straight from Vine Street to Rick's chambers—when Kasimo, Rick's Jap servant, came to tell her of the visitors downstairs.

Still in her evening dress, Nan was sitting in a low leather chair beside the electric fire. There was a breakfast tray on a small Moorish table before her, but she had eaten nothing. She looked tired and pale. Sergeant Mackenzie had arrested her as she emerged from that secret bolt hole of Gaspar Loitz's, had detained her for a few hours at Vine Street, and finally, without any cross-examination, had released her. Nan was under no delusion as to why she had been released; she knew that she was watched and she was afraid for Rick.

"A lady and gentleman? Who are they, Kasimo?"

"Won't give name, Miss Nan," the Jap said, grinning.

Nan hesitated. Sensing danger on all sides, she was distrustful of every one. But suppose, she thought, these visitors should bear some message from Rick, telling her where he was.

"I'll see them, Kasimo," she said abruptly. "And, Kasimo"—she knew that she could trust the Jap—"don't go far away!"

Kasimo showed a considerable quantity of teeth in a flashing smile.

"Trouble, Miss Nan?" He raised his hand; miraculously, a short, gleaming knife had appeared in it. "I ready! Nice knife! New one!"

He grinned at her, took up the breakfast tray, and moved silently from the room.

Nan slipped out her automatic from its hiding place under her garter, and thrust the weapon behind the cushion of her chair, within easy reach. She was taking no chances.

When Kasimo bowed the visitors in, closing the door behind them, she was

sitting again in the low leather chair before the fire. With a little, quick thrill of fear, she recognized the visitors. Rick had pointed them out to her once in the Savoy Grill—Haley Burke, tall, slim, very dark and handsome, immaculate in morning clothes, but with dark circles under his eyes, and unsteady hands; Thaydis Allain, lithe and graceful, exquisite in a black costume with a white fur, with something cold and forbidding in her Oriental beauty.

Nan rose. Thaydis Allain came forward slowly, with a lithe, tigerish grace.

"You are Nancy Fergus, isn't it?" Her voice was smooth and rich, like a cat's purr; save for an occasional eccentricity of idiom, there was nothing foreign about her speech. "You know us, yes?"

"I know you." Nan nodded. "Won't you sit down?"

Burke bowed, saying nothing; he sat down in a chair near the window; his white, nervous hands beat a restless tattoo on the silver knob of his stick. Thaydis Allain took the leather chair opposite Nan's. She leaned forward, watching Nan with oblique, sleepy eyes, hued like amber.

"You know why we have come?"

"No. I was wondering," Nan said bluntly.

The Eurasian smiled.

"You know that at this moment you are in great danger, isn't it?"

Nan's heart gave a little leap. Involuntarily, her hand crept back toward the pistol behind the cushion.

"Danger from whom?"

The Eurasian laid one of her narrow, beautiful hands on Nan's knee, stroking it gently, caressingly. Nan felt herself go taut under that touch. There was something terrible about this woman. Her smooth, olive skin, her oblique eyes, the very shape of her face—everything about her was evil, viperine.

"Listen, little one. We know all that

took place last night in Loitz's night club. We have our—agents. And I tell you this: Even now, already, you are hemmed in by watching eyes. Outside there, in the street, the watchers are gathering—vultures, little one, waiting the minute to strike!"

"You mean Scotland Yard?" Nan breathed. "I knew that."

For the first time, Haley Burke spoke softly, from his chair near the window:

"The Black Ace!"

The Eurasian nodded; a sudden cold, deadly fury blazed from her widened eyes, distorted her small, red mouth.

"Even so, the Black Ace! Be wary, little one. He has you watched. And he is more dangerous than Scotland Yard—more vicious, more cunning, more secret! He strikes suddenly, out of nowhere, and he never misses!"

Nan's breath came fast.

"You mean, he is watching me—this house—now?"

The Eurasian's lips curled back, smiling, from her strangely pointed teeth.

"He is watching in the hope that you may be in touch with your chief. He seeks Rick Leroy; he is afraid of Rick Leroy; he seeks to trample Rick Leroy from his path. He was at Loitz's last night—somewhere in the background."

"Somewhere in the background!" Across Nan's mind there flared suddenly the memory of that man in the dark, the night prowler whom she had disturbed at some mysterious vigil behind the scenes at Loitz's night club. Could it be possible, she wondered, that the night prowler had been the Ace? She suddenly looked across at Thaydis Allain.

"Why do you come here to warn me? What is it to you if Mr. Leroy's life is in danger or mine, either?"

"I will tell you," the Eurasian said. "It is not for your sake, little one, be sure. Only"—sudden hatred rasped in her voice—"only I loved Anson Burke,

and the Ace killed him!" Her hands writhed with fury. "They brought to me the knife with Anson's blood on it, and the black card of death the Ace left behind him! I will seek him out; I will strip him of his mask of darkness; I will confront him with his card of death, and drive his dagger through his own black heart!"

She calmed suddenly; her voice became smooth again. "Rick Leroy is a hunted man: The Ace seeks him; Scotland Yard seeks him. But he is clever, this Rick Leroy. He knows much. He must realize that his only hope of clearing himself of Snide Lehmann's murder is to bring the Ace to book. I, too, seek the Ace. Figure yourself, then, we may help one another, isn't it?"

Haley Burke spoke quietly from the window. With unsteady hands, he was selecting a cigarette from a gold case. Noting those nervous, quivering hands of his, Nan wondered whether he drank or used drugs, perhaps. Probably he used drugs, she thought; he bore all signs of it.

"In her somewhat extravagant way," Burke said: "Thaydis is trying to tell you that we offer you an alliance. No, Thaydis; let me speak for once." He laughed softly. "Miss Fergus, you have heard probably of the Burke mob? That mob did not die with my brother. It still exists. It has its advantages—men, arms, channels of information, organization. I am its leader—its nominal leader," he corrected himself, looking at the Eurasian. "We are willing to put these advantages at your chief's disposal, because we believe Rick Leroy to be the only man clever enough to defeat the Black Ace.

"It is in our own interests to see the Ace laid by the heels. For one thing, he killed my brother; also, we go in fear of his again hampering us in the pursuit of our daily bread. It is clearly essential, from Leroy's point of view, that the Ace be wiped out. Obviously,

then, we both hunt on the same trail. Why not hunt together?"

Nan hesitated. The woman and the man watched her expectantly. Nan's thoughts were racing. A detective and a mob of crooks working together! It sounded mad. But was it, she wondered, so mad as it sounded? Rick could not look to the police for help; Scotland Yard was only a source of menace to him. Yet, if ever a man needed help, it was Rick now. With the Burke mob at his disposal, he would have a powerful weapon against the Black Ace.

"You know where Leroy is hiding, isn't it?" Thaydis Allain said softly. "You could very easily get in touch with him?"

Nan shook her head.

"I don't know where he is. But—but I think——"

"Yes?" the Eurasian said eagerly.

Nan drew a deep breath.

"I think he would agree to an alliance," she said steadily. "I think he would agree that we can be of use to each other."

Burke rose from his chair near the window, moving forward. He stood looking down at Nan.

"In this affair, you can trust us. Our interests are the same," he said. "But we cannot succeed unless we are both open with each other. It is the truth that you do not know where Leroy is hiding?"

Nan rose, facing him.

"That is the truth. But Rick'll surely find some way to get in touch with me before long, and I shall tell him then of our arrangement."

Burke hesitated, looking at her narrowly. She could see uncertainty in his dark, narrow eyes. Abruptly, he bowed and stepped back.

Thaydis Allain rose.

"It is agreed, then. If you need help, if you wish to send us a message, you will find standing at the corner of Jer-

myn and Lower Regent Streets a newspaper seller. You will ask him if he has a double-headed penny; he will answer: 'Yes, but not for sale.' You will then give him your message. Buy an evening paper, so that, if you are being followed, your follower will suspect nothing. Your message will be responded to promptly, for in this business we are your associates. Afterward, if the Black Ace is smashed——" She shrugged. "We shall see! Meantime, we work together! Do you understand? Good-by!"

Without another word, she turned on her heel, and moved with that lithe, tigerish grace to the door. Burke followed her, saying nothing. The door closed behind them. Nan crossed quickly to the window. Twitching aside the curtain ever so slightly, she peered out.

Twenty yards to the left of the house, drawn up against the curb, was a neat, small chocolate-colored motor van, bearing on its side the legend: "S. Rosen, Gentlemen's Valet Service, Maiden Lane." The hood was raised, and the driver was performing on the engine with a spanner. Directly opposite the house, a shabby-looking individual was leaning against a lamp-post, absorbed in a morning paper.

Nan watched. Thaydis Allain and her immaculate cavalier came out into the street, and, walking rapidly, turned toward the Green Park end. Just within Nan's range of vision they passed a well-dressed man in a derby hat and a dark overcoat, who was walking in the opposite direction. The well-dressed man paused as Thaydis and Burke passed him; he looked toward the shabby man with the newspaper, raised two fingers, then turned and followed Thaydis Allain and Haley Burke. The shabby man nodded almost imperceptibly, and returned to his paper.

The driver of the van straghtened from his labors with the engine. He

looked after Thaydis and Burke; his lips moved, as though he were speaking to some one inside the van.

Nan's breath caught suddenly in her throat. From the back of the van, a man stepped out quickly. Nan saw his face. It was Gaspar Loitz! He walked briskly up the street, toward the Green

Park end. The driver of the van glanced up toward the window whence Nan watched.

She stepped back quickly, her hand at her heart.

Thaydis Allain had been right. The house was hemmed in by watching eyes! The vultures were gathering!

To be continued in next week's issue of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine.



WHERE DID THE MONEY GO?

A BAND of gypsies consisting of two women, a young girl, a baby, and a man, entered the First National Bank at Otis, Colorado, recently and asked for a money sack. They engaged the assistant cashier, Mr. Zimmer, in conversation, who gave them what they requested.

The gypsies offered to tell the assistant cashier his fortune. He held one hundred and eighty dollars in his hand while talking. The cashier, B. L. McKenzie, noting the band, ordered them out. They protested but acquiesced finally, and were seen a few minutes later leaving in a high-powered car.

What the gypsies had told the assistant cashier, he could not remember. He believed that he had been hypnotized. When they had gone, he could not find the money which he was positive he had been holding in his hand. A check-up proved that there was a shortage of one hundred and eighty dollars. If he had been under the hypnotic influence of his visitors, the assistant cashier came to earth with a thud, ready for action, as soon as they left. Grabbing up a .410-gauge shotgun, he followed the gypsy car and caught up with them on a hill where their car had stalled.

Mr. Zimmer said he pursued them for two hundred miles. With shotgun in hand, he searched the gypsies as well as the car, but could not find any of the money which he believed they took.

This is not the first instance in which gypsies have entered a bank and made away with money. They are noted for being light-fingered and quick as a sleight-of-hand performer.



CHECK SWALLOWER NEARLY BEATS POLICE

WHEN a Jersey City check forger presented a check to an Easton, Pennsylvania, bank, the teller became suspicious, and called another teller to his assistance. The result of the conference was that the man who had presented the check became alarmed and snatched it from the teller, who at once called the police.

When the policeman arrived, he had his man but no check was in sight, as it had been swallowed as soon as the blue uniform and brass buttons were visible. The policeman, however, arrested the man on suspicion, and a doctor later removed the check with a stomach pump.

The Lion's Cage

HE HAD NOTHING TO DO BUT WAIT FOR HIS PREY.

By Donald G. McDonald

Author of "Strange Tenant," etc.

WITH his swivel chair tipped back at a precarious angle, and his well-polished shoes reposing on the shiny top of the new mahogany desk, Mr. Addison Higgins scowled heavily at the cloud-laden sky and the rain-spattered windows of his office. His tangled brows bristled angrily above his fashionable eyeglasses. A luxuriant growth of light, wavy hair, in a state of orderly confusion, crowned his massive head and made him look like a lion who could be counted upon to roar his displeasure when crossed.

Even at the moment, a deep rumbling sound emanated from his throat—a growl of disgust that reached its climax and was stilled when he jabbed a fat cigar between his lips and chewed at it viciously.

Three weeks of idleness in this office, with nothing to do save read magazines, worry out the solution to innumerable cross-word puzzles and consume quantities of black cigars! And all this time—waiting—waiting with the patience of a lion stalking for his prey!

Suddenly, Mr. Higgins's ample shoes swung to the floor, and their owner pulled his chair up close to the desk. He seized a pen in his right hand and a sheaf of papers in his left. He was none too quick in grasping these props, for the steps that he had heard in the corridor now paused outside the office and a rap sounded on the door.

"Come in," he boomed, apparently too deeply engrossed in his papers to look up as the door opened and then closed.

"I'll be free in just a moment. Pray be seated." Controlling his eagerness to look at the caller, Mr. Higgins replaced his pen, folded the papers with



meticulous care, and placed them in a legal folder. Then and not till then, did he rise ponderously and turn toward the visitor with his palm outstretched.

"My name is Henry Topp," ventured the other while shaking hands weakly. He was of medium height, slender, and wore a spatter of gray whiskers under his nose and another and more ample daub on his chin. His small, gray eyes peered nervously through his thick glasses.

"And mine is Addison Higgins," intoned that individual with appropriate emphasis.

"Very glad to know you, sir. I gather from your office door that you are a broker—a buyer and seller of precious stones."

"Exactly." Mr. Higgins inhaled deeply. Could it be possible that this visitor spelled the end of the long wait? Impossible! Absurd to think that he possessed the purchase price for the Cumberland necklace. "Please be seated."

Mr. Higgins having resumed his own chair, now studied his caller eagerly and hopefully, while the latter explained his visit.

"I am a native of Montana, from the vicinity of a town called Opheim, where I own a rather profitable section of land."

Mr. Higgins bowed approvingly. It seemed as if his ears twitched. "I see. A wonderful country, I believe. My wife lived somewhere in that part as a girl, and she has never ceased to love it."

"Well, that has been my home for practically every day of my life, and the Northwest has been very good to me. I passed through a wretched time in my early attempts to wrest a living from that land of killing frosts, devastating hailstorms and blistering drought, but a few good crops in succession and some profitable investments have at last given

me and my wife a good degree of independence."

Mr. Higgins expanded. "Have a cigar."

"No, thank you. Would that my health were as strong as my bank account."

"You are most fortunate in having the money that will enable you to seek health," beamed the other, while he combated the desire to rub his palms together. But no, he must not appear eager. Mr. Higgins, an actor in his younger days, now called upon all the histrionic talent he possessed and adopted a pose of indifference.

"So now," continued Henry Topp, "I am here in this great city on business, and it occurred to me that I would like to take back home a fine gift for my wife. Mrs. Topp and I have a weakness for diamonds, but so far we haven't bought anything worth mentioning. I thought I'd come to a man like you, who knows about such matters."

Mr. Higgins repressed a desire to rise up and dance a jig. "I am glad to be of every assistance. You have shown admirable judgment, for I can offer you the same, ah—excellent stones at considerable saving over retail prices." His face lighted up in a disarming smile. He reached in his inside coat pocket and withdrew a sort of glorified tobacco pouch of black, soft leather. From it, he extracted an unmounted stone. "Here is a beautiful gem. Examine it closely under this magnifying glass, and note the excellence of both the color and the cutting."

Henry Topp accepted the stone and the glass, surveyed both for a moment, then arose and stepped to a near-by window. For a moment, his head was bent in examination.

Addison Higgins, standing by his side, watched the man as he squinted and blinked his little gray eyes.

Presently, Mr. Topp straightened up, removed his glasses, and dabbed at his

strained optics with a handkerchief. "Very fine—very. My eyes are not as good as they might be, but I can see enough to satisfy me that it is a thoroughly fine diamond. What would be your price?"

The other waved his hand deprecatingly. "I showed it simply to make my point clear to you—that I deal only in the best. Since you ask the price, however—let me see." The broker pursed his lips and looked meditatively out of the window. It still was raining, but he did not notice it. "First I will weigh it to check my memory."

Henry Topp watched, with childlike interest, the process of weighing the stone on the delicate balance.

Mr. Higgins jotted down a string of figures on a piece of paper. "Retail price would be about four hundred and twenty dollars. I can sell it to you for three hundred twenty-five—ninety-five dollars less."

"I'll take it," said Henry Topp. "I would like it for my married daughter, but I haven't her finger measurement, so I'll take the stone as it is, and have it mounted when I return home." He produced a check book, then apologized as he replaced it, and extracted a fat wallet from his hip pocket. "Since I am a stranger to you," he said, "I will not impose by asking you to accept a check. I can give you the cash."

The other raised his hand protestingly. "Now that's quite all right, Mr. Topp. If this inconveniences you——"

"Not at all," said that gentleman. "I have at least two thousand here." He counted out the money and thrust it into Mr. Higgins's hands, accepted the stone, and tucked it hurriedly in a vest pocket.

"Thank you," murmured the broker. "Now, have you anything particular in mind as a gift for your wife?"

"No," said Henry Topp, stroking his goatee reflectively. "What would you advise?"

"Let's sit down," suggested Mr. Higgins. The truth was, he himself felt suddenly in need of support, for much depended upon his answer and upon the manner in which Henry Topp received it. His mouth felt dry, parched. He cleared his throat, adopted an attitude of convincing humility and candor, and proceeded.

"It is really singular that you came to me. Some years ago, I gave my wife a diamond necklace, composed of exquisitely matched and perfect stones. Three years following its purchase, my business dropped off and I was forced to use it as collateral on a loan. When this was paid up, the necklace, of course, returned to me.

"Now," continued Mr. Higgins, lowering and softening his voice, "I am frankly in the most embarrassing position of my life. You are familiar with present business conditions. You can understand, therefore, that at such a time the buying and selling of precious stones drops to a very low ebb. Therefore, my wife and I have finally decided that we will market this wonderful necklace.

"No, a loan is not feasible," he added hastily, as he saw the question on his caller's lips. "My age and business situation make me feel that I should never be able to repay the sum borrowed."

Henry Topp had listened sympathetically. "I am interested. Have you the necklace here?"

"No, it is at my home. Foolish of us, certainly, to keep an article of such value in any other place than a safety-deposit box, but, even though I haven't looked at it in several days, I know that it is quite secure—quite." Mr. Higgins paused a moment, then brought a large and rather flabby palm down on his leg with a resounding slap. "My dear sir, I have it. You are stopping at some hotel, I presume?"

Mr. Topp nodded affirmatively.

"And you are no doubt hungry for a sensible, home-cooked meal. Well, Mr. Topp, you are going to have one. I will be leaving for dinner in a half hour, and you are going with me. After the meal is over, you shall see this beautiful necklace."

Mr. Topp showed signs of declining, but finally capitulated and voiced his thanks.

"Then, if you will excuse me and make yourself comfortable with these magazines, I'll make a brief call a few doors away. I'll be back in fifteen minutes."

Three minutes later, Mr. Higgins dashed into a near-by drug store and entered a phone booth. Soon he was connected with the sharp voice of his wife. "Hello, my dear," he began in his softest and most diplomatic manner, "how are you this afternoon?"

The voice informed him that she was in her usual poor health and uncertain spirits. Mr. Higgins was obliged to break in upon her lengthy recital of annoyance.

"Well, I have good news for you. The hoped for has happened." He assured himself that the booth door was tightly closed before proceeding. "Yes," he replied to the query, "a softy with a whale of a roll. I'm bringing him out to the house for dinner. See that the cook makes it a bang-up meal. How's the new butler getting along?" He referred to a large, slow-thinking individual that he had hired two days before. The man had presented himself looking for work, and, when Mr. Higgins learned that the fellow had once been an actor, he had hired him in spite of the many protests of his wife.

It would be necessary to make it plain to Henry Topp that the cook and butler were leaving at the end of the week, and that he and his wife were seeking a modest apartment, otherwise things might not click well in his customer's

mind. As a matter of fact, it was only a week ago that Mr. and Mrs. Higgins had moved into their present dwelling.

"And don't wear the necklace at dinner," advised Mr. Higgins toward the close of his conversation with his wife. "I'll attend to that part when I get home. And another thing; remember we're supposed to be strapped, and, much as we hate to, we've got to dispose of the necklace—so don't act too happy about selling."

And now Mr. Addison Higgins strode back to the office with a buoyant and elastic step. Almost two years ago, he and his wife had been fortunate enough to secure, by means that were questionable, to say the least, the famous Cumberland necklace. Whether this good fortune could be laid to Mr. Higgins or to his wife was a matter as yet unsettled.

At any rate, once acquired, they had found its sale quite another matter. Both had agreed that it would be foolish to deal with a fence and take a small fraction of the necklace's value. So they had decided to bide their time until a kind fortune might reveal a desirable and unsuspecting purchaser.

Mr. Higgins had evolved the scheme of renting an office and putting up the appearance of a legitimate broker. His wife had been eloquent in her scorn, and, each day for the past three weeks, she had voiced her disapproval of this enterprise.

There was no love lost between these two. They had married only for the financial benefits they mutually acquired through working together, and for the added appearance it gave them of respectability and responsibility. Emotionally, they were intensely incompatible, and each was happiest when away from the other.

A portion of the story Mr. Higgins had told his customer had had a slight foundation in fact. Once, in a distant part of the country, and in immediate

need of cash, he had left the famous necklace as collateral in a dignified pawn establishment. Upon redeeming it a week later, the attempt had been made to return to him a very excellent imitation. There had been fireworks of a gorgeous sort, and Mr. Higgins had emerged in possession of the real necklace and the imitation. He had kept the latter as a souvenir of the affair, and so the true and the false necklaces now reposed in a very excellent place of concealment.

As to any unpleasantness with the law over the robbery of the Cumberland necklace—that danger was most remote. Mr. Higgins, being an actor of no mean ability, had accomplished the theft while in a character rôle so disarmingly unlike himself that clever indeed would be the officer who could find him. Also, until three weeks ago, Mr. and Mrs. Higgins had maintained their residence a thousand miles away from the city where the crime had been perpetrated; and their recent arrival, they felt sure, had not attracted attention. Although the police were acquainted with the habits of this husband and his wife, and though the theft of the necklace had somewhat resembled their handiwork, not a single accusing clew had been found.

There was but one individual who might know, or at least suspect. "Sparks" Knight, a notorious character, specializing in jewel thefts, was believed by many of those in the underworld to be possessed of a third ear, so to speak—an ear that somehow, in some strange, inexplicable manner, heard the truth about undercover activities.

The Higginses had never seen this individual, and hoped they might continue to side-step that misfortune, for Sparks Knight, it was said, profited largely from his coups directed against other and less clever criminals. More than one murder had been entered against him, and, though the police were

agreed on the necessity of his capture, the man's elusiveness had proved baffling.

But Mr. Addison Higgins was in too jubilant a mood to permit the harboring of such gloomy thoughts, and he took his guest to his home that evening in a rare good humor. He was the lion at play for the moment, and, when he and his companion gained the den and found the lioness awaiting them, he tapped her playfully on the cheek and asked for dinner.

"It will be ready in fifteen minutes," she assured him. "You and Mr. Topp will just have time enough to wash up."

While his guest was so occupied in the adjoining bathroom, Mr. Higgins, in his own bedroom, knelt at the foot of a handsome walnut dresser and touched a certain point at the back of one of the legs. A tiny door flipped open, and, from the recess, he drew forth two necklaces, apparently identical. But his keen eyes had no trouble in identifying the false from the true. He slipped them into separate pockets, and noted with great care which held the imitation and which the genuine; then he snapped shut the little door and arose with a smile of satisfaction.

The dinner was proving to be a great success. The butler served in excellent style, and the cook had prepared a tasty meal. Although Henry Topp had appeared somewhat appalled at Mr. Higgins's generous helpings, he proved to be the possessor of a true Western appetite and consumed the food with promptness and enjoyment.

As for the host, though he kept up a running fire of pleasantries, designed to put his guest in excellent humor, his mind was energetically turning over one matter after another.

In the first place, would Henry Topp consider the price higher than he cared to pay? Secondly, would he decide at

once or would he postpone his decision for a number of days or perhaps—indefinitely? Thirdly, would it be advisable to remain in the city following the sale, or would it be wiser to leave these parts for distant climes? These, and even weightier questions, perplexed and annoyed the host and kept him from the full enjoyment of the meal.

Later on, as the conversation progressed, and Mr. Topp, at the invitation of his hostess, rambled through a rather tedious recital of his experiences in the West, the husband found himself puzzled at his wife's attitude. He looked at the sharp-nosed and hard-eyed woman who faced him and tried to discover the reason for her growing agitation.

"How very interesting," his wife had just remarked at the conclusion of some recital on the part of the guest. "And have you always raised corn to the exclusion of other crops?"

"Oh, yes," replied Henry Topp, while he helped himself liberally to the currant jelly. "Corn and a large truck farm have been the two principal sources of our income."

These words, in themselves, seemed to have a disturbing effect upon the woman, and it was equally apparent that she was struggling to control any show of emotion. "How much of your section have you given over to truck farming?"

"Oh, about a hundred and forty acres."

"Gracious!" Mrs. Higgins gave voice to strained laughter. "Just think, my dear husband, of weeding a garden of that size." She turned to Henry Topp. "You know, I have the most terrible time with my husband, getting him to take care of a mere speck of a garden."

For the remainder of the dinner, Mr. Higgins found himself with a new worry on his hands. He was quite familiar with the habitual mental

processes of his shrewd and quick-tongued wife, yet, in all his experience, he had never seen her so thoroughly upset at a crucial moment. Possibly, her customary self-control was due to a supreme confidence in her own ability to put the job over successfully. Perhaps, then, by similar reasoning, she exhibited these present signs of weakness for the opposite cause—from a lack of confidence, even fear. This bit of logic, for a moment, left Mr. Higgins breathless. But what could possibly have disturbed her poise in the brief time that he and Mr. Topp had been in the house? And why had she become so agitated when Western crops and truck gardens had been discussed?

It was at the close of the meal when they were drinking their after-dinner coffee, that the conversation turned to the subject of their guest's wife. Henry Topp fumbled nervously in his inside coat pocket and brought forth a few pictures.

"Here are some snapshots I took of her last summer," he said.

Mrs. Higgins accepted the prints with a trembling hand. After a moment, she remarked: "A very beautiful woman. I should like to know her." Mrs. Higgins's voice broke on this commonplace utterance. Her husband looked across at her in genuine alarm, and even Henry Topp cast a sidelong glance in her direction.

The hostess struggled to compose herself. Again she spoke, this time to her husband. "It seems dreadfully hot in here——" Her eyes closed; her head tipped slightly forward, but, by another effort, she straightened stiffly in her chair and with a white face attempted to complete the sentence. "If you will—open—the win——" The word trailed off. Mrs. Higgins's head dropped to the table top.

Her husband sprang to her side and lifted her into his arms. "Quite all right, Mr. Topp—thank you," he said,

as the guest hastened to his assistance. "It's just a fainting spell. I'll take her to her room. Be back directly."

Alone with his wife, he massaged her head, wrists, and arms, and dashed a little cold water in her face. Soon the color came back to her white cheeks, and presently her eyes opened. She sat up abruptly, pushed her husband away, and glanced nervously about the room. "Where is he?" were her first words.

"Do you mean Henry Topp?"

A sneer formed on her lips. "Henry Topp, my eye. Do you know who it is you invited here to dinner, you idiot?"

Mr. Higgins felt his own temper rising. "Who?" he asked shortly.

"Sparks Knight."

"Impossible!"

"Have you seen to-night's newspaper?"

He shook his head. "Why?"

"There's an item on the front page that says the police believe Sparks Knight has been back in the city for the past few days. They're looking for him. Perhaps they're looking for us, too."

"And why do you think Henry Topp is Sparks Knight?"

Mrs. Higgins's words were freighted with a strange mixture of disgust and fear. "Listen, you egg. They don't grow big crops of corn and garden truck in the vicinity of Opheim, Montana. I know. I've lived out there. The climate doesn't permit. And something else: Why should your 'soft' friend carry a gat in his inside coat pocket? When I saw that, something popped inside of me, and I fainted."

It was Mr. Higgins's turn to pale. "A gat," he said hoarsely. "Are you positive?"

"Sure! I saw it when he fussed around in that pocket, diggin' out those photos." She seized her husband's arm. "You go back down now and leave me alone. Stall him along. I'll come in a minute. I'm too knocked out to go

down there now and face that bozo. You got a gun with you?"

Mr. Higgins turned to a near-by chiffonier and pulled out the top drawer. His mouth fell open in astonishment. "Gone!" he cried. "He must have hooked it when I had him up here before dinner." Mr. Higgins clawed at his collar.

"Well, don't stand there like a dummy. Get downstairs. You'll have to go on with your show now, and you'll have to act natural."

Mr. Higgins forced a dismal smile. "My dear," said he, striving to inject a tone of confidence into his words, "I am sure you are mistaken. I believe that Henry Topp is just who he claims to be. I will go down now. I am quite certain everything will be all right."

"Don't 'dear' me, you fool," was the frigid reply. "If he bumps you off, I'll say it's good riddance and a big favor to me."

Mr. Higgins's thoughts were far from pleasant as he retraced his steps. Unobserved by his wife, his confidence vanished. He was no longer the roaring lion. He was more like a very small and frightened kitten.

What could he say? How would he act? One thing was sure; he'd have to be on his toes every moment. It was not too much to imagine that his very life might depend on quick wit and the instant readiness of every powerful muscle in his body. Yet he realized that the odds were certainly against him, inasmuch as the other man was armed and he was not.

At any rate, he resolved that he would strive to appear normal and unflustered upon reëntering the dining room. He would let the other make the first untoward move; after that, he would have to act as he thought best.

Henry Topp was sitting in the same position at the table. "Your wife," he said at once. "I trust she is better?"

"Much," said Mr. Higgins, immensely relieved that he did not find himself gazing into the muzzle of a revolver. "As soon as she has rested for a few minutes, she will rejoin us."

"Why did she faint?"

"Anxiety," replied the host glibly and with considerable feeling. "Anxiety as to our future. When business is bad, she worries about it more than I do. It ruins her appetite, spoils her sleep, and affects everything about her save her sportsmanship. She is a wonderful little woman." Mr. Higgins sighed deeply with this last statement. Then, coolly, he extracted a glittering necklace from his side coat pocket and placed it before his guest.

Henry Topp leaned forward with a sharp exclamation of pleasure. "Beautiful," he murmured, and, taking the jewels in his hands, he examined them closely and steadily for some time.

Mr. Higgins looked on with tense nerves and flexed muscles while awaiting the other's next word or move. One thing was noticeable; for some strange reason, Mr. Topp's gray eyes were not blinking and straining at this moment as they had that afternoon. Quite to the contrary, they looked remarkably clear and bright—penetrating orbs that examined the entire necklace with painstaking care.

Mr. Topp looked up and smiled. "Very lovely! Nice cutting and well matched."

"As I told you."

"Precisely; there is only one thing that would stop me from buying it."

"What's that?" asked the other quickly.

"These are not diamonds; they are glass."

"W-what?"

Henry Topp smiled mirthlessly at his host.

Mr. Higgins threw his head back and laughed heartily for several seconds, then he straightened up, wiped some

imaginary tears from his eyes, and adopted a "now-the-trick-is-over-I-will-explain" attitude. "My dear sir, pray don't be offended. I simply couldn't resist the impulse to show you this imitation first." He reached for his trousers pocket.

"And I suppose it was the same sort of playfulness that prompted you to sell me a piece of glass this afternoon for three hundred and twenty-five dollars."

Mr. Higgins's bushy eyebrows lifted. "Sir, do you imply that I cheated you?"

The other uttered a short, hard laugh. The character of Henry Topp was somehow fast rolling away, and a different personality now occupied his chair. "Come, come, don't be silly. I know who you are." The gray eyes of the guest burned fixedly at Mr. Higgins.

"A-and you," stammered the latter, "aren't you Henry Topp?"

"I must confess that I am not."

"Who are you?" Icy fingers seemed to clutch at the speaker's heart.

"That's of no consequence, though, I should imagine, from your wife's sudden illness, that she guessed my identity. Right now, I would advise you to come across with the real necklace."

"Look here," continued Mr. Higgins in a sudden bluster, "if you thought that the stone you bought from me this afternoon was phony, why in the world did you permit me to bring you out here this evening?"

The guest lowered his voice. "Did you ever hear of Sparks Knight? And must I ask you again to produce the real necklace—the Cumberland necklace? You have it all right; I saw you take two of these pretty ropes out of the leg of the dresser shortly before dinner."

The last of Mr. Higgins's confidence expired. His large figure cringed in his chair. The lion whimpered. "Aw, Sparks, have a heart."

"I'll give you till the count of three to produce the real necklace. If you make a nasty move, I'll drill you." The speaker's right hand was in his side coat pocket, to which he had evidently transferred the gun.

With trembling fingers, Mr. Higgins produced the real article and begrudgingly tossed it onto the table. "There," he moaned.

"Thank you." Keeping one eye on his host, the man's free hand picked up the genuine article and examined it thoroughly.

Mr. Higgins, in his position at the table, faced the open dining-room door, and now he saw something in the shadows of the hallway that filled him with fresh terror. A man with leveled gun was tiptoeing toward them. Mr. Higgins would surely have betrayed his discovery had not his own wife's face appeared at the doorway in the same instant—her finger to her lips, warning her husband to keep silent.

Slowly, inch by inch, the figure in the hallway advanced. The heavy rugs made his approach noiseless, and, as quietly as a cat, he crept across the space that separated him from the back of the erstwhile Henry Topp.

With each step gained by the intruder, Mr. Higgins found it more and more difficult to keep his eyes from betraying the man's presence to his unpleasant companion. The latter was painstakingly putting each stone in the chain under careful scrutiny.

Presently, the intruder reached a point only three feet distant. It was while he paused a moment to take a firmer grip on his gun, that understanding came to Mr. Higgins and his heart leaped in thanksgiving. He would certainly have to give his wife credit for this brilliant scheme—for the ominous figure who was almost upon them, was their own butler—the ex-actor. He was clad in one of Mr. Higgins's old suits, and obviously and effectively had dis-

guised himself through the assistance of Mr. Higgins's own make-up box.

So it was their own servant, then, who was playing the part of a stick-up man. He would rescue the jewels, appear to flee, and Sparks Knight would comb the city for the next several years in an effort to find the diamonds and the stranger who had snatched them from under his nose.

At this juncture, the butler winked heavily at Mr. Higgins, took one quick step forward, and pressed the muzzle to the back of the bogus Mr. Topp's neck. The latter winced.

"Up with your hands," cried the butler in a convincing snarl. As both men complied, he seized the two necklaces and dropped them into his side coat pocket. "The outside door, gentlemen," he reminded them, "is in full view of this table. If either of you birds move a finger to follow me, I'll shoot."

Mr. Higgins, with uplifted arms, watched the man as he retreated almost as slowly as he had entered. When the butler gained the hall, Mrs. Higgins held out her hand, unobserved, of course, by the former Henry Topp, and motioned that he could give her the jewels and then proceed on out the door as if escaping. For some reason, however, the butler ignored the woman's signal, and continued in his backward course to the doorway.

With his hand on the knob, he paused and spoke briefly, including even Mrs. Higgins in his comments. "Well, you folks will have to get another butler. This little trinket will furnish me with a very enjoyable vacation." Whereupon, with a sudden jerk, he opened the door and vanished into the night.

Mr. Higgins leaped to his feet with the roar of a wounded lion, and bounded to the exit. Simultaneously, his wife uttered a piercing shriek and darted after her husband.

"Don't worry, he'll not get far," sung out the man at the table.

Remembering that he was unarmed and consequently in a decidedly poor position to conduct a pursuit, Mr. Higgins had hesitated at the doorway. Now, at these words, he whirled about. "What do you mean, 'he'll not get far'?" he bellowed. "That guy will get from here to China absolutely unmolested, and with him goes a seventy-five-thousand-dollar——"

A shot rang out, closely followed by two others in quick succession that were louder than the first. The reports came from some point near by.

"If I cared to bet," remarked the gentleman who still sat peacefully at the dining table, "I'd wager that the days of Sparks Knight are over. If those two shots missed him, some of the other boys that have been around this house all evening, will get him sure."

At that moment, somebody outside the house called: "Parker! Parker! Oh, Parker!"

The man at the table answered by a shrill blast on a police whistle, then he rose and threw up a near-by window.

"Hello there, Bob," he called to a uniformed figure on the lawn. "Did they get him?"

"Yep, lieutenant, dead as a stick."

"Anybody among you fellows get hurt by his shot?"

"Not a scratch."

"All right. That's good. Now come on in and pick up Mr. and Mrs. Higgins. You've got the patrol there, haven't you?"

"Sure." The other chuckled. "Say,

lieutenant, pardon me, but you're a knockout in those whiskers and glasses."

At this reminder, the officer reached up and rather painfully removed the mustache and goatee. The spectacles he dropped into his pocket. "Yeah," he said, "it seems like the good old days when I was on the stage." Then he laughed. "Oh, Bob, can you imagine these two in here that hooked the Cumberland necklace two years ago, had Sparks as their butler, and never knew it?"

"That's a hot one," replied Bob.

"And before you take 'em away, I'll be gettin' back that three hundred and twenty-five dollars in marked bills. The old boy still has it on him, I believe."

Mr. Higgins turned burning optics on his wife. "You see," he thundered, "you invited—you actually invited Sparks Knight to help himself to the diamonds."

"Hold your tongue, you petrified old fossil," screamed Mrs. Higgins in reply; "you hired him. And you"—she pointed the finger of scorn—"you brought a police lieutenant home to dinner and tried to sell him the necklace that has been hunted for two years by every cop in the country."

Mr. Higgins approached the lieutenant. "Mr. Henry Topp," he said with heavy sarcasm, "do they confine husband and wife in the same cell?"

The officer grinned and shook his head negatively.

"Thank Heaven," the other remarked feelingly.

A Thrilling Novelette

"COP KILLER," by PAUL ELLSWORTH TRIEM,

in Next Week's Issue.

Trapped In Tape

SOMETHING STRUCK HIM DEEP ENOUGH FOR HIM
TO CHANGE HIS ROLE.

By Mel Watt

Author of "Terror's Reign," etc.

CHAPTER I.

IN DEFENSE OF A FRIEND.

DUVAL, coming upon an article in a daily newspaper, gave the French equivalent of a surprised whistle.

"Here is a little drama in the making."

The other five members of the Gay Sextet, or *Les Joyeux Six*—that polished and highly efficient clique of gentlemen thieves—looked up from their various amusements.

Panisse, Duval's right-hand man, who had an appearance of innocence and the inner spirit of fun and deviltry, had, as usual, been tinkling the piano and singing a spicy song, which he had heard sung by a pretty lady of the stage with whom he had briefly fallen in love—also as usual.

Wheeler, the American, a dark, slender Hoosier, and Huntley, the big blond, rangy Englishman, had been swapping yarns of America and England.

Roques and Savary—two gentlemen of the iron-gray-hair age of life, with a high talent for changing their features to look like princes, professors or paupers—had been indulging in a gravely satirical discussion of that ancient statement that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

"Yes," said Roques, "six feet of it, after they die."

"Or," said Savary, "perhaps they'll



inherit it after all the pompous ones are killed in senseless wars of their own stupid making."

They were attending one of the excellent and informal dinners which Duval from time to time gave in his gorgeous apartment on one of Paris's most smart and respectable streets, where he lived under the name of Monsieur Robert Noiret.

The five of them looked with intense interest at their leader. Duval never became excited; he never spoke in superlatives; but they all knew that the more quiet and casual his remarks, the more probable it was that something of real import was in his mind. Their waiting eyes centered now on his lean, finely cut intellectual face—a face that was a combination of saint and devil. There were many poor unfortunates, especially among disabled and helpless ex-soldiers of France, who called him a saint. There were many war and peace profiteers—those heartless and greedy thieves who work within the law—who had reason to brand him a devil.

"What is it, Duval?" urged Panisse.

Duval, immersed in the article, looked up sharply.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I was reflecting upon this newspaper report. It intrigues me."

"Read it, won't you?" requested Wheeler, the American.

Duval nodded, smiling obscurely to himself. He read:

"Monsieur Pierre Anastay, who, in the past ten years has made an immense fortune in Mesopotamian oil, is returning next week to Paris, where he will reside permanently, opening an office on the Bourse. Monsieur Anastay's advent as a big-scale operator on the street of high finance is regarded as an event of major importance among men of the money mart. Monsieur Anastay, while he is deciding upon a suitable residence, will be the guest of Monsieur Edouard Dellard, well-known financier, and Madame Dellard."

After a few moments of silence, Savary asked: "What's so intriguing about

that? Unless you plan to put a crimp in this Anastay's financial ambitions. Was he a profiteer during the War?"

Duval shook his head. "No, not a profiteer this time, Savary. All that Anastay got out of the War was a disappointment in love. That is why this report intrigues me."

Huntley, the Englishman, grinned broadly.

"I say, old fellow, you're not going to play Cupid!"

Duval shrugged regretfully. "I wish it were as simple and pleasant as that, my friend. Unfortunately, the situation is sinister. There is a real menace in it."

"For Anastay?" inquired Roques.

A short pause, then Duval said: "No. For Edouard Dellard and his charming wife." Duval sighed. "He probably doesn't suspect it; nor she. They are that sort of people, bless them! A high code of honor and loyalty toward those who call them 'friend'—assuming that every one whom they consider friends, has the same high code as they."

"Then they are friends of yours, Duval?" Panisse asked.

"Edouard Dellard once saved my life," said Duval simply. There was warmth and gratefulness in his voice. "He almost lost his own in doing it. It was in the War. He shot down a plane that was just about to make 'cold mutton' of me, after my guns had jammed. At the same instant he had disposed of that plane, another German put Dellard out of business with two tracer bullets: one in his plane's oil line, and one in his shoulder. Dellard managed to get away, I following him. We succeeded in cruising back into our own territory for a landing. But he was weak, and his ship got out of hand. He turned over when he landed. In the hospital, they found he had a bad concussion. For weeks, he swayed between life and death. Finally, Heaven be praised, the

fates decided to be merciful this time, and he pulled through."

Duval concluded quietly: "I have never forgotten the service he rendered me. I never shall."

"But," Panisse urged, "this matter of Anastay? What about it?"

"Ah, yes," Duval said, smiling. "That involves the second half of this prelude to what may turn out to be an interesting drama."

"You see, Dellard was my close friend after that little affair in the air. He was very much in love with a lovely girl by the name of Constance Ficellier. So was another man, named Pierre Anastay."

"To make a very long and emotional story short, Dellard won. Anastay left shortly afterwards for the Mesopotamian oil fields."

Duval reflected a few moments, with ruffled brows, before saying: "I never met Anastay. But I knew a good deal about his wild escapades in Paris at that time. A fellow of violent temper, and an egocentric—with an exaggerated pride and conceit that made him despotic in his demands, and vindictive to those who crossed him in his desires. Do you grasp what I mean, now? Such men seldom forget or forgive. And, in spite of what trusting and generous-minded people like Dellard think, such men seldom change."

"Still," Savary said, "ten years is a long time. And Anastay has got rich, and doubtless has new interests now. It might be that there is no more in that newspaper article than appears in the print, after all, Duval."

Duval nodded. "I hope you are right, Savary. If I prove to be wrong, I shall only too gladly admit it."

But his eyes were steady and determined when he added:

"Nevertheless, I owe a great debt to Edouard Dellard, and I would do anything in my power to see that no misfortune befall him or his wife."

Following another silence, Panisse asked: "What do you propose to do? Feel Anastay out?"

"Yes."

The brief affirmative was Duval's declaration of action. This matter had no relation to the customary adventures of the Sextet; it was Duval's personal affair. Yet Panisse had only to glance rapidly at the expressions of the other four, before declaring quietly:

"We are ready, Duval."

Had their leader not been a man of superb self-control, a tear might have appeared in his eye. He made no attempt to hide the genuine affection in his voice when he replied:

"I need not tell you I'm grateful. This matter, however, is for myself alone. At the beginning, at least. Should I need one or more of you later on——"

"Quite," said Huntley.

"At your service, *mon ami*," said Roques and Savary together.

"Any time, old fellow," agreed Wheeler.

Panisse met Duval's eyes in a bond of deep understanding, before Panisse spoke.

"This party's getting too sentimental! Let's all have a drink!" exclaimed Panisse, the most sentimental of them all.

It touched the sense of humor of the others, and they became in truth again the Gay Sextet. Lovable Panisse—who could always be depended upon to mask the tear with a smile! To mask the tragedy of their lives with a gay laugh and a brave gesture!

The tragedy of honorable men, great names, the flower of French aristocracy, who had fought for the glory of France! Their families had placed their fortunes at the disposal of France while human vultures, who were fit to be neither men nor Frenchmen, bled France white while she was in a death grapple with the enemy. They starved her people with exorbitant food prices, and humbled and

crushed those great and fine old families who had been so "old-fashioned" as to place honor and nobility above chicanery and greed.

Returning from the War to find his patrician father dead and his mother dying, Duval had gathered around him five others who had known deep tragedy, and had sworn to make the profiteers pay. It is difficult to censure Duval and his men. True, they operated outside the law; they were candidly crooks. But it was at least an honest stand; honest with themselves. Even Monsieur Monot, star operative of the Sûreté, who was one day to catch Duval, had a soft spot in his generous heart for the aristocrat who had turned despoiler of cads.

The case of Pierre Anastay, however, was, as has been said, off the usual track of the Sextet. But it was quite characteristic of Duval, gentleman and friend.

"Have you any kind of a plan?" Savary inquired.

Duval nodded slowly. "A rather good one, I think. It will require a bit of acting, but that is nothing new, is it?" He smiled whimsically. "Wouldn't it be nice if life were only as simple as the actors and playwrights make it? All so nice and neatly worked out! Still, I wonder if the Divine Playwright hasn't it all worked out, and we are made to act our little parts toward a dénouement which is held a secret? Life is the world's greatest mystery story."

CHAPTER II.

LOUIS BRISSAUD.

PIERRE ANASTAY, oil millionaire and now professional financier, was in Paris nearly a week before he found a residence suitable for his wants.

With the aid of the Dellards, he finally got settled. He had lived in his new quarters for several days, before he paid a call on Monsieur and Madame

Dellard, to tell them how much he enjoyed the new place.

He called one evening, supped with them, and chatted with them until nearly midnight in the famous Dellard library. This was one of the world's finest, with its impressive array of old first editions, and all bound in beautiful leather design, with the Dellard coat of arms, by an artist who was as exquisite with leather as Corot with oils, or Beethoven with music.

Anastay looked at his watch, and made a move to depart.

"I'm afraid I have become a fearful nuisance to you," he said, smiling apologetically.

"You have nothing of the sort!" retorted Dellard cheerily. His square, handsome Gallic face radiated friendly good will. His figure, rather tall for a Frenchman, had retained much of its military carriage. The gay, adventure-some spirit—which had made him a daring airman in the War—still shone in his dark eyes; he was still a man who was not afraid to take a chance. Close association with the power and ruthlessness of money had made him neither hard nor ruthless.

He assured Anastay: "I have been extremely interested, Pierre, in your tales of adventure in Mesopotamia." He smiled at his wife. "And I am sure Constance has, too."

"They are most thrilling," she said to Anastay. "How fortunate men are, to be able to do all those things."

Her warm, deep-brown eyes looked up at Anastay's face with the candor of complete friendliness. One glance at Constance Dellard's lovely face, with its sweet, womanly mouth, and delicate, softly curved cheeks, informed one instinctively that here was a rare woman who would never stoop to pretense. Her marriage to Edouard Dellard had been an ideal one. For Dellard, too, was one of those rare gentlemen with the refinement of mind and emotion

necessary to appreciate a woman like Constance.

All evening, she had been casually observing Anastay, speculating about him, as a woman will speculate about a man whom she might have married at one time. And, thus observing Anastay, she quite frankly admired him; admired his accomplishments; admired the muscular, bronzed face of him, the lean, fit body. She saw a new strength and maturity in his face, a responsibility and purpose that had been lacking ten years ago. Yes, she decided. She liked Pierre Anastay. And she was glad to find that there was no emotion other than friendship. She gazed over at her husband affectionately, and he responded, his sensitive discernment making him aware of her thought. A short but profound look passed between them—a look of love and faith so deep that they were blessed beyond price.

Pierre Anastay saw that look, but what he thought did not show on his disciplined features. Anastay had not become rich and powerful by being stupid or "showing his hand."

The charm of his smile, the grace of his manner, as he gestured deprecatingly regarding his adventures, were undeniably impressive.

"Thrilling. Yes, they were thrilling at the time," he said with a laugh. "But one is annoyed or bored by such adventures, after a few years. It is good to be back in Paris again! Good to be back among one's friends. And you, my friends, you can never know how much your companionship and aid have meant to me!" he assured them gratefully.

Dellard waved a hand. "It is nothing! After all, why should it not be thus? We are all old friends!"

"You make me very happy." Anastay sighed lightly, and turned a good-humored smile on them. "Things do turn out for the best, sometimes, don't they? You are a lucky man, Edouard!

And you, Constance, you are a lucky woman!" He teased her with gentle humor. "I could never have been as excellent a husband as Edouard, you know. And I am glad, now, that some kind fate gave you the wisdom to see that, ten years ago."

They all three laughed appreciatively, as people laugh at an emotional situation that they have long outgrown. It is said that, when people can laugh at such things, they have overcome the danger of them.

Amid friendly laughter and cheerful leave-taking, Anastay left the Dellard home, and the door closed after him. He had instructed his chauffeur not to call for him; being used for so long to the outdoors, he chose to walk. He buttoned his topcoat around him, and set out at a smart pace down the drive to the street. He hummed a snatch from a Russian symphony: a tense, dramatic score that somehow suggested a restless and uneasy rumbling, as of the gathering of storm clouds, or events shaping themselves toward a distant crisis.

"Put up your hands!"

The sibilant, menacing command came from behind a clump of bushes; at the same instant, Anastay felt a sharp point in his back.

The sudden fright might have made a weaker man flounder or quake, but Anastay was neither weak nor soft. He promptly suppressed the icy chill of fear that ran through him, and elevated his hands. He could not yet see his assailant, for the man was in back of him. He urged in a perfectly steady voice:

"Well?"

The menacing voice, filled with hate, hissed maliciously:

"Not at all well, for you! I only wanted to prolong my pleasure for a few minutes! Do you want to know why I am killing you? So that you will never again steal the savings of poor people in your stock-market man-

ipulations! You thief! You heartless scoundrel!"

Anastay made an attempt to reason with the fanatic; clearly, the fellow was not quite sane.

"My friend, I have never indulged in shady manipulations in my life. If you were so unfortunate as to lose your money, that is very likely the result of inexperience and lack of knowledge of stocks. You can hardly blame me for that! I cannot make stocks go up or down at will! Even I must take losses."

The man jabbed the knife forward until Anastay caught his breath from the feel of the knife point against his side. The fanatic rasped viciously:

"Bah! Fine excuses, as always with your kind! They won't do you any good! I am going to kill you, Edouard Dellard!"

Something heavy seemed to snap inside of Anastay, as if he were suddenly freed from the shackles of death. He chuckled, partly from amusement, partly from relief. The fanatic cursed furiously, and might have driven the knife in, had not Anastay's cool voice stopped him.

"Wait a moment, my friend! You are making a big mistake. I am not Edouard Dellard."

The knife trembled. The assailant grunted, then contemptuously sneered:

"For such a clever man, your trick is rather pitiful! Do you take me for a fool?"

Anastay sighed patiently, and pointed out: "My dear fellow, glance at the letters in my pocket, at my identification card, at the name stamped on my bill fold. Surely, those will convince you."

The man thought for a moment, then, moving the knife threateningly, said:

"Very well. But make no move, I warn you!"

A dozen seconds' swift perusal of the objects named by Anastay showed the assailant that his intended victim had spoken the truth. He withdrew the

knife point from Anastay's back, and stood peering at Anastay. There was still defiance, but also a good deal of apology in his voice:

"Pierre Anastay, eh? Yes, I've read about you. Friend of that swine, Dellard, aren't you? It might not be a bad idea to kill you after all! Doubtless, you'll swindle poor people! Are you in partnership with Dellard?"

Anastay peered speculatively through the dark at the man. He then remarked calmly:

"You are rather bitter against Edouard Dellard, aren't you?"

"I think I have reason to hate him!" the man growled.

Anastay made a sudden decision.

"Come with me to a little coffee shop down the street. I should like to talk to you."

As the man defensively stepped back, Anastay assured him:

"You can trust me. It might interest you to know that we have much in common. Come!"

The man acquiesced. Together they strolled to the coffee shop. They seated themselves at a secluded table, ordered coffee and a light snack, and then Anastay for the first time took a good look at his erstwhile accoster.

The man, of early middle age, looked haggard and strained, and the deep lines of his eyes and mouth were pulled down taut in bitterness; but there was a sensitiveness about the face, too; his was the face of a proud but neurotic man, who took life with the deadly earnestness that makes radicals and fanatics.

"Can I trust you?" asked Anastay deliberately. It was a rhetorical question merely. He knew that the fellow could be trusted to do anything that would hurt Edouard Dellard.

"As much as I can trust you!" the man retorted harshly, still somewhat defiant. "Just what do you want of me?"

Anastay replied slowly and distinctly.

"I am going to crush Edouard Dellard. I want your help."

"You—are——" The man was startled out of his surliness. For a last instant, his suspicion held sway. "Is this some trick, monsieur?"

Anastay nodded calmly. "On Dellard, yes. Not on you." His eyes narrowed to flintlike hardness, and his lips compressed with rancor. "You see, Dellard once did me an ill turn, too. A much greater hurt than the loss of a few francs in the market! A hurt, I can never forget, nor forgive him for!"

"A woman, monsieur?"

"Yes."

The man whistled lowly, whispered comprehendingly:

"Ah, that is different! Now I understand. And between the two of us, Monsieur Anastay, we will make Dellard dance to a tune he will not like, eh?"

"Exactly," said Anastay succinctly. "What is your name?"

"Brissaud. Louis Brissaud. I am an artist."

"Very well, monsieur. Come to my office to-morrow morning; here is the address on this card. Bear in mind, I may not have a great deal for you to do. But, inasmuch as we are both intent on the same purpose, I should like to be able to call upon you at any moment. Is it agreed?"

"But certainly, monsieur! The slightest aid that I can give toward crushing Edouard Dellard, is well worth the waiting."

Anastay rose to go.

"Excellent, my friend! Until to-morrow morning, then."

"Until to-morrow. *Bon nuit, monsieur.*"

"Good night, Brissaud."

Louis Brissaud sat in his place until several minutes after Anastay had gone. Then he smiled, across the room, at a man who was drinking coffee there. The man sauntered over, and seated himself where Anastay had been. He

grinned at Brissaud—a grin that broke into a low chuckle.

"Louis Brissaud, the artist!" he said, chuckling. "You are unquestionably an artist, Duval! An artist of expression!"

Duval smiled. "The plan goes well, Panisse. It is as I had suspected. He is consumed with hatred for Dellard. And he is clever enough to hide it from my friend and his wife." Duval gestured toward the door. "Depart before me, Panisse. And stand ready in case I need help."

Panisse left. He had trailed Duval and Anastay, just in case Anastay tried any tricks.

Duval, or Louis Brissaud, left shortly afterward.

CHAPTER III.

THE PATH OF HATRED.

AH, Brissaud! I have been waiting for you. Please be seated. I told you, yesterday, that I might not have a great deal for you to do. I was wrong. I have a great deal for you to do! A very great deal!"

The scene was Anastay's office on the Bourse, which is the Wall Street of Paris. Anastay was plainly enthused with his plan, whatever it was. But his disciplined eyes were narrowed shrewdly.

Brissaud simulated some of the enthusiasm, and assured:

"Anything that I can do, you may count on, monsieur."

Anastay lost no time explaining.

"Then listen," he said. "I have looked up Dellard's financial rating, and I find that my own financial resources are a good three times the amount of his! Do you see what that means, Brissaud? It means that he hasn't a chance! It is only a question of time and methods."

Anastay, overcome for the moment with rancorous feeling, slammed his fist onto the desk top, and said harshly:

"I shall sacrifice half of my fortune,

if necessary, to crush Dellard! I would sacrifice a great deal more than that, but I do not think it will be needed."

Brissaud sighed, saying regretfully: "I am sorry I can offer you no financial help, monsieur. But, myself, the work of my head and hands, those are at your service."

"And I shall need them," Anastay said. He looked at Brissaud, smiled ironically, and said: "On the Bourse, you are going to be Monsieur X."

Brissaud, taken aback, apparently became somewhat awe-stricken.

"Wh-what do you mean?"

"Just that. Monsieur X. The unknown quantity! You are going to be the mystery man of finance!"

Brissaud was evidently intrigued. He swallowed hard, nodded quickly, and urged Anastay to go on.

"Listen closely," said Anastay. "You shall appear, from no one knows where, and open an office on the Bourse. Your financial rating will be excellent. I shall attend to that; secretly, of course, for no inkling must ever get out that we are working together; that would ruin everything. You shall take the name of — Well, what name would be fitting?"

"Why not simply my own, monsieur? Louis Brissaud, even though a talented artist, is not, I am sorry to say, known to any one."

Anastay nodded agreeably. "Very well. Now think of another name. You will need two. I shall explain in a moment."

Brissaud displayed a puzzled frown, but, after a moment or two of thought, suggested:

"What about Jacques Catheau? Will that do?"

"Excellent!" Anastay exclaimed. "Brissaud, you have a quick brain!"

He leaned forward, explaining in detail his plot:

"Now, here is what happens: Louis Brissaud buys up blocks of those issues

which Edouard Dellard is known to hold in large quantities. There will be no question of your obtaining them, for you will offer top prices for them, offering a fraction higher than the highest bidder, if necessary. Keep in mind that I am backing you to the limit financially; and go the limit, for we are out to crush Dellard. Of course, you will also buy stocks in which Dellard is not interested, so as to make the plan look quite impersonal.

"Very well, now. Louis Brissaud buys, among others, stocks in which Edouard Dellard is heavily involved. Louis Brissaud then sells those stocks short! Selling short, you understand, is taking a deliberate loss on them. The moment you sell the stocks short, in large volume, the market will get frightened, and there will be a general drop among all who hold those stocks. Thus, Dellard will be forced to let go, take a loss!"

Anastay's eyes became like hard flints as he smiled at Louis Brissaud.

"This does not happen all at one time, you understand! We batter one stock at a time, then lie low for a few days, and then batter down another—and so on. Meanwhile, we, too, take a loss—but only temporarily. For, under your other name of Jacques Catheau, you proceed quietly to buy up the stocks, at the low price to which they will have fallen. Then, later on, after Dellard is ruined, we shall push those stocks up, and so recoup our temporary losses.

"So much for our side of it. Meanwhile, Edouard Dellard will be running the gamut of worry, fear, and finally desperation! It is at this point that I shall offer him an attractive proposition—a proposition which, in his quandary, he will jump at, unless I am mistaken!

"I shall explain that proposition to you, later. It is not necessary just now. But I can tell you, that, once Dellard has jumped at it, I shall crush him once and for all! He will be utterly ruined!"

Anastasy's emotions once again got the better of him for a moment.

"Confound the fool! Confound them both! With their smug smiles, and their honeyed words, and their intolerable looks of pity!" He laughed harshly. "They pity me, Brissaud, pity me! I, Pierre Anastay, who can crush them as if they were pygmies!"

There was a touch of the despotic fanatic about him, as he furiously concluded: "I shall teach people what it means to cross me or to pity me!"

His mood abruptly changed to one of amusement as he looked at Brissaud's face, and saw a hint of uncertainty there.

"You need not be nervous, my friend," he assured. "I shall be secretly directing you at every move. I am, as it were, the hand behind the scenes! And you are, quite frankly, a blind for my operations. Until the final scene, when I shall become known to Dellard as the man who really ruined him! Thus, both you and I have our revenge! Are you agreed?"

Brissaud retorted between closed teeth: "Need you ask that, monsieur?"

"Very well, Brissaud."

Anastay pointed to his huge safe.

"I have there large bundles of stock certificates from my bankers at Marseilles, and more will arrive at intervals. It takes time, and one must be cautious." He saw fit to explain: "Marseilles, you know, is financial headquarters, usually, for Frenchmen who carry on their business in the East or Near East." He explained further: "My financial rating is, of course, already established in Paris. So there is, at our disposal, any amount of cash we may need, for the purchase of those stocks we want. Everything is in order. We are ready to proceed."

It was just one week later that the Bourse felt the presence of the mysterious Louis Brissaud for the first time.

He put in a surprising bid for twenty thousand shares of Lyons Electric. The wolves and sheep of the Bourse, curious but cautious, raised his bid a trifle, to see what would happen. Louis Brissaud outbid them all. He got the shares.

And then he coolly proceeded to sell them short!

"Well! Well!" exclaimed one operator to another. "Is he a madman?"

"Very likely, the kind of madman that makes millions!" came the retort. "I would like to know his little scheme."

There was nothing more heard from Brissaud for some four or five days. Then he calmly repeated the process of buying and selling short. For weeks, he pursued this plan, throwing the market into open-mouthed wonder and fear.

Men cursed him, not because they thought he was crazy, but because they could not fathom his scheme. They cursed and sold out their own holdings because they could not afford to hold on.

And, meanwhile, unknown to them, Louis Brissaud was buying up tremendous bundles of shares, under the name of Jacques Catheau.

In another portion of the Bourse, Edouard Dellard sat in his office. Dellard was pallid from worry and, lately, despair. It was the sixth week of the mysterious Brissaud's "bear" raids which steadily followed the "bull" attacks he made to possess the stocks he wanted.

Dellard knew he was facing grim reality at last. Another major attack by this Brissaud, or two attacks at the most, and he, Edouard Dellard, would be a thing of the past, as far as finance and the stock market were concerned.

It was not so much of himself that he was thinking; it was of his wife. Constance, fragile and lovely and delicate as a Dresden china figure, to be reduced to the point of existing in cheap

quarters, reduced to the point of worrying over the means of paying ordinary bills! The thought was unbearable to Dellard; it suffocated him. People can go forward, upward, in the scale of living. But to go backward, downward, is slow and cruel tragedy.

He had thought, often, of his friend Anastay, of course. But Dellard was a proud man. He had never in his whole life been forced to ask for help. He wondered if Anastay, in his periodical visits to the house, had noticed his strained face and nervous actions. Only once had Anastay dropped the remark that he, too, was being hit by this mysterious business in the market.

"This fellow Brissaud is certainly piping a wild tune," Anastay had said.

"Are you being hit, too?" Dellard had forced a smile.

"Badly," Anastay had said succinctly, and shut his lips grimly.

They had said no more, for Constance was there, and Dellard had appreciated Anastay's gentlemanly instinct not to wish to make Constance apprehensive.

Thus was Dellard seated in his office, thinking those depressing thoughts, on a day of the sixth week of calamity, when Anastay was ushered into his office.

Anastay pushed past the clerk in his apparent eagerness to get to Dellard.

"Hello, Anastay," Dellard greeted, adding morosely: "More bad news?"

"On the contrary!" Anastay's voice was excited. "I can let you in on a good thing with me! A stroke that will not only recoup our losses but will make us safely rich!"

Dellard sat up like a convicted man who had been granted his freedom.

"I shall probably awake and find this a dream, Anastay! But let me hear it! Merciful Heaven, let me hear it!"

Anastay seated himself close to Dellard and pulled from his pocket a sheet of paper.

"Look at it! It is a secret dispatch from my bankers in Marseilles! It is relayed, in secret code, from the supervisor of my oil lands in Mesopotamia! Dellard, they have discovered tremendous new oil land on my properties out there! Do you understand? Immense new oil land! Not a small scale, but on a huge scale!"

"But—what——" Dellard was still too stunned to grasp matters.

"Dellard! Dellard!" Anastay rushed on in a tense breath. "Don't you see? The stock shares will go up tremendously! But that is not all! I can float a huge number of new shares now! I cannot handle all of it! They will go on the market!" He put a friendly arm across Dellard's shoulders. "And I want you, my friend, to have first chance! I want to offer them to you before we release the secret, and the stock jumps up! Dellard, don't you see? It will go up by leaps and bounds! You will, indeed, be rich, rich beyond worry!"

Dellard, an experienced financier, grasped the situation. He was so overcome that he was nearly in tears from relief—from relief, and from the kindly consideration which he thought Anastay was showing him.

"My friend," he said with a lump in his throat, "you will never know how much this means to me. I shall never be able to repay you for your generous aid at a time like this."

Anastay waved it aside. "Nonsense, Dellard! I am sacrificing nothing! I, too, will make a sizable fortune out of it! I am simply offering you a chance to share in the luck! We are friends, you know."

Dellard stood up and offered his hand.

"I accept, Anastay. And you have my everlasting gratitude."

They shook hands. Then Dellard, turning to the practical side of it, asked: "How much can you give me?"

Anastay enthusiastically emphasized his reply with a forefinger.

"Put all you have into it. You will be so much the richer. It is the chance of a lifetime, I assure you!"

Dellard shut his lips tightly and nodded shortly.

"I believe you. Whenever you are ready with the shares, I shall have my check waiting for you. I shall liquidate my resources."

They then entered into a discussion of the details and plans. Anastay promised to work as fast as possible, after which he left. As he went down in the elevator, there was a hard smile on his mouth.

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARATIONS.

THE moment he was back in his own office, he got in touch with Louis Brissaud. They made an appointment for that evening.

They met, late in the evening, and went to a secluded place where they could talk without interference.

Anastay held out his hand, palm upward, and slowly closed it as in the act of crushing something.

"I have him," he said, gritting his teeth, "like that!"

"That is sweet news, monsieur!" Brissaud evinced elation.

"I am about to proceed with the last move," Anastay said. "I showed him a trick message, which I told him came from my banker in Marseilles, informing me secretly of vast new oil lands among my holdings in the Near East. I enthusiastically offered him his chance to get rich, by taking, before the news got out, a lot of new shares which I said I was about to float. He bit! He grasped as he would at a last straw!"

Brissaud entered into Anastay's enthusiasm.

"Excellent! Excellent! It could not be more perfect, monsieur! And now, what is your plan?"

Anastay laughed harshly, without humor.

"Very simple. To-morrow, I shall telephone my banker at Marseilles to forward to me the amount of my oil shares which I need to sell to Dellard. He is putting all he has into them. When I have his money, and when he has the shares, we will then start selling short—until Dellard is squeezed out, and totally ruined!"

Brissaud laughed gleefully.

"Simple and final! By the way, monsieur, there are some of those oil shares of yours on the market now, are there not? I chanced across some in the recent manipulations."

Anastay nodded. "Yes. But they are smaller than I need. Certificates of larger denomination are easier and safer for a messenger to bring. Dellard is taking fifty thousand shares. I shall give it to him in five certificates for ten thousand each."

A short silence, then Brissaud asked: "Is there any way I can help?"

"No need. Just wait. I shall meet the bank messenger myself. That has always been my custom."

They chatted for some fifteen minutes longer, after which they parted.

But Louis Brissaud did not immediately return to the apartment which he had occupied for the past two months. He went to the elaborate apartment of Monsieur Robert Noiret, on one of Paris's most respectable streets. There, by private wire, he got in touch with Panisse.

"Duval speaking, Panisse. Get the others, and come at once. We are racing against time!"

No firemen could have gotten there quicker, which is saying a great deal for the organization of the Sextet.

Their faces showed keen interest. Wheeler, restless as a race horse, exclaimed: "Ready for action, Duval!"

Duval smiled somewhat apologetically.

"I suppose you will want to kill me, Wheeler. But the situation calls only for the mechanical action of the hands. It is very important to me, however, and it is a race against time. Will you all help?"

Wheeler and Huntley, Roques and Savery, and Panisse, all stared at their leader as if he had asked a rather unnecessary question.

Duval took off his coat and began rolling up his shirt sleeves. While doing this, he nodded significantly toward a huge desklike affair in a corner of another room.

"Get it ready. Have everything prepared."

Wheeler and Huntley took the glass top off the desklike piece of furniture and unlocked it. Huntley then pressed a button; a small, hidden electric motor began to whirl, and slowly the table top began to revolve. When it had stopped revolving, there stood in full view, a compact but complicated apparatus. It was the most costly, compact, and complete private engraving machine in Europe, specially made for Duval from his own drawings and specifications.

Wheeler, Huntley, Roques and Savary busied themselves preparing the details of the process.

Duval took a paper from his coat pocket. It was a stock certificate; an oil share, in one of Pierre Anastay's oil companies. It was of small denomination. Duval at once set to work upon an art at which he was a master. He made a first outline sketch of the certificate. The only thing he changed was the amount; he forged the amount for ten thousand shares.

Panisse, looking over his shoulder, frowned in a puzzled manner, and remonstrated:

"Duval, that is not your best work."

A measured pause, then Duval replied calmly: "I know that, Panisse. I am engaged in the art of being artless."

There was another short pause, then Duval said: "I can talk while I work. Listen closely, Panisse, for there is much for you to do. To-morrow, Anastay calls his banker at Marseilles. You will assume the rôle of——"

For the ensuing quarter hour, Duval explained his plan in minutest detail. Panisse listened carefully, offered suggestions, and concluded with a gleeful laugh:

"Just the sort of rôle I enjoy. I shall be prepared."

There was no rest for the Sextet that night. They fairly slaved at the work till daybreak. But, by dawn, Duval had what he wanted.

And, finally, Panisse left on his mysterious mission. He hastened to a commercial airdrome, where he immediately chartered a plane. In ten minutes, they were off. And in Panisse's pocket reposed five engraved certificates.

CHAPTER V.

PANISSE ENJOYS AN ADVENTURE.

ON the morning of the next day, we behold a transformed Panisse. But first, let it be explained:

On the Paris-Marseilles line, between the towns of Lyons and Roanne, there stretch the Mountains du Lyonnais. In a part of these mountains, there are lonely stretches, where the line runs beneath high banks where boulders occasionally roll onto the permanent way. In the event that this happens, and help is required quickly to clear the railroad right of way, the telephone and telegraph wires are prepared for rapid tapping. Naturally, those wires often need repairing—so, should a workman be seen inspecting them, by passing trainmen or passing track inspectors, it would not be considered peculiar by them, or out of the ordinary.

Thus, at an early hour of the morning, before the hour when business in far Paris has begun, behold Panisse in

the garb of a telephone lineman. The traveling bag from which he had taken those garments, and from which he had also taken the telephoning instrument which he was about to use, lay behind a rock over a near hill.

The setting, and the adventure, quite obviously appealed to Panisse, for he was singing snatches from an old American popular song which went: "High, high, high up in the hills!" following each snatch with a humorous chuckle. He was rather enjoying himself.

He waited until it was nine o'clock. Then he picked out the wire he wanted, the Paris-Marseilles wire. There was no chance of error, for the wires were metal-tagged, with the names of the line, so as to insure accuracy in emergencies.

He proceeded to tap the Paris-Marseilles line, inserting the wire tips of his own telephoning instrument. He could now intercept any message coming down from Paris, or any message coming up from Marseilles.

Once in control, he calmly rung the Marseilles operator, and, giving the exchange number of Anastay's banker—which he and Duval had previously obtained from the financial directory, together with the banker's name—he waited for the connection.

Soon he had it, and he requested, in a deep, indistinguishable voice:

"I wish to speak to Monsieur Maurignac, the president."

In another moment, a voice came over the wire.

"Yes? Yes? Maurignac speaking! Who is there, please?"

Panisse grinned but said nothing.

The voice became impatient and annoyed.

"Who is there, please? I am very busy. Answer or I must hang up at once!"

Panisse remained silent. There was an angry epithet from the other end, then the click of a telephone being hung up.

Panisse chuckled lazily and remarked to himself:

"Not at all a difficult voice to imitate. Many thanks, Monsieur Maurignac."

The ranges of Panisse's voice never ceased to amaze and amuse his intimates. To Panisse, cultivation of the voice was an art; he regarded his voice as a musical instrument to be played upon. It was a priceless asset to him, therefore, in the various rôles he played in the work of the Gay Sextet.

He now set himself to listen carefully for the call which he knew Anastay would put through to his banker in Marseilles. He had not long to wait. It was about half past nine when the Paris operator called the number and name of the banker in Marseilles, together with the name of the person who was calling: "Monsieur Pierre Anastay, from the Bourse, at Paris."

Panisse took the call, waited a few minutes, and then droned back to the Paris operator:

"The connection is completed."

A few moments of the jangling of a telephone, and then the voice of Anastay came over the wire:

"Marseilles City Bank? I wish to speak with Monsieur Maurignac, please."

Another moment of necessary waiting, then came Panisse's voice—with the aid of long-distance crackle—in an excellent imitation of Maurignac:

"Yes? Yes? Maurignac speaking? Who is there, please?"

A friendly laugh came over the wire from Anastay.

"The same old Maurignac; the same old greeting. I'd recognize it anywhere! Tell me, do you never change it?"

Panisse simulated the tone of a dignified and somewhat irascible banker who recognizes a familiar voice, but is not quite sure.

"Ah, yes, monsieur. So busy, you

know. This is Monsieur—Monsieur—ah——”

“Pierre Anastay, at Paris,” Anastay said laughing.

Panisse played up.

“Ah, yes! Monsieur Anastay! It gives me pleasure to hear your voice! And how are you faring, monsieur?”

“Splendidly! Splendidly, Maurignac!” His conversational tone dropped away, and he spoke rapidly and to the point: “I want you to rush me some oil shares at once, Maurignac! Shares representing my own holdings, of course. I want five certificates, for ten thousand shares each. Have you got that?”

Panisse replied crisply: “Yes, monsieur.”

“At once, Maurignac. Charter a plane, and tell your messenger I shall meet him in the waiting room of the airdrome at Le Bourget field. I shall have an attaché of the airdrome inform me when the private plane from Marseilles arrives on the field so that your man will lose no time meeting me. You understand everything?”

“Perfectly, Monsieur Anastay. I shall proceed immediately.”

“Very good, Maurignac. Adieu.”

“Au revoir, monsieur.”

Anastay replaced his phone. Panisse disconnected, and, without loss of any time, rang the Marseilles operator.

He gave the number of the Marseilles City Bank, and added: “Monsieur Pierre Anastay calling, from the Bourse at Paris.”

In a short time, the connection was made. Panisse, again with the aid of the electric crackle, gave a lively counterfeit of the voice of Pierre Anastay:

“I wish to speak with Monsieur Maurignac.”

A few moments of waiting, then the busy, erratic voice of Maurignac:

“Yes? Yes? Maurignac speaking! Who is there, please?”

To Maurignac's ears went the friendly tone of Pierre Anastay:

“The same old Maurignac; the same old greeting. I'd recognize it anywhere! Do you never change it?”

Panisse's constructive imagination had not been far wrong, for the banker replied very much as Panisse had pictured he would.

“Ah, yes, monsieur! It is habit with me, I suppose.” He added, a trifle hesitantly: “I must beg your pardon—the crackle over the long distance, you know—but—this is Monsieur—Monsieur——”

“Pierre Anastay, at Paris,” Panisse said, laughing.

The banker's voice became genial; Pierre Anastay was a very important client.

“Of course, Monsieur Anastay! It is a pleasure to hear your voice! And how is Paris treating you, monsieur?”

“Splendidly! Splendidly, Maurignac!” Panisse's bantering tone dropped away, and he now spoke in Anastay's businesslike voice: “I want you to rush some oil shares to the airport at Roanne at once, Maurignac! Shares representing my own holdings, of course. I want five certificates, for ten thousand shares each. Have you got that?”

Maurignac's voice came back: “Yes, monsieur.”

“At once, Maurignac. Charter a plane, and tell your messenger my man will meet him at the Roanne airport. So that he will recognize my man without loss of time, he will wear a brown suit and brown fedora hat, and will have a golden-brown fleur-de-lis in his lapel. Your messenger will say to him: ‘Monsieur Quentin goes south.’ And the correct answer of my man will be: ‘North to the Paris Bourse.’ You have all that, Maurignac?”

“Quite, monsieur. Is there anything else I can do?”

“Nothing, Maurignac. My man is attending to some matters for me in

Roanne, so I thought he might as well bring the shares on from that point. It will facilitate matters, and also save the unnecessary expense of your messenger's plane coming all the way up to Paris. You are sure everything is clear to you?"

"Quite, monsieur. I shall proceed immediately."

"Very good, Maurignac. Adieu."

"Adieu, monsieur."

Panisse could hear Maurignac replacing his phone. Then Panisse lost no time getting into action.

He disconnected his apparatus, fixed the line properly, and descended to the ground. Looking around to satisfy himself that he was unobserved, he hastened to the rock on the hill behind which his traveling bag reposed. There, he discarded his workman's clothing, and donned a brown suit and brown fedora hat. He took a golden fleur-de-lis from a bit of glazed paper, and put the flower in his lapel.

It was a walk of about a mile to a little village around the hills. Once there, he found ready waiting a decrepit little automobile, of very ancient vintage, but nevertheless the pride of its owner for the importance it gave him among the townsmen.

"To Roanne," Panisse instructed the owner and chauffeur.

The little car was no speed demon, but neither was it erratic. It wheezed along at a steady pace, and got Panisse to Roanne in satisfactory time.

Panisse paid the man, gave him a liberal bonus, and parted from him. Panisse then proceeded to the town airport, chartered a plane, and seated himself to wait for the plane from Marseilles.

The banker had accomplished the business with dispatch, for, about three hours later, the plane arrived. It slid down easily onto the field, and taxied up to the drome. A thin, very businesslike man got out, and casting a quick eye

over the place, at once recognized the man he had been instructed to meet. He walked smartly up to Panisse, and said:

"Monsieur Quentin goes south."

Panisse responded: "North to the Paris Bourse."

The messenger smiled with satisfaction at the prompt and smooth dispatch of his errand. He drew a sealed envelope from his breast pocket, and handed it over to Panisse.

"I think that completes matters, monsieur," he said.

"Quite," replied Panisse. "And thank you. You are returning at once?"

"By the same plane, monsieur, that I came in. Adieu."

He reentered his plane, and took off. Panisse watched the ship until it was a fading speck in the sky. Then he turned to an airdrome attaché, and instructed:

"Wire Le Bourget field outside Paris that the messenger from Marseilles, calling on Monsieur Pierre Anastay, shall arrive in three hours or very soon thereafter."

Panisse went to a men's private room in the airdrome. For fully ten minutes, he busied himself with a tiny heating apparatus, which he took from his traveling bag, and which melted the sealing wax and the glue on the envelope flap. Once he had it opened, he made an important substitution. Then he resealed the envelope, and reformed the sealing wax.

He rapidly returned to the field, and nodded to the pilot that he was ready to leave. They took off, and headed north to Le Bourget.

In slightly over three hours, the plane came down on the famous flying field.

Pierre Anastay had been promptly informed of the plane's approach, for he was out on the field waiting. The instant Panisse stepped from the ship, Anastay inquired with some impatience:

"You are from Maurignac, in Mar-seilles?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"You have a small package for me?"

"It is here, monsieur."

Panisse took the sealed envelope from his pocket and gave it to Anastay. Anastay smiled with satisfaction and relief.

"Excellent. That was very prompt service, my man. Are you returning to-day?"

"No, monsieur. I have permission from Monsieur Maurignac to wait over until to-morrow morning."

"That is nice," Anastay said indifferently. "Enjoy yourself. And my thanks to you." He added, as in an afterthought: "Give my regards to Monsieur Maurignac."

Panisse bowed politely: "I shall do so, monsieur."

Anastay nodded a farewell, and hurried back to where his car awaited him. Panisse grinned at his retreating form, and mimicked a phrase he had once heard Wheeler say:

"And the goblins'll get you if you don't—watch—out!"

The instant Anastay was well on his way, Panisse swiftly and secretly betook himself to the office of Louis Bris-saud. He handed over the five certificates.

"All completed, Duval."

"Thank you, Panisse," said Duval simply.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHOW-DOWN.

AT eight o'clock that evening, Pierre Anastay was shown into the Dellard home. After a few moments of conventional exchange, Constance excused herself.

"I know you have business of importance with Edouard. I shall not interrupt."

In the library, which Dellard used also as a home office, Anastay gayly

tossed five certificates onto the near-by table.

"Here they are, Dellard! Prompt action, was it not? And now your worries are in the past."

Dellard gazed gratefully at Anastay, and as promptly took a check from his pocketbook.

"And here is my check, Anastay, my friend. I feel happier at this moment than I have felt for weeks! You will never know——"

Anastay put a gentle hand on his arm.

"You needn't say it. I know. And I am only too glad to have been able to aid. Let us forget about it until the secret of the new oil discovery is out, and the market goes sky-high!"

Dellard's gratitude almost brought him to tears. Anastay saw it, and a momentary twinge of pain and conscience passed across his face. But his eyes, although veiled, became hard, and his mouth flicked in an instant's sneer—the defensive sneer of the man who is attempting to justify his actions.

"Let us drink a little toast to success," suggested Dellard quietly, "and to friendship."

Some minutes later, Anastay excused himself.

"I have some matters at home that must have my attention before to-morrow. I am sure you understand. Explain to Constance, too, will you?"

"But certainly, Pierre. Until to-morrow, then."

"Until to-morrow. Good night."

"Good night, my friend."

Anastay rode to his home in a quandary of emotion. Any one observing his features would have seen in them, manhood fighting hatred—or was it wounded conceit? A wound magnified and contorted out of all proportion by ten years of nurturing?

His eyes narrowed, and his mouth hardened. He performed a motion with his hand that had become a habit with

him in those past months; he extended it, palm upward, and slowly closed it as if crushing something.

"They can't make a fool of me!" he told himself over and over. "They can't make a fool out of me!"

As if he feared he might weaken, he spent no time in dangerous self-thought when he got home. He got Louis Brissaud on the telephone.

"Come to my home, Brissaud," he instructed. "I shall explain my plans for to-morrow."

"Very well, monsieur."

Brissaud's calm and poise had a soothing effect on Anastay. He was once again the dictator as he sat in the library facing Brissaud.

"Everything is ready for the kill. Dellard has the shares. I have his check which I will deposit the first thing in the morning. When the exchange opens, we begin selling that oil stock short. We keep on hammering it down, until Dellard is wiped out, and ruined. I can afford to take the temporary loss; I shall more than make it up later." His fist tapped on the table; his lips were tight and without mercy. "To-morrow may see the end of Dellard. If not, then the next day. It is only a question of time."

His narrowed eyes gleamed at Brissaud, and he said, a trifle too vociferously:

"It is success, Brissaud! Success!"

A strange, calm, fearful voice answered him—a voice that came from Louis Brissaud's mouth, but was far, far different from the obedient voice that Anastay had been used to hearing.

"No, Anastay, not success," the voice said quietly and chillingly. "Failure, for you. Utter and irretrievable failure."

"You insolent——" Anastay began angrily, and abruptly changed his tone to one of frenzied demand: "What do you mean? Who are you? Is this your idea of a practical joke?"

The calm, unhurried voice held a note of grim amusement:

"Who I am makes no great difference. One thing, I shall tell you. I am not an enemy of Edouard Dellard; I am a friend. Now do you begin to understand?"

Anastay turned a sickly green; he tried to say something, but could only gawk at his tormentor.

Brissaud—or rather, Duval now, for he is once again being his real self—continued in that same measured, unexcited voice:

"And it is very practical, but far from a joke, for you, Anastay. To-morrow, you will be branded a criminal!"

"A criminal? Are you mad?"

"Extremely sane, as you shall find." Duval measured out each word. "To-morrow, you will be under arrest for trying to pass false stock certificates, and taking money in exchange for them."

Anastay tried to laugh—a shrill spasmodic attempt.

"I think you *are* mad! All this gibberish——"

Duval smiled grimly. "Not gibberish, Anastay. I hold the genuine certificates; they are in my safe at my apartments. The false ones were substituted; when and where need not concern us now. To-morrow, when Dellard takes those certificates to the Bourse, the forgery will be discovered, by expert eyes trained to look for such things." Duval gestured suavely. "You see, the false certificates were deliberately forged to look a bit clumsy, to expert eyes. A sort of careful carelessness, let us say!"

Anastay's voice was rising in the frenzy of fear.

"You thief! You traitor! I shall have you arrested for this!"

"You shall what?" queried Duval with polite amusement.

"Have you arrested! Have you in irons, you criminal!"

"And have your secret alliance with

Louis Brissaud exposed?" Duval pointed out composedly. "If the Bourse knew about that, do you think they would believe you, then, if you fastened the blame for the false certificates on some one else? They would simply despise you the more, think you were shifting the blame like a coward, and have you apprehended by the police all the quicker."

Anastay did not reply. He sat forward, shaking his head mechanically like a half-insensible man in a desperate corner.

Duval applied the punishment relentlessly.

"And if there were any doubt remaining, Louis Brissaud, far away in his hiding place, might inform the police regarding your detailed scheme to ruin Edouard Dellard. The police would have little trouble tracing the various stocks we sold short—all of them stocks in which Dellard was heavily interested. That would be more incriminating evidence against you, would it not, Anastay?"

A sudden change had come over Anastay. The mark of the dictator had dropped from him. The hatred—the cold, harsh, unreasonable hatred—had faded from his eyes. But still he could say nothing.

Duval concluded, like an inexorable Nemesis.

"You set a trap. But that trap sprang the other way. You are caught in your own trap, Anastay!"

And then it was Duval's turn to be astonished.

We are all good and bad; brave and cowardly; generous and selfish; kind and cruel. It depends on the individual circumstance. Anastay's hatred, or imagined hatred, had made him a little mad. But no man is petty who can break a wilderness and take the stored treasures of nature from it. No man is petty who can amass a great fortune in these days. Neither is a man who can

accomplish those things a coward. He is more apt to be, down at rock bottom, a high-strung thoroughbred—a thoroughbred who, by the very fact of his imagination and courage, is prone to be sensitive to hurt—or imagined hurt, which amounts to the same thing.

Duval, gazing at him now, saw, not an Anastay who hurled loud accusations and epithets, not an Anastay who crouched fear-stricken. He saw Anastay, the real man. He sat up straight. He smiled tightly. There was a defiant pride about him that was almost admirable.

And he said, smiling at Duval: "Caught in my own trap. Well, that is only poetic justice, after all! I have made many mistakes in my life. And I have always been prepared to take the consequences standing up! I shall do no differently now." His eyes gleamed with grim regard. "You are a clever man, Brissaud—or whatever your name is. And now that you have me checkmated—"

"Pierre! What is the matter? Pierre, my son!"

Duval wheeled, startled, as if a ghost had spoken. He stared, in utter astonishment, at a little old white-haired lady, wrapped in an old-fashioned dressing gown, who stood timorously in the doorway, her wizened hands groping out in front of her in anxiety.

Duval's instant consideration for the weak made him exclaim: "The strong light! It is hurting her eyes!"

"No, monsieur," Anastay said quietly. He motioned with his hand to his eyes, and his lips formed the silent word: "Blind."

The last trace of grimness left Duval. His thin face fell into lines of the utmost compassion. He gestured, with genuine sympathy, toward Anastay.

"Oh, monsieur! Oh, I am so very sorry!"

The little old lady started unsteadily forward.

"Pierre," she said timidly. "Are you angry with me?"

Anastay went quickly to her aid. Duval noticed the tender way he supported her, the gentleness of his voice when he spoke:

"Of course not, mother. But isn't this a fine time for a lady to be about, when she should be getting her beauty rest!"

The sweet, lined old face showed delight.

"Away with you, flatterer! But there is some one with you. Who is with you?"

"Oh, yes, mother. This is my friend, Monsieur Brissaud. We have been discussing business."

The fragile old lady lifted a hand, and commanded imperiously: "Come here, my boy! I want to see you!"

By "see," she meant "feel," which is the blind's way of seeing. She held on to Duval with her left hand, and with her right lightly went over his face. She smiled like an ancient madonna.

"It is a good face," she said, as though wholly satisfied. "It has hard muscles, and a strong chin, and the eyes are fine and wide like a dreamer's eyes. Yes, indeed, it is a good face, Pierre."

She said it as though she were handing down a decision for the protection of her son. He might be a great man to the world, but to this little old lady he was still a boy who should have his mother's stamp of approval on his friends.

Anastay somewhat pathetically motioned his apologies to Duval. He need not have done so, however, for Duval's heart was touched, and he was quite conquered by the motherly soul. He nodded reassuringly at Anastay, and spoke softly to the sightless old lady:

"It has been a pleasure, Mother Anastay. Had I known that Pierre possessed such a lovely mother, I should have been here long ago!"

"Ah, monsieur!" she replied with the sweet, reserved gayety of the aged, "you are a flatterer, like Pierre! But you must come back again. I shall make Pierre bring you for dinner soon! Will that be nice?"

There was a little lump in Duval's throat as he responded:

"That would be the nicest thing I can think of, Mother Anastay."

Anastay interrupted cheerfully: "I shall not let you forget that, mother. But just now, if you do not go back to bed, you will be catching cold. We must chase her away, Louis."

"Ah, so you are chasing me out!" she said, inordinately pleased with the attention shown her. "I shall not give you the chance. I shall go."

With the tender simplicity of an old lady and a mother, she drew Anastay's head down to her, and kissed him gently.

"Good night, my son. God keep you."

Then, with equal simplicity, she drew Duval to her, and kissed his brow. It was like a benediction.

"Good night, my boy. God keep you."

Anastay took her to her room, entreating with his eyes for Duval to wait.

Duval welcomed the few moments alone. The advent of the angelic old lady, climaxed with that kiss of tender benediction, had caused an emotional upheaval in Duval. Never a subscriber to sticky sentimentality, he recognized and felt and appreciated true sentiment. There was still a little lump in his throat and he slowly wiped a tear from his eye. He whispered to himself:

"My own mother might have been like her, had she lived. Heaven bless them all, those sweet old mothers! Life must be made and kept beautiful for them."

Duval nodded slowly, and there was high resolve in his voice, as he repeated softly:

"Yes, life must be made and kept beautiful for them."

Anastay returned. Duval gazed at him. Anastay seemed to be transformed. There was an aura about him, a lovely light in his eyes, that only an unselfish love can put there.

It was rather sad to see that light fade from Anastay's eyes—change to one of grimness and defiance again.

"Well, Brissaud?" he urged, steeling himself.

"I shall return the genuine certificates to you at once," Duval said quietly and without explaining. "No! Do not interrupt, Anastay. Take them to Dellard the first thing in the morning. Tell him you gave him the wrong ones. Then put the market up on them; you can do it; and all will be well."

Anastay was like a man being freed from a trap.

"Brissaud! You mean——"

"I mean that I am giving you your chance. The shares of those other stocks which we sold short are in my name, as you know. I shall see that they are given back to Dellard and to the other losers at the price which they were forced to sell them at. I planned to return them, anyway, after I trapped you. Thus nobody will be much the worse from it all."

Anastay could scarcely believe his ears. He stammered, timidly, as if Duval would somehow suddenly change his mind.

"But, Brissaud! Why—why are you doing this?"

There was a little smile on Duval's lips, and his eyes were turned upward and far away, as if he were looking for the soul of his mother.

"For the sweet old lady who is your mother, Anastay. If I crush you, I kill her. And that would never do. Because, you see, life must be made and kept beautiful for them."

It was the last touch needed. Duval heard a great sob, then another, and,

after a deathly stillness, another. Anastay had broken down.

"Heaven have mercy on me! I must have been mad! Edouard—Constance—they will never forgive me! Even you, Edouard's friend, can never forgive me! What a fool I have been! What a despicable, petty fool!"

Duval patted the bent shoulders lightly.

"Come, it's not as bad as all that. Edouard and Constance need never know. As for me, does it matter? In any case, it is a more inspiring thing to see a man repent his folly, than to see one who never had any folly."

Anastay—the changed, real Anastay—spoke gratefully:

"If God can listen to me without disgust, I ask Him to bless you, Louis Brissaud!"

Duval patted the shoulder again, and requested:

"Wait for me. I shall be back in a short time with the certificates."

CHAPTER VII.

ANTICLIMAX!

A GREAT Scottish poet once said: "The best-laid plans o' mice and men, gang aft agley." Which is to say: the best-laid plans often go awry. Circumstance does it. Circumstances are funny things. In harmonious combination, they are kind to you. But when they come together at the wrong time, they are often very cruel. Circumstances are the darts hurled by Lady Destiny, who, either from amusement or envy, likes to bedevil poor mortals.

At any rate, about half an hour after Anastay had left Edouard Dellard's house, Dellard had another evening caller. An old friend of Dellard's, a man named Frederic Demoulins, who had intimate association with the stock exchange for some thirty years. Demoulins knew stocks backward and forward.

"You are a stranger to this house, Demoulins!" Dellard greeted. "Why do you not visit us oftener?"

Demoulins gestured philosophically. "We are all barbarians, Edouard! We seldom do what we should, and are always doing what we should not. I haven't a solitary excuse."

"Which is at least candid," said Dellard. "Come, let us have a long chat."

From generalities, they soon got down to the matter that was, necessarily, uppermost in the minds of both.

"To be truthful, Edouard," said Demoulins, "I had been somewhat anxious about your reverses in the market. But you are so elated to-night, everything must be well."

"And why not?" Dellard started off excitedly. He paused abruptly, pondered several moments, then addressed Demoulins more quietly: "You are an old friend, and I can trust you. I am happy because I have the makings of a fortune in my safe!"

"A fortune!" Demoulins was flabbergasted.

"Precisely! Oils! My friend Pierre Anastay! New oil lands discovered on his holdings! I have fifty thousand shares! I am 'in on the ground floor,' as the Americans say! Now do you see why I am elated?"

In his enthusiasm, he went to his safe. "Here, let me show you, Demoulins! The foundation of the Dellard fortune!"

He took out the five certificates and threw them light-heartedly at Demoulins. Demoulins was chuckling agreeably, happy in his friend's good fortune. He was fingering the certificates in a desultory manner, when his good-natured smile suddenly snapped off, and he sat forward tensely. He stared closely at the papers, one after the other. When he had finished, his face went white as chalk, and his mouth was strained at thought of the brutal blow he was forced to deal Dellard.

Dellard must have sensed something, for, almost as pale as Demoulins, he whispered: "What is it—Demoulins?"

"Edouard—Edouard——" Demoulins began thickly. Then he tightened his lips, and said stonily: "Those are forgeries."

"Forgeries! What are you talking about?"

"There is no mistaking them, Dellard. They are forgeries. False certificates. Worthless."

A man's life, his whole character, becomes apparent in one little minute of a crisis. Dellard's character showed now. If a stab of doubt came into his eyes, it was dispelled instantly. He was as pallid as if he were ill, but his shoulders were straight, his head was proudly up, when he urged steadily:

"Something is wrong. My friend Anastay has been duped; he did not know. We must inform him of this at once."

Dellard picked up the phone and called Anastay's house. He waited a long time, but no one answered.

Dellard stared, alarmed, at Demoulins.

"How strange! I wonder if anything has happened! Perhaps he is in danger! It all seems like some plot!"

Demoulins offered a practical suggestion.

"Call the police. And let us go to Anastay's place."

Dellard considered for a moment, then nodded, and called the Prefecture. He rapidly explained the circumstances, and was somewhat startled to hear a little whistle of surprise from the officer at the other end of the wire.

Finally, the officer said, enigmatically: "Very good, monsieur. Our operative, Monot, will be at your home immediately. I think this is a matter which concerns him."

When Monsieur Monot, of the Service de Sûreté, arrived at the Dellard

place, the first thing he asked for was the stock certificates. One glance at them, and he gave a dry laugh. The stocky, dapper little criminologist needed little more to tell him all he wanted to know. His black, piercing eyes saw the design on the certificates. And his piercing mind pictured the design of the master hand of Duval.

"Let us proceed to Monsieur Anastay's house," he requested calmly.

When Dellard sounded the bronze knocker on the door, Anastay, thinking it was Brissaud returning, ran to let him in. When he saw three men standing there, he shrank back instinctively from fear. He was glad it was nearly dark, and that his back was to the electric light, for even a superhuman effort to control his nerves did not quite succeed.

"W-why, Dellard!" he managed to get out. "What on earth are you doing here at this hour?"

"Let us go into your study, Anastay," Dellard urged hastily. He almost pushed himself past Anastay, and Demoulins and Monot followed silently.

In the library, Dellard, breathless from excitement and haste, gasped out:

"You know Demoulins. This other gentleman is Monsieur Monot, of the Sûreté."

Anastay felt himself weaken inside, but prayed he did not show it.

"Sûreté?" he forced himself to say in a puzzled fashion. "But—what—what has happened?"

"You have been duped, Anastay!" Dellard pulled the forged certificates from a pocket. "Those are forgeries!"

To Monsieur Monot, looking with the eyes of a trained student of human nature, Anastay's very soul seemed to sway in the balance.

Anastay might have lied. He might have crawled out. He might have acted, feigned anger, promised to do all in his power to help the police catch the "forger and thief"; it might have been the

practical thing to do, in the light of his new resolve.

But he did none of these things. The words of Dellard rang in his ears: "You have been duped, Anastay!" A statement of trust, of faith, of friendship that did not question! It had never occurred to Dellard to question his friend.

So Anastay met nobility with nobility. He straightened. There was pain and tragedy on his face. But he started to talk clearly, steadily:

"Dellard, there is something I must tell you——"

A cool voice from the doorway cut in on him:

"I shall do the telling, gentlemen. No doubt, I can do it much better."

The voice followed the suave words with the sharp command:

"Put up your hands, messieurs! I prefer to explain in safety."

They all turned to stare at the figure, a slender, poised, assured figure, which wore a mask and held an automatic pistol in a very steady gloved hand.

A low chuckle came from the rear of the small assembly. It came from Monot of the Sûreté. He remarked, laconically, as if this was a novelty which highly amused him:

"Since when did you take to masks, Duval? Have you been won over by the storybooks?"

"Duval!"

The name was repeated, in various tones of consternation by Demoulins, Dellard, and Anastay. Anastay stared, as if he were gazing upon something unreal. He trembled, and swallowed so hard it nearly choked him.

Duval bowed mockingly toward the little criminologist.

"Ah, my Nemesis, Monsieur Monot! It is nice to meet occasionally and pass the time of day—or night, is it not? My mask? Oh, just a whim, let us say! We are all children at heart."

Thus, with a gay laugh, did Duval

conceal the fact that he wore the mask so Dellard, his friend of war days, might have no chance to recognize him. Duval could, after taking lessons from Panisse, suit his voice to various rôles. He was talking now as a super-criminal is supposed to talk—suavely and insolently and coolly. Duval possessed that priceless thing: a keen sense of humor.

Monot, in his turn, bowed with mocking dignity:

"A pleasure, I assure you! Although a trifle uncomfortable, with one's hands in the air."

Duval chuckled behind his mask.

"Very well. Lower them, but clasp them in front of you."

Monot nodded his thanks and waited.

Duval explained: "I had just been making a little exchange with Monsieur Anastay, when you arrived. So I was forced to conceal myself for the time being. Yes, a little exchange. I was about to return certain oil shares which I had stolen from Monsieur Anastay—all unknown to him—and I had just received money which I had demanded for their return.

"You see," he went on flippantly, "I had put Monsieur Anastay in a precarious position. Unknown to him, I had substituted, without his knowledge, forged shares, which he unwittingly sold to Monsieur Dellard. If those forged shares were put on the market, Monsieur Anastay would be arrested as a criminal. I therefore came here to-night to give monsieur the alternative of paying me twice what the real shares were worth—or going to prison. Monsieur Anastay had no choice. He met my demand."

Duval tossed the genuine certificates onto the table.

"And here, monsieur, are your certificates, as I promised."

He simulated apology, still in that faintly mocking tone.

"I am sorry to have upset you. That is very hard on an innocent man. It

was a dreadful thing to do, but even a thief has to live, you know!"

He raised the pistol, and took a step backward.

"And now, adieu, messieurs! I shall leave shortly for some lovely but unknown spot, where I shall enjoy your money, Monsieur Anastay! Farewell!"

He backed away through the doorway, and started to close the door. The door was but half closed, when the thunderous roar of an explosion shook the great house!

Anastay yelled. The others just stood, struck stonelike with the horror of sudden and inescapable doom.

Then the huge house seemed to fold up, to crash down on them, to close in on them in an avalanche of destruction!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ACT OF A VALIANT GENTLEMAN.

FOR many moments, there was only the shocked, stunned stillness that immediately follows a catastrophe.

Monot appeared to have been in Fate's favored position. He strenuously rid himself of the mortar and sticks that had fallen on him, and leaped over to release Anastay where he was pinned against the big table. Fortunately for Anastay, two thick table legs supported the greater part of the weight of the beam that had fallen on him, else he might have been crushed to death. Monot exerted all his strength, and the huge beam slid down to the floor. Anastay, bruised and all but breathless, struggled up. He still clutched in his hand the oil shares, which he had picked up when Duval threw them.

They saw Demoulins and Dellard beneath a part of the wall, which lay upon them like a big platform. Demoulins was groaning from pain. Dellard was plainly unconscious. Working violently, Monot and Anastay finally succeeded in extricating them. Anastay drew Dellard over to a comparatively

clear spot, and placed him in a position of ease. Monot grabbed Demoulins's right arm, and Demoulins gave a yell and almost fainted from pain. His arm was broken.

Monot made a hasty examination of Dellard.

"No cuts or breaks, so far as I can make out. Just been knocked out."

They had just placed Demoulins beside Dellard in a restful position, when, from the region upstairs, but sounding so far away that it seemed miles, came a faint, piteous call:

"Pierre! Pierre! Come to me quickly! Help me, Pierre!"

Anastay shouted at the top of his lungs:

"Coming, mother! I'm coming to you!"

He sprang over the débris, for the doorway. He pulled and tugged madly at the door. It would not give! The crash had slammed it shut, and it was blocked on the other side by fallen mortar and timber!

Monot came up. Side by side with Anastay, they pushed until their faces were purple from exertion. The door did not budge!

Anastay's face bore a look of agony. His eyes were like a madman's, and he was sobbing in futile desperation. For a moment, his nerves snapped; he beat upon the door until his fists were bleeding, and he yelled in prayerful anguish:

"Oh, Heaven, let me get to her! Please be merciful and let me get to her side!"

Monot put a restraining hand on him, and said sternly but kindly:

"Hysteria will not open this door, monsieur! Let us work and pray we shall be in time."

They gave every ounce of their physical strength to crashing the door. It was useless. It would have taken a dozen men. But they worked on, automatically, cloudy of eye and grim of

mouth, as trapped miners work, against time and often against hope.

Then, near the point of exhaustion, they heard noises on the other side—sounds of many voices, of men calling orders, of the hammering and pounding of axes!

Minutes, minutes like hours, passed. The voices and hammerings came ever nearer. At last, the great blade of an ax slashed through the door.

Anastay gave a sob, and drew a shaking and grimy hand across his wet face. Monot waited, his jaw set like steel.

In five more minutes, they broke through.

An officer snapped: "Any others, monsieur? Where are they?"

Anastay gulped and pointed desperately out toward the stairway.

"My mother! My mother! Up there! The first room at the top of the stairs! In Heaven's name, hurry, monsieur, hurry!"

Speed, dispatch, efficiency! The officer and his men bounded up the stairs, leaping over débris, cutting their way violently through wherever they were obstructed.

Monot was behind them, and behind Monot, Anastay.

They broke through the bedroom door, which was hanging by one hinge. The bed was wrecked to bits. Anastay, peering in, let out a shriek. Monot's hand closed like a steel vise on his arm.

The officer and his men glared about sharply, swiftly, at the chaotic scene. Rafters, walls, paneling, scrambled like kindling!

Then, from the other side of the smashed bed, came a low moan. A weak voice, almost no voice at all, came to them:

"Help! Help! Come quickly!"

The officer, his men, Monot, Anastay, all rushed forward to lend a hand. The men furiously cleared away a heap of débris.

They came upon them. Duval,

stretched protectingly across the unconscious form of the old lady, was bracing himself with his arms. His thin face was tortured; his eyes were dull from pain, but his chin was dogged. Two huge crossed beams lay across his back like a pair of inanimate giants waiting for this mortal to surrender so that they could crush him!

The men were barely able to catch his weakened entreaties:

"Make haste, messieurs! I can hold on—only a—moment longer! My back is——"

It took them a full minute, every man straining until he was in a pouring perspiration. They at last pulled the old lady out from under him. Anastay grasped the insensible old body fiercely in his arms, and sobbed over her like a baby.

Then they got Duval out. The moment he was freed from the crushing weight, he fainted.

Again the grim officer snapped: "Others? Any others?"

"Two men in the room downstairs," said Monot. "We made them as easy as possible before you broke through. One was knocked unconscious; the other suffers a broken arm. But what of the servants, monsieur?"

The officer nodded shortly. "They are safe. The explosion occurred throughout the south and central parts of the house. The servants slept in the north part."

They started downstairs.

"What do you think it was, officer?" Monot asked.

"Time bomb. I've seen the results of them before. Besides, no suspicious character was anywhere in the vicinity. We got patrols of gendarmes out, the moment the alarm came in. They haven't found any one. Did Monsieur Anastay have any enemies?"

Monot nodded slowly, and pointed out: "A man who has amassed a fortune, especially in the wilder regions of

the world, cannot help having enemies. Queer specimens of humanity drift into such regions: soured failures, radicals, high-strung types quick of feeling, especially quick to hate; indolent men, with an eye for easy wealth, quick to envy those who make a success."

The officer nodded. "A grudge bombing, then. Some cracked fool's revenge for a fancied injury or such. I hope they catch him."

Monot smiled and said quietly: "And yet, even such a calamity as this, is not without its good points. Such things show human nature at its best or worst. And that"—Monot's smile was unfathomable—"sometimes makes complex puzzles clear and simple."

The officer was staring at him, not quite knowing what to make of the little criminologist. Monot laughed gently, and asked:

"Are the hospital cars on the way? These poor souls need attention at once."

"They are waiting out in front, now."

The officer directed, while his men carried Dellard and Demoulins out to the ambulances. Anastay had already carried his mother into one of them; she was unhurt except for shock, but he thought it better that the doctors should attend her, to be on the safe side. As Dellard and Demoulins were carried past, Monot made a mental note that he must speedily call Madame Dellard and Madame Demoulins, give them directions, and reassure them that the wounds were not serious.

Then two of the men came past carrying Duval. At the same moment, the form of a young man emerged from the crowd outside, and, gaining quick entry by showing a Sûreté badge, hastened to Monot's side.

"Monsieur! You are all right? You are quite all right?"

Monot smiled affectionately. This was young Georges DeLametre, Monot's favorite protégé and assistant.

"Quite, Georges. I was lucky."

"The explosion was heard throughout the city! I called the Prefecture and was informed that you were here, on professional duty. The chief hinted that Duval——"

"Hush!" Monot's voice was a whispered command. Young DeLametre gulped, and nodded obedience.

The officer, near the door, was directing the carrying of Duval. His voice was no longer impersonal and official. His grim eyes had softened for a moment in respect as he said to Monot:

"It was a brave thing to do!"

"Yes," said Monot quietly.

"He must have darted up those stairs at the first sound of the explosion," the officer explained. "There is a momentary pause, between explosion and crash. He must have made it only by—how is it the English say—by 'the skin of his teeth.' A brave man, monsieur!"

A faint sound came from Duval's lips. He was mildly delirious. Monot bent closer, to listen.

"Everything — right — Dellard — my friend."

Monot saw the semblance of a smile on Duval's pale lips. The faint voice went on:

"Giving you—your chance, Anastay. Sweet—old—ladies! Life—must be made—kept—beautiful for them! Sweet—old—mothers!"

They carried Duval on down. Monot straightened himself. There was a tear in his eye.

Young DeLametre was beside him. Hesitantly, but insistently, Georges was saying:

"Isn't he the man you want, monsieur?"

Monot said quietly: "He is not the man."

Somewhat later, on their way back to the Prefecture, Monot came out of his

reverie, saw Georges gazing at him accusingly, and began speaking in a tolerant, patient voice to his young protégé:

"I know it seems inexcusable to you, my young friend. But life sometimes shows us that the law, if taken too literally, is often not only crass and cruel, but mean and unsportsmanlike. You see, Georges, I would give even a dog a sporting chance. How, then, could I take advantage of a hurt and helpless man, and at the same time keep my self-respect?"

He chuckled deeply and patted Georges on the shoulder.

"No, Georges. If we let ourselves do things as abject and ignoble as that, it would be time to leave the Sûreté and take up baby stealing."

The next day, Monot sought to make inquiries into the well being of all the persons concerned in the violent drama of the evening before.

He was glad to find that they were all doing nicely, with the exception of Demoulins, who was, naturally, undergoing no little pain from his broken arm.

There was only one person he could not make immediate inquiries about. He could get no trace of Duval. Monot grinned. It did not require much reasoning to deduce that Duval had been taken care of, by his own men. That, in fact, was exactly what happened. In the excitement and bustle of the crowd, several ambulance cars had driven up to take care of the injured. No one had time to notice or care that one of the cars was a private ambulance, quickly hired by Panisse, who had heard the great explosion, called the telephone operator, and been informed of the location.

Duval had thus been driven to safety, at the home of Panisse.

Monot, with a twinkle in his eyes, decided to do what he had done on numerous other occasions. He decided to

insert a message in the personal columns of *Le Journal*. This was his and Duval's customary method of corresponding.

The message ran:

Where are you? I want to send flowers.
M.

The following day, the reply was there:

Send flowers to Old Peoples' Refuge. They need them more than I. Where did I drop my mask?
D.

Monot, chuckling, sent a retort:

When you performed the act of a valiant gentleman. Have sent flowers where you requested.
M.

Monot nodded slowly to himself, repeating: "Yes. The act of a valiant gentleman."

While, in his bed in the home of Panisse, Duval, waxing sentimental as convalescents are apt to do, spoke softly to Panisse:

"It is not difficult to see why they call him 'Monot of the great heart.'"



WHEN CHEATING COUNTS

IT is becoming a recognized fact that cheating is carried on more or less in most of the colleges and schools of this country. In many communities, it is regarded lightly because of its very commonness. "Every one does it," seems to be excuse enough.

Now comes the question of the outcome in succeeding years. Does the cheater weaken his moral standard, or is it a game between student and teacher to see who will win? If the teacher does not catch the cheater, the student is supposedly the winner of the game. Other students think no less of him because he cheats whether he gets caught or not.

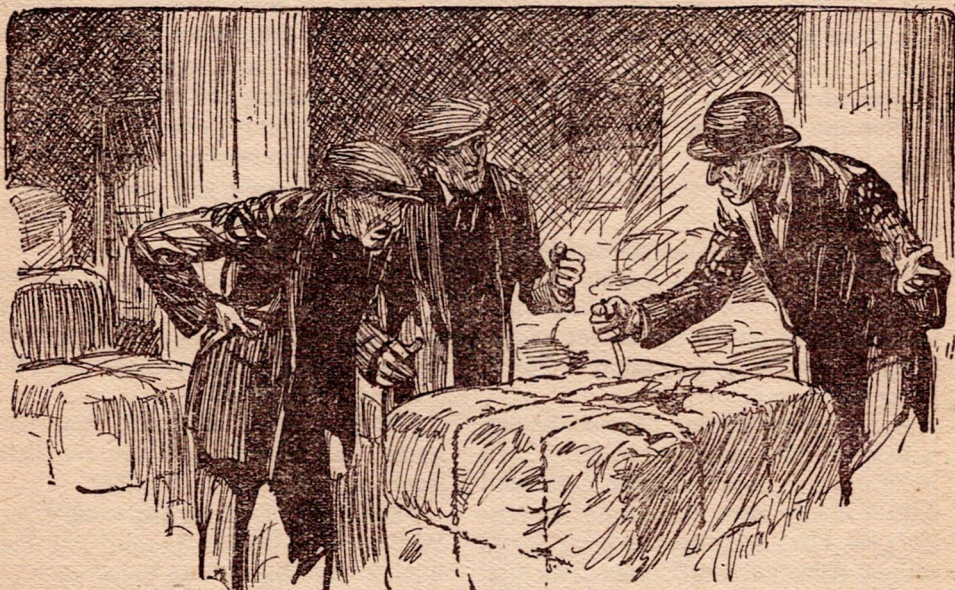
When the student gets out into the business world, his habit of cheating may be carried into his dealings with men who value honesty above everything else. Something has been taken from the young man's character which he finds hard to replace. Many of us agree that the reason for much of the criminality in the world is due to lack of education. What excuse may one offer for those who cheat while in institutions of learning? Have certain persons succeeded in corrupting the morals of the school and college or has the school and college corrupted the morals of the student who persists in cheating?

The fault probably lies in the parent who has not tried hard enough to impress upon the child the value of honesty, or to the parent who has made such a bugaboo of high marks that the child does not dare to fail in his studies and so resorts to a method of insuring success. Children are fundamentally honest, and, when the necessity for cheating has been taken away, no longer think of lowering their own self-respect by resorting to cheap practices.

As one paper puts it: "That 'every one does it,' is a pretty terrible indictment of the moral training of the rising generation. It would mean that within a few short years the fundamental conception of honesty among American youths has turned a complete somersault."

Too Many Cars

THEY SET OUT TO SHOW HIM THAT CHEAP-GUY TACTICS WEREN'T WORTH MUCH.



By Donald Van Riper

Author of "Metal Monster," etc.

THE trouble," said Killian, "is in this unemployment situation."

"Unemployment situation," echoed "Kid" Bailey. "What's this unemployment got to do with us? Ain't the papers full of the fact that the crime business is only in its infancy? Ain't the headlines saying that crime is getting bigger and better every day? What you trying to do, Buck? Trying to kid me? Come on, let's hear the dope on the next job. Flipper is waiting down the line at the Central Pool Parlors for the info. I said I'd see you and find out what all the delay was about. Let's have the rest of the dope."

"There isn't going to be any next job," answered Killian.

"You mean that you're giving me and Flipper Brown the air. That's it in plain English, ain't it?"

"I mean that for a while it's going to pay for all us regular crooks to lay low. I'm not just engineering any more car-swiping jobs for a while. Competition for a lot of amateurs makes that game too hot. And the fencing outfits won't pay much. There's so blame many cars getting stolen that they don't need to pay much."

"What about getting next to some insured cars?" asked Kid Bailey. "With all this business depression, there ought

to be a lot of guys that would slip us something to take insured cars off their hands and lose them. We haven't dumped a car in that old quarry out Westside way in months."

"That's out."

"Why?"

"Because I say it is," snapped Killian. "That swiping of insured cars and dropping them in those water-filled quarries is out."

"But why?"

"Because there's a limit to everything," said Killian.

"That ain't any reason," protested Kid Bailey.

"Reason!" Angry red showed in Killian's sallow face, and leaping fire set his beady dark eyes alight. "Since when have I had to give a reason for everything to any little two-penny crook I happened to talk to?"

Kid Bailey regarded "Buck" Killian with eyes still reluctant to read the truth in the other's look. Killian countered with a steady stare that seemed to contract the black little eyes to mere points of jet. Killian's mouth, mean at its best, was a thin graven mark of cruel compression. For the first time, Kid Bailey saw something in that straight, down-drawn nose of Killian's that reminded him of a bird of prey and marveled how he could have failed to see the close-packed hardness in that lean, lined countenance before.

"You needn't call me a cheap guy," cried Kid Bailey.

"I called you a two-penny crook," answered Killian. "And I'll lay a lot more than that on you and Flipper being pretty near stony broke. If you and Flipper Brown would only save a little against a rainy day why——"

"I didn't come to hear you preach," snarled Bailey.

"I was just going to tell you something for your own good," sighed Killian. "I hate to think of you and Flipper playing the fool. There'll always be

a warm spot in my heart for you two boys."

"A warm spot in your heart!" hooted Kid Bailey. "Your heart! Say, you got as much warmth in your heart as there is in the middle cube in the middle tray of one of these electric ice boxes. You're as hard and cold, and I got a hunch that—that——" Bailey halted, for a thin, inner warning voice told him that there would be nothing gained by talking too much. He had been on the point of telling Buck Killian that he was also as slippery as ice.

"What else were you going to say?" demanded Killian in a strangely smooth tone.

"That's for you to find out," replied Kid Bailey briskly. He had risen even as Killian spoke, and now he flung back his final contemptuous remark from the door of Killian's office.

Killian laughed, a harsh, unmusical sound, and then he accepted the challenge of Kid Bailey's hostility.

"Sore, eh? Looking for trouble, eh? Well, if you hadn't jumped off hot-headed like that I was going to offer you and Flipper a break. I was going to say that, if you would work a little cheaper, I could still use you. But seeing that you want to act high and mighty, why, we'll leave it that we're parting company for good. And I'm warning you——"

Killian stopped talking. The office door had slammed thunderously shut. Outside, he could hear the vicious stamping of Kid Bailey's feet in angry departure.

Kid Bailey could not quite maintain that seething pitch of anger all the way from Killian's office down to the Central Pool Parlor but he still had plenty of excess steam to blow off when he did get to "Flipper" Brown. One glance at Kid Bailey's eyes convinced Flipper that something out of the ordinary had occurred. He and Kid Bailey had been partners long enough for Flipper to

read the significance of the fact that the blue of Bailey's eyes had vanished and left a bleak, chill gray instead. Flipper trailed along as Bailey beckoned him to one of the small side cardrooms.

"Buck has handed us the air for keeps."

This announcement, without any softening preliminaries, brought a startled little gasp from Flipper Brown.

"Yes," said Kid Bailey with a confirming nod of his head. "You and me are on the outside looking in."

"How come?" Flipper Brown's round red face was a picture of stunned amazement.

"He's gone cheap," explained Kid Bailey with an open sneer. "He was going to try and beat us down on our rake-off for working and I wouldn't stand for it. He even tried to kid me along that he was through with car snitching. Tried to make out that our end of crime was dead."

A groan, long deferred, came from Flipper as the full realization of the import of Kid Bailey's words struck home. "And us," moaned Flipper, "as near broke as a mirror falling off the roof of a six-story house."

Kid Bailey's face was dark with sullen and bewildered agreement. "Yeah, and, unless some kind of miracle comes off, we're just as sure of being ruined."

"Miracle," cried Flipper. "We got as much chance of making the grade without Buck Killian as a couple of volunteer firemen trying to put out a three-alarm fire in a match factory."

"Don't get down in the mouth," protested Kid Bailey.

"Down in the mouth," said Flipper. "I'm so down in the mouth that I wouldn't dare yawn for fear I'd bite my own heel on the rebound."

"It ain't any time for yawning, anyway," observed Kid Bailey. "I admit it's like you say. We've been depending on Buck Killian to spot the jobs, plan them out, and either fence them or col-

lect from some insured owner. We sure did get in a mess letting him do all the managing. What we got to do now is to straighten ourselves out and get out of the mess."

Flipper's laughter was frankly derisive. "Us—you and me—straighten ourselves out? Get out of a mess, all alone by ourselves?"

"And why not?"

"Don't ask me questions. I'm asking you," replied Flipper. "But about being in bad, you're right. We're like a couple of eggs in a great big omelette. All stirred up and lost and just as much chance of getting out whole."

"If you would wisecrack less and crack wise more," said Kid Bailey, "you'd be a whole lot more helpful. You can fold up and quit if you like, but not me. On the way down here, I had a hunch that maybe we could do something about this. Something to put some jack in our jeans and at the same time to teach Buck Killian a lesson."

"Us teaching Buck Killian a lesson," commented Flipper, "is just as sensible to my way of thinking as us going over to the zoo and trying to teach a tiger to sit up and beg."

"Is that so?" Kid Bailey's jaw assumed a most decided outward thrust. "Then you and me had better part company. Because I'm going out to square a few accounts with Buck Killian. And you're either with me or against me. What's the answer?"

"Oh, I'm with you," answered Flipper. "So let's hear what sort of an idea you got."

"That's better," approved Kid Bailey. "My idea was this. It's a cinch that Killian isn't going to quit on handling stolen car deals any more than he's going to quit on any other game he knows. And as he's given us the gate, it's just as big a cinch that he's taken on some other lads to fill our places—or is going to take them on."

"That sounds right enough," admitted

Flipper. "But I can't see where that gets us anywhere. Fact is, if his new lads do the same work for less money, it just makes our outlook worse than ever."

"You name the point and never even tumble to it," reproved Kid Bailey. "There's a big *if* in this deal. *If* his new helpers make good. But there's a chance that they won't."

"You're not proposing that we tip off the bulls? That's not our style, Kid."

"What I'm proposing is that we get the low-down on who goes to work for Buck Killian on car stealing and when we get the dope on how and when and where they work, and we apply the rules of hijacking to this game, we let them take the first risk, and then we swipe the car from them. If you can still swing a slug in the manner that earned you the nickname of Flipper, it'll be a cinch that we can spoil enough jobs to convince Buck Killian that cheap help isn't worth hiring. And then the first thing you know Buck'll be sending for us again."

"And if our feet should slip," cut in Flipper with a gloomy undertone to his words, "he'll do something besides send for us. Buck Killian is tougher and meaner than a boarding-house steak."

"It's up to us to see that our feet don't slip."

"Easier said than done," snapped Flipper. "We outwit his hired men and then we go to fence the car and the fence tells Buck."

"We won't fence the cars that we hijack," answered Kid Bailey. "We'll take them on over to those old abandoned water-filled quarries out Westside way and dump them in. While we're queering the price cutters, we'll have to do without any rake-off."

"Well, seeing as I have no ambition to starve to death, I suggest we get going right away. We got enough jack to hold us for ten days—two weeks at the most. And if we aren't back on

Buck Killian's pay roll by then, we're licked."

A coin flipped about in the palm of Kid Bailey's hand. "We have to start tabbing Buck Killian. You snap this coin. If it comes down heads, I'll take the first turn until Buck goes to bed to-night. Tails, you take it. And to-morrow morning, the other fellow takes up the trail. As soon as we get the dope, we'll be all set to bust up Buck's cheap-guy tactics."

Aloft went the coin. "Tails!" announced Flipper. "I go to work. Where'll you be?"

"I'll hang around here a while. If I ain't here, you'll find me in the flat. Mind you don't miss any bets. And for the love of Pete, don't let Buck wise up that you're watching him."

"Don't worry," said Flipper. "I've trailed better guys than Buck Killian and never got caught at it. Give me a break in luck and I'll have an earful of live dope before I hit the hay to-night."

Flipper Brown's parting words assumed the character of prophecy when he returned to the little flat late that night. "Prop your head up and listen," he advised Kid Bailey as the latter bleakly opened his eyes.

"What's the dope?" demanded Kid Bailey as he promptly sat up in bed.

"The dope is great," crowed Flipper. "When you want results, send Mr. Flipper Brown to get them."

"G'wan and broadcast," urged Kid Bailey.

"Tune in on this," murmured Flipper. "Buck Killian has got a job on for to-morrow night lifting a whole truckful of silk. And I know the two lads he's hired to do the actual rough stuff for him."

There was a swift-risen gleam of admiration in Bailey's eyes. "A truckload of silk goods. Boy, oh, boy! If we could cut in on that, we'd be able to turn plenty of money. Now you take old

Saul Tannen. He wouldn't fence a car but he'd turn over textile merchandise, and Saul could be trusted never to spill the truth about who horned in on Buck Killian's work. What kind of silk goods?"

"I didn't say goods. It's even better than that. It's bales of raw silk."

"Say!" The word was explosive with incredulity.

"No, I'm not kidding," responded Flipper. "I was tailing Buck Killian and I followed him clear to the door of Abe Rummel's law offices. To-night, after supper, it was. When I got there, just Rummel was inside. He called to Killian to leave the door open and said Rosenthal would be along in a few minutes."

"Who's Rosenthal?"

"I'm coming to that later. Well, the two of them went on into Rummel's private office, and I ducked in on a flyer and hid back of some filing cases. In a minute or so, along comes this Rosenthal and they begin hashing over a scheme. It seems that Rosenthal is one of two partners that run a place called the Westside Art Weaving Co. I just couldn't get the right and left of it but it seems that Rosenthal is out to trim his partner. You see, the Westside Art Weaving Co. is going to send out raw silk to their throwster to-morrow."

"Throwster?"

"Some guy that takes raw silk and winds and doubles and spins it so that it can be woven. They're sending ten bales to-morrow night. You see, these throwsters do night work on silk when making what they call crêpe twist. And so the night delivery is O. K."

"Go on," urged Kid Bailey. "Leave out the lecture on the silk business and give me the stuff I want to hear."

"Well, Killian says that he's got two good men who'll take the truck—Happy MacAleer and Pudge Ball. Just then, Abe Rummel says, 'S-h-h-h' like that, and I hear him moving toward the outer

office. So I step over, unlatch the door, and go into the hall and fade. He must have been satisfied, for no one came out, and so I went downstairs and hung around a little. It was another hour before the crooked partner came out, and, a little while later, out comes Abe, the mouthpiece, with Killian, and I came on back here."

"So you figure one partner is trying to beat the other, eh?"

"Yeah. And I wish I could have stuck longer to get more of the details. But I got enough. There's going to be a truck belonging to the Westside Art Weaving Co. pull out with ten bales to-morrow night at eight o'clock. All we have to do is tag that truck in that junky little roadster of ours, and, when the other two stick it up, we step in and take truck and all from them."

"Not so good," commented Kid Bailey. "Here's my dope. We're going to fence the stuff through with old Saul Tannen. Why not get Saul to provide us with a truck? And then we——"

"What do we want with a truck?"

"Easy asked and easy answered, Flipper, old boy. We tag the Westside Weaving outfit's truck. You in the roadster and me driving the second truck. Then, when we grab off the silk, we truss up Happy MacAleer and Pudge Ball and dump them in some lots. Then we switch the bales from the right truck to the one we get through Saul Tannen. And we drive truck and silk back to Saul's warehouse and never a chance of trouble."

"And leave the Westside truck to wise up the coppers that we switched the cargo? Say, I got a better scheme than that," proclaimed Flipper. "We get a truck from old Saul just like you said. But we have it parked out by that water-filled quarry where we dumped in so many cars for Buck Killian and I——"

"Nothing doing," protested Kid

Bailey. "According to Buck Killian, that way of making cars disappear isn't good any more."

"Of course, he'd tell you that," asserted Flipper. "And you would believe it. Just what did he say? Did he say the coppers had finally wised up?"

"No, not exactly. He did say something about there was a limit to everything. He must have meant the coppers were wising up."

"Must have meant nothing," sneered Flipper. "All he was trying to do was to keep us from using that quarry. And by the same token he'll believe we never would use it. Now my scheme——"

"But Buck Killian said——"

"The devil take what Buck said," snapped Flipper. "We park the relief truck by the quarry. Then we both trail the Weaving Company's truck in the roadster. We truss up Happy Mac-Aleer and Pudge Ball just like you said. Then you drive off the roadster and I drive the truck. At the quarry, we switch the bales. Then we shove the Westside Weaving's truck over the edge. Kersplash! No more truck, and the coppers looking all over for it while we drive safely to Saul Tannen's warehouse."

"With ten bales, we ought to knock out a pretty piece of change. Let's see, silk's cheap now. Maybe worth three to three and a half dollars a pound. Put it low—say, three dollars a pound. In ten bales, there's more than thirteen hundred pounds. That makes four grand. And with raw silk, once you destroy the bale wrappings it hasn't as many earmarks as an eel. So Saul can fence it for at least two bucks a pound. And our break ought to be a dollar a pound. Say, Kid, if we swing this, we ought to be six to seven hundred bucks ahead apiece. Using that quarry will make it a double-barreled cinch that no one will ever wise up to just what happened."

"I suppose you're right," agreed Kid

Bailey. "Suppose we better use the quarry."

Flipper laughed heartily. "Say, Kid, I'm always right. You ever stop to think how the coppers would look if they ever guessed how many cars were down there in that muddy water?"

"And how a whole lot of car owners who lost insured cars would look," chimed in Kid Bailey.

"And how Buck Killian would look," said Flipper.

"And how we may look," said Kid Bailey with swift returning gloom, "if Buck really meant it when he said that about the old quarry being N. G. Still and all, it did sound like a bluff. All he said was that there was a limit to everything. Fact is, when I asked him for a reason, he got madder than a whole flock of wet hens."

"Bearing out what I say," concluded Flipper, "he was giving us the air and didn't want us to use the quarry any more. Just wanted that left for his personal use."

They were in high spirits. Flipper, most decidedly, had hit upon a good thing. With any break at all, they would not only teach Buck Killian a lesson but they would be more than well paid for their trouble. By this time to-morrow night, they would be richer in cash than ever before in their careers of crime.

"I just can't wait for to-morrow," sleepily murmured Kid Bailey after Flipper had finally retired in the other bed. "First thing I'll turn out and talk things over with old Saul Tannen. Won't Saul pop his eyes out when I begin talking real big money? Think of that, Flipper, real big money!"

The words faded. Only Flipper Brown's snore sounded through the flat.

At eight o'clock the next night, the truck of the Westside Art Weaving Co. pulled away from the loading platform at the side of the mill. Well over a

block behind came the little roadster. Flipper allowed his roadster to drop still more in back as the shadowed silk truck entered a long straightaway road through a desolate, residential development.

From the opposite direction came a closed car which wove back and forth across the highway in a manner suggesting that the driver must be more than a little drunk. The silk truck slowed down, edged well to the side of the road, but still the crazily shifting passenger car slithered and slued.

The silk truck stopped short. So did the passenger car. Out of the sedan climbed a man who moved on uncertain feet. He volleyed abuse at the truck driver. From the silk truck, the driver clambered belligerently into the roadway. All this was visible to Flipper and Kid Bailey by the light of the two cars. Flipper and Kid Bailey had stopped their own two lightless vehicles at a discreet distance.

Now the truck driver and the supposedly intoxicated man clashed. Appearing from the shadows beside the road darted a newcomer. As this third party waved his blackjack, Flipper and Kid Bailey once more stepped on the gas.

As they drew abreast, the vanquished truck driver was nowhere in view. Flipper called down to the two men in the roadway from his place at the wheel. "Want any help?"

"Naw," came the answer. It was "Happy" MacAleer who spoke. Also it was Happy MacAleer who caught the swift impact of the slug which Flipper wielded. "Pudge" Ball stood with mouth agape, and his moment of stunned amazement allowed Flipper to spring out from back of the wheel. Pudge had a blackjack on his own account but Flipper beat him to the blow. With a surprised and anguished yelp, Pudge tried to duck. The blackjack drove home.

"Out for the count—both of them," exulted Flipper. Already, Kid Bailey was trussing up Flipper's first victim with rope. "Make it snappy," urged Flipper. "This is no place to linger."

"Snappy isn't the word," grunted Kid Bailey as he tugged at the first knot of his second victim. "This is the most dog-gone snappiest job I ever saw. Two stick-ups inside a couple of minutes."

When they went on again, Kid Bailey driving the roadster, Flipper guiding the truck, the silk-truck driver and Happy MacAleer and Pudge Ball were all securely trussed and still but half conscious in the sedan at the curb. Kid Bailey had been right. There were few jobs that ever went off with such brisk smoothness.

On the old quarry's edge, they wrestled and tugged with the transferring of the bales from the silk truck to the one which Saul Tannen had provided. "One hundred and thirty-odd pounds of silk in each one," said Flipper. "And we sure have pulled a fast one this time."

"And now," cried Kid Bailey as they transferred the last of the load, "just let the brakes off that bus of the Art Weaving Co. and let her ride to a watery grave."

Lights out and motor off, the silk truck started slowly and then with swifter pace toward the brink. From far below came the mighty echoing splash as the silk truck struck the water. "Out of sight and out of mind," commented Flipper. "And as you see, Kid, that line of Buck Killian's about this quarry game being played out is the bunk. All we got to do now is to rustle this load down to Saul Tannen's warehouse and collect."

"Let's go," said Kid Bailey. "Boy, how good that jack is going to feel in my jeans!"

"Humph!" Such was the greeting from Saul Tannen as he watched them

unloading the bales at his warehouse. Old Saul walked up and kicked tentatively at the yellow straw matting of one of the bales. Flipper and Kid Bailey paused to regard Tannen with puzzled glances. Clearly, something was displeasing Saul Tannen.

"These, bales, gentlemen! Something tells me that something is wrong. I think that right now I should look inside. Never have I seen bales that were so loose covered as these." So, saying, he applied a pocketknife to the corners of several bales. Then, rapidly, he thrust his hands in each bale and pulled out great masses of dirty, snarled fiber.

"Waste," yelled Tannen. "Silk waste. And not even good waste. Dirty, filthy stuff! Looks like ten years of sweepings from the factory floor. Should I ever live to see such a joke on myself! Me lending my truck and taking such chances while all the time you two donkey fellows are swiping bales filled with stuff and waste that even a junk man wouldn't buy."

"Ain't that raw silk?" faltered Kid Bailey.

Tannen was sputtering his disgust.

"Of course, that isn't raw silk, you boob," Flipper said.

"Boob yourself," snarled Kid Bailey. "You were the guy that had this red-hot info."

"And you're the guy that's going to have a decorated eye if you crab about this."

The fence grew worried.

"Gentlemen," intervened Saul Tannen. "If you'll be so kind as to take your quarrel outside, I should like it better already."

Flipper Brown whirled swiftly on Saul Tannen. "Who are you to be high-hatting us?" Disappointment had engendered a rare recklessness in Flipper. He was bilked, tricked into playing the fool; his loot was worthless trash—and he was fighting mad.

Old Saul Tannen backed hastily away. "Now, now," said the fence. "Let's not have any trouble, gentlemen. We're all old friends together, ain't it?" He continued backing until he reached a small door at the far side of the room. There he rapped sharply, and, in swift response, the door flung open and three mean-looking huskies filed in and ranged themselves ready to his command.

The oily, suave smile faded from Tannen's face. "Throw these two bums out, boys, and be quick about it."

A couple of minutes later, Flipper Brown and Kid Bailey, bruised and battered were in their little roadster homeward bound. "A fine night's work," groaned Bailey. "All we get out of it is a couple of nice black eyes."

"And that guy Rosenthal of the Westside Weaving sure beats his partner, anyway," pointed out Flipper. "A slick one, he is. He must be trimming his partner out of the ten bales. Sends those fake bales out. They're gone in Tannen's place. The truck's under water in the old quarry. It sure looks like we helped Rosenthal get away with a four-thousand dollar fraud and didn't get a nickel. Can you beat it?"

Just about the same time that this conversation took place between Flipper and Bailey, a certain Mr. Hirsch, partner in the Westside Weaving Co. was starting out for the warehouse of old Saul Tannen. A few minutes later, Hirsch was staring at the mute and undeniable evidence of the faked shipment.

"That I should live to see this day!" cried Hirsch. "That Sam Rosenthal! That dirty conniver! To-morrow I shall have him in jail already."

"I told you over the phone," reminded Saul Tannen, "that for five hundred dollars I'd save you thousands. You brought the money?"

"And you'll testify at the trial?" asked Hirsch as he counted.

"For five hundred dollars," purred Saul Tannen, "I'd even lie a little. And for those two fresh crooks, Flipper and Kid, I couldn't even shed tears like a crocodile already."

It was almost midnight when a greatly agitated Buck Killian arrived in the library of Lawyer Abe Rummel.

"Happy MacAleer 'n' Pudge Ball are in jail. Half conscious and trussed up when the cops find them. And the Westside's truck driver identifies them as the holdup men. You got to spring them, Rummel, because, if you don't, they'll drag me in to get a lighter sentence themselves."

"I'll arrange to spring them," said Rummel. "But say, Killian, what's worrying me is who stuck your two workers up?"

"It was Flipper Brown and Kid Bailey, of course," snapped Killian. "Who else would try to crab my party?"

"Well, just don't worry," soothed Lawyer Rummel. "I'll fix everything up all right. And, afterward, you can tend to Flipper and Bailey."

"I'll tend to them," grimly promised Killian. "And how!"

"And after all," reminded Rummel, "what a joke on them when they find out that those bales are faked. What a joke! Them going to all that trouble to steal ten faked bales. As near as I can see, Sam Rosenthal trims his partner Hirsch no matter what happens."

It was late the next afternoon before Lawyer Abe Rummel came to the stunning realization that he had laughed too soon at the misadventure which had befallen Flipper and Kid Bailey. Inspector Olliphant of the detective bureau had walked unannounced into Rummel's office and told him that he was under arrest.

"Nonsense," cried Lawyer Rummel. "What utter nonsense!"

Lieutenant Olliphant smiled pity-

ingly. "No use bluffing, Rummel. First we got two crooks named MacAleer and Ball. There's no doubt they stuck up the Westside Weaving Co. truck. Then on information from Hirsch—a partner in the weaving outfit—we arrested his partner Rosenthal. And Rosenthal talked to save his own neck. He implicated you and Buck Killian."

"Any one can lie," observed Lawyer Rummel with a calmness he did not feel. "But, after all, what proof have you really got?"

Olliphant continued to smile with condescending pity. "We have all sorts of proof now, Rummel. On the say-so of Saul Tannen, we arrested two other crooks, Flipper Brown and Kid Bailey."

"Those two wouldn't talk," challenged Rummel. "Never in the world would they talk."

"They didn't need to," answered Olliphant. "And we've got you all so much dead to rights that I can even tell you all about it. It seems that Flipper and Kid Bailey dumped the Westside truck into an old quarry. Some kid went by there and saw the tailend of the truck sticking out above water. All day, we've been hauling out cars from that quarry. We've been looking up the owners and telling them what it means to conspire to defraud an insurance company. Most of them have talked and explained how their lawyer Abe Rummel introduced them to a man named Killian and arranged for insured cars to be permanently stolen."

Rummel was gray now—shaken and speechless.

Olliphant continued remorselessly. "And just now, before I left headquarters, we had Killian and Flipper and Bailey confront each other. Killian and Kid Bailey had some words. Like to hear what they said?"

"It'll do no harm to listen," growled Rummel.

"Well, Killian calls Kid Bailey a few fancy names and says he warned

Bailey. Bailey says that it's not so. Killian asks whether he remembers him saying that the old quarry had passed the limit of its usefulness. Bailey says that he remembers Killian saying something about there being a limit to everything. And Killian says he meant that they'd dumped so many cars in there that he was afraid the last one was pretty near the surface. Then Kid Bailey starts swearing as he realizes what we have on him."

"The fools," moaned Rummel. "All talking! The fools!"

"Funny," sighed Olliphant. "For once, the coppers get a break. Imagine a regular mountain of cars and at last it gets above the surface of the water in that quarry bottom. And all those car owners trying to save their necks by

squealing and then try to figure out where you and Killian and those other crooks get off. There sure is a limit to everything, Rummel, just like Killian says. My hunch is that you and your little playmates are going to hear some judge hand you just that—the limit. So grab your hat and come along Rummel—and——"

"And what?" asked Rummel as he dejectedly reached for his hat.

"I was just going to suggest," answered the officer, "that it would be a good idea to fire the office help and close up shop right away. No use paying rent and pay roll for several years for nothing." A slow and ironic smile spread over Olliphant's face as he murmured: "As Buck Killian said, 'There's a limit to everything.'"

Coming Next Week, "PEARLS OF MURDER," by IVAN KELL.

NO CAPITAL PENALTIES IN NEW YORK

WHILE there were fifteen executed in the electric chair in New York State last year, none of them committed their murders in the city of New York. This is said to be the first time in forty-one years that New York City has not shared in supplying criminals for the death chair.

There were from three hundred and fifty to three hundred and seventy-five homicides or murders in the five boroughs of New York City during the past year. Evidently, the two most wicked spots in New York State are Buffalo and Nassau County, for it was from these two places that most of the capital offenders came.

Besides the fifteen executed, one committed suicide in the death house, while another was adjudged insane and his sentence commuted to life imprisonment. Prosecuting attorneys give a number of opinions as to the reason for no capital offenders from New York City. Hesitant indictments for first-degree murder without sufficient evidence to warrant such a charge, acceptance of pleas of lesser degree, and appeals on legal technicalities, are given for reasons.

"It is our belief," says a Bronx attorney, "that we are obtaining as many convictions for first-degree murder as the facts and evidence warrant."

Another attorney, from Richmond County, is quoted as saying:

"It is difficult, I find, to get juries to convict for first-degree murder in cases where the crimes were committed by persons under influence of liquor, the law requiring proof of premeditation in first-degree convictions."

The Girl in the Case

THEY WERE ALL SET TO MAKE A STOOL PIGEON
OUT OF THE NOISELESS CRACKSMAN.



By John Jay Chichester

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

DONNA STARK aids Maxwell Sanderson from the clutches of the police and Diamond Mary. In return for this, Sanderson agrees to get certain papers from the district-attorney's safe to aid Mockerson, Donna's lover.

Sanderson obtains the papers. Donna invites Sanderson to dinner. Mockerson becomes jealous of Sanderson and later sets out to kill him. Donna, in order to save him from death, sends the police to Sanderson's house. The police arrest Sanderson.

Donna, frantic, asks Tony Lunt to help her in getting Sanderson out of jail. Tony says that he will if he can get ten thousand dollars.

(BACK NUMBERS ARE EASILY PROCURED.)

CHAPTER XII.

BART TAKES ACTION.

NOT a great while after Tony Lunt had taken his departure, the matter of no more than ten minutes or so, a man with his face set into tight, strained lines which gave him a grim and haggard look, walked down Larkin Street at a hurry-

ing pace, seeking Mockerson's flower shop. The large sign overhanging the sidewalk, visible a full block distant, directed him to his destination.

Donna Stark had not relocked the door behind Tony's exit, and so the stranger walked in upon her, startling her a little. She thought he was a chance customer and did not give him any particular attention as she got list-

lessly to her feet, not caring whether she made a sale or not.

"Something I can do for you?" she asked in a flat, colorless voice.

The man of the drawn, haggard face came closer. The stricken look in his eyes suddenly arrested Donna's attention. Sometimes those who came in to buy flowers for a funeral had this stamp of tragedy upon them, and they nearly always wanted to share their grief. Donna was in no mood for that sort of thing; she had a very real tragedy of her own.

"Is your name Donna?" the man asked with such unexpectedness that Donna's head gave a little jerk of surprise.

"Yes," she answered, "that's my name. But why do you ask? Who are you, and what do you want?"

The man came still a step closer. "I would like to speak with you privately," he said.

"And why privately?" Donna demanded, her voice sharpening with challenge.

"Because," he replied, "it happens to be a private matter."

"There's nobody here but you and me," she told him, "and that ought to make it private enough for anybody. Whatever you've got to say, say it."

"My name is Clark; I don't know if that'll mean anything to you or not."

Evidently it did, for Donna Stark drew in her breath with a gasping sound and stared into his face with eyes that had become wide.

"Clark!" she exclaimed. "Then you are—you must be Barton Clark!" And since Sanderson, during the talk at that fateful dinner the previous evening, had given her some intimation of the warm and deep personal friendship that existed between the two, Donna was able to understand why it would be that Clark looked as though he were about to order a funeral wreath.

Barton Clark nodded. "I'm not sure

if it was the right thing for me to come here," he said hurriedly. "Maybe I should have telephoned first. Heaven knows I don't want to make things any worse than they are."

Donna put her hand on Clark's arm. "I've been wanting you to come, but without any hope that you would. I've been wondering how I *could* go about getting in touch with you. I knew you wouldn't dare go back to the flat. The wonder of it is that you weren't there when—when it happened."

"A miracle by the matter of five or ten minutes," Bart explained grimly. "I'd been to the movies, just to kill a part of the evening while Max was having dinner with you and Mockerson. If I hadn't stayed to see the news reel, I'd have been back home before the police closed down on us."

Again Donna's hand rested upon Clark's arm. "Have you thought of anything—some plan to save him?" she demanded anxiously.

"No, but that's why I am here—to see if the three of us can't figure some plan."

"Three of us? Who do you mean by the three of us?"

"You, Mockerson, and myself, of course. I thought—at least I'm hoping, that Mockerson especially, with his organization, his knowledge of local conditions may be able to suggest something that can be done before Max is extradited back to New York. After that happens, I'm afraid there's not much hope; Blodgett and his crew will not be giving Max much of a chance to slip through his fingers this time. The legal proceeding will take about ten days or two weeks."

"You would have been expecting help from Mockerson, naturally," Donna said slowly, an edge creeping into her voice to betray her own abject misery. "You ask it for granted, I suppose, that it was Diamond Mary who turned Sanderson over to the cops. Isn't that right?"

A startled, very much bewildered expression spread over Barton Clark's face. "Of course, it's right! What on earth do you mean?"

Donna motioned him toward a chair and sat down near him.

"I'll tell you exactly what I mean, Mr. Clark. It wouldn't be fair to conceal anything, or to have you think we're going to get any help from Mockerson, for——" Abruptly, her words faltered to a pause.

"You mean," cried Clark, half rising to his feet again, "that it was Mockerson who tipped off the police? Isn't that what you're getting at?"

"It—it's hard for me to explain," Donna replied. "Perhaps I'd better tell you first that I'd walk over broken glass in my bare feet for Maxwell Sanderson, that I'd trade places with him if I could—yes, and that I'd die for him, too, if that would help any! I mean that; try and believe I mean every word of it, Mr. Clark, for it was me tipped off the cops."

Small wonder that Bart was completely flabbergasted, that he stared at Donna for a moment, aghast to the point of being bereft of speech.

"To keep Mockerson from putting him on the spot," she rushed on, taking advantage of Clark's dumfounded silence. "Oh, it was all my fault; I'm not trying to alibi myself, but I did do it to save Sanderson's life, and, since I couldn't undo the awful thing I had done, it was the only way. Please wait until I have explained."

"I'm waiting," snapped Barton Clark, his voice brittle and harsh.

In quick little rushes of words that were punctuated by pauses and half-released sobs, Donna told exactly how it had happened. She omitted no essential detail. Clark found himself listening not without a degree of sympathy, for she was so unmistakably sincere.

"Please, Mr. Clark," she pleaded, "try not to hate me too much. You see,

we've got to work together; we've got to get him free."

"And you doubtless think," grunted Bart, "that when we get Max out of jail—if we do—it'll be one of those they-lived-happily-ever-afterward romances."

Donna's mouth trembled and steadied as she shook her head.

"No," she answered tremulously, "I don't expect that; I don't expect anything but that he will hate me. It doesn't make any difference. I've been a fool, just a vain little fool. I'm not Sanderson's kind, and that's what I didn't realize."

Clark wasn't quite so angry with her as he felt he should be.

"Nor would it make any difference what sort you were," he told her. "Max fell in love with a woman once; he'll never fall in love again. It was a good many years ago. He's the sort of chap women do lose their heads over, but it never does them any good. There was Diamond Mary; she made a play for him, and when he didn't fall for her—well, from that moment, I think, she was out to get him caught."

Donna made a gesture as to wave all this aside.

"We've got to save him!" she said desperately. "That's really the only thing that matters now. You haven't thought of anything?"

Clark shook his head. "Not so much as the glimmer of an idea," he admitted. "How about you?"

"I've been so dazed that I can hardly think at all. The stuff Spec was pulling on me, I don't know whether there's anything in it, or if it's just plain hooey. Spec hasn't got much of a reputation for heavy thinking."

"Who's Spec?" Bart demanded. "Let's hear what his scheme is?"

"I don't know myself," Donna admitted. "Maybe he was just trying to graft me for some easy money. He says he knows how Sanderson can be sprung

but he wants ten grand before he'll talk."

"He values his information pretty high, doesn't he?"

"Oh, he really doesn't expect to get ten grand," declared Donna as her opinion. "If we could offer him half of that and show him the color of real money, he'd talk fast enough. I could raise maybe two thousand of it on my jewelry."

Even ten thousand dollars as the price of Sanderson's liberty did not raise a barrier of impossibility with Clark, for the disaster had come at a time when they were richly in funds. In a safety-deposit box to which both he and Max had a key, were the cash proceeds of Sanderson's last coup, and a little more besides—fifty-five thousand in all. As a precaution against the possibility of the police finding a safety-deposit key in Sanderson's possession and seizing their funds, Clark had early this morning gone to the trust company and removed the money. He had it upon his own person now, concealed in a money belt fastened about his waist.

For the barest instant, there entered his mind the suspicion that Donna might be rigging a game on him, that this tale of a fellow called "Spec" who wanted ten thousand for a scheme to liberate Sanderson might be a come-on; but she was so obviously sincere that it was impossible to have any real doubts as to the genuineness of her emotions.

"Maybe I could raise twenty-five hundred," added Donna. "For—for a crook's moll, you see, I haven't been much of a gold digger. I guess I've been a sap."

"Don't worry about the money end of it," Clark told her. "I can manage that. The main thing is to get hold of this fellow Spec, show him the color of our cash, and find out if this information of his is really worth paying for. Do you know where to locate him?"

Donna nodded. "Spec told me that I

could find him at Naughton's place, a speakeasy where he hangs out."

Barton Clark was on his feet. "Let's get going," he said. Donna needed no urging, for her eagerness was no less than his. A moment later, she had on her coat, had locked the door of the flower shop and the two were hurrying down Larkin Street.

The speakeasy known as Naughton's place was housed in a grimy-faced brownstone house that had once been a rich man's home and had been an address to be envied. People of importance had long since deserted this one-time fashionable street, two blocks around the corner from Larkin, and the present owners of the shabby properties were glad to get any sort of a tenant. And the proprietor of a speakeasy is willing to pay a stiff rent.

The entrance of Naughton's place was through a basement. One descended a brief flight of steps and came to an outer door. If things were "right" and the dry snoopers not giving any trouble, the outer door was open and one entered a dank, dark sort of a vestibule with a feeble light burning overhead, coming to a second barrier with an eye slot in the panel.

"This is the place," said Donna. "It's not a bad joint—better than most." The stout outer door stood invitingly open. "I see Naughton has fixed up his protection and is sitting pretty again."

Barton Clark wasn't interested in Naughton's speakeasy beyond the fact that it was the rendezvous for an interview with the man who maintained to know a way to get Sanderson out of jail. He reached out his hand to the bell call.

"Do we ring this?" he asked.

Donna nodded. "Press the button three times and then twice," she answered. "That'll get us inside quicker. A kind of a signal, you know."

Clark punched the button, and the response was a little startling in its

promptness. The door swung open in front of them.

"Hello, Charley," said Donna to the lookout. "Tony Lunt's here, isn't he?"

Charley jerked his bullet-shaped head toward the rear of the speakeasy.

"Back in th' bar with a couple of guys," he answered.

Naughton's speakeasy occupied the entire house. In days of a past grandeur the basement had housed the kitchen and servants' quarters. There was a stairway leading to the upper floors, and Donna moved toward it.

"Tell Spec we'll be waiting for him upstairs," she said.

Barton Clark followed her up the steps and into one of the private rooms. Both of them were tense with the uncertainty of their mission. Donna's fingers were trembling a little as she lighted a cigarette.

"I hope Spec hasn't been stringing me!" she exclaimed fervently, and then her voice faltered, as she added: "But I'm afraid—I'm afraid we're going to find out that it's just a lot of hot air."

"You know this fellow better than I do," Clark answered. "Anyhow, we're going to know pretty quick if it's hot air or not."

Donna's message to Tony Lunt was promptly delivered, and, no less promptly, he responded in person. Grinning spacioously, Spec came into the private room and closed the door behind him. His eyes rested questioningly upon Bart.

"A friend of Sanderson, Spec!" Donna exclaimed. "Names don't matter."

Tony Lunt jerked his head. "So long as you O. K. him, Donna, it's all right with me. You got here a lot quicker'n I expected. But if this is a fishin' expedition, both of you might as well save yourselves the tongue exercise. I'm givin' it to you straight: You gotta show me ten grand before I do any talkin'. If you ain't got the cash, here

and now, then I'm goin' back downstairs and shoot craps."

"Cash all right, Spec," said Donna, "but not ten grand."

Tony Lunt shook his head emphatically. "Ten grand or nothin'," he insisted. "And that's cheap for springin' a big-time crook like the Noiseless Cracksman. Why, I just seen in th' afternoon papers that the cops is gonna collect fifty thousand for landin' him in the jug." He moved back toward the door. "When you two can gimme a look at ten grand, gimme a jingle. Until then, nothin' doin'."

"Five of it now," Donna tried to bargain, "and the other five——"

Barton Clark interrupted her. "I'm not going to haggle over a few thousand dollars when there's a chance of getting Sanderson clear!" he exclaimed. "I've got Tony's price, and I'm prepared to pay it over the instant he can convince me that he's got a plan that can be made to work."

Spec's retreat toward the door ceased, and he started toward them. Reaching the table where Clark and Donna sat, he occupied the chair between the other two and leaned forward with unconcealed eagerness of manner.

"Let's see the color of that money, and we'll talk turkey."

Clark's hand went under his coat for the two packets of bills, five thousand in each, which, on his way to Naughton's place, he had removed from his money belt. At the sight of the actual cash, more money than he had ever dreamed of, Spec sucked in his breath with a sound of gasping avarice, and one of his hands reached out across the table in an unconscious gesture of greed. Clark warded off the movement.

"Not so fast, Tony," he grunted. "Not quite so fast, my friend! You've seen the color of the money, and now I want to see the value of this information you say you've got. If it's a plan that has any reasonable chance of suc-

cess, then these bills are yours without any quibbling."

For the barest instant, Spec hesitated, his eyes narrowing.

"No double-crossing," he warned. "You look like a pretty square guy to me, but I've seen square-lookin' guys before, that wasn't to be trusted. So I'm tellin' you, see, that you can't possibly get away with no double cross on this deal."

"I don't know what you're talking about," snapped Barton Clark.

"What I mean," amplified Tony Lunt, "is that I know this here scheme of mine is pretty sure to work. If you try to grab off the idea without comin' across with the dough—well, you'll find it won't work, that's all."

"You suspicious fool!" Barton Clark rasped impatiently. "Do you think I'm going to jeopardize Sanderson's chance of liberty by crooking you out of your money?"

"Oh, don't be such a sap, Spec," chimed in Donna. "You could even take this gentleman's word and consider it just as good as the cash in your own pocket."

Tony Lunt shook his head emphatically. "Gentlemen or no gentlemen," he retorted, "there's nobody's word would be that good with me, but I guess I've made it clear that I'm sittin' with an ace in the hole, so here goes."

He tipped forward in his chair, and both Clark and Donna leaned closer so as not to miss any word of the whisper to which his voice had lowered. A pencil had popped from the pocket of his vest between his fingers; with it, Tony began drawing a crude diagram on the tablecloth.

"This, y'understand, is police headquarters, and here——"

Hardly had he started than his hushed voice abruptly ceased. The door opened, but it was only one of the speakeasy waiters solicitously inquiring if anything was wanted to drink.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RAY OF HOPE.

DIAGONALLY across the street from the Criminal Courts Building, housed in a shabby three-storied structure, was police headquarters. The arrangement was but a temporary one, pending the completion of an imposing edifice which was to be part of a plan for a centralized arrangement of public buildings. The project, when finished, was to be called the City Plaza.

Temporary police headquarters, ironically enough, had once been a notorious gambling establishment. Those of the sporting world could look back, not so many years ago either, when "Honest John" Tuthill's palace of chance had offered almost every possible variety of gaming. There were fabled stories about poker, with thousands of dollars in a single pot, the tale concerning the night when a famous actress had "broken the bank" at roulette to the tune of fifty thousand and how Honest John had merely smiled his genial smile, remarking that it was good advertising for the public to hear of it.

Honest John himself would bet one thousand, or five, on the turn of a single card, but he liked it even better to show the paintings he had collected and to be admitted, on equal terms, into the company of ladies and gentlemen. When the police, urged by a persistent press of public opinion, had finally borne down heavily upon Tuthill's, when raids became a too regular occurrence and Honest John had finally to face an indictment as a common gambler, he finally bought his peace with the law. He agreed to shut up shop, to dismantle the large rooms, rip up the gorgeous rugs, box up his cherished paintings, and himself vanish into legendary obscurity.

The police, taking over the former notorious place for a temporary headquarters, found none of the secret gam-

bling rooms which, according to story, those high in name and reputation could play with safety or where gambling paraphernalia could be rushed into concealment in case of a sudden raid. They found only vacant rooms, bare floors and scarred walls.

Converting the building into suitable quarters for a police station, even temporarily, had been a problem of never-ending vexations; records had been jammed into makeshift spaces; executive police officers were without sufficient room to work in, and there was an atmosphere of confusion and constant irritations throughout the whole place.

Not the least of the problem had been that of providing cell space for prisoners. It was inadequately solved by building a series of cages in a low-ceilinged, ill-ventilated basement. Here the men held on charges were tossed in together, often three and four to a cell, without so much as the convenience of running water.

Maxwell Sanderson was shown no special favor. For that matter, one cell was about as bad as another, had there been any inclination to single him out for consideration. One of the men with whom he shared the unbelievably foul space was a foreigner who had slit his wife's throat and who constantly screamed out curses in his native tongue; the other was a dazed boy of nineteen.

Accommodations being what they were, the temper of the prisoners being such that it would have taken but little to incite a mutiny, the men were not allowed to exercise at the same time. Sanderson was not permitted to exercise at all.

Three days had passed since Sanderson's arrest. During those three days, a number of telegrams had been exchanged between the police department of the Western city and New York City. Among them was one from Peter

Blodgett, nationally known private detective, which had said:

Private reward of fifty thousand dollars will be paid upon Sanderson's conviction to term in prison. Urgently advise every precaution against possibility of escape. Leave to-day with extradition papers.

During those three days, also, Sanderson had silently endured the ordeal of the foul odors, the lack of running water, the cursing of the man who had cut his wife's throat, the endless sobbing of the nineteen-year-old boy. His clothing became rumpled, his linen soiled and, worst of all, he had not managed to get a shave. For two of the three days, also, he had his choice of the regular prison fare or going hungry; he preferred an empty stomach. Finally, however, by a series of petty bribes, he managed to gain a privilege which, theoretically at least, was allowed to all prisoners, that of having food brought in from the outside, provided they could afford to pay.

A guard brought him a tray, grinning through the bars, as he slipped the food under the slot in the bottom of the steel door.

"You'll find the victuals sort of cold, I guess," he grunted humorously. "Y'see, Mr. Noiseless Cracksman, when a bird gets th' reputation of flyin' th' coop, we allow to keep his wings trimmed. So our head jailer give them potatoes a little extra mashin' just to make sure they wasn't mixed with nothin' besides salt and butter."

Maxwell Sanderson had been in many trying situations, but never one which had so strained his nerves to the breaking point. Yet he managed to summon a smile to his lips; there was nothing to be gained and possibly an advantage to be lost in talking surily to a guard.

"Thanks, old man," he said as pleasantly as he could.

The guard tarried for a moment. "You're takin' it like a dead-game sport," he observed. "I'll say that for

you. Must be pretty tough for anybody, much less a real swell, the likes of yourself. Guess I'll be able to get a barber for you some time to-morrow."

"Splendid!" murmured Sanderson. "I'll not forget the favor."

The guard clumped off, and Sanderson gave a stifled groan of dismay to discover that a knife and fork had not been included with his outside rations. Even a very dull knife was apparently considered too dangerous an implement to trust within the clever fingers of the Noiseless Cracksman!

He had, however, a single spoon, and stirring sugar into a cup of lukewarm coffee, he thought of another similar situation in which he had once found himself—the time when Clark had got a message to him by means of a small capsule. He drank the mug of coffee with this in mind, but there was no such little pellet with a scrap of writing contained inside of it. He made sure of that.

Sanderson shook his head hopelessly.

"The rules are drawn too tight this time," he thought, and motioned to the younger of his two cell mates. "Here, son, maybe you'd like the rest of this food. I'll have to be a little hungrier before I can go the stuff."

Another hour or so dragged past. There were sounds of activity along the corridor—cell doors being slammed open, rattle of keys in the locks, grunts and growls of pleasure as a part of the prisoners got their usual period of recreation. Even the fellow who had slashed his wife's throat could stretch his legs—but not the Noiseless Cracksman.

The imprisoned men walked back and forth. Most of them paused for an instant near the door of Cell No. 9, to peer into the shadows for a glimpse of the man whom the newspapers called "America's cleverest and most daring jewel thief." The guards, watchful, did not allow them to linger.

One of the prisoners who strolled past Cell No. 9 was a fellow answering to

the name of "Pigeon." Now Pigeon had been in this same jail times before, for he was a chronic petty offender. The police would have been considerably puzzled to know that to-day Pigeon was in durance vile as part of a definite purpose and plan, that he had deliberately goaded the arresting officer into locking him up, and that for this inconvenience he had received two crisp hundred-dollar bills. Pigeon, it must be explained, was a friend of Tony Lunt, alias Spec.

Pigeon was apparently about to indulge himself in a cigarette; it hung from between his flabby lips as he paused before Cell No. 9 and stepped closer to the steel door.

"Huh!" he grunted. "So you're the ritzy guy they calls th' Noiseless Cracksman?"

"Hey, you!" roared the voice of a guard. "Get away from there!"

Pigeon neatly ejected the unlighted cigarette from between his lips and hastily turned away.

"Aw right, I'm gettin' away, ain't I?"

The cigarette fell to the floor inside of Sanderson's cell. On the alert for the smallest thing, Sanderson did not pass the incident by unnoticed. For a moment or two, he let the cigarette lie where it was without offering to pick it up; that might be rather too obvious. Presently, however, he touched it with the sole of his shoe, rolling it out of sight underneath the edge of the lower bunk, and then picked it up.

It appeared to be nothing more than an ordinary cigarette of a popular brand. Sure that he was not observed, he carefully began removing the filling of shredded tobacco.

Suddenly, his pulse quickened, for lying among the brown color of the tobacco, was a tiny white pellet of tightly wadded rice paper. He knew, even before he smoothed out the crinkled thing against the palm of his hand, that it would contain a message.

"Good old Bart!" Sanderson ex-

claimed under his breath. "He never fails me, but if he's found a way to get me out of this hole he's a magician, nothing less."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S RUSE.

THE police are constantly receiving anonymous tips. Sometimes they come by telephone and sometimes by letter. It may be a jane turning in a former sweetie whose amorous fancies have strayed in another direction. Usually, the motive is either jealousy or revenge. Now and then, too, the tip is from a crank, just plain "nut stuff."

The one that reached Chief of Detectives Cartwright on Wednesday morning came by mail, inclosed in a cheap envelope and written with a lead pencil on a sheet of cheap tablet paper. The words were printed, obviously an attempt to conceal the handwriting of the sender.

Sergeant Hawley, a second-grade detective who acted as the chief's secretary and opened the official mail, was the first to see it and to puzzle over it with a perplexed frown. The anonymous communication said, briefly:

If you want to know who robbed the district attorney's safe, ask the Noiseless Cracksmen. He did the job.

Sergeant Hawley started to toss the sheet of paper into the wastebasket. The next instant, he changed his mind on a sudden hunch that he had better show the anonymous communication to Chief Cartwright. One of the safest rules a policeman can follow is "Pass the buck." So far as Hawley knew, there hadn't been any robbery of the district attorney's safe, a ridiculously impossible thing to contemplate on the face of it. Still, something told him that he had better show the letter to the chief of detectives, so the policeman secretary scraped back his chair, rose heavily to his feet, pressed his considerable bulk past the narrow space between the

wall and a filing cabinet, and entered the private office of his superior.

Chief Cartwright was a large man with a forbidding face and a belligerent manner. His private office was a room measuring about eighteen by twenty feet and had once been the private office of Honest John Tuthill, the supergambler. It was an inside room and had no windows. The chief was barricaded behind a large desk occupying the exact geometrical center of the chamber so that the opening of the room's only door brought one face to face with Cartwright's stern and sometimes terrifying countenance.

This morning, he was in a particularly unpleasant humor, an irritability of domestic origin. The second Mrs. Cartwright, many years his junior, was young and pretty to look at, but sometimes she was very exasperating.

"Whatcha want?" rumbled the chief of detectives as Sergeant Hawley opened the door and stepped within the room.

Hawley saluted and advanced toward the massive desk.

"Something told me, chief, that I'd better turn this over to you personally." He placed the anonymous letter in front of Cartwright. The latter stared at it for a moment, and then lifted his eyes from the sheet of cheap writing paper and impaled his official secretary with a withering glare.

"Why?" he thundered.

Hawley shuffled his feet. "I beg your pardon, sir. Why what?"

"Why," rasped Chief Cartwright, "do you want to bother me with such nonsense? So the district attorney's safe has been robbed, has it? Bah! You waste my time with a nut letter like this. The district attorney's safe! Next they'll be writing in that it was the Noiseless Cracksmen who kidnaped Charley Ross."

"I'm sorry," Hawley apologized humbly. "I had a hunch, I thought——"

"You thought!" sneered the chief of

detectives. "The trouble with you is that you haven't got any brains to think with. Take this darn-fool thing and chuck it——"

Before he could finish, one of the battery of telephones on his desk started ringing. The chief flung out one of his hands and jerked the receiver from its hook.

"Hello!" he rumbled. "Yeah, Chief Cartwright speaking." Instantly, the quality of his voice lost its strident belligerence in a tone of unusual deference. "Good morning, Mr. Sommers. What's that? Why, sure you can see me . . . any time that suits you. Five minutes? O. K., Mr. Sommers. I'll keep the office clear for you."

Slamming the receiver back onto its hook, Chief Cartwright grunted and fingered the anonymous letter at which a moment before he had snorted so derisively.

"That was the district attorney on the wire," he explained to Hawley, "and he's all heated up over something. Humph! I wonder if maybe there's something to this letter after all."

"I can't answer that, chief, but I was about to chuck it into the wastebasket when I had a hunch I'd better show it to you first."

Chief Cartwright considered the matter for a moment, and then shook his head. "It must be something else the D. A. is excited over," he decided. "We've had this Noiseless Cracksman bird locked up for four days, and, if he *did* burgle anybody's safe, it had to be before he was pinched. It ain't sensible to suppose that the D. A. would wait half a week to get hot about his own safe bein' cracked."

"Doesn't sound reasonable, chief," agreed Hawley, who was an habitual yes-man.

"Don't let anybody get in here before Sommers arrives!" ordered Cartwright. "Five minutes, he said, but I guess it'll be even quicker than that."

The chief was right, and had he taken the trouble to hold a watch on his prediction, it required District Attorney Sommers exactly three and a half minutes to come rushing across the street from the Criminal Courts Building.

He was not usually a man to give way to such an outburst of excitement, which made it clear that something very much out of the ordinary had happened. Being admitted to the office of Chief Cartwright, he strode across the room and flung down upon the chief's desk an almost identical copy of the letter which had so recently reached the eyes of the police official.

"Take a look at that, chief! It reached me by mail this morning."

The detective chief gave a grunt and nodded. "I got one, too, Mr. Sommers. I was reading it when you telephoned. What am I to guess—that it's the straight goods?"

District Attorney Sommers sat down, pushed back his faultless gray fedora and brushed a faint film of perspiration from his high forehead.

"The straight goods and no mistake, chief," he answered grimly.

"Then your safe *has* been robbed? We've had the Noiseless Cracksman under arrest for four days, you know. You're not just finding out about it, surely?"

The district attorney took a handsome cigar case from his pocket and helped himself to a smoke.

"I'll have to explain from the beginning, chief, but I'll make it short. As you know, I've been after Ed Mockerson and his bunch of thugs ever since I took office. He's a hard man to get the goods on, but I bided my time and watched my chance. Then your men picked up Spider Kelley, one of the Mockerson mob, and got him with the goods. That was a piece of luck, and I played it to the limit. I blocked all of Mockerson's attempts to get Kelley out on bail, and finally I'd worked on Spider

until he didn't want any bail—afraid Mockerson would put him on the spot. Day after day, I've seen Spider Kelley cracking and I knew he was ready to squeal. And then the evidence against him disappeared."

"Whatta ya mean, disappeared?" grunted the chief of detectives.

"What I mean," snapped back the district attorney, "is that one day the evidence was in my safe, and the next day it wasn't. I thought somebody in my office had sold out for a bunch of Mockerson's crooked money. I guess I suspected pretty nearly everybody who had access to the records' vault.

"In this morning's mail, I got this anonymous letter. Not until then, chief, did it even remotely occur to me that the safe had been tampered with by an outsider. But, when I examined the vault door—a few minutes before I telephoned you—I must have been a blind fool not to have noticed before, that there had been a hole drilled through the steel."

"And you never noticed that until this morning?" Cartwright demanded.

"The hole had been plugged with boiler cement and enameled over," snapped Sommers. "A darned neat job it was, too. Oh, it's a straight tip right enough, chief. It was this Noiseless Cracksman fellow who pulled the job and he did it for Ed Mockerson."

Chief Cartwright smiled thinly. "Well," he observed, "we've got the guilty man downstairs in a cell, if that's any consolation to you. We're holding him for the New York authorities, you know. I expect officers from the East to arrive either to-night or to-morrow morning. I guess they'll give Sanderson plenty when they get him back to New York."

The district attorney leaped to his feet and slammed his hand against the chief's desk.

"Exactly!" he exclaimed. "And that's what I'm planning on!"

"I don't quite follow you, Mr. Sommers."

Again the district attorney sat down; he was smiling—the smile of the man who is proud of his own cleverness.

"How a high-class crook like Sanderson ever got mixed up with a tough egg and a thug like Ed Mockerson, I don't profess to know. Maybe he was broke and did the job for money; yes, that likely explains it. Anyhow, all I'm interested in is that, with the evidence against Spider Kelley gone, I've still got a chance to give Ed Mockerson the works, and that's to make the Noiseless Cracksman talk."

Chief Cartwright grunted sourly. "Oh, he'll talk! He's a free-and-easy talker, one of the niftiest conversationalists I ever listened to. Talks on almost any subject except himself. But just you try to get him to tell you anything that you actually want to know!"

The district attorney smiled.

"Ah, chief, but you don't yet realize what I'm driving at. I'm going to make a trade with him."

"Whatta ya mean—trade?"

"Sanderson faces a term of not less than twenty years in prison if he's extradited to New York. I'm going to offer him, in return for coming clean and confessing that Mockerson inspired and instigated the stealing of the Kelley evidence, a chance from being returned to New York."

"But how can you do that?" demanded the detective chief.

"I'm not saying I'm going to do it," Sommers unblushingly admitted. "I'm only going to promise to do it. Sometimes, it's impossible to keep a promise, and, after all, what's a promise given to a crook? I'll tell him I've got a strong pull with the governor—close political alliance and that sort of thing."

"And you and the governor sworn enemies!"

"Sounds logical, anyhow," the district attorney pursued blandly. "My line

will be that I'll go to the governor and oppose extradition on the ground that I want to try him on charges myself. Then I'll promise Sanderson that, having prosecuted him and got him convicted on a charge of robbing the vault in my office, I'll let him off easy—ten years and maybe five."

Chief Cartwright shook his head.

"You're sure an optimist, Mr. Sommers. I guess you think you've cooked up a mighty clever scheme, but I'm telling you in advance that it won't work."

"Why not?" the district attorney demanded sharply. "Sanderson is an intelligent man, and no intelligent man is going to face twenty sure years in prison when he's given even a gambling chance of halving and perhaps quartering the rap."

"No, Mr. Sommers," repeated the detective chief, "it won't work. I could give you several reasons, but one of 'em is enough. This Maxwell Sanderson, for all of his being a crook, is no snitch. You could third-degree him from now until doomsday and you'd not get a squeal out of him."

Sommers's eyes snapped. "Confound it, chief, to hear you talk, you've actually got an admiration for the fellow!"

"And I'd be a liar to deny that I have," admitted Cartwright with a grin. "I'll defy any one to deny that they've got a sneaking liking for the man." He shrugged his shoulders. "Never seen him yourself, huh? Well, when you've gone down into that filthy hole we call a cell room, and tried to bamboozle him with that proposition you've cooked up, you'll know what I mean."

"But I'm not going to talk with Sanderson in the cell room," the district attorney announced crisply. "We're going to have him up here in your office. The psychological effect will be better."

Chief Cartwright stirred with a vague and what might have seemed an entirely unreasonable feeling of uneasiness.

"I'm not very strong on this psycho-

logical-effect stuff," he growled, "but something tells me to keep Sanderson right where he is—down there in his cell. He's one slippery article, Mr. Sommers. Of course, I don't see myself how anything could happen."

"Certainly not!" exclaimed the district attorney. "Let's have him up here as quickly as it can be done. I'm impatient to see if this little scheme of mine is going to work."

Chief Cartwright punched a button on the desk in front of him. The door between the private office and the ante-room opened and Sergeant Hawley stood on the threshold.

"Hawley!"

"Yes, chief."

"Who's on duty in the ward room?"

"Leahy and MacMasters, sir."

"Humph! Good men, both of them. Tell Leahy and MacMasters to bring Sanderson up here to my office so the district attorney can talk to him; and just a minute, Hawley. Don't be in such a rush; wait until I've finished."

"I'm waiting, sir."

"Tell 'em to take a uniformed man along with 'em, and to shackle Sanderson to the officer the minute they take him out of his cell and to keep their hands on their guns."

As the door closed behind Sergeant Hawley, the district attorney burst into a cackling laugh.

"All that stuff is so utterly ridiculous, chief. You must think this Sanderson is superhuman."

"No, not superhuman, Sommers, but a fast thinker and the world's champion escape artist. I'm not running any chances."

CHAPTER XV.

TRICKED!

TWO burly detectives, Leahy and MacMasters, and a policeman in uniform appeared at the steel door of Maxwell Sanderson's cell. The massive key rattled noisily in the huge lock. At

the moment Sanderson was lying down, wondering in distaste if it would ever be possible for him to get accustomed to the texture of these coarse, rough blankets.

The fellow who had cut his wife's throat had been hauled away to court for arraignment; the nineteen-year-old boy was sprawled out upon the upper bunk, having sobbed himself into a state of complete mental and physical exhaustion.

As the cell door swung open, Sanderson raised himself to the support of one elbow.

"You, Sanderson!" barked one of the plain-clothes men. "Come outta there."

Swinging his feet to the floor, the Noiseless Cracksman stood up and obediently advanced to the front of the cell.

"What is it, gentlemen?" he asked with that same show of good humor which had not once failed him since his arrest.

"We're takin' you upstairs," answered Detective Leahy. "Chief wants to see you. Stick out one of your mitts."

Sanderson reached out his left hand, and the next instant he was securely handcuffed to the officer in uniform. MacMasters carefully examined the locks to make sure that they had caught. Once, a long time back, he had lost a prisoner and a month's pay by taking it for granted that the metallic click meant that the steel wristlets were tightly closed.

"Doubtlessly," murmured Sanderson, that shadowy smile of his flitting briefly across his mouth, "I should take these precautions as a personal compliment. No exercise hour, no newspapers, not even the customary shaving privilege. Really, men, you're making me feel quite like a desperado. I suppose I'll have to try and make a break, just to live up to my reputation."

MacMasters grinned, but his smile was grim as he gestured toward the butt

of his gun in its leather holster beneath his coat.

"Don't attempt it, Sanderson. I'd hate like the devil to put a bullet through you."

"To tell you the truth," answered the Noiseless Cracksman, "I shouldn't like it so well myself. Now, if no ball and chain is to be added to the restriction of my movements, I am now at your service."

"All right," said Detective Leahy, "let's go."

The guarded march toward the detective bureau started; it led out of the cell room, past two steel doors, and then past a third at the top of the steps. Up another flight of stairs to the second story of the shabby old building they went and then into the group of rooms with a sign announcing "Detective Division."

This was not Sanderson's first visit to the chief's office. The night of his arrest, he had been brought here from the fourth precinct police station, to be questioned, to be finger-printed and to have his measurements taken.

"Here he is," announced MacMasters to Sergeant Hawley, and the latter jerked his thumb toward the second door.

"Take 'im on in."

Just as cheerfully as though he had entered the room voluntarily, Sanderson flashed a smile toward Cartwright and a second man who gave him back a long, carefully appraising stare. After this moment of penetrating scrutiny, the district attorney began smiling in return—an obvious effort to create an air of friendly good-fellowship.

The two detectives were awaiting instructions from their chief, but the latter, apparently, had more or less reluctantly agreed to let it be the district attorney's show.

"Take the handcuffs off of him," instructed Sommers with a continuation of the same studiously agreeable man-

ner. "Give the man a chance to be comfortable."

With a jerk of his head, Chief Cartwright agreed that these orders were to be carried out, so off came the handcuffs from about the wrist of the officer in uniform, freeing the use of Sanderson's arm but leaving the steel circle dangling from his hand. When that was done, the district attorney indicated with a dismissing gesture that the officers were to retire from the office. But Chief Cartwright amended this plan.

"You, Patrolman Gresham," he snapped, "will stand post *inside* the door. And you, Leahy and MacMasters, will remain in the anteroom."

Maxwell Sanderson's eyes went slowly about the windowless room. A smile flicked across his face. The district attorney motioned him to the chair at the end of the desk.

"Sit down, Mr. Sanderson," he said agreeably. "Smoke? You'll find this brand of mine exceptionally good." He leaned forward and offered his cigar case.

"Thanks," responded the Noiseless Cracksman, accepting one of the cigars and relaxing into the chair. "Yes, you're right; a very splendid smoke—rather incongruous, however, to be in the mouth of a chap who hasn't felt the edge of a razor in four days." The links of the handcuffs dangling heavily from his one imprisoned wrist jingled as he struck a match. "Well, gentlemen, I suppose this little conference concerns extradition. Am I right?"

Sommers nodded. "In a way it does, Sanderson, but not perhaps precisely in the way you think. I am the district attorney."

Now it was Sanderson who inclined his head. "I rather fancied so; the legal manner is quite apparent."

Sommers's smile had a touch of grimness as he said: "You paid me a little visit some days ago, Mr. Sanderson, but, of course, you called after office

hours and made sure that I wouldn't be in."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, come, Sanderson! Come now! Don't pretend surprise. You're a much too intelligent man to presume that I am an utter fool. You drilled your way into my vault and took possession of certain records, certain evidence in a case of the State vs. Spider Kelley."

Maxwell Sanderson shrugged his shoulders. Again the links of the handcuffs tinkled as he removed the cigar from between his lips and blew a thin, leisurely trickle of smoke toward the ceiling.

"You can readily understand, Mr. District Attorney," he said quietly, "that I would scarcely admit your hypothesis, granting that it might be true."

Sommers leaned forward. "You will find it greatly to your advantage to admit it, Mr. Sanderson, for I am in a position to offer you a proposition that will halve and perhaps quarter the prison term that you will receive if you are taken back to New York on extradition. Not a day less than twenty years will you get back East—the maximum penalty. I am not intimately familiar with the details of your various crimes, but, if the New York prosecutors can establish that you ever committed a robbery armed with a gun, I understand that lets you in for a life term."

The Noiseless Cracksman calmly took another puff at his cigar.

"Which leads us where?" he murmured.

"There's no use beating around the bush, Sanderson," went on the district attorney, "so let us be entirely frank about the whole matter. You drilled open the safe in my office for just one purpose—to remove from my possession the evidence against Spider Kelley. We were depending on Kelley to turn State's evidence against a crook named Ed Mockerson. Therefore, obviously, you committed this robbery for Mocker-

son. What your connection is with that thug, I don't know, nor do I greatly care.

"For two years I've been after Mockerson, but he's always slipped through my fingers. You spoiled my chance of getting him through Spider Kelley, and I——"

"And," Sanderson finished for him, "what you now want *me* to do is turn informer and admit that Mockerson was behind the robbery of your safe. Do you really think, Mr. District Attorney, that there is even the remotest possibility of my turning stool pigeon?"

Sommers gestured angrily.

"Use your head, Sanderson!" he exclaimed. "I'm offering you a chance to save yourself rotting away the rest of your life in prison. You'll be an old man twenty years from now. Do you think Mockerson wouldn't toss *you* to the wolves if the situation were reversed? You can just bet your sweet life he would. Ed Mockerson would double-cross his own mother."

The Noiseless Cracksman tapped the ash from the end of his cigar.

"Precisely what is your proposition, Mr. District Attorney?" he inquired.

"Ah, that's better! You're showing some intelligence. Now here's what I've got to offer you.

"The New York authorities have, as you would know without being told, applied to the governor of this State for your extradition. The matter comes up for a hearing on Thursday of next week. If matters are allowed to run their normal course, the extradition will be granted, but it *could* be arranged to have the application denied. The governor and I are pretty good friends, both personally and politically.

"I would, you see, oppose the extradition on the grounds that you were wanted on criminal charges in this State, that your testimony was badly needed to put an end to the crooked organization headed by Mockerson. I could success-

fully resist the extradition, and bring you to trial myself."

The district attorney paused briefly and then plunged on: "I would see to it, furthermore, that you were brought to trial before a judge with whom my word carries weight and has always displayed a willingness to accept my recommendations as the public prosecutor. Naturally, Sanderson, I could not promise you complete immunity; I'd be a fool to promise it, and you'd be a fool to place any dependence in such a promise. But I do pledge you that you'll get off with not more than ten years. In New York, they'll give you twenty years and perhaps a life sentence. And, too, there's the bare possibility that I might be able to get you off with five years. Do I make myself clear?"

Maxwell Sanderson nodded.

"Oh, quite clear indeed," he answered, "but these deals with the law do not always work out according to the strict letter of the promise; sometimes, they do not work out at all."

Chief Cartwright entered the conversation for the first time.

"You can depend on it, Sanderson," he said gruffly, "that Mr. Sommers is a man of his word. I strongly advise you to accept the proposition and at once. When the governor has signed the extradition papers, it'll be too late. Maybe you're banking on the chance of an escape between here and New York; maybe you're depending on that pal of yours, too. Get that stuff out of your head, Sanderson. You won't have a chance, not a chance in the world."

"The chance of escape, I should say," murmured Sanderson, "would seem to be an extremely doubtful one."

For a moment, there was silence within the windowless room. Sanderson appeared to be giving the district attorney's proposition his most serious consideration. Sommers leaned forward, an exultant gleam in his eyes.

"He's falling for it!" he exclaimed to

himself. "He's nibbling the bait and is about to swallow the hook!"

Chief Cartwright wasn't so sure of that; there was something in Sanderson's manner that made him uneasy. He sensed that the Noiseless Cracksman was deliberately sparring for time, playing some sort of a game.

"Take your time, Mr. Sanderson," the district attorney was saying persuasively. "Think it over—five years against twenty. Yes, I'm pretty sure that I'll be able to get you off."

And then it happened—complete darkness within the room, a tomblike blackness as, inexplicably, the lights went out. From the detective chief's throat came a hoarse bellow of astonishment and consternation.

"Gresham!" he roared. "Don't move an inch away from that door. Your gun! Be ready to use your gun at any moment!"

The chief's office was filled with a strange odor; papers rustled in a draft of wind. There was a jingling sound—undoubtedly the noise made by the links of the handcuffs about Sanderson's one imprisoned wrist. Recovering from his own stupefaction, Sommers reached out his hand in the direction where the Noiseless Cracksman had last been visible. Something struck him violently in the pit of the stomach, and toppled him over to the floor. His curse cracked out in the darkness like a pistol shot.

Frantically, Chief Cartwright was pawing his pockets for matches.

All these things had happened practically simultaneously, in the dazed passing of a few fleeting seconds. The timid head of a match flame leaped up feebly. There stood Patrolman Gresham, firmly braced against the door, revolver in his hand.

Assuredly, the door had not opened, for that was impossible; the room had no windows, but Maxwell Sanderson had utterly vanished!

"He's done it," groaned the chief of

detectives. "Curse him, he's done it. But how? How?"

"It's impossible!" mouthed District Attorney Sommers as a second match flared up between Chief Cartwright's fingers. "It's simply impossible!"

"Impossible or not," shouted the chief, "Sanderson's gone! If we can only find out how he worked this trick! Gresham, open that door! Open it quick! Leahy, MacMasters! Come in here! Bring a flashlight!"

Swiftly, the two plain-clothes men, with Sergeant Hawley at their heels, came pounding into the dark office. The lights in the anteroom had not been affected. The now open door admitted sufficient illumination to confirm the truth, that Sanderson was gone, apparently melted into empty space.

For a few moments, shouting, excited, practical-minded men were faced with a manifestation of the seemingly impossible. But, since they were practical-minded men, they swiftly sought a practical explanation.

"There's only one possible answer," cried the detective chief. "This room has got a secret exit. We gotta find it, men!"

It was Detective MacMasters who hit upon the exact truth.

"Right you are, chief!" exclaimed MacMasters. "This used to be the private gambling room of Tuthill. There were always yarns about some secret passage, but I never took no stock in 'em."

"Get that fire ax out there in the hall!" roared Chief Cartwright. At the same instant, he had jerked the flashlight from the hand of Detective Leahy and was moving the white beam over the surface of the four walls.

"That looks like it might be the place," he muttered, and lunged forward. The wall sounded solid to the pound of his fist. "Fools that we are! I can see the whole business now! That anonymous letter was nothing more than

a bait for us. We did exactly what Sanderson and his pal wanted us to do; we brought him up here from the cell room to question him about the robbery of Sommers's safe. Yes, curse their cleverness, we played right into their hands!"

Detective Leahy came back on the run with the fire ax, and Chief Cartwright directed where the first blow should be struck. The sudden impact of the ax was met by the ringing sound of metal.

"A steel door!" snapped Cartwright. "Fastened on the other side, of course. By the time we cut through this——"

But a second blow from the ax demonstrated that the barrier was not so formidable after all. The innocent-looking panel in the wall suddenly sprang outward, and the room was again filled with that odor of musty spaces. Cartwright and the others pressed forward, staring down into a shaftlike space pierced through the center with a spiral stairway which led downward.

"Honest John Tuthill was one foxy bird, all right," grunted Detective MacMasters.

"Come on, men!" thundered the chief of detectives. "Down we go!"

The descent had to be made in single file. The chief flashed his light around the shaft.

"The light wires have been run inside of here so the circuit could be broken," he growled. "That means Sanderson's outside help had everything prepared and they got in touch with Sanderson, too, despite all the precautions I took."

Down the spiral stairway clattered the men, the district attorney more cautiously bringing up a distant rear. At the bottom of the shaft they came, apparently to a blank wall, but, obviously, there had to be a way out. The fire ax was brought into use again. Another cunningly concealed exit was forced

open, and it led into a tunnel so low that all had to stoop in passing through it. At the other end, a crack of light showed; the final exit had been, apparently, left open in the haste of Sanderson's flight.

"The bookshop!" grunted Detective Leahy. "Sanderson's pals bought it out, just to get the use of the passageway. Old Brinkhead told me yesterday that he'd sold out to somebody and got a fancy price for it, too."

The secondhand bookshop was a dismal place, filled with old volumes that people seldom wanted. There were books everywhere—on shelves, on tables, in piles upon the floor. Chief Cartwright stumbled over an ancient set of the Encyclopedia Britannica as he lunged for the open street door of the shop.

The street back of the entrance to police headquarters was a narrow, shabby, dismal lane of hopeless tradesmen eking out a bare existence. A woman sat on a stool in the doorway of a fruit stand across the way. This was "Apple Annie," who augmented her income by peddling her wares about various office buildings.

"Hey, Annie!" bellowed Chief Cartwright. "Two men just came out of this place. Which way did they go?"

Apple Annie's hand appeared from beneath her shawl and prodded out in a gesture.

"Around the corner," she answered. "They was in a hurry."

"Come on, men!" shouted Cartwright. "They haven't got much of a start on us; we've still got a chance left to nab 'em."

CHAPTER XVI.

IN A TAXI.

THE information given by Apple Annie to Sanderson's pursuers had been honest enough, and yet misleading. Neither of the two men she had seen

was the escaping Noiseless Cracksman. But Chief Cartwright and his detectives never did discover that, for the pair they followed, innocent enough fellows, who happened to wander past the second-hand bookshop, had lost themselves in the traffic of the busier main street just around the corner.

The bookshop remained apparently empty and deserted until well past midnight, when a half-filled box of books began to lift itself from the floor as a trapdoor raised slowly, and the face of Barton Clark appeared at the widening opening.

"All right, Max!" he exclaimed softly. "I guess we can make a break for it now. The cops aren't bothering to keep a watch on this place; they're looking for us miles away from here by this time. But I'll keep a watch while you use a razor and your make-up box. There's running water behind the partition."

The fugitive Noiseless Cracksman followed Clark out through the opening in the floor.

"Did you find this ready-made, or was it of your own devising?" he anxiously inquired.

"I did it myself last night, with a saw and hatchet," Clark answered. "Don't waste any time talking, Max; let's get out of here."

Maxwell Sanderson vanished behind the partition. There came the subdued sound of running water and, even more faintly, the scrape of a safety razor over his four-day's growth of beard. For a moment, he paused in his shaving.

"Tell me, Bart," he called softly, "how did you manage to discover that passageway between the chief's office and this place? Pretty much blind luck, wasn't it?"

"Explanation can wait. We haven't dared talk and we'd better not talk now. When we get clear, I'll tell you the whole thing—including Donna."

"Donna? You mean Mockerson's

moll? What did she have to do with it?"

"Just about everything, Max. In heaven's name, hurry!"

Sanderson lapsed into silence and completed his shaving. Following that, he began altering his appearance, as only his clever fingers knew how to manage. A coat with a pad sewed into the back disguised his usual erectness of carriage and gave him a stoop-shouldered appearance.

"If I'd done some of this a week ago," he murmured, "Diamond Mary would never have spotted me."

He dared not turn on a light, and had to work in the darkness, but since the finished effect would not have to stand the probing light of day, he felt that it would pass.

"All right," he finally announced.

"Listen!" Clark told Sanderson tensely. "I'm going out first. We'd better not walk together. If anything *does* happen, the cops will only get one of us. Two blocks east and three blocks west. There'll be a taxi. I'll be at the wheel by the time you get there."

In the gloom of the shop, Sanderson saw that Clark was wearing the uniform of a taxi driver.

"Safer than using a hired cab," said Clark, "so I bought one of our own."

Not more than two or three minutes after Clark's departure from the second-hand bookshop, the Noiseless Cracksman himself emerged into the empty street of cheap, discouraged shops, a stooped figure walking at an unhurried pace. Two blocks east and three blocks west, as per Clark's instructions, he sighted the taxicab. He raised his arm to hail it, and the cab slid forward as taxis always do when a passenger signals.

Even Clark himself was unaware that he already had a passenger, for Donna Stark was huddled low in the rear seat, completely out of sight. As Sanderson opened the door, he saw the huddled fig-

ure and drew back with sudden alarm and caution.

"It—it's all right," she whispered. "It—it's me—Donna Stark. I had to wait. I had to know that you were safe!"

"Nice of you to be so considerate," murmured Sanderson, as he proceeded to enter the cab. Donna stayed his hand as he was closing the door.

"Wait!" she said in a half-choked voice. "I'm not going with you. I—

I just waited here to make sure you were all right." Then, suddenly, she flung her arms about him, clung to him for a moment, her warm, hungry lips against his. Then, before Sanderson could quite recover from his surprise, she had wrenched open the door, and had leaped down to the sidewalk, hurrying up the street.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Sanderson weakly. "Now what on earth made her do that?"

THE END.

In Next Week's Issue, "CONWAY'S BEAT,"

by DONALD VAN RIPER.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO SUNDAY SCHOOL

A NEW YORK CITY judge recently gave his opinion regarding the youthful criminal of to-day. There are a variety of views upon this subject, all with the same end in mind; namely, the best way to prevent crime. The judge is quoted as follows:

"My experience during twenty-three years on the bench, in which time over four thousand boys under the age of twenty-one years were convicted of crime before me, of whom but three were members of a Sabbath school, has satisfied me of the value of Sabbath schools to the community, in helping safeguard it, to the extent to which Sabbath schools exist, from the growth of criminals.

"My experience also satisfies me of their value to the individual. In nineteen hundred and two cases of suspended criminal sentences, in each of which a minister, priest, or rabbi became interested at my request, only sixty-two of the boys were brought back for violation of the conditions of parole. I believe the reform in the remaining cases was prompt and permanent.

"In fact, I regard our Sabbath schools, including those of all faiths, as the only effective means to stem the rising tide of vice and crime among our youth. Society carries the heavy burden of criminality, chiefly because of the lack of religious training of the youth.

"If all the children could be kept under the influence of the Sabbath school, and the grown-ups were active in some church, we could close our prisons and jails, instead of being compelled to enlarge and increase their number.

"The problem of youth is the problem of humanity. There are over seventeen million boys and girls in this country growing up without moral training from any source."

Six Saps

HE LAUGHED AT MOUNTAIN JUSTICE UNTIL HE SAW WHAT IT WAS LIKE.



By F. Ranikel

Author of "Power Of Death," etc.

THE conviction for murder of two of his most able lieutenants was a hard blow to "Butch" Cranston's pride. For Butch was proud of his influence, proud of his power, and it was only natural that now the hatred he had always harbored for Detective David Hale should mount to savage proportions.

He sat in the lavish apartment that plunder had made possible. With him were his bodyguards, "Pug" Ballin and "Navy Sam." Pug had been in the fistic ring, until it was painfully revealed to him that he couldn't successfully be a prize fighter and a booze fighter at the same time. Sam had served part of an enlistment in the navy. A prison term as a deserter gave him the necessary

foundation and inspiration for service under Butch's leadership.

Before them, on a table, was spread out a newspaper, which recounted the sentencing of "Trigger Jack" Galotti and "Dutch Henry" Bleeker to the chair. Alongside this account there was a photo of David Hale, and three pairs of eyes, smoldering hate, glittered down at the tall, lean man pictured there.

Part of the account read:

Galotti and Bleeker were to-day convicted of the murder of Detective Edward McCoy. A few weeks ago, McCoy and Detective David Hale were walking together on a downtown street, when a car drew up and the occupants opened fire. McCoy fell with a bullet in the back that had pierced his heart. Hale returned the fire. His first shot killed the driver of the murder car, and the machine, uncontrolled, hit the curb and turned

over, pinning Galotti and Bleeker underneath. A fourth man was thrown free. He exchanged shots with Hale, but escaped. Hale was unable to get a good look at him in the dark street.

To all expressions of congratulation, Hale replied grimly: "There was a fourth man." The friendship of McCoy and Hale was department gossip.

Hale's laconic comment is taken to mean that he will not rest till the man who escaped is accorded the same fate as the pair that were sentenced to death to-day.

Hale comes naturally by a vengeful spirit. He is of Kentucky mountaineer stock. The Hale-Thompson feud was a memorable period in the history of vendettas in the Kentucky hills. After the law stepped in and effected a reconciliation and peace began to reign, many of the Hale clan scattered to appease their adventurous spirit elsewhere. David Hale came to New York and became a policeman. He received recognition and promotion promptly, but it seems he has lost none of the feudist spirit.

Butch thrust the paper aside with a grimace. He poured a shot of whisky into his glass from a bottle that stood on the table and downed it at a gulp.

"What the devil's a Kentucky mountaineer?" demanded Pug, who had never been outside of New York, except on the occasions when he was the State's involuntary guest.

"I know," said Sam, and the other two turned curious eyes toward him. "I used to know one of them when I was in the navy. They live in the mountains. They call 'em 'hill-billies.' When a member of the family gets bumped, they go after the guy that does the croakin' till they get him."

"They got nothin' on us," said Butch. "Don't we do the same?"

Sam shrugged. Pug helped himself to the bottle. Butch's dark, close-set eyes remained moodily thoughtful.

"Too bad we only got McCoy that night," he muttered.

Pug and Sam made no comment. They knew, from experience, that Butch wanted none. Their chief was just thinking out loud, preparatory to making some sort of decision.

"That guy, Hale," went on Butch, "is gettin' on my nerves, comin' here day after day, snoopin' around, askin' his fool questions. I ain't goin' to stand it any longer. I ain't goin' to let him rag me like that."

"What do you care if he comes here?" suggested Pug with some timidity. "He can't do you nothin'. You got an air-tight alibi framed."

The muscles in Butch's face flexed angrily. "Ain't he done enough? He bumped Max. He sent Trigger and Dutch to the hot seat. That guy is a jinx. There ain't room enough for me and him in the same city."

A tense silence followed that remark.

"Gee, chief, you don't mean," asked Sam hoarsely, "you want to put Hale on the spot?"

Butch's teeth clicked sharply.

"Maybe I do. This ain't Kentucky, you know. We got our own little ways of getting rid of pests up here, too."

"But they'll nail it on us right off," put in Pug with a little terror in his voice. "We couldn't get away with that."

"Can that!" cried Butch, and Pug subsided meekly. "I can get away with anything in this burg. If Maxie hadn't been so careless with the car, Trigger and Dutch wouldn't be where they are to-day. With Hale there to testify, and all that publicity, I couldn't fix it. Hale don't scare me, not with all the mountains in Kentucky."

The doorbell rang. The three men exchanged taut glances.

"See who it is!" ordered Butch, and Sam rose to obey. He stepped through a little foyer to the door. His voice came back to the pair waiting tensely in the room.

"Oh, hello, Hale! We been expecting you."

Butch and Pug stiffened, turned scowling faces up to the tanned, gaunt detective who stepped into the room, with Sam behind him.

"What do you want, bull?" demanded Butch, putting a surly venom into the last word.

"I just came to talk to you," said Hale in a soft drawl, his steady, gray eyes resting narrowly on the chief.

"Oh, yeah?" exclaimed Butch. "And maybe to do a little crowin'?"

Hale shook his head slowly.

"'Tain't time for crowing. My job ain't done yet," he said pointedly.

Flame leaped into Butch's eyes.

"You ain't goin' to finish it here," he snapped. "Not by comin' here and doin' a lot of talkin'."

"I do get tired," said Hale musingly, "of just talking."

"Then why come?" demanded Butch. "You'll never be missed if you don't."

"I know it," said Hale. "I don't enjoy these visits any more than you do. But there's that fourth man in the McCoy business."

The scowl on Butch's face became darker.

"That McCoy business," he said, "was settled to-day, wasn't it?"

"Only partly."

"Well, you ain't goin' to get any further with settlin' it around here. Gumshoein' and talkin' is a waste of time with me."

"I s'pose so," said Hale. "You people up North do waste a lot of time that way."

"I suppose down where you come from," sneered Butch, "you'd have put a slug in my back a long time ago?"

"Not in your back exactly," returned Hale, with a tremor in his voice, "but somewhere where it would have done a lot of good."

Butch sprang angrily to his feet and stepped close to the detective. He hunched his head forward threateningly, so that a lock of his dark hair hung over his beetle brow. His thick lips quivered in a snarl of outraged pride, and his thick nostrils dilated with quickened breath.

"Well, you ain't in the mountains now," he sneered. "Up here, we got law." He pointed a trembling finger to the crumpled newspaper on the floor. "To them guys that write the news you may be a hero because you come from the Kentucky mountains, but to me you're nothin' but a snoopin', thick-headed dick, like a thousand other dumb flatfoots that I've met." The lines in Hale's face did not change under this verbal onslaught, but his eyes seemed to take on added fire. "I'm sick of the sight of you," went on Butch, "and I don't want you gumshoein' around here any more. I'm too big—too important to be pestered by a no-account dick."

For a moment, Hale stared silently at Butch—at the man who was the guiding genius of a dozen unlawful enterprises, who did not hesitate to take the lives of rivals or police when it became necessary to maintain his power—as when Detective McCoy came too close to certain damaging information. Hale drew a deep breath.

"I'm through pestering," he said. "On my way up here, I stopped to have a talk with a certain party that lives right around the corner from where McCoy was killed. Fact is, Cranston, I came here to arrest you."

Butch's laugh of scornful anger echoed through the room, but Hale maintained his unwavering, tight-lipped grimness.

"That's hot!" exclaimed Butch. He turned slightly sideways. He flashed a significant message with his eyes to his two lieutenants. When he whirled around, Hale was looking into a gun in the gunman's hand. Hale glanced at the other two, and they likewise had weapons leveled at him. The brutal murder lust was vivid in their taut faces, in their crouching positions. Hale's expression did not change.

"Well, Mr. Mountaineer," sneered Butch, "you was talkin' about an arrest."

"It looks," replied Hale with unfaltering calm, "like I won't make it to-night."

"No," retorted Butch with a grim nod, "nor no other night." He chuckled derisively. "Now, I'm goin' to tell you who the fourth man was."

Hale must have gleaned his death warrant from these words. His face grew paler, his eyes narrower.

"I know who it was," he murmured, and his voice, though softer, still was level.

"But the info's no good to you now," rasped Butch. "Clout him, Sam!" he ordered.

Which Sam did, before the detective could make a defensive move.

In the wee small hours of the morning, a sedan slowed down on a dark stretch of highway a short distance from the city line. It was a dismally lonely spot at that hour, through which no cars passed. The sedan stopped. Three faces peered warily from behind the car windows. Then a body came hurtling from one of the doors to the roadside.

An insolent voice echoed in the woody silence.

"Well, Mr. Hale, New York's been too fast for you. There ain't no mountains in this burg, so it's back to Kentucky for you."

A burst of ribald laughter received these words. The sedan whirled about and headed away into the darkness.

Back in the apartment, Sam said:

"Butch, we should 'a' hid him somewhere."

"Hid nothin'!" retorted Butch. "I don't hide nothin'. Everybody'll know I bumped Hale, but nobody's goin' to be able to prove it. That's exactly the way I want it. All the credit and none of the trouble. It'll teach the other bulls to watch their step when they come monkeyin' around my door." He turned sharp, domineering eyes on them. "We're goin' to be pinched for this

sure's we're born. Everybody knows Hale was after us, but they ain't got a thing on us. We was here all night, see? Playin' cards, drinkin'. Hale came in, asked some questions and went out. That's our spiel. We're all in it together and we got to stick. You fellers have been in the line-up times enough to know how to keep your traps shut. You got it straight?"

The pair gulped and nodded.

"Let's turn in, then!" ordered Butch.

Early the next morning an imperative ring of the doorbell jarred the three from sleep. Clad in their silk pajamas, they came together in the living room. Butch was quite cool and unconcerned. The other two were a bit nervous. Butch snapped out a stern caution for them to keep level heads, and then, quite confidently, went to the door.

Six stern, grim-faced men pushed him back into the room, where the other two waited.

"Well!" said Butch, quite cheerfully. "Looks like the whole department's visitin' us."

"None of your lip, Butch!" this came from the officer in charge, who was well known to that part of the world concerned with crime, as Inspector Cloggin. "We're in no mood for your jokes. I want to know when you saw David Hale last."

Butch received the question with well-simulated surprise. Pug and Sam struggled to mask their nervousness.

"Last night," replied Butch. "It was around nine or ten." He turned to his hirelings for confirmation. They nodded.

"How long did he stay?"

"A few minutes, inspector," replied Butch glibly. "He asked me some questions about McCoy. He comes here regular 'most every day, askin' questions." He couldn't resist the facetious impulse to add: "Expect he'll be here again to-night."

"No, he won't be here to-night," said

the inspector grimly, "and I'm betting no one in the world knows that better than you do."

"Huh!" exclaimed Butch. "He ain't been—uh——"

"Yes, he has. And I'd stake my life and reputation that you three mugs know how, when and why. Get your clothes on, the three of you."

"You lockin' us up?" demanded Butch.

"Yeah," scowled Cloggin. "I am. Not that I'm expecting much good of it. Right now, I'm wishing we had a little mountain justice up here—like the kind they have where David Hale came from."

Butch shrugged to hide the exultation that glowed in him. He slouched into his room and dressed leisurely. The note of despair in the inspector's voice was a source of deep satisfaction to him. As he adjusted his tie, he grinned at his own image in the mirror, and repeated under his breath those two words, "mountain justice," and added his own derisive comment, which was, "Bah!"

The law prevailed in this city. And the law gave men like Butch, Pug, and Sam protection. Here on the fifth floor of a magnificent apartment house, he could dwell with relish on the death of an annoying detective and laugh at this thing called mountain justice.

He presented himself to the detective. He was easily the calmest man in the room. Pug and Sam were not so debonair, but seemingly quite confident. For Butch, a charge of murder was no novelty, and consequently no worry.

"Could I call my lawyer, inspector?" asked Butch.

"No," snapped Cloggin.

Butch shrugged. He knew what he was in for, but he had been through it before and was unafraid. Pug and Sam would hold out, for their lives were also at stake, and Butch knew he had left no telltale clews.

For twenty-four tireless hours, Butch, Pug, and Sam parried an unending succession of questions. Each, in separate rooms, was harassed by a stern group of pitiless inquisitors, made savage by the determination to avenge the death of a brother officer. Inspector Cloggin honored Butch's ordeal by his own supervision.

No food, no water, no smokes! An occasional sharp blow, where it would hurt, but would leave no mark! Detectives occasionally rushing into one or the other of the rooms, with a triumphant boast that one of the trio had confessed! But none of these artifices worked. Each had faith in the other, and their lips were stubbornly sealed by fear of the grim fate that would follow weakening.

Butch was insolent, defiant throughout. The blows hurt, but he did not wince. After his first request for water was denied, he did not ask for it again, though his tongue became dry and his throat ached. He felt himself superior to these men, smarter, more crafty, for only fools wasted their lives away in police work. At the end of those twenty-four hours, they were more wearied than he from the incessant hammering.

So they gave it up in despair.

The police made one last desperate effort to hold Butch and his two confederates. They decided to arraign them on a charge of murder, hoping the magistrate would hold them, and that luck might later turn up some damaging evidence. Butch's lawyer came to see him on the afternoon before the hearing.

"Butch, you're as good as out, but the cops sure are sore at you. They ain't got a thing on you, as far as I can see. You'll be sprung in the morning."

Butch received this information quite calmly. His lawyer left him a newspaper and went on his way. Butch settled down on his bunk to read about Hale's funeral—a story with all the

usual details, guard of honor, tributes to his bravery, promises that some one would pay. Butch chuckled.

He turned a page. A picture of a group of six men caught his eyes. They were all lean and lanky, thin-faced and grim-lipped, all smooth shaven, except the one in the center, who wore a long beard that gave him a patriarchal air. Instinctively, Butch knew who they were. He sneered over the caption:

Clem Hale, Detective David Hale's father, and five of the detective's kin, came to New York to take Hale's body home. It was Clem Hale, who achieved nation-wide attention as the leader of the Hale factions in the Hale-Thompson feud, which ended amicably some years ago.

What struck Butch most was their crude clothing, baggy, ill-fitting odds and ends hastily snatched together in a feeble attempt to make themselves presentable according to city standards. He laughed uncontrollably.

When the trio entered court the next morning, Butch made no effort to conceal the indifference and contempt in which he held the proceedings. He listened with an insolent grin to the efforts of the district attorney and the police to bolster up some sort of a case on which the magistrate could hold him and his pals. He grinned in broad triumph when the magistrate said, in plain regret, to the district attorney's assistant:

"Is that your case?"

"That's all, your honor," came the chagrined reply.

Butch's lawyer rose. Butch chuckled inwardly as he heard himself and the other two classed as victims of police persecution. The magistrate cut the lawyer short.

"Your speech is unnecessary," he said testily. "I take it that you are going to make a motion to dismiss for lack of evidence."

The lawyer gulped, in red-faced an-

noyance at this denial of his opportunity to display his oratorical abilities.

"Uh—yes, your honor."

"Well," said the magistrate wryly, "I'm going to grant it against my own inclination, against my sincere conviction that these defendants are guilty."

The judge's eyes strayed to the first bench behind the railing. Butch took the occasion to glance boastfully around the courtroom, at his friends thronged there. He drew in his breath quickly as he suddenly faced a battery of six pairs of steady, gray eyes. An involuntary chill quivered up his spine and dispelled that exulting arrogance. The six men in the front row were emphatically reminiscent of David Hale, the eyes, the lean, set faces, the thin lips. He turned away quickly.

"When I see some of the things that happen here," the judge went on, "I realize the weakness of the law before these crafty criminals. It sometimes makes me regret that we don't go in for that quick mountain justice that is practiced in the region that gave us the brave detective with whose murder these defendants are charged."

A tense silence followed these words. Butch felt bitter wrath suddenly for those two words, "mountain justice." The silence was broken by the judge's curt words:

"The prisoners are discharged."

Butch, rising, saw those six going out through the door. He and the other two were at once surrounded by congratulating friends. The trio strode proudly from the courtroom.

"Did you see those six yokels?" Pug asked.

Butch noted the tremor in his voice. He repressed a shiver and replied with his usual bravado: "You ain't scared of a few farmer saps, are you?"

"Who me?" retorted Pug. "Naw!"

"But we better look out," put in Sam. "Those babies mean business, I'm tellin' you."

Butch scowled. "Listen, boob, I never showed yellow to the quickest shootin'-rod men in this burg, and I've met some fast ones. I never run from the cops neither, and I ain't goin' to let a half dozen hayseeds bulldoze me. Am I clear?"

Butch started from the courthouse with his head held defiantly high. Cameramen were waiting to snap his unprepossessing visage. He passed them indifferently by, as became a man who had basked in the limelight and was camera-seasoned.

But at the foot of the marble steps stood that group of six. Butch and his pals paused momentarily. Butch had a disagreeable feeling that his face was the focal point of six vindictive glances. He knew the curious crowd was watching for his reaction. He flung them a twisted sneer of contempt. The expression on the faces of Hale's kinsfolk did not change, but their eyes followed him until he, flanked by Pug and Sam, were seated in a waiting sedan.

"Did you see how those fellers was watchin' us?" asked Sam, as the car rolled off.

"The devil with them!" retorted Butch, with a flippancy he did not feel. "If those yokels think they can come here and scare me, they got another guess comin'. I'll have them picked off one by one, if they don't go back where they come from mighty quick."

Sam and Pug lapsed into a moody silence. Butch was conscious of a worry that was new to him—a mysterious dread—a feeling which he would not admit, even to himself, was fear.

"Listen, mugs," he said suddenly with forced lightness. "We're goin' to spring a party over in Jake's Palace to-night. Round up the whole mob and tell them to bring their molls along. Give 'em a good dinner, liquor and dancing. I'm goin' to spring this on them. We got boys that can shoot, too," he said. "I got a good mind to go out and clean

those birds up. Maybe I will. Mountain justice! Bah!"

"Oh, 'tain't that, Butch," said Sam. "I been up against some tough ones in my day, but these guys—there's somethin' different about them. They ain't the sort of killers our boys are. It's a different kind of spirit."

Butch pondered these words, and, because he could make nothing of them, he growled derisively.

"Forget it. Round up the mob and tell them to come ready to whoop it up."

The ballroom of Jake's Palace was in possession of Butch's mob. Thirty desperadoes and almost as many of their painted ladies were there. In one corner, a jazz band played music tirelessly. On each table stood bottles and glasses. Perspiring waiters hovered industriously about, delivering cracked ice, ginger ale, and bottles of liquor. The guests were obeying Butch's dictum with enthusiasm; they were whooping it up plenty. And many a joke with the law and the police as its butt brought boisterous laughter.

Butch, honored guest of the occasion, strode the room with a superior, proprietary air that hid an undercurrent of concern which he could not shake off. Men who had earned large notoriety in deadly callings followed him with envious eyes. The girls looked after him adoringly, for he met more than any man their peculiar standards of manly perfection.

He paused at the table where Pug and Sam sat. He noted their cheerless mien.

"What's eatin' you guys?" he demanded. "Why don't you drink and dance? This is our party, you know."

Sam gulped. "Well, chief, it's this way," he said haltingly. "Me and Pug's been talkin' and we want to—uh—pull out."

Butch gave them a glance of withering scorn.

"So the mountain fellers has got you

worried. Well, there's only one way out for mugs like you," he said sternly. "Like Hale, McCoy, and Maxie."

Amused by the sudden pallor that suffused their faces, he walked away from them. That was what differentiated him from them. They let panic overtake them easily. He took time to think things out coolly.

Some one grabbed his arm. He turned to face a gawky cohort of his.

"What's eatin' you?" he demanded sharply.

The man leaned close, whispered.

"You know them six, chief, the ones what had their pictures in the papers, what was in the court to-day. They're acrost the street. They just came up in a car and they got rifles on them."

Butch stiffened, downed the chill that started to tingle along his spine.

"O. K.," he muttered.

He looked around the room. Every man there was armed, he knew. Every man had accounted for his own little gory quota. His confidence rose only to drop again when his mind dwelt on the peculiar spirit of those six. They were different kind of fighters, and it was a difference that was beginning to awe him.

He felt suddenly an impulse to flee. There was a saying in that element, that they all, the biggest and the smallest, came inevitably to the same end—death in the gutter. Butch had long ago decided that he would see it coming and be elsewhere when it arrived. He stepped into an anteroom to think it over—to decide whether it was coming now.

If it came to flight, he was prepared. He had always known that the time would come when his hold would weaken, when the death he had coldly meted out to others, would come dogging his own trail. He had funds cached in different places—in Paris, for example, where he had often planned to retire when danger that he could not

overcome would loom. In his apartment behind a secret panel was a wall safe, holding many thousands of dollars in small bills.

He felt a sudden revulsion of pride. The most powerful men in crookdom had tried to get him only to fall at his hands or those of his hirelings; Butch often finished off an important enemy to show he could do it. The police department was powerless to punish him. And here he was thinking of abandoning all he had gained because of six farmers—six ignorant hill-billies, as Sam had called them. Different! His men could shoot as well as they! His bullets were as deadly as theirs!

He chuckled. If they were here, they had come to fight. They were six. He commanded here thirty guns. Well, he'd fight them, if they wanted it. Better yet, he'd carry the fight to them—give them some stories to take back to their mountains if they were lucky to escape death.

Stepping back to the ballroom, he paused as he spied Pug and Sam elbowing their way to the door. He would have stopped them, only he decided quickly that to do so might create a disturbance, and he couldn't risk confusion now. He would settle with them later in the usual way. He raised his hands.

"Everybody, listen!"

The music stopped. Dancing couples parted. Glasses came away from parted lips to rest on the tables. Eyes turned toward him in respectful, servile attention. He gloried in his power. These men were his servants, his loyal soldiers.

"There's a half dozen hicks from Kentucky outside," he began. "They've come to make trouble."

Derisive laughter interrupted him, in which he joined. They had seen those six—in the courtroom, or their picture in the papers, and had judged them by the only standard they knew—their clothes.

And then the laughter froze suddenly on their lips. Pug and Sam were returning to the room, and not exactly as they had gone. Their hands were held high over their heads and they were walking backward. The girls emitted screams of terror, and ducked below tables. The men stared in a paralysis of terror. In a moment, six gaunt, determined men, with rifles at their hips, and steady fingers on triggers, faced them.

Butch stiffened in bewilderment. This kind of attack was beyond him. He understood the kind that lurks in dark corners, that swoops on an unsuspecting victim, and deals its death blow from behind. He fought to stem his ebbing courage in the face of it.

A drawling command—its accents strange in the ears of Butch and the others, its intensity none the less apparent—echoed through the room.

"Ye'll all raise up your hands. Ye'll none of ye draw your guns. We want but three of ye."

All eyes turned to the speaker. Butch recognized the patriarch of the newspaper pictures. He could not laugh now, for he knew he was one of the three wanted, and the gnarled hands that aimed the gun and gripped the trigger, were steady. That thing called mountain justice was beginning to assume a very ominous aspect. Almost involuntarily his hands, like those of the others, went toward the ceiling.

Butch suddenly realized he was surrendering everything, that even, if by some miracle, he could save himself, his actions now would brand him as a coward, and he could not save himself from destruction.

"Fight them, fellers!" he cried in a sudden, blind rage. "We're thirty against six."

There was a shuffling of feet, hands lowered uncertainly.

"Ye'll none of ye draw guns!"

The same drawling voice, but this

time sharper, with a threatening note that could not be denied.

And the thirty made no move against the six. They couldn't bring themselves to tempt those leveled rifles. This was utterly different from their customary target—a man's back on a dark street.

Tense silence settled on the room. A whimper jarred it, and Butch saw Sam's lips quivering. The old mountaineer came slowly toward Cranston, his heavy-soled shoes echoing sharply. Age had engraved deep lines on his face, but he bore himself with the erectness of youth, and the resemblance to David Hale was so sharp that Butch shivered.

"Ye be Cranston?"

Butch clung desperately to his customary arrogance.

"Yeah? What's it to you?"

"I be Clem Hale. David was my son. We be his kin. We come to square with you-all."

A forced sneer twisted Butch's face. He resorted to his favorite weapon—bluff.

"You can't pull stuff like that here, fellers," he cried. "This is New York. There ain't no mountains here."

Butch, with ice forming around his heart, saw his words had as much effect as a pebble dropped into the ocean, for the expression on Clem Hale's face remained set, grim, inflexible.

"We want ye to come with us. Ye'll be comin' peaceable?"

"Comin' peaceable?" Butch's voice trembled. "Where to?"

"We know whar. Ye'll be comin'?"

Suddenly, Butch knew all the terror of impending death, and the thing he had ridiculed in others—panic—seized him.

"No, I won't go nowhere," his voice rose in a quivering wail. He turned fear-stricken eyes on his followers. "Fight them, fellers! Fight them!"

But he made no move toward his own weapon, and the eyes that faced him, mirrored his own consuming terror.

Hands that had pumped lead into the backs of living men, remained supinely upraised, and lips that had snarled curses over men dying, were trembling.

"You bunch of yellowbacks!" Butch shrieked.

Then that same inexorable voice came again to his ears.

"Ye'll be comin' now?"

Butch went limp. A gun muzzle prodded his back. He stumbled out and Pug and Sam were close behind him.

Two cars waited in the dark street. He looked back with a last, desperate hope toward the door of Jake's Palace as the last of Hale's kin backed away from it with raised rifle. Perhaps his men would even then surge forth to rescue him. But the silence of the street was unbroken by a rescuing shot. The motors whirled into motion, and the cars began to move him off to the destiny he had always been so certain he was wise enough to cheat.

And then it came to him with sicken-

ing clarity—why this handful of men had awed his mob that outnumbered them five to one. For his followers were killers from lust and for profit. None of them knew the death-defying loyalty that inspired these men of the mountains. They had none of that ancestral heritage in their blood that urged them to go through fire to avenge a wrong done to friend or kin. To them, this cold courage and deadly purpose was something inexplicable, and its very strangeness awed them and made them powerless.

In the morning, Butch, Sam and Pug were found. It was not by mere accident that the tree from which they hung, shadowed the spot where David Hale's body was found a few days before.

Butch must have had some unpleasant thoughts regarding mountain justice when the noose was tightened around his neck, but it is a certainty that he didn't conclude them with his customary, derisive, "Bah!"



PRINTS LEFT BY THE MURDERER

IT is not always finger prints that solve a murder mystery, but clues may be left by other kinds of prints. To quote a well-known authority at Lyons, France:

"When a criminal attempts to dispose of his victim's body, it is exceptional for him to possess the strength to carry it on his shoulders or in his arms. He almost always drags it.

"On earth or sand, the track consists of two furrows made by the feet, for nearly always the murderer holds his victim by the shoulders. On grass, the body leaves quite characteristic marks, made by the pressing down of the grass by the dragging feet, and by the clothing. Even if the grass is high, the marks of dragging cannot be confused with the footsteps, because they are continuous.

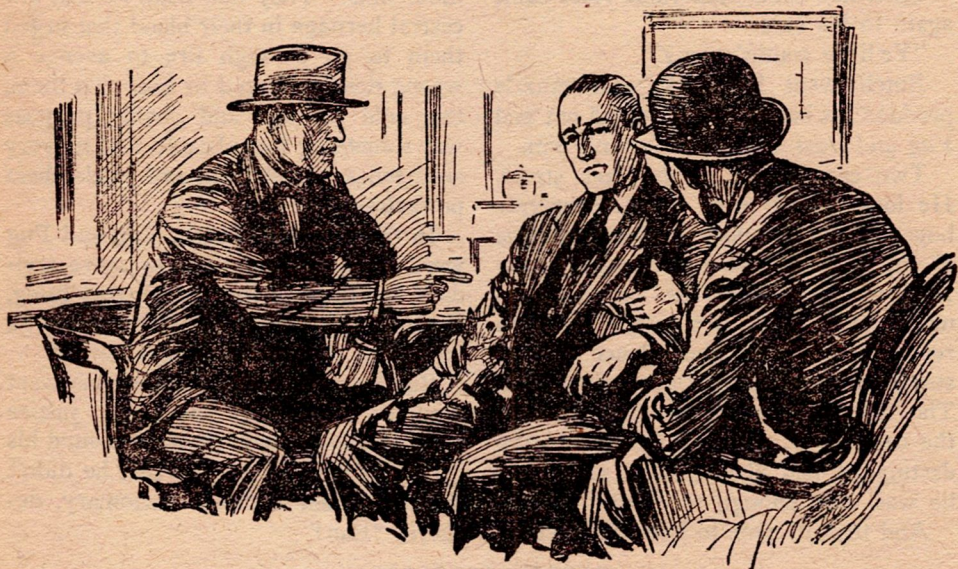
"The murderer may have been obliged to lay the body down while he opened a gate, and thus make a complete imprint of it, revealing its height and the length of the arms and legs. If he had to drag it through a hedge, broken twigs and the depth of his footprints at this point will furnish data on his muscular strength and on the weight of the body.

"A hand pressing on an object may leave a print that shows none of the characteristic markings of a finger print, but is none the less extremely interesting if it enables us to determine the exact size of the hand, the position of its folds, and especially any anomalies that it may possess."

A six-fingered murderer was careless enough to leave a hand print near the scene of his crime. Such an oddity was not hard to discover.

Jungle Jetsam

INTO THE JUNGLE OF MISFITS HE WENT AND
FOUND A TREASURE.



By John D. Swain

Author of "Fetters," etc.

DOCTOR JOSEPH MASON cast a final glance about his dismantled office in the great building devoted to the profession of which he was an unworthy representative. Truckmen had taken away his equipment; there remained only his suitcase, and he had telephoned for a taxicab.

He stepped into the little lavatory, and gazed into its mirror. "What a dirty rotter you are!" he told his mirrored face.

There stood on the shelf a pint flask with one fairly stiff drink of whisky remaining. This he poured out into a tumbler with a hand that was none too steady; for an instant he looked at it, then, with an expression of disgust, he

poured it into the washbowl. The second he had done it, he regretted it and cursed the impulse. A step sounded in the empty room beyond; he turned to note the grave, concerned face of a colleague, young Hammond, a good chap who specialized in internal medicine.

"Oh, hello, Ham!" he greeted. "I'm leaving you cold. All packed up."

As an afterthought, he added: "You don't happen to have a shot of liquor about you, do you? I just poured my last one away."

Hammond's eyes held his, gravely and sympathetically.

"Yes, I have some whisky in my office," he said. "But you will have to drink alone, old fellow! Office hours,

and all that silly rot. You know my rules."

They crossed the empty room, Mason picking up his suitcase on the way, and at the door turning to wave an ironical farewell to what had been for some months a pleasant home.

Once in Hammond's office, at the time empty of patients, Mason poured for himself a stiff drink. All the time he was guiltily conscious of Hammond's serious, kind eyes upon him.

"I wish I could do something for you, old fellow!" he said. "But, after all, the only one who can do a thing for a man is himself!"

"Right-o!" agreed Mason, temporarily cheered by his drink.

"Just how did this thing start?" asked Hammond.

"Hard to say. Conviviality, I suppose. Perhaps a bit of heredity. I was talking with Jones, neurologist, about taking a cure."

Hammond shook his head. "No good, I'd say! Fact is, Mason, do you really *want* to stop drinking?"

Mason pondered a moment. "No, I honestly do not believe I do."

"And there you are! My experience as a medico has been that a man stops drinking when he finds something that he prefers to do. Until then, all cures are the bunk! When a man really wants to stop, any one of half a dozen cures will help in a purely physiological sense. But *nobody* can put into a man the will to stop. He must furnish that himself. You are a good scout, Mason, and the time will come when something will engage your interest. Maybe it will be a good woman. It may be social-settlement work. When that time comes, you'll gladly toss the old flask away."

Mason sipped his whisky in silence for a time. Finally he spoke. "I had a pretty decent practice here," he mused. "But you know the class of our clients. They not only mistrust a physician who

drinks, but they are even offended if they smell it on his breath."

"And they're right," Hammond agreed. "What man wants his wife or daughter to smell whisky on the breath of the good old family G. P.?"

After a time he asked Mason: "Made any plans, old chap?"

"Oh, yeah! Offices all fixed up. Down on Thames Street."

A look of genuine pain crossed Hammond's features.

"That's a terrible drop, Mason! A human jungle. Once a man gets himself identified with that precinct, he can never come back! Couldn't you arrange for some small-town practice for a while? Why not try some place out in the sticks?"

Mason finished his drink and cast a calculating eye on the bottle. Hammond shoved it across his desk and indicated the ginger ale.

"I'm no prude, Mason! I never drink during office hours, but there have been times—after the big football games, that sort of thing—when I've had as bad a headache as you ever did. But where you fall down is this: you insist on drinking between drinks. Promise me this: look in on me from time to time. There isn't one of us in the shop who doesn't like you, and wish you well. Don't disappear into the jungle! You are barely thirty; too good a man to lose himself."

"I'm no good at all," muttered Mason. "A bum! But don't think for a minute I don't appreciate your attitude. You're a good scout!"

A taxicab drew up before the entrance and softly sounded its horn. Mason picked up his suitcase and thrust out a hand that, though tremulous, was still sinewy and lithe.

"So long!" he said. "Here goes nothing—down to the jungle where it belongs."

For a long time Hammond stood looking sadly from his office window. Then

the telephone rang, and he returned to his routine.

Meanwhile Doctor Joseph Mason rolled down into a section of the city he knew only by repute. It was the district of crookdom—a squalid, brutalized sector of the city where graft, corruption, bootlegging, dope peddling, and worse activities prevailed. It was here that men wanted by the police were sought. There lived, side by side, utter destitution and fat rolls of illicit money. Sam Mellitos owned the whole district. The local police captain was only nominally in charge of law and order. Punishment was meted out by the lords of the underworld, headed by Sam. Nobody squealed; or, if they did, they soon went to Flynn's funeral home. And not for years had there been a resident physician.

In an old, ramshackle house that had been built fifty years before by a merchant prince of his epoch, he had established his living quarters and office. The walls were paneled with teakwood, scarred by many years of tenement dwellers. Outside the door, a shiny, new brass sign announced Joseph Mason, M. D. He had arranged for an old Irish woman, who was incidentally one of the finest Christian women Mason was ever to come into contact with, to come and do his char work. Her husband, a longshoreman, had been crushed to death years ago, and she supported herself by honest and menial toil.

And now, for the first time in his life, Mason found himself living in a jungle more terrible than those of the tropics where serpents and all manner of poisonous insectivora battle for existence. In college he had never been a brilliant student. He might, save for his vice, his passion for whisky, have become a competent G. P. There had been a time when his practice earned him more than a competence. But no man addicted to liquor during office

hours could retain the type of clients that frequented the professional offices. And now he was where he belonged—in the human jungle where men and women, worse than beasts, preyed upon one another.

Greatly to his astonishment, he at once began to earn more money than he had ever before dreamed of. The second day he opened his new offices, he was visited by Sam Mellitos, the local czar. Mellitos was a rather handsome lad, with cold, gray eyes, and a slit of a mouth from which dangled an expensive cigarette.

"Thought I'd give you the double-O, doc," he said. "Glad to have you with us. We been needing a saw bones for some time. I can throw a little business your way."

To Mason's naïve surprise, in less than half an hour he had been appointed official medical examiner of the arena, where, three or four times a week, popular boxing bouts were pulled off; and house physician of a tough little hotel whose only rules seemed to be: Don't smoke hop in the lobby—and bury your own dead!

"And now about hop," Sam remarked. "I figure my cut on that ought to be about half a yard per week. Fifty bucks. Fair enough?"

"But I don't deal in hop," Mason protested.

Sam waved a languid hand.

"Try and practice in this precinct and not handle dope! And about booze; I'll send Landesman around to see you to-morrow. His stuff isn't too bad, and I'll pass him the word not to cut yours two ways."

"But I am a regular M. D.," Mason said. "I get my own blanks."

"Oh, yeah? And how many? How long do you think they will last you down here? Save your blanks for yourself. You hit the stuff, don't you?"

"Sure. I take a drink when I feel like it!"

"Which is fairly often, or so I am told," Sam consented amiably. "You and me is going to get on fine together, doc! I've already kicked a hundred and fifty bucks a week into your lap, and no strings to it. You'll find the junk game worth your while. You'll be surprised! As a rule, I don't do my own collecting. But I sort of like you. I'll be round every Thursday. And by the way, I got a kid—Rosie. Sumpin the matter with her spine. Whatever it costs, I'll pay. Rosie's a swell kid. Just eleven. I looked you up. You graduated from a Class A school. You know your stuff. Well, I'll bring Rosie over some day. And give Landesman the glad hand. He's not a bad guy, if you hold him in his place!"

To Mason's surprise, his office practice began on the very first day, and increased steadily. It was not unusual for him to have as many as fifty patients in a day. And at that, they paid cash! Down on Thames Street, transactions were strictly on a cash basis. But the type of patient was entirely new to him. To begin with, there were a great many hop heads. They bought a single "card," as a rule. Some of them bought a "deck," or three doses, for which Mason charged a dollar and a quarter. A few of them had him inject morphine; most of them preferred "snow," which they inhaled.

Some of the older addicts carried a spoon, in which they dissolved their narcotic in water by heating the spoon with a match. There was no possible legal way for Mason to obtain the amount of hop, or junk, needed for his patients. He instantly sensed the logic of Sam Mellitos's position. His agent called regularly, with a full line of drugs; and the fifty per week he paid Sam as graft for the concession, hardly made a dent in his roll.

Landesman, too! The bootlegger was suave, affable; he delivered many cases a week to the young physician. For

some reason, many of the local souses preferred to buy their liquor from a regular medico. It may be that they felt safer as to the quality; and at any rate, it cost them little or no more than if purchased at a speakeasy.

In an old junk shop, Mason found a single riding boot. Whatever had become of its mate, nobody could say. It was smooth and shiny, of a lovely mahogany hue, and this he used as a local bank. Often it would be filled with dirty, filthy bills; and whenever this happened, Mason would gather its contents and bank them in an all-night trust company. He had never had so much money in his life.

It did not seem to disturb his patients that he drank whisky steadily. Everybody in and about Thames Street drank. Sometimes Mason would be absent from his office for two days, usually hanging out in the frowzy little Hotel de Paris, of which he was officially house doctor. In his absence from his office, his patients went to the Relief Hospital. They never seemed to be peeved when he staggered back, shaky and nerve-racked. At other times he would loiter about one of the numerous speakeasies of the neighborhood. And here, as everywhere in the district, he was struck by the fact that there seemed to be no friendships hereabout. Men on Thames Street might be partners, but seldom pals. There was a curious, silent watchfulness prevalent. Men eyed one another glassily, sizing one another up. But there was none of the old friendliness of even the tougher saloons. Mason would sit for hours drinking high balls, without once coming into real contact with any frequenter. They let him alone, and he did the same.

Everybody knew him by now; there was a certain veiled respect in their attitudes. But nobody tried to make friends with him; with, of course, the exception of the bar flies always alert to cadge a drink.

Mason never had imagined the queer ways in which men could get themselves injured. His first-aid practice was enormous from the start. Aside from the various factories and shops in which men met with all manner of accidents, it seemed to Mason that half the population of Thames Street was principally engaged in beating up the other half. Teeth knocked out; noses broken; eyes gouged; ears and noses gnawed. In a few weeks he had performed more minor surgery than in all his previous years of practice.

Maternity cases he did not touch. For one thing, he was too intelligent to attempt them, half full of whisky as he was most of the time. And also, the expectant mother of to-day goes to a maternity ward. The old-time G. P. ready to rush out at any hour of day or night to usher in a new fellow citizen has gone.

Scattered among his more or less furtive patients were quite a few who were perfectly respectable. One of his greatest satisfactions resulted from a cure he effected on his good old Irish charwoman, and for which, of course, he refused to accept a cent. And there was a pretty little girl who drifted into his office one night—Louise Hale; one could not ask to feast his eyes on anybody more wholesome. She lived with a doddering, half-drunken old father, and a sleek young brother who was engaged in some sort of crooked work; Mason never knew just what it was. Everybody on Thames Street seemed to be occupied with some furtive avocation. But this little girl, Louise, was O. K. She had a bad case of bronchitis, and Mason managed to fix her up in good shape. She paid him a number of visits, and only once had he been stewed when she called. He was glad of that.

Isolated as he was, with more money than he knew how to spend, there were times when Mason was frightfully lonely, and he managed to console him-

self in an odd way. Weakness was his outstanding characteristic; a big, muscular, good-looking chap, with a genuine gift for friendliness, he had never harmed a soul save himself. Children, dogs, and cats were always tagging him about. There was hardly a night that some friendless pup or alley cat did not follow him home. Just at present it chanced to be a Maltese he called Aunt Harriet, who had chosen his offices to rear four wee kittens. She slept at the foot of his bed, and lived on the fat of the land.

Awaking in the middle of the night in a cold sweat and alone, he liked to reach out a tremulous hand and feel the warm fur of Aunt Harriet, to scratch her chin, to feel her vibrant body. Aunt Harriet would pur sleepily and go to washing her small quartet, and then Mason would fall asleep. By and by, as always happened, cat or dog would leave him, or get themselves run over or simply disappear; and he would adopt something else, wash it, fill it full of rich milk or juicy bones. He was almost never entirely alone by night, and when he was, they were nights of horror.

Mellitos called once a week; he had raised his graft to a hundred a week. But Mason did not care. He was making plenty! Always he was aware of the cold, steady regard of Sam. He seemed to be probing Mason's mind, studying him. There was no real friendliness between the two, but neither was there any hostility. Their partnership was mutually profitable. Mason, despite his dissolute life, had well over a thousand in bank. Back in the Professional Building, where he had been respectable once, it had always been a tight squeeze to scrape together the monthly bills!

Mason knew that he was skating on thin ice. Not yet had he been called up before his medical association, but he well knew that he was being watched.

He was anything but ethical. He had not even screwed up his courage to the point of revisiting any of his old friends in the Professional Building. He was pandering to addicts, both dope and alcoholic, not only satisfying the ghastly cravings of the most debased wretches, but also breaking in beginners. Every week he saw new faces in his office— young, hard faces, from whose mumbled lips came half-shamed demands for the poison he sold. They were new customers dug up by Sam Mellitos and his henchmen. As his own ignoble profits piled up, Sam's demands rose steadily. He was a part of the mob now, a link in their chain—a true citizen of the jungle to which he had resorted when his own vice overmastered him.

Meanwhile, from time to time, Louise Hale visited him. He could see that she was concerned about him, though nothing definite passed her lips. She pretended to some trifling ailment; a head cold, a bad digestion. He went through the farce of putting her name in his books, for some mythical bill he knew he would never render. He sensed that her life was not an easy one; she had to stand for a half-demented old father, who had suffered two shocks, and a brother who was headed for the big house, perhaps the hot chair. And she was a gently bred girl, considering the neighborhood; one who read good books, sometimes borrowed them from Mason, and could talk intelligently about them. A girl who knew life on its seamy side, yet had remained unscathed. Twice, lately, he had been drunk when she called. How sadly her big brown eyes had surveyed him, and how rotten he had felt about it, and how he had despised himself!

Yet he continued to sink deeper and deeper into the jungle wherein he had immured himself. There were days now when he did not even bother to shave himself. He had not yet taken to wearing soiled linen; but his shirts

and collars always looked as if they would begin to look soiled in a few more hours. Decidedly seedy! Nothing like the spruce young G. P. who had so recently had his ultramodern equipment in the Professional Building!

To say that Mason was happy would be the utmost folly. At best, he lived in a sort of stupor, wherein he forgot his former decent life. At his worst, he dwelt in a torment of self-disgust. With more money than he had ever owned before, he had less happiness in existence. He ate barely enough to retain a fair amount of strength sufficient for his daily tasks. His sleep was made ghastly by nightmares. He was not in touch with any of his old associates, and this year, for the first time, he had failed to attend the annual class dinner.

The cold-eyed men among whom he moved surveyed him dispassionately, watching his downfall with wise eyes, caring nothing for it, neither blaming nor criticizing. Each one among them was the victim of some vice, secret or open. They conceded to him the right to his own, and they approved of his ability to unite himself to their "game" and to get his while the getting was good. Presently he would die, and some other crooked, grafting medico would take his place. Meanwhile Thames Street lived out its hideous life.

There were decent folks even here. Mason knew some of them—old couples, worn by toil in the sweatshops; young ones, not yet corrupted. There was love, loyalty. He even did his bit toward helping some of the afflicted. But two or three patients died when he was lying up in the Hotel de Paris, stupefied by whisky. Hammond called on him twice; on neither occasion was he keeping office hours. The old life dropped away from him. He sank deeper and deeper into the jungle he had chosen for himself. The hard-eyed denizens watched him, and bought their dope

and hooch from him, and went to him to have their bruises healed and blood stanchd. Every week Sam Mellitos called for his steadily increasing graft.

It might almost be said that Mason's sole human contact during these months was with the girl, Louise. Even that was of so slender a nature that never yet had they addressed one another by their Christian names. Twice he had called to examine her father; the old man, he knew, was close to the end of his rope. About all that he could do for him was to give him a little good whisky at Louise's request. It was all the consolation the miserable old creature had; one night, chancing to call, and finding the brother stealing the old man's dram, he beat him up severely, and Louise thanked him for it. But he knew that from this moment he had a deadly enemy.

There was one other individual with whom he might be said to maintain human relations. He was the young curate of an ancient parish, now sadly dwindled. The modern denizens of Thames Street were not pious. Nor was Mason himself. Never a religious man, he was even less so now than before. But like many another man down the ages, he was led into church by a woman's footsteps. He had seen the girl Louise coming here; and he fell into the odd habit of dropping in between services and sitting quietly in a dim corner of the great, empty old brick edifice. One day a young priest came and sat quietly beside him.

Only the crimson sanctuary lamp lighted the ghostly interior. Without was twilight. After a time the two fell into hushed talk. The young curate spoke of his parish, and how it had changed even in his day.

"My uncle was in charge here in the old days," he said. "They were rough, hearty times. A good deal too much whisky Saturday nights. Plenty of family brawls. But everybody up and

dressed for church come Sunday morning! No gunmen. No big graft. And now, what have we? Do you know, Doctor Mason, it is drugs we have to contend with. Young men and women snuffing coke! Anything for a thrill! What should be done to a man who purveys dope to boys and girls scarce out of their teens?"

Mason gazed steadily into the eyes of the fine young man beside him in the dim old church. Fragments of Biblical phrases came back to him from a mother long dead. He answered steadily: "It were better for him that a millstone were tied about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea!"

The young priest gripped his hand. "It is so written in the Book of Books!" he whispered.

That, amazingly, was all that ever passed between the two on the subject. For the curate went on: "I have noticed all sorts of miserable creatures following you home: cats and dogs and once a pigeon with a broken wing. Now, I don't happen to know a single veterinary, but back in the parish house I have an old dog, Hugo, that has endeared himself to me for more than ten years. He got himself rammed into by a car the other day, and his leg is broken. Do you think you could fix the old chap up?"

Mason went to the parish house and did a swell job on old Hugo, and refused to take a dime for it. From time to time he and the hard-working young priest met, and Mason was able to assist some of the poor creatures who had no money for doctors' fees. Between the young priest, who loathed and abhorred what he knew Mason to be, and Mason himself, who abhorred and loathed himself even more, grew up a strange friendship.

Knowing what he was doing, Mason began to squander his savings. He still continued to pander to addicts and alcoholics; but whereas from a sort of

good-natured weakness he had always been prey to any panhandler who wanted a drink or a feed, he now began to disburse his money in all sorts of silly ways. So fast that one week, when Sam called, he actually did not have his graft money for him. And Sam had said, with his still smile: "You are slipping, doc! I'll let it ride this once, but be sure you have the works for me next week! The whole outfit!"

The next stage in Mason's descent followed naturally, if not inevitably. It began with powerful hypnotics to induce sleep. With his nerves jangling from overdoses of whisky, he began to take subtler and more dangerous drugs to steady them. It was absolutely necessary that he should be in some sort of shape to meet his morning patients, who came shuffling into his office at ten o'clock for their regular shots. And when, rendered stupid and dull by the drugs, he took a stiff jolt of liquor, the vicious circle was completed. He did not believe that his new habit was yet known. Not that Thames Street would have cared! But whenever Louise Hale called, at rare intervals, he felt her searching eyes upon him, and had the guilty feeling that she at least suspected him.

She and the young curate remained his sole contacts with decency; he lacked the presumption to term her a friend, and while the clergyman was friendly in his attitude, and always grateful for the help Mason willingly extended to the destitute of his parish, he knew that the curate detested his work, and could have for him little or no respect. Meanwhile, the money continued to pour in; suddenly, perhaps caused by the drugs he now took, he ceased to toss his money away, and became almost miserly. He even descended to such petty meanness as to change Aunt Harriet's diet of light cream to one of canned milk. His bank account swelled; never again did he have to put off Sam Mellitos when he

called for his weekly graft. He had become that rarest of mortals, a thrifty drunkard. Perhaps it was because of the change of diet that Aunt Harriet left him. Her four children were now weaned. One day she marched off with three of them, to disappear into the jungle. The fourth, the smallest and weakest of the kittens, remained behind. At first it cried piteously; but with feline philosophy he soon settled down, and Sam named him Walter and, with a change of heart, Mason began to overfeed it with delicacies.

One night Mason sat in his office, comparatively sober, and having dismissed his last patient of the day, was preparing to mix for himself a high ball when the bell sounded and Sam Mellitos entered. As he had only this same day called to collect his graft, Mason was mildly surprised. He greeted Sam pleasantly, pointed a chair to him.

Sam studied him through cold eyes.

"How's your hand, doc?" he asked quietly.

Mason extended a sinewy hand, and it shook only slightly.

"What's on your mind, Sam?" he asked.

"Anybody here?" Sam asked, his eyes darting about the room.

"Not a soul but us two, if I might flatter us by mentioning souls," Mason assured him.

"Got an emergency case for you," Sam explained. "Guy shot in the breast. Looks bad to me. Pack your kit and hurry along! The bullet is inside him somewhere."

Mason paled.

"You understand, of course, that I have to report on any case like that?" he asked.

"Yeah," Sam drawled. "I know all about that. Hurry up!"

Outside it was dark, with flurries of rain. Mason hastily stuffed into his bag such things as he would be likely to need, and in ten minutes was being

whirled in one of Sam's expensive closed cars through side streets and down brightly lighted avenues. Mason could see that they were doubling in and out on their track, and guessed that Sam was planning to throw off any possible pursuers, and to obliterate his trail. It must be so; otherwise, the case being critical, they would have taken the shortest cut.

When at length they parked and entered a dark, dingy old brownstone house, Mason was surprised to recognize it as the one where Louise Hale had her home. And indeed it was into her walk-up flat on the third floor that Sam piloted him. But she did not meet them at the door, nor indeed did Mason see her at all that evening. Sam took a key from his pocket, an action that gave Mason a curious thrill of anger and disgust, and once inside, closed and bolted the door.

"This way," he said curtly.

Mason silently followed him into a small, dark bedroom. Sam snapped on the lights, and there was revealed on the bed the form of a thin young man, whose closed eyes indicated unconsciousness, whether sleep or coma.

"That's him," Sam said.

With no further words, Mason crossed to the bed, drew back the sheet, and finding his unknown patient already undressed to his underwear, gently stripped his shirt front down, and with a muttered oath took from his bag a pair of shears and cut the garment down the front and sleeves, exposing his upper torso.

"Bring hot water—plenty of it!" he curtly commanded, and began his examination.

It was a bad wound, the worse because it had bled so little externally. The young man had been shot in the right breast, and it would be a nasty job probing for the bullet. He shook his head dubiously.

When Sam returned with the pan of

hot water, Mason said: "This is a hospital case! The quicker your friend is rushed to a well-equipped hospital, the better his chances. This is no case for kitchen treatment, with no nurse, no anæsthetic, nothing!"

Sam shook his head. "Nothing doing on that! Do your stuff. This guy stays right here, whether he lives or dies."

"But, man——" Mason began impatiently.

Sam shut him off. "Hop to it!" he barked.

So Mason hopped to it. And a nasty job it was! The youth recovered consciousness under the pain of the probing; Mason did as well as he could with a local anæsthetic, but Sam had to hold him by force so that Mason could work. To Sam it may all have seemed natural enough, but to the physician it always remained a miracle to him that, under such adverse circumstances, he should have actually found and extracted the bullet. Then he sterilized and dressed the wound, gave his patient a hypodermic, and washed his hands and repacked his bags.

"Well, that's that!" he said. "Let's go."

"Just a minute, doc," Sam said smoothly. "No hurry. I got a pint of the best on me, and we'll have a little talk first—out here."

He led the way back into the tiny living room—a room cheaply furnished, yet showing the homelike touch he knew had been given by the girl Louise. They seated themselves at a small table, on which already stood glasses, a couple of bottles of ginger ale, and a dish of cracked ice. Sam drew from a hip pocket a pint flask of genuine warehouse rye, handing it over to Mason, who poured himself a stiff drink. Sam followed with a much smaller one.

"Down the rat hole!" toasted Sam, and Mason took his in two gulps.

"Here's the dope," he continued. "This afternoon they went and put Spiff

Wyzanski on a spot, see? He was my right-hand man. Well, Spiff is quick on the draw, and he shot it out with them. He got the leader of the mob, Hevlin; and he got his at the same time. Some of us happened to be in the neighborhood, in my car, and we rushed Spiff away. But the bulls came too quick for the other mob, and they took Hevlin away in the ambulance. Now here is the bad break: Hevlin croaks on the way to the hospital. That makes Spiff liable for manslaughter. So we got to hide him out. And the reason he is here is this: Timmy Hale and Spiff never had nothing to do with each other. No bad blood between them; they was just in different lines. Down at headquarters they know all about that, and they will be combing the town to put the finger on Spiff. Natcherally, they'll dig into his regular haunts, visit the houses where his pals live. But if we get any kind of a break they'll never think of looking for him here. So I ordered him parked here. Will he pull through?"

"I think so," Mason replied. "Unless blood poisoning sets in. But at that, I'd hate to bet on it!"

"O. K.! That's all we can do, then. Have another shot!"

After Mason had done so, Sam went on: "Now, about this making out a report. You can see for yourself that is off! It would spill all the beans."

Mason gasped.

"But, man! Be yourself! I'm ruined if I don't turn in my report, and get caught out! They'd hold me as accessory after the fact, and I'd lose my license to practice, and go up the river for a long stretch as well!"

"Sure!" agreed Sam. "But get this, too. If you go haywire and do squeal on us, you'll be took for a one-way ride! If you keep your trap closed, you got a good chance of coming through clean. But if you don't, you got no chance a-tall! You'll be found peacefully sleeping out in the sticks with a dande-

lion in your folded mitts. Make no mistake about that! I'm giving orders in this precinct. And I'm not afraid of the precinct captain; he's my man. It's the headquarters birds I'm leery of. If we can kid them until Spiff is able to be moved, everything will be jake."

Mason's hand trembled so as he poured for himself a third drink that he spilled half of it. After a long time, and without raising his eyes to those of Sam, he muttered "O. K.! I want to go home."

Sam grinned his satisfaction and rose. In a short time, and by a devious route, they were on their way back to the office on Thames Street.

Horrid dreams wrecked what little slumber Mason had that night. Very early he rose and went to the door to get the morning paper. He downed a stiff drink before, with shaking hands, he unfolded it. There on the front page it was! Double-column headline! Through bleary eyes he read:

WAR BREAKS OUT AFRESH!

This afternoon shortly after four o'clock, rival gunmen shot it out on the corner of Eighth and Lancaster Streets. Bud Hevlin, leader of one of the city's big mobs, received a bullet under the heart, and two through the stomach, and died before he could be rushed to the hospital.

His slayer, Spiff Wyzanski, one of Sam Mellitos's henchmen, was spirited away by friends before the arrival of the police, and is somewhere in hiding. As he is known to have been seriously wounded, the police are combing the hospitals and physicians' offices in order to learn if treatment has been given any suspiciously wounded man.

The police commissioner states that he expects to round up Wyzanski in a very short time, and the police are following a promising clew. Every effort will be made to stamp out the conditions that have made the Thames Street section a murderers' playground, and that have driven away more than half of the respectable citizens.

Not less than a score of plain-clothes men are scouring the precinct and its environs to take Spiff Wyzanski. Mellitos was located without difficulty, and grilled for three

hours at headquarters, but nothing was learned. He insists that he knows nothing about the affair, and while grieving at the attack made on a good pal of his, has no idea who is responsible, and did not even know that Spiff and Hevlin had a grievance.

Great stuff! So the dicks were combing the doctors' offices, were they? In that case they certainly would not overlook him. And it behooved himself to steady down. He switched from whisky to an opiate, then went out to a near-by restaurant, "Beefsteak Bill's," and, with a repugnance almost unendurable, managed to eat a breakfast steak and French-fried potatoes after a glass of tomato juice. He finished with a mug of black coffee, and went back to his office; he tried to shave, couldn't, but contrived to don clean linen and get his desk into some sort of shape. Two patients came; this steadied him a bit. At half past ten the bell rang; and when Mrs. Egan ushered in a couple of solid citizens with steady eyes and heavy shoes, he realized instantly that they were detectives from headquarters.

It may have been fortunate for him that at this instant Walter, the little cat, having had his breakfast, decided to visit the room; he jumped into Mason's lap, and Mason, wholly unconscious of his presence, mechanically stroked his soft fur, and Walter purred and curled himself into a circle for a nap.

One of the visitors grinned.

"Like animals, don't you, doc?" he inquired. "Heard a lot about you always dragging home sick dogs and cats. Never met you before. We're from headquarters. I'm Cafferty; my friend is Ryan."

Before Mason could invite them to do so, they had seated themselves, close to him, one at either hand.

Cafferty leaned forward, his breath on Mason's cheek. He spoke in a low voice, almost confidentially.

"Here's the layout, doc!" he began. "You read the paper to-day?"

"Part of it, while eating my breakfast," Mason admitted.

"Yeah. Well, everybody takes a glom at the front page. So you must 'a' seen about the fight down around Eighth Street, huh?"

"Just the headlines and a look at the names. Nobody I knew or ever heard of, so I was not interested."

"Oh, no? Well, you know Sam Melitos, don't you?"

"Everybody on Thames Street knows him; besides, he has been a patient of mine. But I didn't understand he was mixed up in this?"

"Never mind that; here's the point. This Spiff guy was hurt bad. We got plenty witnesses as to that! Dropped, and unconscious! Hurt bad enough so he would have to get medical treatment. Some doc fixed him up. Now what we wanta know is, *who*? You look like a good bet to us. This is your stamping ground. You got all the local birds on your books. Oh, we know a lot about your practice, Mason! But nev' mind that. Have you treated any gunshot wounds?"

Mason tried to smile and made sad work of it.

Finally he managed to say: "I get all kinds of bruises and cuts and so forth down here, as you can easily guess. But no gunshot stuff. I haven't even seen a case since I was a medical student. If I should treat one and not report it, I'd lose my license to practice."

"Yeah, and then some," Cafferty agreed. "But some medico fixed Spiff up, and hasn't reported it. We been pretty well over the territory, and every other doctor has got a cast-iron alibi. And Spiff never was took to none of the hospitals or relief stations, neither. Now just where was you yesterday, Mason, after four o'clock, let's say?"

Mason pointed a trembling finger at his desk book.

"My records show that I was in my

office treating patients until four o'clock," he said. "In fact, as there were rather more than usual, I stayed at work till a little later. Half an hour, maybe. Then I washed up and put away my instruments and medicines, straightened things out, I mean, and at about six went out for dinner at the Hotel de Paris. After dinner I was in their bar for quite a while; I can give you the names of half a dozen I met there, and Kelley, the bartender, will verify my presence. I began to get—well, a little jingled, so I came back home earlier than usual. As far as I can remember, it was about seven. The walk home freshened me up a little, and I took a few more shots all alone here. Then, to speak frankly, and as office hours were over—I have no evening hours except by appointment—I got rather drunk. In fact, I don't really remember going to bed at all. Woke up with one shoe on. Had the deuce of a time finding the other. And that's all."

Cafferty and Ryan had listened cynically. It was Ryan who now spoke for the first time.

"Sure you didn't go any place last night after you got home from the hotel?" he asked.

"Sure," insisted Mason.

"How can you be sure, if you was stewed?"

Mason hesitated.

"Well, in a sense that scores a point," he admitted. "If I don't remember going to bed, I might also fail to remember going out again. But this much is certain: if I did go out, which I am positive I did not, then I was in no condition to treat any gunshot wound. I wouldn't have known a case of measles from one of senile dementia, and if I had handled any instrument, I would only have cut my own fingers."

"Any callers after you got in from the hotel?"

"Not a soul. Not that I know of.

Anybody might have come in and robbed me of my own underwear, and I'd never have known it."

The two plain-clothes men rose like one. Their faces were hard and inscrutable. At the door, Cafferty turned.

"Get this, doc!" he warned. "You may be right. I don't say you're not. But some doctor fixed Spiff up, and when we get him, he's gonna stand trial for manslaughter, and maybe murder. Chew on that a while."

The door slammed, and Mason was left alone, as weak as a rag. Not until then did he take note that the little cat, Walter, was in his lap. He gently set him on the floor, rose on legs that wobbled, and crossed to a cabinet at the end of the room. Taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked it and drew forth a cherished half bottle of absinth. On very rare occasions he fortified his jangled nerves with a shot of this forbidden liquor. To-day he downed a generous potation. It seemed to travel at lightning speed along his arteries; he felt cheered, and it seemed to him that the sun that looked in through his dusty panes shone brighter. His next patient arrived, and the routine of the day went on as usual.

During the following days Mason lived through torture. He learned from the papers that the search for "Spiff" Wyzanski went on doggedly, but without result; by some miracle, none of his cronies had seen him that fatal afternoon; none could guess where he was. Perhaps he was dead. Sam Mellitos did not visit Mason's office, nor did he see the girl Louise. Some of his patients stared knowingly at him, and a few grinned; one even went so far as to wink. But nobody said a word about the case in his hearing, at his office.

Outside, at the speakeasies and other resorts, it was freely discussed; but Mason had the uncomfortable feeling that whenever he appeared the conversation halted and then shifted to another

topic. He felt, without any proof whatever, that every evil denizen of his jungle knew that he was mixed up in the business; and his sole comfort was the knowledge that nobody would talk about him to any one in authority. That was the sole virtue of the jungle; they held their peace and buried their own dead. Not to do so was always dangerous, and usually fatal.

But constantly he visualized himself as under arrest, and with his medical career—miserable as it was—ruined, sent to prison, there probably to be assigned as an assistant to the overworked prison physician, and on being sprung, forced to take up other work for which he had no training.

He worried, too, about Louise. She, too, would suffer through no fault of her own, were Spiff's hiding place discovered. But she had had no choice. Sam was king of his territory; what he commanded went. Mason tried to drink less, fearing his tongue might let slip some clew in his cups; he succeeded in cutting down his daily amounts, but took rather more drugs. He had not yet become an addict, but he knew that he was well on the way to becoming one. He cursed the day that had led him to select Thames Street for his fresh start.

It would have been better for him to have taken on anything else; to have gone aboard some fruit steamer as ship's surgeon at a pittance; to have gone far into the lumber country and earned—really earned—his five or six hundred a year. He at least would have kept physically fit! And he would not have got himself tied up with the jungle mob.

A few mornings later Louise visited him just at the end of his office hour. He was looking very badly indeed, but he was sober. She surveyed him through her sad eyes for a moment before speaking, seeming to probe his soul. Nervous at her scrutiny, he broke the silence.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

Louise nodded somberly. "Your patient—the one at our house—isn't getting on at all well. His wound doesn't seem to be healing."

Mason asked her a few questions, and nervously began to gather the necessary things and put them into a shabby hand bag. Louise meanwhile continued to regard him steadily.

"Do you know what Thames Street has done to you?" she at length inquired. "Do you realize how you have changed since you came down here? You are doing things to-day, as a physician, that you wouldn't have done six months ago, aren't you?"

"I am," he replied bitterly. "And you are now asking me to do one of them."

She nodded soberly.

"I know it. That is the trouble with Thames Street. It gets you! Sure as fate, if you live here long enough, it will get you. You can't live here and not become one of the cogs in the machine. In theory, I ought to go straight to headquarters and tell the police all I know. And what would happen? I do not speak of myself, for I honestly do not care. It would probably cost me my life; I would be spat down upon by every denizen of our jungle for having broken its first and almost its only law. But poor Timmy, utterly blameless for having Spiff dragged into our house by Mellitos's orders, would be arrested as an accessory.

"They might arrest and persecute my poor, half-crazy old father, whose days are numbered. I should be sending Spiff to prison for a long stretch—perhaps even to the chair. And you, too. It would spell sheer ruin for you! An ever-widening circle of victims! And all for what good? To arrest the man who in self-defense shot down that rat Hevlin, who ought to have gone to the hot seat a dozen times, who has cost the city scores of thousands of dollars, and who has been for years a menace

to decency! That is what my squealing would accomplish. Wrong to keep silent? Of course it is. But that is what Thames Street does to you. Ready?"

Mason had continued his preparations while the girl talked; he now jammed on his hat, and they passed into the hall.

"Won't we be followed?" he asked.

"You might be," she answered almost indifferently. "That is why Sam has a couple of his gorillas outside. If we are tailed, they will know it and either tip us off or bump the dicks off. And I don't know as I care much what they do. I seem to have lost all interest in life the last few months."

Outside, across the street, lounged two sickly-looking youths, cigarettes drooping from their lips. They seemed too inert even to talk to one another; in fact, they were conversing rapidly with practically no motion of the lips—a trick they had learned early in reform schools. They did not lift their eyes as Mason emerged from his house with Louise; but one of them shuffled ahead, while the other lingered behind, still remaining on the other side of the street. They gave no sign, and nothing happened. Presently Mason found himself once more at the bedside of the wounded man.

This time it was Louise who assisted him. Spiff had been only semiconscious on the first occasion. He had his full senses now, and endured the pain with typical stoicism. Indeed, he smoked a cigarette, more or less to Mason's annoyance. The wound was not doing as well as he had hoped; was not healing "by first intention," as they say. He cleansed and sterilized it, and redressed it; and when he had finished, Spiff threw him a crooked smile and a brief: "Much obliged, doc! Do I get a shot in the arm now?"

Spiff got it.

To Mason the most thrilling part of the affair had been when the cool, capa-

ble fingers of Louise had touched his own by chance while she was helping him. Suddenly, and with a profound shock, he discovered that he loved her! Loved her with a passion as intense, but less ignoble, than that of all the jungle dwellers. A love tinged with respect and with pity and with admiration! And because he knew himself utterly unworthy of her, he hated himself for it, and was almost brusque in his manner when he left.

"Let me know if he doesn't improve. Have you sense enough to use an oral thermometer? All right; keep this. Use it every three hours."

He explained the proper readings to her and left. From the tail of his eye he noted the same slouching pair who had piloted him here. They moved down the street as he did. Again nothing happened. He reached his office after an uneventful walk, but with his mind in a ferment.

During the next few days he was always on the alert for her tapping little heels in his hall; but she did not come. Instead, a week later, it was Sam Melitos who dropped in casually one afternoon when his office hours were over. The leader sank lazily into a leather chair.

"Well, doc, it's all over!" he announced.

Mason started. "Is he dead?" he asked sharply.

"Dead nothin'!" replied Sam. "He's t'ousands of miles away from here by now. Clean get-away. You sure done a swell job, and I'm for you a hunnert per cent. Here's the jack!"

He tossed a roll of bills onto the desk. Mason scarcely glanced at them, made no offer to pick them up. Later, after Sam had left, he counted them and found they totaled five hundred dollars. Sam was, in his crooked way, a straight guy. He gave orders, paid generously, punished ruthlessly.

"Yeah, doc, you sure know your pills!"

Me and you can do a lot of business together. And are the dicks sore—and how! At that, Spiff done 'em a good turn. Well, so long. Gotta see Landesman. They're runnin' in a lot of stuff from Miquelon to-night. Plenty fog."

He stepped briskly through to the hall, pausing, before opening the door, to look out through the side light, where across the street waited one of his body-guard.

A vast relief made Mason feel almost giddy. For some strange reason he did not seem to desire either alcohol or drugs. All he wanted to do was to sleep. He went out, ate a hasty bite of supper, returned and went to bed by eight o'clock, and for the first time in months, slept without waking and without dreams until Walter, the little cat, walked across his face next morning at seven, to remind him that it was time for his warm milk, and that Mrs. Egan would soon be coming.

Quickly he rose, bathed, shaved, dressed more carefully than for a long time past. He had no reason for doing this save that he felt rested and free from nerves. He whistled as he brushed his hair; another thing he had almost forgotten how to do. Somehow he looked forward with distaste to the long string of hop heads who would soon be filing into his office. But that couldn't be helped—now!

That very day old man Hale died. Louise sent him word by a gamin of the precinct. As Mason's patient, it was his duty to make out the death certificate. It would hardly be honest to say that Louise felt any real grief; her old man had been a harsh tyrant in his prime, and a great care in his dotage. She had done her duty to the very end. Still, blood is blood; there were unshed tears in her eyes at the mass celebrated by the young curate, and attended by a handful of old men and women who had known Louise's father when he was a roaring, drinking, fighting longshoreman.

The rites at an end, the grave filled in, Mason rode back to Louise's home. Timmy, her brother, had not even shown up. It was doubtful if he even knew that his father was dead. Certainly he would not care, though had he been in town, he would probably from tradition, that dies so hard, have dropped in at the church for the funeral.

"What are you going to do, Louise?" asked Mason, unaware that he had for the first time addressed her by her Christian name.

She had brewed a strong pot of tea for them, and brought out some cakes she herself had made.

"Do? What I always planned to do! Get out of this hole just as quick as I can dispose of the furniture. That belongs to me. Only my father has kept me here the last five years. If I stay, the jungle will get me, just as—just as it has got—you."

Her voice trailed off into silence.

"But what can you do? Have you any money?"

"Walk the streets if necessary! Get myself picked up as a vagrant! Wash dishes in an all-night lunch dump! Anything, so that I get away from here and save my soul. Yes, I have a little money saved up; not much, but enough to take me a long, long way from here! And if you only had left in you the fiber you brought to Thames Street, and lost here, you would go away, too!"

"With you?" he asked gently.

She flamed into anger.

"Certainly not! I'm getting away from the jungle, not dragging part of it along with me!"

"I deserved that," he said, grinning ruefully.

"Couldn't you get away on your own account? Save your own soul by going some place?" she asked, patting his arm softly.

"As a matter of fact, yes. I was born in a little up-State village, from which I went away to college. All my people

are dead; but we stood well in the community. The old G. P. is overworked and aging. I happen to know he needs an assistant. The salary wouldn't keep me in cigarettes at first, but two little factories have opened up there the past year, and there are quite a lot of first-aid cases that old Doc Bowman hates to handle. Well, if there is anything I don't know about wounds and bruises of all sorts——"

"Then why don't you go?" she urged. "You won't last much longer here, body or soul! This old doctor you speak of—some day he will retire. There ought to be a living in it for you then, if you if——"

"If I cut out my bad habits, you mean!" he finished.

"Well, then, yes!" she snapped defiantly.

Mason leaned forward and took one of her small, calloused hands in his. She struggled feebly, but in his iron grasp her hand was immovable.

"If I did this, would you come with me, Louise?" he asked. "Much to my own surprise, I found that I loved you when your hand touched mine the other day over Spiff's bed. Fancy falling in love across a wounded gunman's bandaged chest! Would you come with me, taking a fearful chance?"

She shook her head vigorously.

"Not *with* you, Joe, but *to* you, if you win out! I will take your address, if you really go, and at the end of three months I will write to you. I shall know by your letter just how you are doing! You won't fool me! Your handwriting, and what you say, will tell me."

So it was arranged, despite Mason's plea that now was the very time he needed her most, when he was fighting to overcome his past. It was she who left first, after the auction where her cheap little stock of furniture had been sold off. Her brother was still unheard from. Very likely he was in jail in

some distant city. She refused to let Mason see her off at the station. Their good-bys were said in his office.

A week later, after his heavier equipment had been trucked away, Mason once more found himself surveying an empty office. The brass sign had been unscrewed, and packed with the rest of his furniture. He had presented good old Mrs. Egan with five hundred dollars, and she had assured him that as long as she lived he would have her daily prayers, whatever they were worth. He had said good-by to the tired-looking young curate.

Now he emerged from his stripped office, suitcase in hand, the head of Walter, the little cat, sticking inquisitively up from his ulster pocket. He looked up and down for the taxicab he had ordered.

Across the street lounged a group of uninfluential denizens of the jungle.

"I see Doc Mason's leavin' us flat," one remarked as he stroked a stubbly chin.

"Yeah; he got his quick. Been here less'n a year, and made his pile already. Well, he wasn't a bad guy at that."

The other agreed listlessly.

"Awful souse," one remarked dispassionately. "Most as bad as I be myself. Dunno how he managed to do his stuff. I counted ten quart bottles in one week he had in his ash barrel."

The taxi appeared, and Mason climbed in. As he passed the shabby little group, one of them cried out: "So long, doc! Hopin' ya never see the back of yer neck!"

Mason leaned from the open window of his cab. He thrust his fingers into a vest pocket, extracted a five-dollar bill, and tossed it at them.

"Good-by, boys! Have one on me!" he called, and was gone.

"I told ya he was a good guy," said the one who managed to get to the five-spot first. "Let's all go to Jake's place!"

Thus Mason left the jungle.

The following three months were busy ones. He found Bowman much weaker than he had expected. The old man had failed fast during the past few months. Fifty years of riding out at all hours, in all sorts of weather, and in an old horse-drawn vehicle, had broken him at last. He did little but potter about the office, filling prescriptions. There was as yet no drug store in the village.

The two new factories, a cheese-making and a foundry variety, had brought some three hundred new people into the township. There was plenty to do. Charges for professional service was small, payments slow; nothing like the quick cash transactions, no-questions-asked system of the jungle. But fortunately, Mason had brought with him quite a nice little sum of money in the form of a certified check which he deposited in the local bank; this enabled him to lease a neat little cottage with half an acre of ground and some fruit trees, and to furnish this sufficiently for his simple bachelor needs, supplemented by the office equipment he had shipped on from Thames Street.

One day, to his surprise and delight, Hammond dropped in to see him.

"What you doing down in the sticks, Ham?" he asked.

"Consultation, over at your county seat. Heard you were here, and decided to run my flivver over and look-see. Not drinking much, are you, Joe?"

"Not any. Or, not since the lodge meeting last month, and not much then."

"Uh-huh. Found something you like better, I warrant?"

"Yeah. Something named Louise," confessed Mason.

Hammond clapped him on the shoulder.

"Atta boy! I told you so. Well, send me a piece of the wedding cake."

It was shortly after Ham's visit that Mason first heard from Louise. It was not a letter—just an envelope containing

a clipping from a metropolitan paper describing how Sam Mellitos, leader, had been taken for a ride. So that was that! The king was dead! Long live the king!

Toward the last of April came another clipping. This was from a distant city—St. Louis, in fact. It briefly mentioned the finding of the body of one Timothy Hale, suspected gunman and con man, along the water front with a stiletto driven through his heart.

After that, silence, until, well along in May, there came a letter that was really a letter. It gave Mason the address of Louise, invited him to write her there, but on no account to call in person.

Mason poured out his heart. All the things he had wanted to say for the past three months, he now wrote. He told of his work, and his interest in it, of the odd little quirks in his kindly neighbors. He wrote about the crocuses that were peeping up in his tiny garden, the mess of dandelion greens he had enjoyed that very day, of the peeping of the young hylas along the creek. Of his own habits he said not a word.

Two days later he received an invitation to call. Louise was in a small city far to the north, though in the State. He took the first train his duties would permit, then wired the hour of his arrival. He got a night train, arriving at five o'clock in the morning. But he was glad of the respite. Somehow, now that their meeting was at hand, he was stricken with a sudden timidity. He was almost panicky. Would she regard him as she had in his shabbiness and the days of his carousings? Would she hold the memory of these against him? Had she called him to break gently the news that she had learned to love another? She was a lovely girl; there must have been no end of opportunities to meet eligible youths of the small city where she lived.

He got washed and shaved, changed

his collar, decided he did not like it, and as soon as the shops opened, bought a different style, wore it an hour, viewed himself in a restaurant glass, and changed back to the other one in their washroom; he ordered two omelettes and forgot his coffee. At length it got to be nine o'clock. He decided he could wait no longer.

It was in a respectable though rather mournful lodging house that she greeted him. In the little room where she had lived for the past three months they gravely kissed, and then sat watching one another.

Mason coughed.

"What have you been doing?" he asked.

"Working in one of the ten-cent stores," she told him. "It was lots of fun. I even managed to live on what they paid me, and to add a trifle to what I had saved up."

Still Mason was nervous. In a panic he sought for some safe topic.

"Walter is still with me," he said.

Louise frowned in puzzlement. "Walter? Walter who?"

"Don't you remember my little tom-cat, Walter? The one I took away with me. Well, you'd be surprised how he has grown. He has licked most all the cats in the village."

Louise nodded gravely.

"Coming from Thames Street, he would!" she agreed.

Presently, and after a trying pause, Mason blurted out: "Have you any preference as to a clergyman?"

"A clergyman? For what?" she asked in seeming surprise.

"Why, to marry us, of course! What did you think I came here for?"

Then Louise threw back her head, exposing a pretty, firm neck, and the tiny room rang with her laughter.

"I wondered if you had forgotten," she admitted. "What with your formal manners, and your recitals of Walter's battles and all!"

Her voice was smothered as he swept her into his strong arms. Presently, when she emerged, she resumed: "Of course, I picked our clergyman, long ago! Do you remember the tired little curate back on Thames Street? We will go there. Our positively last appearance in the jungle."

After a moment, she added: "But first of all, I want my breakfast!"

They walked out into the bright May morning, with bluebirds warbling, and gray squirrels leaping from tree to tree. Presently, Mason was eating a hearty breakfast of little sausages, buckwheats and maple sirup, and lots of coffee; he was totally unaware that he had already breakfasted once that morning.

Down on Thames Street, in the jungle, two bleary-eyed men sat in a speakeasy where they had spent the night. Conversation was beginning to flag.

"Wunner what come of ole Doc Mason!" one remarked.

The other yawned. "Oh, he's croaked by this time," he allowed. "He hit the hard stuff too much. They say he took a shot in the arm now and then, too."

"Well, he was a good guy, anyhow!" the other argued. "'Member when he tossed us that finif outta the window of his taxi, day he left us flat? Say! Pie-face! Two more Scotch highs. Here's to good ole' Doc Mason, wherever he is!"

They drank it down; at the same hour, a young curate who had sat all night by the side of a dying old woman, stole forth into the sunshine and turned tired eyes toward a smoke-blackened scrap of lawn whereon hopped an optimistic bird.

The eyes of the young priest brightened.

"That's the first robin I've seen on Thames Street this year!" he murmured. "They don't often get down our way."



NOBILITY NELL

By C. Wiles Hallock

IN Lime'ouse taverns, the barmaids tell
The 'eart-rendin' tale of "Nobility Nell."
Nobility Nell, so 'andsome an' tall,
Sang ballads by night in a music 'all.
A lydy she was—a lovable gel—
We called 'er "'Er 'Ighness Nobility Nell."
But Nell 'ad a weakness others 'ave 'ad;
She trusted 'er 'eart to a Lime'ouse lad.
A light-fingered bloke, in'umanly cool;
A bit of a blighter—a bit of a fool—
A bit of a sneak. But swankier, far,
Than most of the blighters in Lime'ouse are.
We called 'im the "Mouse." Hit suited 'im well,
But 'e was a gent to Nobility Nell.

Now, Nell 'ad a necklace—jools on a chain—
She 'eld it more precious than love or gain;
A gewgaw of worth, a trinket renowned,
She wouldn't 'ave sold it for seventy pound.
The Mouse was light-fingered, fickle, an' bold;
'E lifted 'er necklace an' quit 'er cold,
An' lavished the gaud hon the blowziest gel
Wot danced in the 'all wit' Nobility Nell!
Ho, 'e was a cad, 'e was—for a fack!
But dearly 'e paid for 'is scurvy ack.
One night in a mood of hinsolent pride,
'E sat in the 'all wit' the dancer beside.

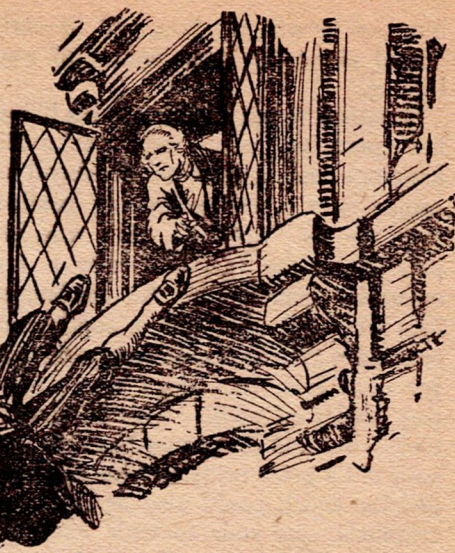
Nobility Nell—so 'andsome an' tall—
Was singin' a ballad called "Hafter the Ball";
While many a tear of sorrow was shed.
She fired 'er pistol—an' shot the pair dead!

So now she sings in a prison cell;
But she was a lydy—Nobility Nell!

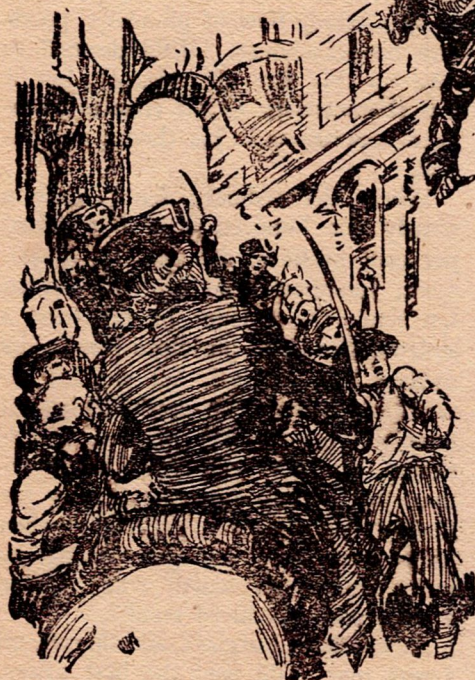
Jonathan Wild

By Charles E. Chapel

Lieutenant,
U. S. Marine Corps



A Story of London's
Master Crook.



boss," himself. In reading the story of England's king of crime, one is inclined to forget that it concerns some one who died more than two hundred years ago; his methods were so much like those in vogue to-day. The public official sworn to enforce the law who is himself a master crook, the false witness, the intimidated juror, the policeman who protects the burglar at work, the murdered man listed as a suicide—all these details sound like headlines from some present-day newspaper instead of the happenings of the year 1725.

BEFORE Scotland Yard became the home of detectives, and even before the Bow Street Runners attained fame for ferreting out criminals, there lived and died a man who held nearly all of England in the shadow of the scaffold; guilty or innocent, they had but to displease Jonathan Wild, the great thief taker, to find themselves in court facing a judge, jury, and witnesses, all ready bought and paid for by the "big

Jonathan Wild was born in Wolverhampton, England; some say that it was in the year 1682, while others say that it was in 1665; it matters little one way or the other, but historians seem to agree that there was a great plague sweeping the country at the advent of young Wild; the superstitious may say that the foul air he breathed influenced his life's career. Be that as it may, we do know that his father's trade as wig maker failed to provide enough

luxuries to suit the boy, and he early looked about for some source of easy income.

Jonathan found no work to his liking, but spent his leisure hours at public hangings and in the neighborhood of people who were undergoing confinement in the "stocks." He was impressed by the fact that only a few onlookers ever pelted the condemned men with rocks and stones, and became convinced that he could create a demand for dead cats, rats, dogs, rotten eggs, and bottles of swill. This inspiration took fruit, and the young business man soon did a brisk trade in these unsavory articles which could also be hurled at criminals who rode to their execution sitting on their own coffins in the hangman's cart. His talent for organization showed itself at this early stage when he hired others to accumulate the wares which he personally peddled, but before long he turned to a more lucrative racket.

Patrons of taverns in those days were no more cautious than the modern night-club guests; gold-headed canes, watches, purses, and jewelry were often laid on a table while the owner went in pursuit of a well-turned ankle, or exchanged winks with a buxom waitress. A quick jerk, a sudden rush of feet, and Jonathan Wild was outside with the drunkard's property; when arrested, he was usually found to have nothing of interest in his possession, but diligent search might have disclosed the missing valuable in the pocket of one of Wild's friends who was loitering near the saloon door. Finally, there came a day when Wild was a little slow about transferring the loot to a confederate; the embryonic racketeer was sent to prison, but by some means he secured his release and looked for more fertile fields for the exercise of his ability.

Wild aspired to be a servant in the homes of the rich, where he might have access to the silver and jewels, but his

sneering lips, widely separated eyes, bulging forehead, and protruding eyeballs ruined his chance for employment in refined circles. His lack of beauty did not discourage Jonathan, for he persisted in his ambition to sit in the seats of the mighty. Ordinary stealing was not very exciting, and offered little chance for the execution of the schemes which filled his mind, but the profession of "fence," or "receiver of stolen goods," was alluring, since a successful fence must plan and direct the operations of his thieves if he is to enjoy a steady flow of plundered goods into his warehouse. Wild decided to take up this line of endeavor, but it was characteristic of the chap to introduce innovations in his chosen occupation.

Where the ordinary fence made a measly one hundred or two hundred per cent profit on his original investment, Jonathan Wild received five or ten times the amount he paid for a stolen diamond, or purloined pearl. His method was original, but simple; instead of reselling the material he bought from thieves to supposedly honest merchants, as other fences did, he advertised that he had a peculiar ability for finding lost property, especially when the reward offered was great enough to make his efforts worth while. This scheme soon produced results.

Pickpockets, burglars, and thieves, all found that Wild paid the best prices, while lords and ladies of the realm were astonished that any one should possess such an uncanny faculty for tracing stolen and missing trinkets. Wild's fame spread far and wide; before long, he was widely known as the ex-officio "restorer of missing property"; in recognition of his services to society, he was designated "thief taker" and invested with a silver wand of office which he prominently displayed as he walked through the streets of London. On the main floor of his office in the

Red Lion Tavern, the walls were papered with reward notices, announcements of executions, and descriptions of missing property; in the basement were workbenches and anvils on which clever artisans hammered up golden chains and pins, or changed the shape of rings and bracelets. There were forgers who could imitate the king's own signature to perfection; there were counterfeiters who made coins of brass which were prettier than the best products of the royal mint; there were chemists who could mix potions which would cause the victim to temporarily lose his reason. There was no form of deviltry which did not occur to Jonathan Wild, and there was no workman in the land who dared oppose his will.

There were a few thieves and robbers who did not bring their loot to the office for the restoration of missing property. Wild sent his threats once; a second disregard of his establishment meant that the thief taker would have a reward offered for the offenders, and then under the cloak of his office he would have them arrested, tried, and hanged. If they had not committed any crime for which evidence was immediately available, it meant nothing to Wild; he merely manufactured such evidence as was necessary to sustain a conviction and compelled his henchmen to swear to the stories he concocted.

Thieves who traded with Wild were encouraged to increase their profits, but, if they rested too long between jobs, they were taken into custody to convince the public that Jonathan was efficient in the performance of his duties. When his agents were caught in the act, the same skill as was shown in convicting the innocent was manifested in proving them guiltless, but no hard-working follower was allowed to hang as long as the great thief taker could bribe those in power.

Wild's organization of crooks has no

rival in history except the Chicago-Sicilian gangsters, and even they could learn something from their English predecessor. Wild kept a file of the dates of arrivals and departures of stagecoaches, ships, and treasure trains; he knew more about the financial ratings of his intended victims than they did themselves; he believed in specialization and gave each of his staff tasks for which he was best fitted.

Slow-witted but muscular louts were expected to take victims for a "walk" in the darkness, and return without them; some of Wild's men stole from churches; some were mounted and way-laid coaches on the highway; there were "collectors" who took toll from the earnings of unfortunate women; some levied tribute on builders of homes; others sold their services to "protect" shops; while still others posed as thief catchers from the office for restoration of missing property. Doesn't that have a familiar touch? Isn't it quite in keeping with the present-day American scene?

Laws were passed by honest citizens who suspected much, but could prove nothing. Then, as now, legislation without honest enforcement and honest trial was valueless. Parliament by a special act made receivers of stolen property accessories to the theft, but Wild's official position covered his operations completely; in fact, he did more business than ever, since the other fences were afraid to keep open. So prosperous did Wild become, that he had to open two branch offices to take care of the business; such property as the owners did not care to pay exorbitant rewards for was packed and shipped to Holland on a ship bought by the thief taker for that especial purpose. In that country, agents found a ready market for the overflow from England; Jonathan Wild began to dream of a world empire based on stolen goods, but at last there came to his ears a discon-

tented rumbling from the public which had suffered meekly for so long.

Wild, like city officials of to-day, tried to cover up his lax and corrupt administration by making a number of spectacular arrests. One of his victims was the notorious highwayman, Blueskin, who had incurred the wrath of the restorer of property by refusing to rob certain people whom Wild disliked. In the courtroom, Blueskin arose, and told the judge how he had never been able to forsake his life of crime as long as Wild threatened him with the rope, how Wild conducted his business as an enforcer of the law, where the loot was hidden, and who the other gang leaders were. He wound up his denunciation of Wild by shouting: "Judge, your thief taker is a thief maker."

The confession made by Blueskin seemed to have no effect on the judge, who was in the pay of the syndicate of crooks. Jonathan Wild whispered something in the judge's ear, emphasized his demands with violent gestures, and then stepped back to watch the judge shake with fear. In a few moments, the clerk of the court commanded Blueskin to arise and hear his sentence.

"Prisoner," began the clerk, "you are sentenced to be taken to the dungeon whence you came, and to be placed into a smaller room, closed to all light; and there you shall be placed upon the ground, without any covering of straw or wool, and without any garment; there you shall lie upon your back, with your head covered, your feet bare, one arm drawn to one side of the cell and the other to the other side, and your legs arranged in a like manner. There shall then be laid upon your chest as much iron or stone as you can bear and a little more on the first day, the weight to be increased daily thereafter. On the first day, you shall have three crumbs of stale bread, without any water; on the second day, you shall be allowed to

drink as much as you can of the water that is nearest to your cell door, except running water, but you shall have no bread. And this, prisoner before the bar, shall be your diet until you die."

Blueskin jumped from the prisoner's dock, shouted: "I would sooner die fighting than be tried by such courts as these"—and grabbed a sword from one of the guards. With this weapon, he lunged at Jonathan Wild and succeeded in inflicting a deep wound in the neck; under the cloak of the general excitement, Blueskin made his escape.

About seven weeks after the disappearance of Blueskin, Jonathan Wild held a conference with several of his confederates in a rear room of the Gold Cup, a tavern famous for the low character of its patrons. Some of London's wealthiest gentry had been seen to enter this place in the company of beautiful but flashily dressed young girls; the ladies came out after a while, but the moneyed gentlemen were never seen again. When any one tried to investigate the interior, he was advised to move on, that the inn had been inspected and passed by the great thief taker.

While the crooks were drinking, there chanced to pass that way a section of mounted soldiers who formed a hollow square, in the center of which sat Harry Stamps, the chief of Wild's highwaymen, with his arms and legs tied to his horse. A beggar, standing in the tavern doorway, recognized the prisoner, and ran to tell his boss. In a minute, Jonathan Wild was in the road, yelling to the soldiers to stop and deliver to him the prisoner.

"On your way, on your way!" commanded the lieutenant in charge of the cavalrymen. "This is my man, and not yours."

"I'll make you rue this day, my precious fellow," shouted Wild. "I'm thief taker; I'll have your commission before you're a day older."

"Thief maker, you mean," replied the officer, as he continued his advance at the head of his men.

At this retort, Wild lost his temper, seized the horse's reins and called upon his men to come to his assistance. In answer to his demands there came a shot from a pistol fired from the tavern, a shower of dishes covered the soldiers, and a motley crew poured out of the inn, armed with knives, iron bars, and firearms of every description. The mounted men beat right and left with the flat of their sabers against the thick skulls of their assailants; the ruffians swung their clubs recklessly in every direction, hitting one another quite as often as they did the guards. Curses and groans, shots and pleas for mercy filled the air; there were wounded faces, broken bones and mangled flesh; in the excitement, Harry Stamps was pulled away from his captors and partially untied, but, before he could escape, there came a shout of many voices, and a rush of feet. Every one turned to see a tall man dressed in red, riding a white horse at the head of a column of armed men.

"Down with Wild; down with the thief maker!" cried the new mob.

"It's Blueskin, the escaped prisoner," some one exclaimed. "He's come to get his old enemy, Jonathan Wild."

Where there had been confusion, there was now wild chaos; soldiers, Wild's men, Blueskin's supporters, and innocent onlookers milled back and forth, biting, scratching, hitting, stabbing, and shooting. A few of the struggling hundreds made their way into the Golden Cup Tavern, and tried to shut the door, but the weight of the mass of men pressing against the building prevented its closing. Blueskin jumped from his horse, fought his way through the throng, and forced his way into the tavern, followed by as many as could find room within.

Suddenly, a soldier shouted: "See, Blueskin and Wild; they're tussling."

Outlined against a second-story window were the forms of the two antagonists, clutching at one another, and straining every muscle to secure a death grip. There was a sound of splintering furniture, followed by shattering glass as the window was knocked out. Wild had his dagger raised over his enemy's heart; Blueskin's hand was at his adversary's throat. Back and forth they lunged and lurched; Wild's dagger slowly descended toward its mark, but Blueskin's iron grip was cutting off the thief taker's last bit of breath; it seemed to the rabble in the street below that the combat would never end, but without warning Blueskin suddenly released his grasp, picked the thief taker up bodily and hurled him from the window; there was a flash of scarlet, and Blueskin followed his quarry to earth. Again they grappled, but this time the odds were all on one side; Blueskin arose, holding Wild with one hand and his cap in the other. With a low bow to the officer in charge of the soldiers, he said:

"Jonathan Wild is now your prisoner, sir."

"No, no, arrest Blueskin, seize him, don't let him get away!" cried the frantic Wild.

The guards reformed in hollow square, this time with the great restorer of missing property in the center; Jonathan spent that night in Newgate Prison; on the morrow, he was charged with stealing a piece of lace, but, as soon as he was acquitted of that, he was arrested again for not informing the police that he had taken a reward for returning the lace to its owner. On May 24, 1725, the greatest criminal in all England rode to his death in a creaking cart, seated upon his own coffin, while an angry populace pelted him with stones and sticks, cats and rats.

Skinned

THE GAG OF THE LAW KEPT HIM GUESSING.



By Alfred I. Tooke

Author of "Youn Pang's Parrot," etc.

EASTBOUND, drawing the usual string of Pullman cars, No. 4 slid to a protesting stop at Rennet with a shrieking of brakes that tore the night asunder and barely drowned the fervent comments of the irate engineer. Seven minutes late already, and, of course, there had to be a passenger at Rennet, where No. 4 stopped on signal only.

Samuel Aloysius Lincoln, better known as Sam, the Negro porter presiding over the middle Pullman, hopped

down and assisted a heavily bearded man who climbed awkwardly aboard with the aid of a cane. "Good evenin', Mistuh Brown, suh!" the porter greeted him. "Lower 5?"

"Not this time, Sam! Some one beat me to it for the first time in months. I got Upper 5, worse luck."

The engineer, having received the conductor's signal to proceed, threw the train into motion with an angry jerk that hurled the bearded man against the side of the vestibule with a force only

partly broken by the hand he thrust out to save himself. He sagged almost to the floor, as Sam, who was behind him, dropped the grip and recovering his own balance, shot out a steadying hand.

"Hot diggety-dog! That hoghead sure is cranky to-night just 'cause he's a few minutes late!" Sam's tone was angry, but the expression on his face was one of puzzled bewilderment. "You—you wasn't hurt, was you, suh?"

The bearded man shot a sharp glance at Sam before he replied, but the look of bewilderment had vanished, and Sam was once more the efficient Pullman porter, seeing and hearing only those things he was supposed to see and hear.

"No harm done, but—I might have been badly hurt with this game leg of mine!"

"Yes, suh! You sure might have been. It ain't no joke having a stiff leg. Upper 5, did you say?" Sam picked up the grip and led the way. His keen eyes had noticed a spot of blood on the back of the hand the passenger had thrust out to save himself. Just a tiny triangle of skin missing, but Sam had once before noticed such a scratch under similar circumstances, and had later been the unwilling star witness for the passenger when she brought suit for damages. So this time Sam said nothing. "Here you are, Mistuh Brown, suh! You can sit on Lower 5. He's not aboard yet. Ah'll get the ladder and give you a hand up when you're ready, suh!"

Sam secured the ladder, and, in due course, assisted the passenger into the upper berth.

"Thanks, Sam! Bad enough getting in and out of these things even when you're not lame. You might leave that ladder handy in case I want to get up at any time." A shining silver dollar changed hands. "I have a bad headache and may not be able to sleep."

"Yes, suh, boss! Ah noticed you looked pale and peaked. Ah'll leave the ladder right here, and any time you

want something, you just press that button over there and Ah'll be right along, suh!"

"Thanks, Sam! I'll try to sleep if I can. May run into a lot of trouble to-morrow, and—— Keep this till morning for me, will you? I don't want it to get lost. Good night, Sam!"

"Good night, suh!" Sam took the envelope the other held out, and tucked it into his pocket. He picked up the shoes and turned them sole up to mark them, but the chalk poised hesitantly until Sam reached his own better-lighted quarters. "That sure looks like blood," he muttered, staring at a dark stain that ran up under the instep of one shoe. He scraped off some of the stain with a spent match and held it close to the light.

"Yes, suh! That sure is blood!" he murmured, and again the look of puzzled bewilderment crept over his face.

Sam worked industriously until familiar signs informed him the train was entering the outskirts of Hildale, the divisional point, where the train changed engines before tackling the steep grades of the mountain division. Then he opened the vestibule doors, and hung poised on a step as the train rolled to a stop.

Two passengers came aboard, and were disposed of: the frail, motherly little woman in Lower 10, and the lady of enormous proportions in Upper 2 after much frantic hoisting on the part of Sam.

"Well! Ah got her in all right!" he muttered as he straightened out his joints again. "But how Ah'm goin' to get her out again without disaster, Ah don't know. If Ah let her drop, she'll go clean through the floor." He gossiped with the porter on the next car until the conductor shouted, "All aboard." A white light rose and fell; the bell on the engine clanged, but not until the train had already started did

Sam see the man who came running to swing himself easily aboard.

"Nearly missed you, porter!" he gasped, presenting his ticket. "This the right train and the right car?"

"Yes, suh! Lower 5! This way, suh!"

"Thanks! Call me in lots of time for Burton, will you!"

"Ah will, suh! That's as far as this car goes. We get switched off there, you know!"

Sam returned to his shoes. Local showers throughout the country had added considerably to his work, but he waded steadily through the slowly diminishing pile of dirty shoes.

Once the jangle of the bell interrupted him, and the indicator showed Upper 5 calling. "Mistuh Brown ain't asleep yet!" Sam muttered, and a moment later he parted the curtains and peered into the darkness of Upper 5. "Did you want somethin', Mr. Brown, suh?"

"Yes, Sam! I'd like a glass of water!"

"Ah'll bring you one right along, suh!" He vanished, and quickly returned. "Here you are, suh! If you'll just switch the light on so you don't spill it!"

The light flashed on, and, as the bearded man drank the water, Sam seized the opportunity to examine the scratch on his hand. It was just a small scratch. It had already stopped bleeding, and Sam congratulated himself on having ignored it. Then he rubbed his woolly head. "Those shoes of yours, Mistuh Brown, suh!" he ventured. "There was——" He lowered his voice. "There was a big bloodstain on one of them."

"What?" The other gave a start and the hand that held the glass trembled. "Blood on my shoes? Oh, yes!" He laughed nervously. "I killed a rat, Sam, just before I boarded the train. So I got blood on my shoes, eh! Well, it

doesn't matter! Nasty things, rats, Sam!"

"Yes, suh! Good night, suh!"

Up through the clouds blanketing the mountains the train climbed, writhing along curves, diving into tunnels and out again, rumbling through snowsheds, and crawling over high trestles that spanned turbulent mountain streams rushing and tumbling far below. And through it all Sam cleaned shoes, as was his regular custom, putting the last pair down with a sigh of satisfaction as the engine whistled two longs and two shorts for Cranstoke, the big mining town on the western slope.

There were no passengers at Cranstoke, and little baggage, but still the train waited, the big engine puffing impatiently.

"What're we waiting for?" Sam asked the conductor.

"Orders to wait for a fellow name of Sackett!"

"Bet that's him!" Sam indicated a pulsating automobile from which a tall, official-looking man had hurled himself. "Here he comes!"

"I'm Sackett, conductor!" the newcomer announced, flashing a badge. "Railroad police. Have you a heavily bearded man of medium height, walks with a limp, wearing——"

"That's Mistuh Brown, suh! He's in Upper 5 in my car!" Sam interrupted.

"That's the name. Matthew Brown. Is he still on board?"

"Yes, suh! Leastways, he was there after we left Hilldale, because he rang for a drink of water, and I ain't seen nobody leave this yere car since."

"Upper 5!" The detective led the way, Sam and the conductor following. He jerked back the curtains of Upper 5, and then stepped back with a gasp. The sheets and blankets were crimson-stained. Garments that Sam identified as Matthew Brown's were scattered about the berth, their linings torn loose

and their pockets turned inside out. But of Matthew Brown himself there was no trace.

For long moments, Detective Sackett stared thoughtfully into the disordered berth, noting the position of everything in it. Then he examined the curtains and the carpeted aisle from one end of the car to the other, and the vestibules.

"Not a sign of anything!" he muttered finally. "Search the train, Conductor Morton. See if any passengers are missing, and see that none leave the train. If the body is still aboard, find it. This is murder!"

"Body! Murder! What's the trouble?" A sleepy voice drawled the question as a head appeared from Lower 5.

"Sorry if we disturbed you, sir, but the gentleman in Upper 5 seems to be missing, and——"

"Might have walked in his sleep and fallen off the train!"

"The condition of the berth seems to indicate—murder."

"Oh, I—well, that's no joking matter, is it!" The man in Lower 5 was wide awake now. "But it can't be murder, or I would have been wakened, though I guess I am a heavy sleeper."

"I'll talk to you later, sir. See that nobody leaves this car, Sam."

"Y-y-yes, s-s-suh!" Sam's teeth were chattering as his eyes still stared at the murder berth, now curtained again. "Ah's g-g-goin' to l-l-loose mah job over this, sure!" he stuttered. "Ah g-g-guess if there's one thing they w-w-won't stand for on these c-c-cars, it's m-m-m-murder!"

The man in Lower 5 smiled. "But you didn't commit the murder, did you?"

"N-n-n-no, suh!" Sam's tone was emphatic. "But Ah always gets the blame if anything goes wrong. Ah sure doesn't know nothin' about this business. Mistuh Brown was in that berth a half an hour ago, and there sure hasn't been any noise or rumpus since. He just done evaporated, that's what."

Sam paused and stared meditatively at the berth. "There was somethin' funny about that man, anyway!" he muttered. "He——"

The return of Sackett with the conductor interrupted him. Carefully, the searchers performed their work. Sackett took Sam into the smoking room with him, while the searchers proceeded through the train. Sam had given his disjointed replies to the detective's questions by the time the searchers returned to report that they had found nothing. Not a single passenger was missing, other than Matthew Brown. Not a single train employee or passenger admitted having heard or seen anything unusual. There was no trace of the body. Outside of the berth itself, there was no sign of any kind indicating that a body that must have still been dripping blood, had been carried away from it. Even the outside of the train had been examined, especially around the windows, doors and steps, but without result.

"It's a mystery!" Sackett grunted. "It's murder, of course, and a clever one. The man must have been killed in the berth, the body taken out and thrown from the train. It took nerve to do that—colossal nerve. Whoever did it would have nerve to stay on the train. If they did, I'll get them by the time the train reaches Burton, or my name isn't Sackett. In the meantime, I'll wire to have the track searched and then I'll go along with the train and see if I can't get to the bottom of the mystery."

"What was this man Brown wanted by the police for?" the conductor asked.

"He was wanted for murder!" Sackett replied.

When No. 4 resumed its upward climb, Detective G. G. Sackett—"Go Get 'Em Sackett," they called him—went to work in the smoking room of Sam's car. For the conductor's benefit, he went briefly over the case. "Martin Pearson, a resident of Rennet for the past four years, was murdered, apparently a short time

before No. 4 passed through," he explained. "About half an hour later, the patrolman on the beat noticed what appeared to be crimson-stained footsteps leading away from Pearson's door. He investigated, and discovered the murder. He found a neighbor who had heard a commotion in Pearson's house and had seen a bearded man in a brown overcoat leave shortly after.

"All avenues of escape from the town were immediately checked, with the result that the station agent identified the bearded man as Matthew Brown, who had boarded No. 4 for Burton. The train had by that time left Hilldale. I was working on another case at Cranstoke, so the chief telephoned me to meet your train, which I did. Now——" The detective turned to the porter. "Pull yourself together, Sam! You have nothing to be afraid of so long as as you tell the truth!"

"Cross my heart, Mistuh Sackett, suh, Ah sure have told nothing but!"

"Well, tell me again, now, where did Brown board the train?"

"At Rennet, suh, where he always does. He came aboard at eleven fifty, which we was seven minutes late already."

"And he looked pale and peaked and said he had a headache. Is that it?"

"Yes, suh! And he said he expected a lot of trouble to-morrow."

"But he didn't specify what kind of trouble?"

"No, suh! He didn't—he didn't speechify what kind."

"And when you told him about the stains on his shoe, he first looked scared and then laughed and said he'd killed a rat."

"Yes, suh!"

"And yuh washed the stains off with soap and water!"

"Yes, suh!"

"Too bad. A chemical analysis of that stain would have shown if it was Pearson's blood. However, it's your

job to clean the shoes so we can't hold that against you. And you say you gave Brown a glass of water after the train left Hilldale."

"Yes, suh!"

"Are you sure it was Brown? Was the light on in the berth?"

"Yes, suh, it was! And I'm sure it was Brown because, when he got on the train, he scratched his right hand—took a little piece of skin off right there, suh!" Sam indicated the spot on his own hand. "Ah noticed it was healing up all right, suh. Ah didn't say anything about it when it happened, suh, because one time a woman claimed damages for a scratch like that. And—Ah clean forgot it before, suh——" Sam paused and delved into a pocket. "Mistuh Brown give me this here letter to keep for him till morning. He said he didn't want it to get lost."

Sackett took the envelope and ripped it open, unfolding a sheet of paper it contained. "Huh! That's funny!" he grunted; then, reading aloud:

"If anything happens to me, see Martin Pearson. He will tell you who is responsible, unless they get him first."

The detective folded the paper and returned it to the envelope. "They did get him first, unfortunately!" he murmured. "It looks as if Brown was not a murderer, after all. He apparently didn't know about Pearson's death, by this, but he did suspect his own life was in danger. Who else got on the train at Rennet, conductor?"

"Nobody, sir!"

"And Hilldale is the only stop between Rennet and Cranstoke?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Who boarded the train at Hilldale?"

"Three passengers—and they all got on this car. Lower 5, Upper 2, and Lower 10."

"I'll talk to them. Bring Lower 10, Sam."

Lower 10 proved to be the frail, motherly little lady, who obviously could

not have been guilty of the crime. She admitted having boarded the train at Hilldale to go to Burton to see her married daughter who worked there. She had heard some one ask Sam for water, and she had heard some of the talk when Sam brought it. She hadn't heard another single thing, although she had been unable to sleep.

Sam perked up considerably at the way she corroborated his evidence.

"Now Upper 2, Sam!"

"Yes, suh!" Sam's voice was cheerful, but his smile had suddenly vanished. "Y-y-you couldn't speak to the lady where she is, suh, could you?"

"Why?"

"Well, suh! Upper 2 is that big woman with the bad temper, and as you know——"

"Go get her, Sam! She won't eat you!"

"Maybe not, suh! But if she slips, she's sure liable to squash me somethin' awful. Well, if you says so, suh!" He paused hopefully for a moment, then woefully departed.

They heard her coming long before she arrived, a veritable mountain of flesh, fully dressed.

"Land's sakes!" She panted, casting baleful eyes first on the groaning Sam and then on the smiling Sackett. "There ought to be a law against them dinky little berths. How they expect a body to get undressed in them, I don't know. And when they start murdering people in them——"

"You should use the dressing room, Mrs.—er——"

"Zachary, the name is. Henrietta Zachary, and you don't catch me traipsin' back and forth to dressing rooms with all the fresh men passengers making smart remarks about detours and such things."

The detective's eyes lit up at the possibilities suggested. It was obvious that Mrs. Zachary could not have moved from her berth or regained it without

assistance, or without creating a great deal of noise and disturbance.

No, she hadn't slept. How could she, when there wasn't room to breathe? No, she hadn't heard a thing except the snoring of the woman across the aisle. There ought to be a law against snoring in public. All she had heard was that porter fellow giving some one a drink. They were talking about water, but how did she know what they were drinking? Yes, it was right after the train left Hilldale.

She departed majestically, but the effect was spoiled when she stuck in the narrow doorway.

"When you've got her into the siding, Sam," Sackett whispered, "bring that chap in Lower 5. He's our last hope."

The man from Lower 5 proved to be a middle-aged, clean-shaven, active-looking man, attired in a natty new gray suit. He took a seat without being asked, flung one leg across the other, stared at them a moment before he reversed them, and then lit a cigar.

"I suppose you want me to tell you what I know about this murder, eh?" he asked. "Well, I can sum it all up in one word: Nothing! Very sorry, Mr.—er——"

"Sackett!"

"My name's Waldon Rhodes."

"You boarded No. 4 at Hilldale, did you not, Mr. Rhodes?"

"I did. Just managed to make it. I was tired and went right to bed. The last thing I heard was when the porter gave the man in the upper berth a drink of water. He said something about blood on a shoe, and the fellow up top said something about having killed a rat."

"And you heard nothing after that?"

"Not a thing. I used to be a traveling salesman, and got used to sleeping in all kinds of noises, so——"

Sackett did not appear to be listening. Through half-closed eyes, he seemed to be watching the smoke from Rhodes's

cigar as it curled up through the air, but, as Rhodes stopped talking, the detective's eyes shot open. "Fascinating thing, smoke!" he remarked. "What particular brand of cigar is that you're smoking. Where did you buy it?"

"Why, er—it's a——" Rhodes paused and glanced sharply at the detective. "I'm hanged if I noticed what brand it was. It was given to me, as a matter of fact. Why do you ask me that question?"

"Oh! Just idle curiosity, I suppose. One's mind shoots off on curious slants sometimes when it's tired of the job in hand, or when the job is about finished. I suppose I might as well tell you that I think my work on the case is about over. The train was searched thoroughly at Cranstoke. Not a clew was found. Nobody had heard a thing. The body was not on the train. Therefore——"

"It must have been thrown off, probably into one of the canyons. Didn't there used to be a big trestle just about halfway between Hilldale and Cranstoke?"

The detective nodded. "There still is. I wired instructions to have the track searched."

"In the dark?"

"No. In the light. They'll fix up an engine so that it will light up every inch of the track, and if there's any sign they'll find it. If the body was thrown off the trestle, though, it might have dropped clear into the rapids in Devil's Canyon."

"That's what I figured when I started thinking about the case. If the body was thrown off there, the chances are it would be swept down into some inaccessible backwash, or catch in a beaver dam or something, and never be found. As for the murderer, he probably dropped off as the train slowed up for Cranstoke, and vanished."

"I thought of that!" The detective yawned, and then chuckled. "I noticed you can't keep your eyes or your mind

off that cigar since I mentioned it. It's a great gag—when you've nothing better to do! Try it yourself some day on a friend."

"I will! And now, if you don't want me any longer, I'll see if I can get some sleep."

"I don't think there's much more I can do on the case. We're slowing up for Divide now, so I should soon hear what results they got from searching the track. Good night!"

"Good night, and good luck!" Rhodes replied.

The train stopped but a few seconds at Divide, and the conductor brought a sheaf of telegrams to Sackett who read them and thrust them into his pocket with a grunt. "They couldn't find a sign, Morton, but they're going to look again on their way back. I don't think they'll have any better luck, though. Send Sam to me, will you?"

"Sam!" the detective said when that worthy appeared. "Give this cigar to the gentleman in Lower 5, with my compliments, and watch his face, and particularly his right hand. Then come right back."

"Yes, suh!" Sam departed and in two minutes was back, his eyes staring. "Ah did, suh!" he reported. "Ah watched his face and he sure looked rattled. Ah watched his hand, and—and—maybe Ah better go and have another look, suh!"

"No, Sam! I didn't believe my own eyes at first, either. It didn't seem possible, but——"

"By gollies, suh, it might be possible! Ah just remembered something. When Mistuh Brown got on the train, the engineer started up with a jerk, and——" Sam lowered his voice and whispered the rest, as though fearful other ears might hear.

The detective's eyes flashed. "Are you positive, Sam?"

"Certain sure positive, suh! He did just like this!" Sam demonstrated.

"That was when he scratched the skin off his hand, too!"

"Ha! I'll get that piece of skin if you'll show me where it is. It may help to identify the body in case it has been—er—disfigured in any way. You show me where it is. Then you get Brown's clothes, put them in his grip, and bring them here."

In five minutes, they were both back. Sackett slipped a small tissue paper package into his notebook before he spread the clothes of the missing Matthew Brown on the floor. "Iron-gray hair, blue eyes, size 7 shoes," he wrote in the notebook. Then, with a foot rule Sam produced, he measured the clothing, jotting down the figures.

"Now we have a very good description of Matthew Brown," he said, packing the clothes back in the grip. "The next job is up to you, Sam. Do exactly as I told you to do. Work quickly and carefully when your chance comes."

"Yes, suh, and—'scuse me a moment, suh! I just remembered something more." Sam vanished and in a moment was back, holding something out on a piece of newspaper.

"Tell me what the dickens is that, Sam?"

"A spent match, suh, what I scraped some of the stain off of Mistuh Brown's shoes with. Maybe you could get one of them comical paralysis out of that, suh!"

"Comical paralysis? Oh, you mean chemical analysis! Sam, you're a treasure. This will prove whether the blood on Matthew Brown's shoes came from the body of Martin Pearson or not. Good work, Sam." The detective yawned. "Well, I'm going to have a snooze. Nothing much for me to do now till we get to Burton. It's up to you now, Sam!"

Detective Sackett was still snoozing when Rhodes, in dressing gown and pajamas, taking his grip with him, went into the wash room half an hour before

the train was due to reach Burton. He was still snoozing when Rhodes came out again. Once, as Sam passed, his eyes shot open. "Get it, Sam?" he asked.

"Yes, suh!" Sam produced a small slip of paper. The detective examined it for a moment, then tucked it in his notebook. "Fine work, Sam. It all fits like a glove, so keep your eyes wide open, Sam!"

"Yes, suh! Ah sure will!"

Sackett was reading an old newspaper when the train pulled into Burton. Rhodes, spruce and fresh-looking in his new suit and shoes, passed once again. "Hello!" he called. "Thought you were getting off here, Sackett!"

"I am!" Sackett picked up the grip marked M. B. and joined the other. "Going uptown?"

"Yes! Until the noon train leaves for Chicago."

"Ride with me, then. I wired ahead to have an official car waiting here for me."

"Thanks! That's mighty good of you!"

"Not at all! Here, porter! Carry these grips!"

Sackett led the way out of the station. Outside, backed up to the curb among the taxicabs, was the city police department's patrol wagon, at which Rhodes smiled. "Somebody's due for a free ride!" he said, chuckling.

Sackett stopped. "Yes!" he said. "Step right in, Mr.—Brown!"

The other jerked to a stop also, his face pale, his hands trembling. "Er—what did you say?" he demanded.

"I said: step right in, Mr. Brown!" Sackett repeated. "You get the free ride. This is the official car I wired for."

For an instant, the other hesitated as though gathering himself for a spring. Then, at a touch from a uniformed man on the other side of him, he slumped, and climbed slowly into the wagon.

"I thought I had a perfect alibi!" It was Matthew Brown, alias Waldon Rhodes, who spoke. "I can't see yet where I made a mistake!"

"You made a big mistake in trying to pull off your little scheme on the railroad in the first place!" Sackett retorted. "Don't you know that the railroad police get their men in ninety-nine per cent of the cases? Why did you kill Martin Pearson?"

"I suppose I might as well tell you, since you'll find out anyway. He double-crossed me seven years ago. Framed me to get jailed while he got away with the loot. When I got out, I tracked him down. I grew a beard, acquired a stiff leg, and established myself as Matthew Brown, who was in due time to kill Pearson and then vanish. A week ago, I shaved clean and started using a false beard I had had made. A week ago, as clean-shaven Waldon Rhodes, I reserved Lower 5 at Hilldale and left a gripful of clothing there. Last night, I killed Pearson, boarded the train as Matthew Brown, and slipped off unobserved at Hilldale. I got ticket and grip, then hurriedly changed my clothes in the wash room, and boarded the train as Waldon Rhodes, going to bed in Lower 5."

"I see!" Detective Sackett took up the narration. "As soon as the coast was clear, you slipped into Upper 5, donned the beard, and rang for water, thus establishing the presence of Matthew Brown. Then you 'murdered' Matthew Brown, and became Rhodes in Lower 5 again. Presto! Believing Brown murdered and his body thrown from the train into some river, the police would soon give up the search for him. Then you could live in peace. Tell me, where did you get the blood? From a rabbit?"

"From a rat! It was some of Pearson's blood, in case you were smart enough to test it to see if it was human blood. I threw the bottle and beard out

of the window into Devil's Canyon where they'd never be found. Now tell me, how did you find out I was Matthew Brown?"

Sackett smiled. "The cards were stacked against you from the start! When you boarded the train, the engineer was riled because you delayed him when he was already late. He started the train with a jerk that relieved his feelings but made you stagger and throw out a hand to save yourself. Isn't that so?"

"Yes."

"In saving yourself, you bent your supposedly stiff leg, and scratched a tiny piece of skin off your right hand—and Sam noticed."

"I could have sworn he didn't notice a thing!"

"But he did, though he had his own reasons for appearing not to. I even have that little bit of skin you parted with." The detective drew the tissue paper package from his notebook. "Why did Matthew Brown feign lameness? Matthew Brown was wanted for murder! Was this, then, some impostor planting a false trail? Was it—— Ha! The man we knew as Matthew Brown suddenly vanished under circumstances that indicated he had been murdered. But was it not very strange that a body dripping blood should disappear so absolutely and completely without sign or sound? Possibly, it hadn't disappeared at all! Then we must look for a man of the same height and build as Matthew Brown; a man with a scratched hand, but not a lame man.

"Ha! Waldon Rhodes, the man in Lower 5, had a scratched hand that matched all too perfectly! He had eyes and hair of the correct shade, though the hair was slicked down a different way. Moreover, his clothes—according to Sam's measurements—were cut to exactly the same measure in every detail as those left behind by the missing Matthew Brown. Could it be possible that

Waldon Rhodes was Matthew Brown? It could! He was! Presto! The mystery was solved!"

"But what had my cigar to do with it?"

Sackett chuckled heartily. "It was not your cigar I was staring at when I pulled that gag. It was the scratch on your hand. I noticed you had seen me staring. It was too soon to let you sus-

pect anything, so I used that cigar gag to keep your mind off more important matters."

"It was a good gag! It had me guessing, all right!" Rhodes admitted with a wry grin. "Sort of a smoke screen, eh!"

"A lot better sort than the kind you tried to lay down!" the detective said, chuckling.



GIRL TAKEN FOR A RIDE

NINETEEN and pretty, the bandits who came to rob her father's bank, decided that they would take her for a ride. It was not the kind of a ride meted out to gangsters who are elected to die. Helen Hamilton, of Stockwell, Indiana, had just come home from the movies with her best beau, when the invitation came for the ride, an invitation which neither she, the young man, nor the parents had the power to refuse.

It was about ten o'clock when Mr. Hamilton, banker, looked up from his reading to see a strange young man standing in the doorway. The stranger's preamble about hard times came to a sudden end when he pulled out his revolver and announced that he was going to rob Mr. Hamilton's bank. Just then, Helen and her friend arrived. The bandits tied up all four people.

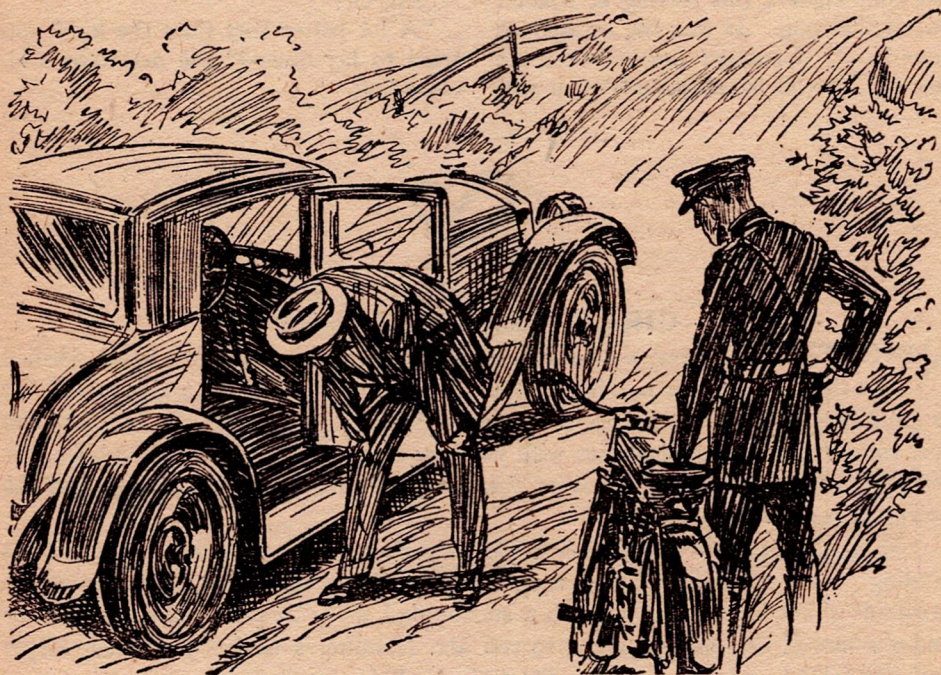
Upstairs was sixteen-year-old Mary, who, leaning over the banister, had heard enough to know that her parents were being held up. She opened her window and made her way down the rose trellis. But trellises are frail things, and, before Mary had quite reached the bottom, it broke, spilling the girl to the ground. Unhurt, she picked herself up and ran to the nearest house which was a block away. Friends there jumped into their car and drove twelve miles to get the sheriff.

In the meantime, one of the bandits heard the trellis break, but he wasn't sure what it was until he went upstairs to look. In answer to his question of who was upstairs, he found the daughter, Mary, missing, and reasoned that she had gone to raise an alarm. They decided to leave at once.

"We'll take your daughter to make sure you don't tell anybody. We'll be back Monday for dough," they said. Helen was untied and led to the car. It was believed that the bandits did not care to be involved in a kidnaping case and so, after riding around several hours, gave Helen fifteen cents and told her to take a street car to a police station. By that time, they were in Chicago and it was three o'clock in the morning. The girl was unharmed and had rather enjoyed her experience, she told her father, when he drove into the city to get her.

Points Of Strategy

AN OLD-TIMER COMBINES AN OLD TRICK WITH A MODERN GET-AWAY.



By Duane Burton

WHEN "Duffer" McCarthy had first started his career of crime, life was comparatively simple. Safes were old and rusty or new and lightly constructed. Many people kept their savings under the mattress and scarcely any one locked his doors or windows. At that time, Duffer McCarthy was known as "Bill," by his colleagues. But Bill McCarthy had let the world go by and the younger generation dubbed him "Duffer," which to their minds meant any one old, slow, stupid, and lazy. Modern, steel-walled, burglar-proof vaults were as impossible to Duffer McCarthy as to the average honest citizen.

So it was that Duffer had to use strategy in order to outwit the police when pulling a job. Although he was adverse to what he called "newfangled geegaws," he realized that he must make one concession to modernity and that was, to own an automobile. So, at last, he acquired one, and with patient perseverance, he mastered the art of operating it. Duffer preferred to work alone, so he would not hire a driver, and he thought one of the most foolish things a man could do was to steal a car. Although he did not admit it to himself, one reason for this was that he felt he would never be proficient enough to get away in a strange machine.

Although Duffer was not given to finer feelings in respect to possessing so modern a burglar's accessory as an automobile, he felt a distinct sense of guilt every time he entered the little coupé—a sense of disloyalty to his ideas. He scorned machine guns, tear bombs and such outcroppings of the World War. Had he not been beyond the age limit during the big fight, he might have felt differently, but even at that time he was known as Duffer instead of Bill.

Nor did Duffer ever carry a "gat." To-night, as he rolled quietly along in his car, he patted a certain bulge in his pocket, but it was not one of the death-dealing instruments carried by the average crook. If folks were foolish enough to leave money and jewels out in plain sight, that was their sad but well-deserved misfortune, thought Duffer, but killing was not in his somewhat disjointed code of morals.

With his usual precaution, Duffer circled the block three times before stopping in front of a house, well set back from the street and shaded from the gaze of curious passers-by, although there was little chance of any one abroad at this time of night, or rather morning. Duffer took out a heavy nickel watch, and, holding it below the dash light, saw it was two o'clock.

He stepped out of his coupé and walked noiselessly up the driveway. There was no watchdog to break the still night air with its yelping. Duffer had studied the possibilities of this particular prospect quite thoroughly. He knew that only a man and his wife lived there. The one servant slept out. The Thompsons, Duffer sized up as being old-fashioned like himself. He guessed that Mr. Thompson slept in the same room with his wife and in all probability laid his trousers over the back of any convenient chair. Mrs. Thompson wore a few "real" jewels whenever she went out, which was often—too often to bother putting them

in a safe-deposit box. Even if she put them in a wall safe, which Duffer very much doubted, he felt reasonably sure that no alarms were connected with it which he could not easily disconnect.

"All you gotta do is use strategy," muttered Duffer as he cautiously approached a kitchen window which he thought might possibly be open. All were closed; two of them he would not budge, but a third rewarded his efforts and slipped up easily. An agile spring, which dated back to Duffer's palmy days, and he was inside. He listened intently for a few minutes, then tiptoed to the front door which he unlocked and left ajar.

"Cops always run to the back doors and windows," Duffer whispered to himself. "Jest a little strategy and you can fool 'em."

Some of the stairs creaked so that Duffer had to stop and listen breathlessly every few seconds. At last, he reached the upper hallway and detected the sound which he wanted to hear—the deep and regular breathing of the Thompsons, fast asleep. The door of their bedroom was wide open.

"Here's where the old duffer uses his strategy," said the burglar. Sufficient light from a star-studded sky enabled him to make out two blanket-covered mounds on a double bed, a dresser, where, in all probability, rested the jewels Mrs. Thompson had been seen wearing that same evening, two hours earlier, and a chair over which were laid Mr. Thompson's trousers. So far, Duffer was right in his conjectures.

From his protruding pocket, Duffer withdrew a small box, and, crouching upon hands and knees, he spread the contents generously on the floor beside the sleeping couple. The contents of another box followed, and that of another, until there was no break in the wide and somewhat uneven trail which led around the bed. After this very necessary part of his plan was consum-

mated, he was free to get down to business.

Duffer's depredations of late years had seldom gone further than picking pockets or stealing portable objects of small value. Repeated experiences at this sort of thievery, however, had lent some speed and deftness to his fingers.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson slept benignly on. The moon looked in through the window and helped Duffer to see the contents of Mr. Thompson's trousers pockets. As he had hoped, one of them contained a fat roll of bills. He turned his attention to the dresser where he saw the glint of a gold watch. There would also be a necklace and diamond ring or two. *Crash!* The very thing he was guarding against happened. A cologne bottle, its fragile base barely able to balance itself, was brushed to the floor. Why did women insist upon such unsubstantial things, anyway? Duffer was transfixed into immobility by a woman's scream which was promptly cut off by the large, firm hand of Mr. Thompson, who was awakened but not fully cognizant of what was going on.

The scream was no more than half expressed before Duffer was running down the stairway to the open front door. By this time, Mr. Thompson had jumped slipperless from the bed, and Duffer heard another scream which was more a shriek of pain, quite outdistancing in expression and volume that of his buxom wife's. Duffer chuckled to himself as he sped to his waiting car. Something dropped as he placed his foot on the running board, but he dared not stop to pick it up.

Slipping behind the wheel, he threw the car into first, then second, and a minute later only a rear red tail light was visible disappearing down the deserted street. Duffer did not believe in driving without his lights. It was not that he had any respect for the law, but he did have a great fear of it and

only did he disregard it when he was sure of not getting caught.

Faintly on the early morning breeze he fancied he still heard the shrill cries of Mr. Thompson, who was hindered in his quick dash to the telephone by dozens of glistening blue tacks, new and unused, as the sharp points would testify. The road leading out of town which Duffer was taking was one that passed no police station. Smarter burglars than he did not know this.

A sense of security and peace flooded over Duffer even while he kept one eye on his mirror in search of possible pursuit. He looked at the result of his haul on the seat beside him—a necklace, whose value he could only guess at, the roll of bills and some change, one ring and the stopper to the cologne bottle which he remembered he had grabbed in a futile effort to retrieve it.

"Wonder what I dropped at the curb," he said aloud. He brought his gaze back to the reflector and what he saw there caused him to press hard upon the gas. The car leaped forward as Duffer realized what the now tiny headlight of a motor cycle behind him meant.

There was no doubt in Duffer's mind that the approaching light belonged to a motor-cycle cop. Still, there wasn't much to be frightened of, for Duffer had a good headstart and there was no traffic. Although he had no desire to try out the speed of the coupé, the salesman had told him it would do seventy-five, and not many motor-cycle cops cared to go that fast, for long.

Duffer turned off his lights, but the first streaks of another day made his precaution useless. His pursuer did not need the small red disk to guide him now that he was able to distinguish the car in the half light of early morning. The motor cycle seemed no nearer. Perhaps it was not chasing him after all, Duffer reasoned, not however, releasing his pressure on the accelerator.

"Fool that I was not to have hit this pace in the beginning. Old man Thompson must have a good pair of lungs." Duffer smiled reminiscently at the memory of the anguished screams of his victim, and he pictured him, pulling tacks out of his feet with further groans and probably curses.

"That cop sure is a whirlwind driver. Good thing I have plenty of gas and four good tires." Duffer was not very worried. He knew those "bicycle fellows." A spurt of speed for a few miles and then they gave up the chase. They valued their own necks too highly. This fellow did seem to be a sticker, though.

Then, with as little warning as Mrs. Thompson's scream, the coupé swerved sharply to one side and started climbing a steep embankment. It was this bit of rising scenery that saved Duffer's life. His foot pressed the brake pedal and the little coupé came to a stop.

"Now what the——" Duffer scrambled out of the car. On came the motor cycle with relentless purpose. There was no escape for Duffer. High banks on one side of the road and open fields on the other. He gazed regret-

fully at the right front and rear tires. They were flat as two tires could be.

"Well, feller, you gave me quite a run." The cop kept one hand suggestively near his revolver. "Guess we'll have to wait here until some one comes along to pick us up."

Duffer only looked at the tires of his heretofore trusted coupé. "What do you suppose did that, officer?" he whined.

It was fast growing light. The officer bent over the rear tire and plucked something from it which he held up between forefinger and thumb. "Reckon it's the same thing that made old man Thompson yell loud enough for me to hear him. 'Tacks! Burglars! Tacks!' he shouted, and me more than three blocks away."

Duffer was old-fashioned in many ways. He didn't hate the "bulls," like the younger generation. Even if the joke did turn on him, he could laugh.

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out the lining. There was a hole large enough to permit a tack box to slip through.

"That must be what dropped jest when I was gettin' in the car—one of my boxes of tacks," confided Duffer.

In Next Week's Issue of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine

COP KILLER

By Paul Ellsworth Triem

When he beheld the silver star, the symbol of power, hate welled up in him—and he killed.

PEARLS OF MURDER

By Ivan Kell

The old lady who ordered "hard stuff" was a great little eye opener to Justice.

Other Features by

Barry Perowne
Donald Van Riper

David Redstone
And Others

15c A COPY

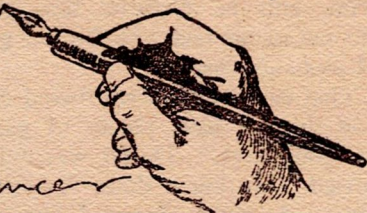
AT ALL NEWS STANDS

What Handwriting Reveals

Conducted

By

Shirley Spencer



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 specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned to Shirley Spencer, Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. Shirley Spencer will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

Also, coupon—at end of this department—must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read. If possible, write with black ink.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in this 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 Spencer cannot be responsible for them.

J. B. B., Chicago.—Yes, you have artistic ability. It is shown in your artistic and original capitals. Your letter formations show an original mind, though one that needs training and development.

I suggest that you specialize in the field of the theater rather than advertising. You haven't a very practical and businesslike mind that might help you in the purely commercial world. Your involved capitals and some of the

smaller formations indicate imagination that is a little eccentric and unusual. You don't think clearly and concisely as is required in business. You aren't direct enough.

Those horizontal strokes tell me you love authority, and are determined and tenacious. The lower terminals, especially on your *d*'s and *l*'s, are the sure sign of a very stubborn nature.

R. L. S., Ohio.—I have just advised the young lady from Chicago to go into commercial art but suggested that she select the theatrical world as her field. Your writing shows that you have talent for commercial art but I suggest advertising, sign painting, and poster work for you.

Your writing is of the constructive type, so you love to mold and build

things, both with your hands and mind. You have the sculptor's point of view and have a fine sense of outline and form. If you had the opportunity to study I suggest you turn to architecture, even though that takes many more years of training.

Sometimes I'm sig
low ascenders and
What is the D
Spencer/
I would v
align of our hand.

You are still very naïve and inexperienced, as those rounded and awkward formations show when you are not printing. The heavy pressure indicates responsiveness to color, movement, form, and rich and exotic beauty.

C. E. A., Nebraska.—Yes, it is time you settled down to one thing and tried to make a practical adjustment. The reason why you don't stick to business—even though doing well—is reflected right in those tall upper loops of your writing. Those very tall loops are an

work from the
I got to where
tion. something
loves me up, so

indication of the dreamer—the visionary and impractical person. The exaggerated terminals that soar upward, too,

are another sign of this tendency to live on the spiritual plane and not be interested in making a practical adjustment.

You are still young so you have time to come down to earth, as it were, but you ought to realize the difficulty or you might continue to drift around until it is too late. When you find your mind wandering and building air castles and your work drags so that you suddenly give it up, just check up on yourself and see if it isn't hard work that is bothering you. I'm afraid there is a real lazy streak in you that needs to be conquered.

Your rounded formations and forward slant with the light pressure portray a sweet, gentle, affectionate, and sympathetic nature.

N. G., Vermont.—I wouldn't recommend nursing for any one who writes a large, bold, emotional script such as you write. Your personality would be too disturbing to the patients.

What are my
qualities?
What are my
qualities?

That heavy pen pressure is the reflection of strong appetites and material tastes. You love luxury and have exotic tastes. The very forward slant and the large, sprawly writing intensify these signs and give one the picture of a very warm-hearted, passionate person who could not possibly concentrate mentally for long. You must be "up and

doing," though you have a decided lazy streak. You like to have change and novelty around you, however, and you enjoy praise and appreciation.

The very tall capitals show ambition and personal pride. The stage or the movies would suit you best, but, if you can't find the opportunity to follow a dramatic career, then the newspaper work you mention will be better than nursing.

MRS. K. S.—I sympathize with you for a husband who won't stick to a job is just about hopeless. If your husband has had about one hundred jobs in three years, there certainly is something the matter with his attitude toward life. He is not prepared to accept the responsibility of a wife and two children, certainly, and I think you are right in leaving him. Such men very seldom change into good providers. They are born lazy and irresponsible.

*istic disposition
do you think I
am not to stick
he just doesn't
re job for any long
not he has been*

Now, to be quite frank with you about your writing, I must say that you are not an easy person to live with. You are impulsive, inconsistent, changeable, and have a quick temper. You are capricious and pleasure loving, so would not be very practical yourself. There is need for a strong, firm will, less superficial thinking, and more control of the emotions in your case. Your disposition is not even. Perhaps constant irritation has ruined it! Don't try to live under exasperating conditions. Life is too short.

D. S., Ontario.—If you only had the will power which is indicated by a long, straight *t* bar, you could make much more of yourself. As it is, you are scattering your forces to the four winds and getting involved mentally until your mind is muddled. See how awkward, involved, and in bad taste are your capitals. They show you are not thinking clearly.

*Miss Spencer,
I have follo
me time and ara
his is not a fa*

Your capital *M* has the third stroke taller than the first—another indication that all is not harmonious within. Those light, scratchy *t* bars show you are nervous and weak-willed, easily swayed this way and that by any emotions and any outside influence.

That capital *D* reveals secrecy and the *o*'s and *a*'s that are tightly closed with extra loops intensify that sign. The uneven pen pressure and thickened and sharpened terminals reveal temper and a sharp tongue. You are irritable, combative, and fault finding. That is "what's what" frankly.

Don't forget the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Handwriting Coupon

This coupon must accompany each specimen of handwriting which you wish read.

Name

Address

Under The Lamp

By Gerard Holmes

This department is conducted by Gerard Holmes, for those of you who like puzzles. If there is any particular kind of puzzle that you prefer, please tell us, and Gerard Holmes will do his best to give it to you. Also, won't you work on a puzzle of your own, send it in, and let the other readers wrestle with it?

Answers to this week's problems will be printed in next week's issue of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine.

All letters relative to this department should be addressed to Gerard Holmes, care of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

DORIS HOFF, 1490 Mission Street, San Francisco, California, who composed this crypt, says it's easy, and that the topic is different from the general run of crypts. She has our number.

1. XMOQQ AVGPZ BU
CQBCNQ DY AQ FC
BFO HBONP: XMQ
HVN NZ, XMQ HB-
G'XZ, XMQ EYG'XZ.
XMQ UVOZX YEEB-
DCNVZM QSQOTX-
MVGJ; XMQ ZQEBGP
BCCBZQ QSQOTXM-
VGJ; XMG XMVOP
UYVN VG QSQOT-
XMVGJ.

Another of the fairer sex speaks in a lighter vein. It is none other than Anna

M. Page, 73 Ashfield Street, Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts.

2. ABC DEAF HGZJK
LGJJ ENDGC COEC
BJN REKOGBAK
TBDMEZX REPBZ-
ESJF LGCO DBNXZA
KCFJXK.

A new fan is heard from. It's the voice of F. E. Murphy, 121 North Francisco Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

3. ABCDEFH GIKL B-
HIMNA MOOBIPA
NMFJ QBRIA BO
ORF MFP AKBIL. E
GMF QMIPCJ SMEL
OBI OIEPMJ LB
PIMS FEHQ, LQML
E NMJ TRJ NJ TBBU.

Here's one that's a bit more "crimey," by Fred E. Loepp, 3134 West Forty-fourth Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

4. C E S C C A , E F C C T G
V A J E O G S M O K Y
K I T E O W G O N P T G
J A H K E A L S E R F -
C E F W N A , J T N S Y T I
X S B K F N O S K I Z V T W
M V S P S C E F M V T G
L O W C T E M E O W P T G ,
F W G H F O X T G O W
H O L L A .

Answers to Last Week's Puzzles:

Behold the missing-letter puzzle by Odle Arthaud, Moneta, Iowa.

1. P O S T A L
O C T A V E
S T Y L E S
T A L O N S
A V E N G E
L E S S E N

David E. Hutchinson, 10 Gates Street, South Boston, Massachusetts,

answers a crypt that one of our fans contributed.

2. An answer to Miss Hlavaty: We did not live in Utopian security previous to the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, because prohibition only accounts for the increase in crime, not for all crime.

How is this for a first attempt at composing a crypt by a new fan, Toney Moliere, 705 North Sixteenth Avenue, Melrose Park, Illinois?

3. Difficult situations present themselves in various types of cryptograms submitted.

From a junior member of our family, Emmanuel Cohen, 420 Park Place, Long Beach, Long Island, New York.

4. "Similar triangles have homologous sides proportional; corresponding angles equal."

Contributed by a new fan, C. A. Ben-nick, 2018 McKinney Avenue, Houston, Texas.

5. From twin cedars north one thousand feet to mouth of cave, down twenty feet, follow stream to second chamber. Enter ten feet to right. Dig.

PUZZLE FANS' HONOR ROLL

Send in your answers to each week's puzzles, ye fans, and watch for your name on our monthly Honor Roll.

HOW TO SOLVE CRYPTOGRAMS

The object is to find out what letters have been substituted for the regular alphabet. This may be accomplished by counting the number of times each letter appears in the crypt. The letter used most often will, except on rare occasions, be E, as E is the most used letter in the alphabet. To unravel the rest of the crypt use approximate letter-frequency table: E T O A N I R S H D L U C M P F Y W G B V K J X Z Q. Also watch for word frequencies, pattern words, common prefixes and endings, vowel spotting, et cetera. THE and AND are the most used three-letter words.

Headquarters Chat

THIS Shadow Contest is by far the biggest thing of its kind that's ever been attempted by a magazine. The interest in it is tremendous. And the participants are engaging in real detective work, in one of its important branches, too. Contestants in The Shadow Contest discover clues in ten issues of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine. They put together all these clues, which are true hints as to what The Shadow really looks like, and then form a natural picture, which they transfer in words on paper. This picture is what they have concluded must be the true appearance of The Shadow.

Also, clues are given which give contestants a good chance to surmise what kind of man The Shadow really is.

This is just the kind of work that a detective is called upon to do. A man is murdered, we'll say. A detective investigates, and neighbors inform him that they noticed, for several days before the crime, a stranger skulking about the house in which the murdered man lived.

The detective is, of course, very anxious to learn the identity of the man who has been noticed lurking about the scene of the murder. From all who have seen the skulker, he tries to gain little bits of description, which he can piece together in such a manner that he is able to form a mental picture which will be so accurate that he will be able to

recognize the person, should he meet him.

Not only are the handsome money and other prizes a big inducement for readers to enter The Shadow Contest, but the very contest itself is so interesting that it does not fail to attract all persons, old and young, to try their brain and hand at conjecturing as to what The Shadow really looks like and, also, what kind of man he really is.

While it is not at all necessary for those who enter the contest to listen to The Shadow during the Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine broadcast on Thursday evenings, they will find much entertainment in doing so, and it is not unlikely that from The Shadow's tone of voice they may gain, to their own minds, at least, some little help. But the clues given out over the radio by The Shadow are in nowise different from the clues printed in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine. So, inside the broadcast's area or out of it, all contestants, as a matter of fact, stand on an equal footing.

The stations from which a dramatized version of a story taken from Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine is broadcast every Thursday night are listed below:

CITY	STATION	TIME
Akron	WADC	9:30 ES
Baltimore	WCAO	9:30 ES
Boston	WNAC	9:30 ES
Buffalo	WKBW	9:30 ES
Chicago	WBBM	8:30 CS

Cincinnati	WKRC	9:30 ES
Cleveland	WHK	9:30 ES
Detroit	WXYZ	9:30 ES
Fort Wayne	WOWO	8:30 CS
Hartford, Conn.	WDRC	9:30 ES
Kansas City	KMBC	8:30 CS
New York City	WABC	9:30 ES
Omaha-Council Bluffs	KOIL	8:30 CS
Philadelphia	WCAU	9:30 ES
Pittsburgh	WJAS	9:30 ES
Providence	WEAN	9:30 ES
St. Louis	KMOX	8:30 CS
Syracuse	WFBL	9:30 ES
Toledo	WSPD	9:30 ES
Washington	WMAL	9:30 ES

ES—Eastern Standard Time

CS—Central Standard Time

Fifty cents is not too much to pay for Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine. That's the way David Cloete, Moffat Avenue, N'Dola, North Western Rhodesia, Africa, feels about it. He has just sent us this letter:

"DEAR EDITOR:

"It's only lately that I became a reader of the Detective Story Magazine. Unluckily, it is about two months old when it arrives here and, consequently, I can never send in my solutions to your famous cryptograms. I, however, always compare my solutions with those published in the issue of the following

week. Only eight came my way for solving, and I had all eight correct.

"Detective Story Magazine is great, and I simply love it. Every story keeps you there. The price for one copy out here is fifty cents in American money! High finance, says I; but it's worth it."

This lady—Mrs. Florence Flowerday, 84 Whittaker Street, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, feels that Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine radio broadcast has helped her son to be a better boy, and writes us about it in this wise:

"DEAR EDITOR:

"I listen to your program every Thursday night, and I sure enjoy them, and I think they are a lesson in themselves for boys who think they can do wrong and get away with it. I have one boy fourteen, and I used to have lots of trouble with him. He did things which I was always afraid would get him into trouble; but, since we have been listening to your detective story, he has changed a lot and stays in at night, and he wouldn't miss Thursday for anything.

"Wish best wishes from your ardent listener."

THE SHADOW CONTEST

Began in the February 7, 1931, issue of

STREET & SMITH'S DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

It will be run for ten consecutive issues—

February 7th-April 11th, inclusive.

One or more new clues will be found on the second page of the Contest Conditions printed in each of these issues. In order to fairly equip yourselves to compete in the contest, you should study all the clues carefully. If you have missed any of the issues containing clues, either consult them without charge in a public library, at the offices of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, or buy them from your dealer. In the event of the dealer being unable to supply you with the copies you desire, order direct from the publishers, inclosing fifteen cents for each magazine wanted.

MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in Street & Smith's 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. Because "copy" for a magazine must go to the printer long in advance of publication, don't expect to see your notice till a considerable time after you send it.

If it can be avoided, please do not send a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proven 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," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

Address all your communications to Missing Department, Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

R. S. S.—Please write to Dad, Route No. 1, Salem, Oregon.

ROY, S. S.—Formerly Chief Yeoman on the U. S. S. "Julia Luckenback." Please get in touch with M. E. S., Route No. 1, Salem, Oregon.

JONSSON, THEODORE.—Left Aleo, Finland, forty years ago, and has not been heard from since. Information appreciated by Box 660, San Diego, California.

CALLAHAN, CLARENCE.—Known as Jimmie. Lots of changes in family. Please write to your sister, Mrs. Grace Starkey, Box 63, Suffern, New York.

LANDERS, BOB.—A miner. Came from Mt. Shasta County, California. He is about forty-five years old, and five feet seven inches tall. He worked in Susanville, California, and was last seen August 27, 1930, in Alamosa, Colorado. Any one knowing him or his present whereabouts kindly notify his old partner, A. J. Dollinger, 181 Post Avenue, Westbury, Long Island, New York.

DUZICK, FRANK, or HENSEL, RAYMOND.—Or any of the boys who served aboard the U. S. S. "Nevada" in Turret No. 2, in 1923-'24, please write to your old shipmate, Steve Borbely, 1474 Cloutier, Lincoln Park, Michigan.

HARRIOTT, MRS. IDA.—She was living at 20 Dravmo Street, Seattle, Washington, when last heard from, about two years ago. She is believed to have come from Los Angeles, California, originally, and if any of her friends there can give me news of her, please write to Miss Mary Matherly, 2317 Lafayette Avenue, Mattoon, Illinois.

HILL, MRS. JENNIE.—About five feet four inches tall. Has light-brown hair, and is about forty years old. Last seen at Bill Brown's Training Farm, Garrison, New York, in 1927. Was working in New York State when last heard from. Information appreciated by Joseph Hill, care of this magazine.

NOTICE.—Would like to hear from shipmates who served on the U. S. S. "Rappahannock" in 1918 and 1919. William Johnson, 1411 Fourteenth Avenue, North, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

RITTER, GEORGE and JOHNNY.—Lived in Joplin, Missouri, about thirteen years ago. George, who had red hair, was with an Indian couple in Missouri, when last heard from. Johnny, who had light-brown hair and blue eyes, is believed to have gone to Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Any information will be deeply appreciated by their brother Bill, William Ritter, Carl Junction, Missouri.

MULHOLLAND, DAVID M.—A prospector, about seventy-four years old. Was brought up in Dempsey, Pennsylvania, and lived in Colorado for many years. When last heard from he was somewhere in California. It is important that we learn if he is living or dead. Any one knowing him or anything about him, kindly write to his brother, Irvin G. Mulholland, P. O. Box 176, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania.

SMITH, RALPH WILLIAM.—Worked on the Craig Farm at Clinton, Pennsylvania, in December, 1929, but left when he learned we were looking for him. He is seventeen years old. Has light-brown hair, blue eyes, and a light complexion. Please send any information to Mr. William Smith, Sixth Street Car Barn, Steubenville, Ohio.

GRIMSTEAD, MRS. CARRIE LOUISE.—Formerly of Detroit, Michigan. Last heard of in Victor, Montana. Please communicate with your nephew, Charles, care of this magazine.

HOWE, BERT.—Resident of Detroit, Michigan. Information appreciated by his nephew, Charles, care of this magazine.

SMITH, JOHN L.—Wrote to his wife, Mrs. Alice Smith, of Jamestown, North Dakota, from Chicago, in 1926. Your father died last August. Please come home. Walter and Christ. H. Smith, Marion, North Dakota.

PELLERIN, EUGENIE.—Lived in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 1896. Any one knowing her whereabouts please communicate with Joe, care of this magazine.

STURDWANT, LEO C.—A little over twenty years old, medium height, has dark-brown curly hair and dark-brown eyes. Served in the coast guard at New London, and was later sent to the Marine Hospital at Ellis Island, New York. If any one knowing him can help me locate him, please write to G. H., care of this magazine.

HENDERSON, TRAVIS or TOM.—Known as a smart gambler, and attends all large horse races. He left Indiana, twenty-five years ago, and was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1926. His son, who has seen him for many years, would like to communicate with him. Address any information to Robert, care of this magazine.

MOORE, ROY.—Formerly of Herford, Texas. Please write to Ruth Kirk, now Mrs. Ruth Gilliland, 108½ North Rock Island, El Reno, Oklahoma.

KIRK.—Would like to hear from the family of Roy Kirk, consisting of Mr. Kirk, his wife Gladys, and their son Bobbie. They lived at one time in Ohio, but were last heard from in Wink, Texas. We were together in Florida five years ago, and I would welcome any news of them. Mrs. Charles Redfair, Kell, Illinois.

CRISP, PEARL.—Lived at 2617 Stanton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1923. She had come there from one of the Carolinas. She is blonde, has blue eyes, and is about twenty years old. She has a brother, Earl, and also a sister. Information will be appreciated by Mrs. Elwood Morris, nee Elizabeth Marrs, 2701 Eighth Avenue, Huntington, West Virginia.

CLAUDE, L. T.—Keep in touch with me always. I love you and believe in you. I am depending on you to come out on top of the world. Please write to your faithful sister Hazel, in care of this magazine.

ALLEN, KERNER WATTS.—Left home in King, North Carolina, in 1911. Has been seen by friends in various States since, but has not communicated with his family. His father died December 2, 1930. We tried to locate him over the radio, but failed. Any one knowing him, or his whereabouts, kindly write to his sister, Mrs. Mabel Allen Taibert, Box 563, Mount Airy, North Carolina.

COYLE, ELIZABETH C.—A typist, who worked in an office in New York City when last heard from. She formerly lived at 220 East Seventieth Street, New York City. She will receive some valuable information if she will write to H. W. R., Box 124, Kallispell, Montana.

RHODES, CHARLIE.—Believed to be a cowboy. He is tall, has light hair and blue eyes, and his face is thin. When last heard from, he was in Decker, Montana, and was going to Polaris, Montana. Will any one knowing his present address please write to his niece, Donna Stevens, Sagala, Michigan.

BUCK, G. G.—Have good news for you. Please write home, or to H. L. Kishter, 900 North Wolfe Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

MABY, FLOYD LEROY.—Thirty-eight years old. Six feet tall. Fair complexion. Has scar between eyes. Was last seen in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Please write to mother, care of Mrs. F. Birtsch, 191 Division Street, Buffalo, New York, or to Siegfried, care of this magazine.

SMITH, ELIZABETH.—Last seen at the Friends' Home for Children, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, about eleven years ago. Had three boys, Robert Cleaver, Asa James, and Grover Cleveland, in Children's Home. Any information concerning her will be appreciated by her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Robert C. Smith, Jr., General Delivery, Ione, Oregon.

GOTTMAN, LANEY.—My father. Would like to get in touch with him, or with any one who knows his present address. Kindly write to Charles E. Gottman, 2103 Highland Avenue, Everett, Washington.

EVERSON, CHARLIE.—Please come to see your mother, or write to her. Mrs. Anna Everson, 254 Franklin Street, Elgin, Illinois.

COCHRAN, PERRY.—We are so anxious to know where you are. Have sad news for you. Please write to your sister, Mrs. J. M. Ellis, Murrayville, Georgia.

\$1000.00

In Rewards

*For those who display the greatest ingenuity
and accuracy in correctly arriving at their
conclusions as to*

What The Shadow Looks Like

What Type of Man Is He?

Countless thousands of radio listeners have heard The Shadow. His mysterious voice—his sardonic chuckles—have sent shivers up and down their spines as he announces the Street & Smith Detective Story Magazine Programs every Thursday evening at 9:30 (Eastern Standard Time) over the Columbia Broadcasting network.

To the radio audience The Shadow has been a voice—an eerie, sinister, creepy voice. *But what does The Shadow look like?*—what type of man is he?

That no one may know his identity, The Shadow will broadcast in a cloak with his face completely masked. Beginning Thursday

night, January 29th, and each succeeding Thursday evening for a period of ten weeks, The Shadow will give hints over the radio as to his appearance and habits. If you are alert these hints will enable you to form a good idea of The Shadow. The same clues which The Shadow sends out over the air will be printed in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine for ten weeks from February 7th to April 11th, 1931, inclusive.

In addition to the clues given by The Shadow each week over the radio and in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, there are many who may be aided in forming a mental picture of The Shadow from his tone of voice and manner of speaking.

HERE IS A LIST OF THE PRIZES:

First Prize.....	\$500
Second Prize.....	200
Third Prize.....	100
Next 20 Prizes, each.....	10
Next 20 Prizes, each—1 year's subscription (52 issues) to Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine	

CONDITIONS OF THE TEN-WEEK'S CONTEST

You may submit as many descriptions as you wish during the duration of this contest. Descriptions must not contain more than 100 words. These descriptions will be judged by the degree of ingenuity displayed by contestants in coming to their conclusions as to the type of man The Shadow is and what he looks like; for the clarity and conciseness which they show in coming to their conclusion; and for the neatness and general appearance of their manuscript.

Contestants in the Ten-Week's Contest, offered by Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, will be given two weeks from the date of printing the last clues in the issue of April 11th, 1931, to write out their descriptions of The Shadow and mail them to Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York. These clues will aid contestants in forming their ideas as to the looks and habits of The Shadow. Descriptions must reach Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine at 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., before midnight, April 25th, 1931.

The judges will be the Honorable Joseph Corrigan, Chief Magistrate of New York City; Edgar Wallace, celebrated detective story writer; John J. Sullivan, Assistant Chief Inspector in Charge of Detectives, New York Police Department, and W. Sherman Burns, of the Burns Detective Agency. Their decision will be final and the judges and Street

& Smith will not engage in correspondence about the awards.

Before notice can be given in the magazine as to the result of the contest, some little time must elapse after the contestants' conclusions have been received, because the Contest Editor must have ample opportunity to consider them, and because copy must go to the composing room a long time before the date of publication. However, just as soon as the names of the winners have been decided, checks will be mailed to them.

Then, at the earliest possible date, the conclusions reached by the first, second and third prize-winner will be printed in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, together with the names of all the winners of the other prizes.

Copies of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine may be found in most public libraries or, if any of those who desire to enter the contest do not care to purchase copies, the magazines may be examined at the office of the publication, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York.

This contest is open to all, save those who are directly or indirectly connected with Street & Smith Publications Incorporated or directly or indirectly connected with the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Stations over which the Street & Smith Detective Story Magazine hour is broadcast are:

WABC WFBL WKBW WEAN WNAC WCAU WJAS WDRC
WMAL WCAO WADC WHK WKRC WXYZ WSPD WOWO
KMOX KMBC KOIL WBBM

THIS WEEK'S CLEW

On Thursday Night, March 19th

The Shadow Said:

"Twenty years ago, for me, precocious youth, 'B. A.,' and let those from any clime converse near by, and their secrets will be mine."

CANNON, FRANK.—Native of South Carolina. He was a Lieutenant in Company L, Eleventh Infantry, United States army, during the World War. When last heard from he was in St. Petersburg, Florida, and intended to go to South America. Any information regarding him will be deeply appreciated by R., care of this magazine.

MARTIN, R.—Last seen in Maryland, four years ago. He is five feet six inches tall, weighs about one hundred and thirty-five pounds, has Auburn hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. Has order emblem and initials on right arm. Mother has been sick a year. I am lonesome for you. Do you remember the last cards you sent? Please write to your son Peck, in Virginia, or to your wife, L. V. S. M., care of this magazine.

TRAMMELL, BELLVIA.—Was heard from in Texas in 1929. She has black, wavy hair, and dark-brown eyes. Any information will be appreciated by her friend, Mrs. Lillie Mae DuBels, Fowler, Colorado.

GLICK, LOUIS.—Had a brother attending school in Decatur, Illinois. Please get in touch with your old friend, Louis Oberman, 601 Belden Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

THOMPSON, ARTHUR.—I never believed one could miss any one as much as I do you. Please write promptly to your pal, Louis Oberman, 601 Belden Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

McGINNIS, ROBERT.—Formerly of High Bridge, Kentucky. Last heard from in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1905. He is about fifty-four years old, five feet nine inches tall, has a dark complexion, and used to wear a mustache. He married a Kentucky girl in 1889 or 1900, and had one son, born in 1901, who was given the name of his father. Information appreciated by his son, Robert Lee McGinnis, Box 288, Dodge City, Kansas.

SMALLWOOD, W. H.—Last seen in Port Arthur, Texas. Please let me know where you are. Your son, George W. Smallwood, Station Veterans' Hospital, Fort Bliss, Texas.

GRAY.—My mother, Grace Gray, was born near Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her foster father, a railroad man, suffered a sunstroke, moved to Los Angeles, California, and later returned to New Mexico. Her foster mother was a Spaniard. My father, Mr. Gray, was supposed to have been killed in a California mining accident, but I believe he and my brother Albert are still alive. I was born in San Francisco, California, December 21, 1901. After the earthquake we went to Portland, Oregon, returning to California one year later. In 1910 we came East. Please Norma, or David M., won't you write to me? Any information concerning my relatives will be deeply appreciated by Babe, care of this magazine.

ACREY, JOHN.—Last heard from in Carlsbad, New Mexico, twenty-four years ago. Have urgent message for him. Please communicate with Grace, care of this magazine.

POWELL, ANTHONY.—Was born in Paterson, New Jersey, about forty-six years ago, and lived there when last heard from. He left home twenty-three years ago to become a prize fighter. Any news of him would be welcomed by his sister, Miss M. Powell, 759 East Eighteenth Street, Paterson, New Jersey.

ROBINETT, H.—Formerly of Westville, Oklahoma. Information appreciated by D., care of this magazine.

McDONALD, ABNER.—Has dark hair and dark eyes. Used to be around the little towns of Hazelwood, Harmon, Moore Siding, and Jenningstown, West Virginia. Has a brother named Frier. Any information will be greatly appreciated if sent to Miss Nellie E. Jones, care of J. E. Young, 66 Brennen Street, Newark, Ohio.

BRENICK, ANDREW H.—Your mother is anxious about you. Please write to John C. Brenick, Box 88, Southview, Pennsylvania.

HULL, HARRY H.—Forty-seven years old. Five feet eight inches tall. Weighs about one hundred and eighty pounds. Has fair hair and blue eyes. Last heard from in British Columbia, Canada. Please address any information to A. W. Hull, 1331 Maple Avenue, Santa Ana, California.

NOTICE.—On Sunday, July 27, 1930, a girl hiker was given a lift from a small town about two hundred miles east of El Paso, Texas, to Miami, Arizona, by a party in a 1929 Chevrolet coupe. The other hitch-hiker, who left the party in El Paso, would like to repay you the favor you did him. Please write to Richard Parmele, 6504 Linwood Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

DeVERROW, PEARLEY.—Formerly of West Plains, Missouri. Last heard from in Chicago, Illinois. He has the news for you. Please communicate with T. H. Willis, West Plains, Missouri.

PLUMMER, EMERY M.—Lived in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Topeka, Kansas. Any one knowing his present whereabouts, or any one who served with the 148th Field Artillery during the World War, please write to his buddy, Edward P. Ammon, 711 South Grant Street, Denver, Colorado.

WEST, ZEFFIE.—Missing for twenty years. Last heard from in Wichita, Kansas. Your daughter's heart is nearly broken. Please let her know where you are. Address letter to Delora, care of this magazine.

WARNER, ROY, and ALMA McKINLEY.—Please write to Roy McKinley, 313 Cambie Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

NOTICE.—Will the party in a 1929 Ford roadster, who gave me a ride from Macksburg, Ohio, to Caldwell, Ohio, on Saturday, December 6, 1929, kindly communicate with Howard E. Graves, Jr., 7518 Redell Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

FOUNTAIN, ROSS.—Last known address was 762 Shawmut Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts. Please write to your niece, Mrs. E. V. Coleman, Route 5, Box 79, Disputanto, Virginia.

FOUNTAIN, RUTH.—Believed to be in Cincinnati, Ohio. Information will be greatly appreciated by her cousin, Mrs. E. V. Coleman, Route 5, Box 79, Disputanto, Virginia.

JONES, MINNIE, WILLIE, and ROSELLA.—When last seen, they were at a children's home in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1916. They were later adopted. Minnie would now be twenty-six years old, Willie twenty-two, and Rosella twenty. Information concerning them will be deeply appreciated by their aunt, Dora Jones, care of this magazine.

McERVAIN.—Would like to hear from any member of the McErvin family who lived near Transwiche, Missouri, twelve years ago. Please write to Dora Phillips, Morehouse, Missouri.

WHITIE.—I am still living in the town we said good-by in. Let me hear from you. You know I worry about you all the time. Marie, care of this magazine.

GILBERT, CARL W.—I am teaching school at present, but am still waiting for you to return. Our baby is fine. Please write to us, and we shall gladly come to you. Your wife, Cora McCracken Gilbert, Ledger, Montana.

MYERS, AUDIE.—Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Silvester Tomlin, of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Last known address was 212 North Street, Pueblo, Colorado. She is about four feet eleven inches tall, weighs about one hundred and thirty-five pounds, has black hair and black eyes. Please send any information regarding her to her cousin, Joe H. Tomlin, care of C. S. M., 815 Palm Court, Bellflower, California.

KOVOLOFF, ALEX.—Left Honolulu, Hawaii, November 14, 1930, working as a sailor on board the U. S. "Guido." He is believed to be living in Seattle, or Olympia, Washington. Information will be appreciated by his wife, Martha Kovoloff, Honolulu P. O., Hawaii.

COOPER, JAMES WILLIAM.—Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 1915. Son of Nellie Sullivan Cooper and Clarence William Cooper. Please forward any information as to his whereabouts to Mrs. A. W., 1664 Adanac Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

MORSE, U. E.—An ironworker. Remember older time in Kingston? Communicate with L. A. D., in care of this magazine.

COX, MAT.—Last heard from in San Francisco, California. Please write to your old friend, W. M., Box 96, Center, Alabama.

SHUNWAY, VICTOR.—About six feet tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty-five pounds, has light hair and brown eyes. Last heard from in Rochester, Minnesota. Please write to your old buddy, Norton Stout, R. F. D. 1, Long Bottom, Ohio.

LeMARR, ETHEL.—Please write to Wayne LeMarr, care of this magazine.

WOODMAN.—Let us try again. George and I miss our Daddy Jack so much. Please write to me at 234 South Second Street East, Salt Lake City, Utah, or to Thelma, in care of this magazine.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from men who served in Nineteenth Company, R. S., Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, from 1906 to 1908, and also from men who served as prison guards at Alcatraz Island, California, during 1909. Please communicate with Thomas W. Brandon, Tamaroa, Illinois.

DAVIS, BOB.—Please write to your friend "Banker" whom you knew in Alabama, and send letter to Frazier, care of this magazine.

MAGAR, BISHOP M.—Nicknamed Jack. Missing for over two years. He is about thirty-eight years old, has brown hair and brown eyes. Last heard from in Shelby, Montana. His wife and little boy need his help greatly. Please address any information concerning his whereabouts to Mrs. Edith Magar, 485 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, Colorado.

JACKSON, DICK and JOHN.—Twins. Natives of Arkansas. Information concerning them welcomed by their half sister, Mrs. Margaret Graham, care of Sawyer Reynolds, Ketchikan, Alaska.

BROWN, SUSIE.—Received your note too late. Am sorry. Please write to W. S., care of this magazine.

CURRY, NORMAN E. S.—Went to live in the home of Mrs. Margaret Hoggon when he was about five years old. Last heard of in Bluefield, West Virginia. Is now about twenty-one years old. Any information regarding him will be greatly appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Gladys Gowins, Robertsville, Ohio.

VOLLENDROFF, WALTER.—Last seen in Humboldt County, California, eighteen years ago. Forty-five years old. Please write to your brother, William Vollandroff, 217 North Lybarger Street, Olympia, Washington.

MILTZ, OSCAR G.—Native of Montana. He has relatives living in Great Falls, Montana. Believed to be in Idaho, Wyoming, or California. He is tall and dark. Have very important news for him. Please address any information to Mrs. Bessie McWherter, Lowell, Washington.

BRIDGES, GUY.—Last heard from in Gunn, Wyoming, about twenty-two years ago. Will any one knowing his present whereabouts kindly write to his daughter, Mrs. Pearl F. Wood, 415 North Market Street, Johnstown, New York.

MORRISON, JAMES CHESTER.—Missing since January 6, 1914. Any information concerning him would be deeply appreciated by his mother, Mrs. Amanda Morrison, 2122 Queen Avenue, Middletown, Ohio.

BROWNE, LEONE.—About forty years old. Weighs one hundred and seventy pounds. Left Detroit, Michigan, last summer, and was later heard from in San Francisco, California. Information appreciated by A. Brickson, Mayer, Arizona.

VANHUTTON, C. H.—Information concerning his whereabouts and that of his family would be greatly appreciated by Ulrich Vanhutton, care of this magazine.

ARDEENE, ALICE C.—Left Detroit, Michigan, in spring of 1930, to go to Illinois or Indiana. Would appreciate word of her, or would like her to write to me direct. Mrs. Marian Howard, Dryhead, Montana.

KIGHTLINGER, ARTHUR WARREN.—A resident of Titusville, Pennsylvania, twenty-four years ago. Last heard from in British Columbia, Canada, eight years ago. He is fifty-seven years old, has iron-gray hair, and probably weighs about two hundred pounds or a little less. His friends always called him Oss. His son Raymond would like to hear from him, or from any one who knows where he is. Please address any information to Raymond L. Kightlinger, P. O. Box 14, Saegertown, Pennsylvania.

HOILES, HAZEL.—Last heard from in 1914, at Alliance, Ohio. Please write to Mrs. M. D. Edwards, 271 North Oakley Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

BROWN, MOLLIE.—Lived in East Chicago, Indiana, in 1916. Your friend Williamae would like to hear from you. Please address her at 271 North Oakley Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

FITZGERALD, GERTRUDE.—Please write to Williamae B. Edwards, 271 North Oakley Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

HINKLE, H. L.—A medium and fortune teller. His wife was very blonde and has blue eyes. They were last heard from in Oklahoma in 1928. Will any one knowing them, or their son Charlie, formerly of Henrietta, Oklahoma, kindly communicate with their friend, J. H. D., care of this magazine.

DeCAMP, NELLIE.—Had three sons, Cecil, Burt, and Frank. Last heard from in Daisy, Tennessee, in 1918 or 1919. Her sister is very anxious to hear from her or her sons. Please address all information to Mrs. Clara Gates, 821 North Second Street, Yakima, Washington.

TERRELL, ROSS A.—Blue eyes, light hair. Medium height. Is about twenty-four years old. Has a cowgirl tattooed on his right arm. Last heard from in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in November, 1927. Would like to hear from any one knowing his present address or anything about him. Please write to Ethel, care of this magazine.

REED, ED.—Was a street-car motorman in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, Washington, when last heard from. He has light hair and blue eyes, and is about five feet six inches tall. Please write to your children, Ed, Ida, Helen, John, and Carroll, at 365 East Norton Street, Bend, Oregon.

KOOPERMAN, LOUIS.—Left home in Brooklyn, New York, about a year ago. Little Henry is lonesome and wants you to come home. Please come, or write to your mother, Rose Kooperman, 120 Christopher Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from buddies who served in G Troop, Twelfth Cavalry, from January, 1913, to January, 1916; or in M Troop, Seventeenth Cavalry, from August, 1916, to August, 1917. Address Ben Fuls, Box 27, Benloek, Indiana.

BRAISER, ADA MAY.—About twenty-three years old. At the time of her mother's death, twenty years ago, her name was Ada May Johnson, but she was adopted by a family whose name was Braiser, and she probably bears their name. When last heard of she was in Oklahoma. Any information regarding her will be deeply appreciated by her brother, Earl Patterson, 2207 South Third Street, St. Louis, Missouri.

SAUNDERS, BILL.—When last heard of he owned a farm near Illinois Bend, Texas. He has four children, Jack, Eva, Vera, and Jennie. Their mother has been dead about nine years. Information concerning this family will be greatly appreciated by Mrs. Lillie Richards, care of Clyde McGraw, Route 3, Box 27, Ryan, Oklahoma.

DUNCAN, ROSE MARIE.—I love you and can't forget you. Life is not the same without you. All is forgiven. Please write to E. E. H., care of this magazine.

DASHIER, LEWIS.—My father. Last heard of in Oklahoma, when he and my mother, Della Mae Dashier, separated. I was then three years old. Mother died when I was twelve. My father and a sister, whose last name is White, living in Galveston, Texas. Any information regarding my father or my father's relatives will be appreciated by Mary Magdalene Dashier, care of this magazine.

OLSON, JOHN; HANSON, ANDREW; GERRISH, LESS; GIBBS, BILL; WORKMAN, HARPER; JACOBY, ED; JACOBY, HUGO.—These men worked on Emma Creek in the Koyuk Country, in 1902. Would like to hear from any one of them, or from persons knowing them. Please address S. A. Cornelius, 619 South Harvey Avenue, Freeport, Illinois.

CARTER, O. B.—Last known address was Elizabethport, New Jersey. He is twenty-six years old, has light-brown hair and a fair complexion. Baker by trade. Please write to Inez Cupp, Radio Station, Gastonia, North Carolina.

HARDING, WILLIAM.—Born at Halthwhistle, England, and lived at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Emigrated to America in the early fifties. He engaged in the lumber business, and became very successful. He was a bachelor, and died, leaving a large fortune to his bachelor uncle in England, who died before claiming the fortune, and all papers were lost. It is known that William Harding was in Quebec, Canada, in 1858. Any one able to give further information about him, kindly communicate with Robert C. Smith, Sarahville, Noble County, Ohio.

VIOLET VAN S.—Your friend and next-door neighbor at King Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, would like to hear from you. Please write to G. A. P., care of this magazine.

BOZAWICK, HAZEL.—Last heard from in Marshfield, Oregon, in 1926. Will any one knowing her present address kindly write to M. Bozawick, 1216 South Center Street, San Pedro, California.

CARR, WARREN H.—Left Ranger, Texas, September 5, 1930, driving a model A Ford Sport coupe. Believed to be in Oklahoma at present. He is five feet eight inches tall, has brown hair, gray eyes, and fair complexion. Does electrical engineering and is also an oil-and-gas chemist. All is forgiven. Please write to Barbara, in care of this magazine.

MORRIS, BERTIE.—Maiden name was Norman. Information appreciated by her friend, Helen Harris, Ocate, New Mexico.

HOWDYSHILL, JOHN.—Sometimes known as John Laurence or Jim Long. When last heard from he was with the Levitt, Brown & Huggins carnival. He ran the prison show, and was called Whitey. Any information concerning him will be gratefully received by his wife, Mrs. Mildred Howdysheill, 1515 South Fifty-first Street, Tacoma, Washington.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from any of the boys who were with the Third Trench Motor Battery, Third Division, A. E. F. Please write to Herbert H. Flitzgibbons, P. O. Box 43-608, San Quentin, California.

RAPER, HERBERT.—Last heard from two years ago, when he was working with a section gang on the railway in Kansas. He then lived at the Foss Hotel, Kansas City, Kansas. Information will be greatly appreciated by Thomas William Raper, 26 Amy Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

HILTON, ROY FRANK.—Last seen in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in July, 1930. His two daughters, Eleanor and Inez, are anxious to hear from him. Please address any information to I. L., care of this magazine.

GREY, HOMER.—Was brought up in Oregon County, Missouri. Went to Texas in 1912 or 1913. He is now about forty years old, five feet nine inches tall, has blue eyes and a fair complexion. Information appreciated by R. T. Pallew, 1820 Mitchell Avenue, St. Joseph, Missouri.

C. J. W.—Charlie is in hospital. You are welcome, Charlie, Earl, Maude, Mabel, and Ted.

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