

15 STREET & SMITH'S

JAN. 23, 1932

Detective

Story Magazine

EVERY WEEK



THE DOCTOR'S
VICTIMS

by
HECTOR GAVIN GREY

C.E.F.

**Page
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"Keep up with the pace!"

We're talking to YOU!

YOU KNOW men who are out of work. They're looking for jobs—and jobs are hard to find.

Perhaps you wonder how secure your own job is. A lot of men are wondering the same thing!

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are replacing the old ones. *Employers today are demanding that the men they hire be equipped to keep up with the pace.*

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Vol. CXXXIII Contents for January 23, 1932

No. 3

Two Novelettes

THE DOCTOR'S VICTIMS	Hector Gavin Grey	2
PLAYING COPPER	Ray Humphreys	82

One Serial

THE UNLOVED BRIDEGROOM	Christopher B. Booth	40
A Four-part Story—Part Two		

Five Short Stories

CAGED HOPE	Donald G. McDonald	28
HIS FIRST BREAK	Joseph F. Hook	64
SCARED STIFF	Donald Van Riper	102
GUNMAN'S END	David Redstone	119
FOUR SASSY BIRDS	Warren Kimsey	131

One True Crime Story

A CRIMINAL'S PRIDE	Hugo Solomon	76
----------------------------	----------------------	----

One Article

BLACK LIGHT IN CRIME	Lieut. Charles E. Chapel	113
------------------------------	----------------------------------	-----

Miscellaneous

Price Reductions Hurt Bootleggers	39	Ice Cream or the Third Degree?	101
Killing Children	75	Too Many Playthings	112
Praising The Cops	81	A New-type Prison Needed	118
A Safe Place		130	

Departments

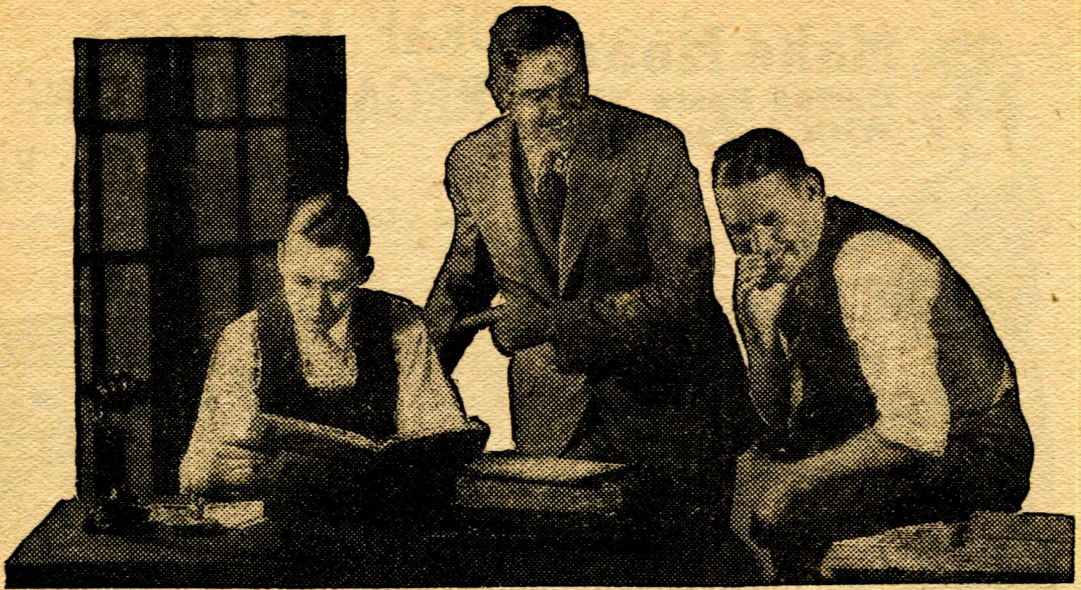
WHAT HANDWRITING REVEALS	Shirley Spencer	136
UNDER THE LAMP	Gerard Holmes	139
HEADQUARTERS CHAT	The Editor	141
MISSING		143

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STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC., 79 7th AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y.



They Told Him Salesmen Were "Born" But Now He Makes \$10,000 a Year ...Thanks to This Little Book

IT WAS just a little free book that showed Ed Pinkham that he could be different from the rest of the men in our shop. Nobody ever imagined that Ed would land, even in the \$5,000-a-year class, let alone be making \$10,000 before he was thirty. Ed didn't know himself the abilities he had in him as a money-maker.

But one day, a strange occurrence changed his whole life. During his lunch hour Ed started to read a little book he had brought to work with him.

"It's a book called 'The Key To Master Salesmanship,' Bill," he told me. "It's the most amazing thing I ever read. I never dreamed there was so much in salesmanship. You ought to send for a copy yourself. It's free."

"Huh!" said Luke Jones. "Does that book tell you how to become a salesman?"

"It sure does," replied Ed, enthusiastically.

"Don't waste your time," advised Luke. "You can't learn how to be a salesman. A fellow has to be 'born' that way to be a good salesman."

Ed just smiled at that, but he said nothing. Soon afterward he quit the shop, and we forgot about him. And then last night, I met Ed again—driving a snappy new sedan and dressed like a million dollars.

"For Pete's sake," I said. "What are you doing nowadays, Ed?" He smiled. "City sales manager for the Steel Castings Company," he told me. "What are you doing?"

"Still at the shop," I replied. "But what I want to know is, how do you come to be sales manager for Steel Castings? They're one of the biggest firms in the business."

Ed smiled again. "Remember that book on Salesmanship that Luke Jones was kidding me about one day? Well, when I finished my Salesmanship training the Association I took it from gave me a choice of a number of jobs through their Free Employment Department, and I took a position as salesman for Steel Castings Company. They made me City Sales Manager three months ago at ten thousand dollars a year."

"Good night!" I said. "And Luke and I are still punching the old time clock!"

Ed looked at me seriously. "See here, Bill," he said. "Are you sport enough to risk two cents that you can do as well as I did? Then spend the two cents to

write to the National Salesmen's Training Association tonight and get their free book. Then take their course. When you are qualified, their Free Employment Department will help you get a good sales job. Not only will they help you get the job but they agree under an iron-clad money-back penalty that you must be satisfied with the training received—or they refund your tuition!"

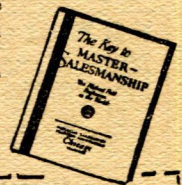
FREE-TO EVERY MAN

A book—but what a book! Just seven ounces of paper and printer's ink—but it reveals facts and secrets that have led hundreds of men to success beyond their fondest expectations! See for yourself—FREE—why thousands have increased their earning capacities, after reading "The Key To Master Salesmanship." A. L. Galbraith, of Detroit, Michigan, went from a bank teller's job to the position of branch manager of a large insurance company, after this book opened his eyes. You can understand how it helped A. A. Fidler of Montgomery, Alabama, to raise his pay 700%. You'll know how it made C. B. Sterling of Boldman, Kentucky, an officer and manager of his Company, raising his pay to ten times what it was. Learn for yourself the REAL TRUTH about salesmanship. You do not risk one penny nor incur the slightest obligation. And since it may prove the turning point in your career it is certainly worth your while to fill out and mail the coupon below. Do it now!

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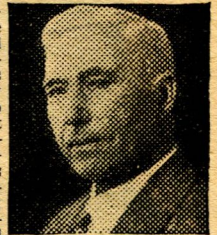
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Mr. Alex Martin

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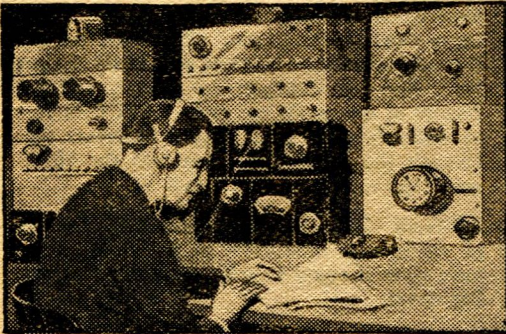
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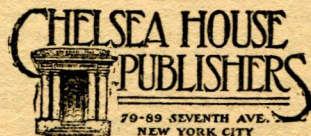
"Dancing Partner" might be a fairy story, glamorous, fantastic, unreal, did it not give the sense to the reader that Lolita, glove clerk by day and taxi dancer by night, was the very sort of girl that he might well meet around the next corner.

Lolita, looking up into the handsome eyes of aristocratic Phil Nearing, fell suddenly and hopelessly in love with the owner of those eyes, and from then on her life became complicated. There were those who would bar the gate to her entrance to that world of wealth and fashion through which Phil Nearing walked so confidently. Out of a clear sky the false accusation of theft was made against her. She felt desolate, an outcast, and the cruelty of the world cut deep. And then just as suddenly there came a turn in events that brought the gold of sunshine into the blackness that covered Lolita's soul.

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"How did I get it? Well, I'll tell you, Bill. Right after we got back from France I got a job in a factory. It didn't 'pan out.' They got some kind of new machinery and a lot of us were let out. Boy, I was worried!

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"I suppose I'd be worrying myself sick right now, just as you are doing, if I hadn't happened to get hold of a booklet written by a fellow in Rochester named Arthur R. Patterson. Patterson was a Secretary Examiner of the Civil Service Commission for eight years. It was through the help he gave me that I got such a high rating and got my government job so quickly.

"If you are 'shaky' about your job and wondering what's going to happen to you, I suggest, Bill, that you write to Arthur R. Patterson in Rochester right now. I forget the name of the booklet he'll send you, but it's good sound stuff.

"Well, so long, Bill, we pull out of here in a couple of minutes and I have to get going."

The title of the booklet which this Railway Mail Clerk refers to is "How to Secure a Government Position." If you are a citizen, 18 to 50, this booklet will tell you how to get the government job you want—and a lot of other interesting facts about jobs with the government.



Page 4, for example, tells what Uncle Sam pays. Page 10 tells all about the vacations. Page 12 explains how I prepare you quickly and how, if you don't get the job within a certain time after passing examinations, my help costs you nothing. Page 18 tells about the automatic system of giving you yearly raises.

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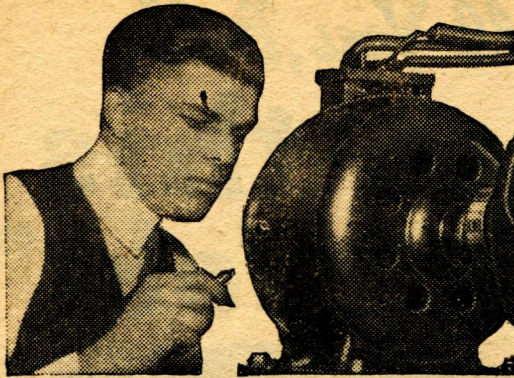
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RUPTURE IS NOT A TEAR

Rupture is not a tear, but is due to a muscular weakness in the abdominal wall. Trusses merely brace these muscles but do not strengthen them—on the contrary, the gouging of the ordinary truss pad often increases this weakness as it tends to shut off circulation of the blood.

STUART'S ADHESIF PLAPAO-PADS are patentably different—being mechanico-chemico applicators—made self-adhesive purposely to keep the muscle-tonic called "Plapao" continuously applied to the affected parts, and to minimize danger of slipping and painful friction. The adhesive fabric is soft as velvet and clings to the body without straps, buckles or springs. Easy to apply—comfortable—inexpensive. Awarded Gold Medal, Rome; Grand Prix, Paris; Honorable Mention, Panama Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, etc. For almost a quarter century stacks of sworn testimonials from many different countries report success—without delay from work. The epidermatic absorption of Plapao utilizing "mechanico-chemico therapy" tends toward a natural process of recovery, after which no further use for a truss.

Stop wasting your time and money on old-fashioned devices. Learn how to close the hernial opening as nature intended, so the rupture can't come down. Send no money; just mail the Free Test coupon below. For your own good—write today—tomorrow may be too late.

FREE TEST COUPON

PLAPAO CO., 2623 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Send me a Free 10-day test supply of the remedial factor Plapao and 48-page illustrated book on Rupture; no charge for this now or later.

Name _____

Address _____

\$-ALWAYS HAVE LUCK!-\$



Unlucky in Money Games, Love or Business? You should carry a pair of genuine MYSTIC BRAHMA RED LIVE HIGHLY MAGNETIC LODGE STONES. Rare, Amazing, Compelling, Attractive these LIVE LODGESTONES are carried by Occult Oriental people as a POWERFUL LUCKY CHARM, one to prevent Bad Luck, Evil and Misfortune, and the other to attract much Good Luck, Love, Happiness and Prosperity. Special only \$1.97 for the two. With valuable instructions FREE. Pay postman \$1.97 and 15c. postage on delivery. Satisfaction or money refunded. You can be LUCKY! Order yours TODAY!

Dept. 385, P. S. BUREAU, General P. O. Box 72, Brooklyn, N. Y.
NOTICE! We absolutely GUARANTEE these genuine Mystic Brahma Lodestones are ALIVE! Just what you want, for they are the REAL THING—POWERFUL HIGHLY MAGNETIC! GET YOURS NOW!!

Does Not Suffer From Asthma Now

Every Sign of Trouble Gone.
Works All the Time Now.

People who suffer from asthma or chronic bronchial coughs will be interested in a letter written by Wm. F. McKinley, 826 Marion Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. He says:

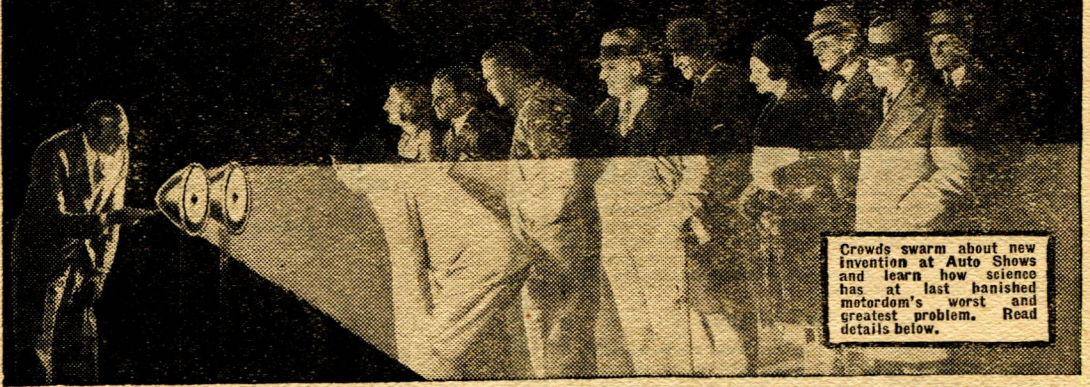
"I had asthma for 15 years. Was unable to work for months at a time, had to sit in a chair, unable to lie down. I tried different medicines, and finally started on Nacor in September, 1923. I hadn't taken a half bottle until I could sleep in bed. I have no signs of asthma now and my health is good again."

Hundreds of people who suffered for years from asthma and bronchial coughs, state that their trouble left and has not returned. Their letters and a booklet of vital information will be sent free by Nacor Medicine Co., 773 State Life Bldg., Indianapolis, Ind. Write for this free information, and find out how thousands have found lasting relief.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

DANGEROUS DIMMING ENDED..

/// Road Light Doubled! ///



Crowds swarm about new invention at Auto Shows and learn how science has at last banished motordom's worst and greatest problem. Read details below.

AMAZING INVENTION

FITS ANY HEADLIGHT...

Revolutionizes Night Driving!

At last! Night driving suddenly becomes actually SAFER than day! At one sweep, a tiny, inexpensive invention banishes glare yet doubles road illumination! Cuts through every light on the road! Fits any car. Use coupon QUICK for liberal FREE TEST OFFER!

IT is a well-known fact that motor car manufacturers have solved every big problem except one. As soon as the sun goes down at night, the highways of America break forth into a constant, rushing stream of "dimming and damping." Speed is cut down one-third to one-half. Every Monday morning finds the highways littered with broken glass, wrecks, cars in the ditch, overturned, shattered against telephone posts. Every man who ever groped dizzily down the highway in traffic at night knows the horrible sensation of being half-blinded by cars on his left, unable to see the ditch on his right, his own lights seeming dim and shadowy and practically worthless. Now, in a twinkling, this curse of night driving is lifted completely and inexpensively from the shoulders of the entire motoring world!

FITS ANY HEADLIGHT

This new lighting discovery is called Perfect-O-Lite. It is a little invention that replaces the "bulbs" in your automobile headlights. No extra wiring or installation. Yet actually DOES double road illumination. Banishes need for Glare Shields. Cuts through the other fellow's light, yet absolutely cannot glare in his eyes. Makes ruts, animals, children, detour signs, etc., visible at least three times as far. Makes night driving at 40 to 50 miles an hour safe and easy.

The secret of this new light is in the kind of "beam" or "ray" that it throws. Instead of ordinary light, this new invention throws a solid beam of double-reflected or "infused" light down the entire roadway. Shows up ditches at the side, as well as distant ob-

jects, absolutely clear, without the usual flickering "shadows." Space here limits further discussion of the facts.

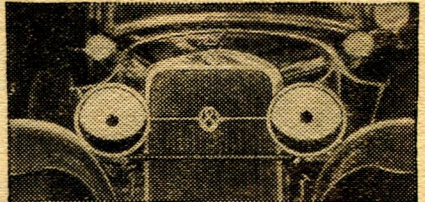
MAKE YOUR OWN TEST FREE

Under an introductory offer you are now invited to be the judge and jury without risking one penny. The coupon brings full details of the invention, offer of a set on FREE TEST and facts about agent's money-making opportunities. Mail the coupon without obligation, TODAY!

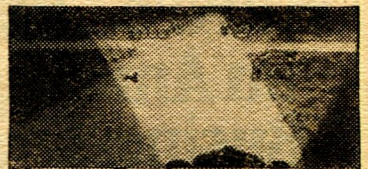
AGENTS! Davis Made \$1,400 in 1 Week

This new invention unquestionably opens up one of the most amazing money-making opportunities ever presented. Here actually is that chance for \$3 to \$14 in your FIRST hour, \$6,000 to \$10,000 THIS year, with no limit **WHATEVER** for Distributors! Fleet owners buy quantities. Wallace & Tiernan, N. J., trucks just equipped. Other big orders flooding in. A real self-advertiser; each car equipped is seen by thousands. Davis, Pa., made \$1,400 in one week. Start full-time or spare-time. Use coupon for FREE TEST OFFER and details of Exclusive Territory, etc.

HACHMEISTER-LIND CO.
Dept. A-1330 Pittsburgh, Pa.



Perfect-O-Lite even looks absolutely unique and entirely different. Every sale brings dozens more. It's the greatest "self-advertiser" ever known.



Lights entire roadway, including ditch. Absolutely no glare to on-coming car. Unique double-reflected, "infused" light beam cuts through every light on the road. No flickering "shadows." Even lights distant objects with daylight clearness.



Throws all light on roadway. Shoots through fog, mist, rain and snow like magic!

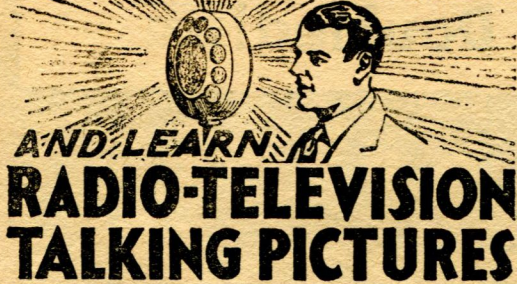
Hachmeister-Lind Co., Dept. A-1330, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Rush details of your Free Test Offer, also send facts about agent's money-making opportunities, without obligation.

Name.....
Address.....
Town.....State.....

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

COME TO SUNNY CALIFORNIA



RADIO-TELEVISION TALKING PICTURES

Come to California where many of the famous Radio Stars make their homes—where the great Laboratories of the American Television Corp. are located—where hundreds of trained sound Engineers and Mechanics are employed in the Studios of Hollywood. Scores of good jobs opening up—and you can prepare for them in 4 months of practical shop work in the great National Television, Talking Picture and Radio Shops.

RAILROAD FARE ALLOWED

Don't worry about the expense of the trip! For a limited time we are making a special Free Railroad Fare offer to California. Spare time jobs while going to school. Free Employment Service for life. Get all the facts about this 25 year old Institution. Mail coupon for big Free Book.

National Television, Talking Picture and Radio School,
Dept. 235-E, 4006 So. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, California
Please send me your big Free Book on Television, Talking Pictures and Radio.

Name _____
Street No. _____
City _____ State _____



**Here's
an Amazing New
Business THAT PAYS
UP TO
\$1,000 A MONTH**

A SURPRISING new profit opportunity is now offered to every ambitious man and woman! A sensational new kind of food business has been invented that can be operated by anyone in either full or spare time. Now, almost incredible as it may sound, \$400 to \$1000 a month is possible in even the smallest cities!

We supply you with equipment and plans for making and selling a delicious new greaseless doughnut that is cooked in a remarkable electrical device. Easy to digest and more toothsome than old-style doughnuts ever were. This delicious new dainty—Brown Bobby—costs less to make and sells four times as fast. No wonder so many people without one bit of experience are literally cleaning up fortunes with this new money maker. You can open a shop; rent cheap floor space in a grocery, delicatessen, lunch counter, drug store, etc. Or start at home—and make good profits your very first week!

**\$3,000
in 3 Months**
"I made \$3,000 in 3 months from my greaseless doughnut business!"
Tues. Minch, Fla.

Men and Women Start in This Business Daily

You cannot afford to delay. Details will gladly be sent without obligation of any sort. Such an amazing money maker may never be offered you again. Write at once for full plans and details.
Food Display Machine Corporation
500-510 N. Dearborn St., Dept. F-331, Chicago.

PICTURE PLAY

selling at the new
price of

10c

per copy is now the
circulation leader of
the movie magazine
field



Get your copy
to-day

10c

per copy

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

Why waste time on old fashioned methods

*—when you can learn to play
at home without a teacher*

DON'T let the thought of long years of tire-
some practice scare you away from learning
to play! Don't let the thought of an expensive
private teacher keep you from letting your dreams
come true! For you—*anyone*—can easily *teach*
yourself to play—right in your own home, in your
spare time, and at only a fraction of what old,
slow methods cost!

It's *so* easy! Just look at that sketch at the
right. The note in the first space is *always* f. The
note in the second space is *always* a. The way to
know the notes that come in these four spaces is
simply to remember that they spell *face*.

Now, isn't that simple? You don't have to know
one note from another in order to begin. For the
U. S. School way explains everything as *you go*
along—both in print and picture—so that, almost
before you know it, you are playing *real tunes and*
melodies right from the notes.

You simply *can't go wrong*. First you are *told*
what to do, then the picture *shows* you how to do
it—then you do it yourself and *hear* it. No private
teacher could make it any clearer.

Easy as A-B-C

No wonder over 600,000 men and women have
learned to play this easy way! For this famous
course is based on sound, fundamental musical
principles, highly simplified. It's not a "trick" or
"stunt" method. You learn to play from notes, just
as the best musicians do. You learn to pick up any
piece of music, read it, and understand it.

No time is wasted on theories. You get all the musical facts.
You get the real meaning of musical notation, time, automatic
finger control, harmony.

You'll find yourself studying the U. S. School way with a smile.
Your own home is your studio. The lessons come to you by mail.
They consist of complete printed instructions, diagrams, all the
music you need. There are no dry-as-dust exercises to struggle

through. Instead, it's just like
playing a game—you learn *so*
fast!

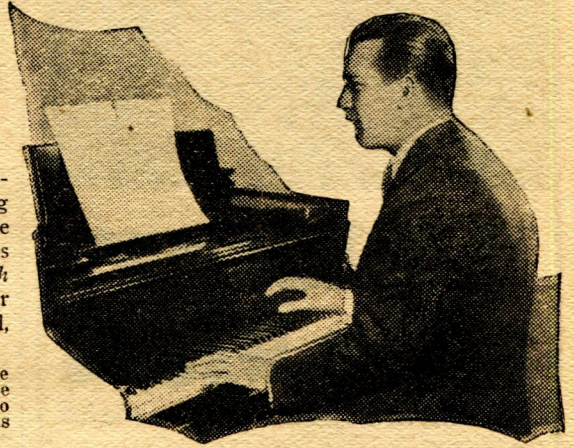
CHOOSE YOUR COURSE

Piano	Piccolo
Organ	Organ
Violin	Sight Singing
Drums	Ukulele
and Traps	Hawaiian
Guitar	Steel Guitar
Mandolin	Clarinet
Harp	Flute
Cornet	Saxophone
	Trombone
Voice and Speech Culture	
Harmony & Composition	
Automatic Finger	
Control	
Piano Accordion	
Italian and Germ	
Accordion	
Banjo (Plectrum, 5-	
String or Tenor)	
Juniors' Piano Course	

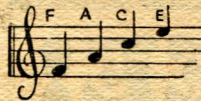
No Talent Needed

Forget the old-fashioned idea
that you need "talent." Just
read the list of instruments in
the panel, decide which one you
want to play, and the U. S.
School of Music will do the
rest. And remember—no mat-
ter which instrument you choose,
the cost in each case will aver-
age just the same—only a few
cents a day.

You'll never regret having
learned to play. For those who
can entertain with music at
parties—who can snap up things
with peppy numbers—are always
sought after, always sure of a
good time! Start *now* and sur-
prise your friends!



Easy as A-B-C



If you can read the alpha-
bet you can learn to play
your favorite instrument
in just a few months.



Free Book and Demonstration Lesson

"Music Lessons in Your Own Home" is an interesting little
book that is yours for the asking. With this free book we will
send you a typical demonstration lesson that proves better than
words, how quickly and easily you can learn to play your favorite
instrument by note—in less than half the time and at a fraction
of the cost of old, slow methods—the U. S. School way. The book-
let will also tell you all about the amazing new **Automatic Finger**
Control.

If you really want to play—if new friends, good times, social
popularity, and increased income appeal to you—clip and mail the
coupon **NOW**. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.
U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 3591 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

Thirty-fourth Year (Established 1898)

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC

3591 Brunswick Building, New York City

Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own
Home," with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration
Lesson, and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested
in the following course—

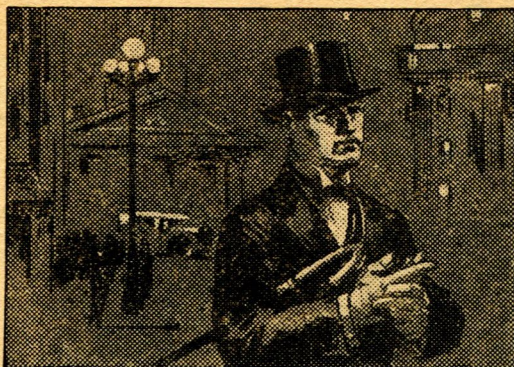
Have you
instrument?

Name

Address

City State

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements



Follow this Man

Secret Service Operator 38 is on the job

FOLLOW him through all the excitement of his chase of the counterfeit gang. See how a crafty operator works. Telltale finger prints on the lamp stand in the murdered girl's room! The detective's cigarette case is handled by the unsuspecting gangster, and a great mystery is solved. Better than fiction. It's true, every word of it. No obligation. Just send the coupon and get—

FREE!

**The Confidential Reports
No. 38 Made to His Chief**

And the best part of it all is this. It may open your eyes to the great future for YOU as a highly paid Finger Print Expert. More men are needed right now. This school has taken men just like you and trained them for high official positions. This is the kind of work you would like. Days full of excitement. Big salaries. Rewards.

Can you meet this test?

Can you read and write? Are you ambitious? Would you give 30 minutes a day of your spare time preparing yourself for this profession? Answer "yes" and I'll show you how to attain all this. Send the coupon and I'll also send the Free Reports.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 27-71 Chicago, Illinois

Institute of Applied Science
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 27-71 Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen:—Without any obligation whatever, send me the Reports of Operator No. 38, also your illustrated Free Book on Finger Prints and your low prices and Easy Terms Offer. Literature will NOT be sent to boys under 17 years of age.

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____

FREE 6 FAMOUS SPARK PLUGS
worth \$4.50
To customers for GOOD YEAR
Goodrich Firestone and other tires

DEALERS WANTED

Lowest Prices in History • 75% Saving

Midland's Immense Buying Power Makes This Possible
Thousands of motorists all over U. S. A. use and boost our Standard Brand reconstructed tires. Hard service on roughest roads guaranteed. Our nation-wide success and reputation speaks for itself. FREE for limited time one 75c best quality spark plug with every tire shipped. Order 4 tires—get full set 6 spark plugs free. New pep for your car—no extra cost. Be sure to mention make of car, model, year built. ORDER TODAY at these Rock Bottom Prices. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

BALLOON TIRES

Size	Rim	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
20x4.40-21"	\$2.30	\$1.10	32x6.00-20"	\$3.20	\$1.40
22x4.50-20"	2.40	1.15	32x6.00-21"	3.20	1.45
30x4.50-21"	2.45	1.20	32x6.20-20"	3.65	1.75
28x4.75-19"	2.45	1.20	32x6.75-20"	3.95	1.90

Reg. CORD TIRES

Size	Rim	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
30x4.95-21"	2.90	1.35	30x3	\$2.20	\$1.00
28x5.00-19"	2.95	1.35	30x3 1/2	2.95	1.15
30x5.00-20"	2.95	1.35	31x4	2.95	1.15
28x5.25-18"	2.95	1.35	32x4	2.95	1.15
28x5.25-19"	2.95	1.35	32x4 1/2	2.95	1.15
30x5.25-20"	2.95	1.35	32x4 1/2	3.20	1.45
31x5.25-21"	3.10	1.35	32x4 1/2	3.20	1.45
28x5.50-19"	3.10	1.35	34x4 1/2	3.45	1.60
30x5.77-20"	3.20	1.40	30x5	3.60	1.75
30x5.00-18"	3.20	1.40	33x5	3.60	1.75
31x5.00-18"	3.20	1.40	33x5	3.60	1.75

All Other Sizes

Send \$1.00 deposit with each tire ordered.

Balance C. O. D. If you send cash in full deduct 5 per cent. You are guaranteed a year's service or replacement at half price. Order Today—Save Money.

MIDLAND TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY

Dept. 17 J 1000-10 W. Sixty-Third Street Chicago

A BABY IN YOUR HOME

I have an honest proven treatment for sterility due to functional weakness which I have used with wonderful success in thousands of cases. It is the result of 35 years experience and has been praised in the highest terms by hundreds of married women, childless for years, who became happy mothers. If you will send me your name and address I will gladly send you a treatment and a copy of my booklet, "A Baby in Your Home" which tells how to use it and many other things married women should know. Both will be sent free in plain wrapper. Write today.



Dr. H. Will Elders, Suite 301-A
7th & Felix, St. Joseph, Missouri

YOU MEN PAST 40 TRY THIS

ALL IN? WEAK? LACK VIGOR?

If you have lost your courage and grow tired too soon then send for 777 (Formula), the amazing new tonic discovery. Pep and energy back quick. Feel like a new man, full of red blooded vim and vigor. Nothing like 777 (Formula). That's why so many are finding this tonic so wonderful. Satisfaction Guaranteed or money back. Send \$2. for double strength package.

SPECIAL 2 PACKAGE OFFER \$3.00 ALSO C. O. D.
CERES CO., Dept. T-1

Box 2068 Ventnor Atlantic City, N. J.

GOV'T. POSITIONS
SPLENDID SALARIES
WE HELP YOU GET ONE

By Mail Clerk	Steno-Typist
P. O. Laborer	Immigrant Inspector
R. F. D. Carrier	Seamstress
Special Agent	Auditor
Customs Inspector	Prohibition Agt.
City Mail Carrier	U. S. Border Patrol
Meat Inspector	Chauffeur
C. O. Clerk	Watchman
File Clerk	Skilled Laborer
General Clerk	Postmaster
Matron	Typist

INSTRUCTION BUREAU, Dept. 451, St. Louis, Mo.
Send me FREE particulars How to Qualify for position marked 'X'. Salaries, locations, opportunities, etc. ALL SENT FREE.

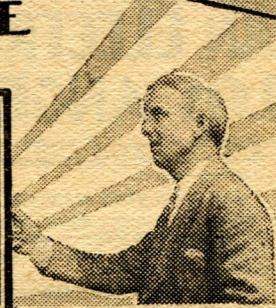
Name _____
Address _____

MEN - WOMEN
AGE RANGE 18 to 50

NEW BIG MONEY FIELD

FOR
WIDE AWAKE
MEN!

SELLING NEW
SPECIALTY
to
BUSINESS
and
PROFESSIONAL
MEN



Four \$15 Sales Daily Pay \$280 Weekly

When green men, with just average ability, make \$200 to \$400 a week, and up, our proposition must be worth investigating. We train you giving you successful methods of one of the fastest sales forces in the country. If you are looking for a man-size business, free from worries of other overcrowded lines of work, write for full information.

"WORLD'S LARGEST FIRMS AMONG OUR CUSTOMERS"

Sears, Roebuck, Larkin Company, Loftis Bros. and Company, LeSalle Extension University, National Radio, Dodd, Mead and Co., Collier's, National Brake Service, Inc., Advance-Rumley Thresher Co., and scores of others nationally known are among our customers. It's a life saver for the smallest merchant who needs it even more than the big firm and he buys quick. 2 sizes—one costs \$2.50—sells \$7.50; your profit \$5, and more, as your sales increase. Other size costs \$5—sells \$15—your profit \$10 and more—every salesman working regularly makes close to \$12 profit per sale on this size! Think of that!

GUARANTEED

To Bring Customer 10 Times Its Cost in Actual Cash

Customer gets signed certificate of guarantee protecting him, backed by a national organization. Very few business men are so foolish as to turn down a proposition guaranteed to pay ten for one, with proof from leading concerns of the world that it does pay.

Here's What Our Men Make

\$400 Weekly!

Between Sept. 6th and Sept. 20th—just two weeks—E. D. Ferrell of Atlanta, Ga., cleaned up \$802.50 on his first orders. His sales were all made in three small Georgia towns. His customers are reordering, and he is going strong. His sales winning plan is now added to our sure-fire sales manual. Tells where, how and who to sell.



EDDIE FOYER

At \$4920 in 3 Months California rings the bell again! Eddie Foyer starts out April 1st and by July 1st he has 410 \$15 sales to his credit. Multiply 410 by \$12 profit and you've got something to show you the money in this proposition.

ARTHUR FRIEDMAN \$105 Profit on 1 Sub-Agent Sale

Besides his own profits—\$1,260 clear in 23 days—Friedman, Wisconsin, gets a \$105 bonus on a single sale made by one of his sub-agents! It's all in selling the right thing, boy!

\$165 First Day!

Made by E. H. Walker—Georgia—made one sale to a Columbus, Georgia, organization, and that sale got him four more sales within a few hours. Met another salesman and the other salesman bought him out! That's the kind of proposition this is.

Leaves 14 Year Job After Making \$120 in Spare Time 1st 5 Days

Here's Sidney Rosenthal, Illinois—This old-timer wired an order for 10 of the \$15 size 8 days after getting our sample. He had cleaned up \$120 on a sideline in spare time and wrote: "This is the best and easiest proposition I have ever become associated with. Will specialize on \$15 size."

\$1500 A Month clear for M. L. Tardy, California

\$6000 First Year for A. E. Almond, S. Carolina—They make good everywhere.

\$60 Per Day for W. E. Vaughn, N. Carolina.

Write for Other Salesmen's Reports

We can send them as fast as you can read 'em. We've got plenty! See for yourself. Mail the coupon for further details.

REFERENCES:
YOU GET PORTFOLIO of LETTERS from WORLD'S LEADING FIRMS
Clinches the Sale!

A handsome, impressive portfolio that contains letters from the world's most famous concerns. Every type of business and profession represented. You have immediate, positive proof of success. They can't say—"doesn't fit my business." Nails 'em right then and there. Sells them on sight.

BE SURE TO READ THIS

Remember, this is no ordinary proposition. You deal with a company that doesn't split pennies, headed by a man who spent twenty years on the road. A company with a record you can be proud of as our representative. Get the facts—see with your own eyes what you can make in this business. Mail the coupon for full information.

SURETY Company's BOND Protects Customer

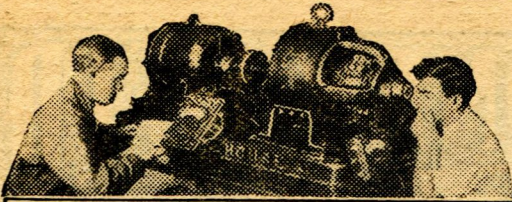
Your customer is entitled to the service of a national organization bonded by a Surety Company with assets running into the millions. He CAN'T lose. You are able to show positive safety. This means quick sales and big turn-over for you.

Seeing Is Believing...Mail Coupon for Proof

This is a business with a future to it. Enormous repeat business. Tremendous profits from sub-agents—your sub-agents have more margin than total profit on 99 out of 100 other specialties. You get profit on all mail order business from your territory. Every customer is a prospect for two or three times the initial amount on your second call. Every customer recommends others to you. If you get ready to quit, you have an established route that can be sold like any other business. An opportunity to make \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year is worth while. Just a limited number of openings. Hurry, boys—they won't be left long now!

F. E. ARMSTRONG, Pres., Dept. 4037-A, Mobile, Ala.

SEND ME FULL INFORMATION, MR. ARMSTRONG
F. E. Armstrong, Pres., Dept. 4037-A, Mobile, Ala.
Without obligation to me, send me full information on your proposition.
Name
Street or Route
Box No.
City State



LEARN ELECTRICITY IN LOS ANGELES

Get into Electricity, where Trained Men make up to \$60, \$70 and more a week! Come to National in California and learn by actual shop work—no useless theory!

RAILROAD FARE ALLOWED

For a limited time we are making a Special Free Railroad Fare Offer to California. So mail the coupon at once! Take advantage of this opportunity to visit Sunny California and prepare for a good Electrical Job at the same time!

FREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE Spare Time Jobs While at School

National has been placing men in good jobs for over 25 years! Let National help place you in a good Electrical position! And don't worry about money. We will gladly help you get a part time job to pay your living expenses while at school. Get all the facts. Mail coupon below for Big Free Electrical Book. No cost or obligation! Just mail the coupon.

National Electrical School,

Dept. 235-D, 4006 So. Figueroa St., Los Angeles, California

Please send me your Big Free Electrical Book and all details of your Free Railroad Fare Offer.

Name _____

Street No. _____

City _____

State _____

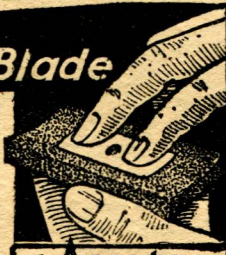
100 Shaves from EACH Blade

The Master-Hone puts a hair splitting edge on the dullest razor blade—ANY make—in 6 seconds. Many get 100 shaves per blade. W. F. Walsh, Windsor, Ontario, used same blade daily, 8 months. Only honing can give a NEW edge on a blade. This patented, accurately beveled hone of special abrasive makes each blade worth \$2.00 in service. MONEY REFUND if not delighted.

YOURS FREE We will send you a Master-Hone absolutely free WITH FIRST ORDER of 12 for \$3.00, or send \$6c for 1 or \$1 for 3, POSTPAID. Or, send no money and pay postman plus postal charges. But send today. These are Agents' prices. Regular retail price \$1.

WISCONSIN ABRASIVE CO.

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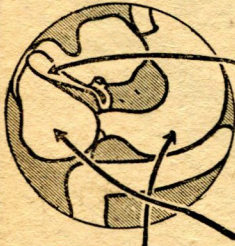
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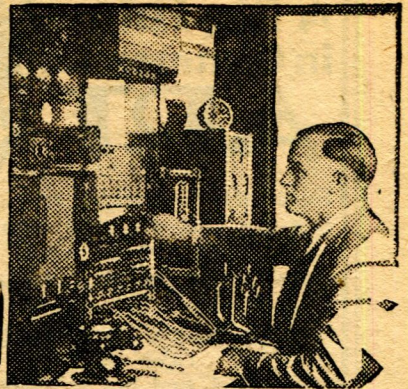
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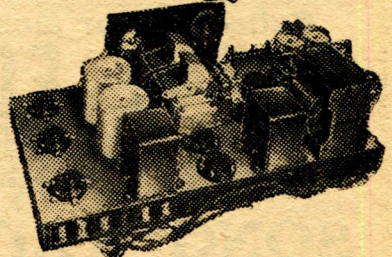
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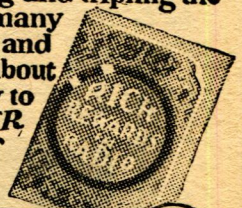
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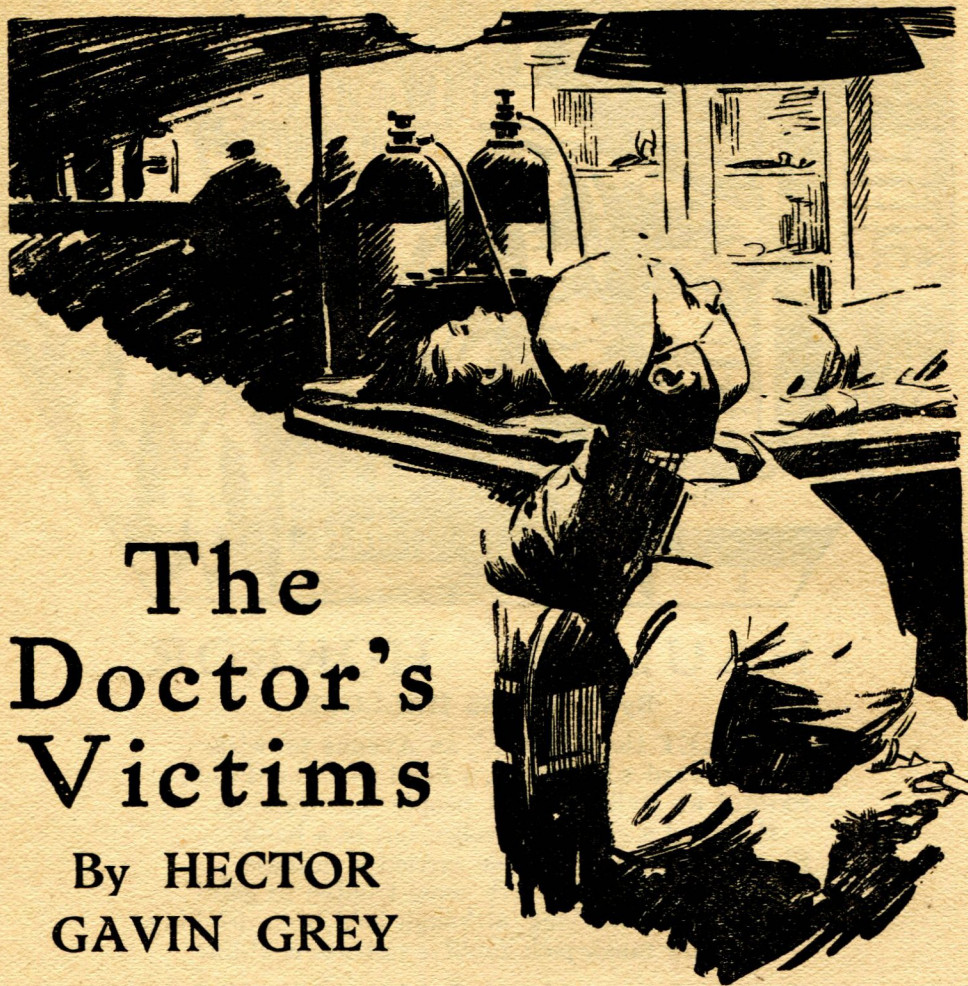
By C. WILES HALLOCK

MICKEY the Growler," an Avenue prowler,
 Coward when sober, a fiend when he drank,
 Skillful at stalking good people out walking,
 Followed a girl who strolled out of a bank.
 She was a cute case. She carried a suitcase.
 Here was a haul worth some trouble to gain!
 Mickey tried thinking, although he'd been drinking,
 Just how much jack could a suitcase contain?

Skulking, he trailed her to Brooklyn, then nailed her
 Hard by an alley upon a dark street;
 Stepped up beside her and growled as he eyed her:
 "Gimmie that keister, or croak from the heat!"
 Scorning her wonder, he lammed with the plunder;
 Lammed to his lair, at "Depeyster Street Jake's."
 Opened his loot, and in horror stood mute,
 Viewing a tangle of slithery snakes!

Terror impelling, poor Mickey fled yelling:
 "D. T.'s! I've got 'em! I've got 'em for sure!"
 Three cops pursued him and caught and subdued
 him;

Sent him to Bellevue. He's taking "the cure!"
 As to the fair one, whose luggage would scare one—
 Sober or drunk—into fits willy-nilly,
 Serpents don't harm 'er, for she's a snake charmer!
 Known in show business as "Princess Reptilly!"



The Doctor's Victims

By HECTOR
GAVIN GREY

CHAPTER I.

GETTING EXAMINED.

SWIFTLY, Mr. Jimmie "Quick-shot" Corliss descended from the armored limousine which had figured in the St. Swithin's Day massacre. After a glance right and left, he walked with a studied swagger up to the Park Avenue mansion which was both the office and winter residence of Doctor Christopher Melloy. He rang the bell impatiently, was admitted by a good-looking girl in a nurse's uniform, and ushered into a tastefully furnished waiting room.

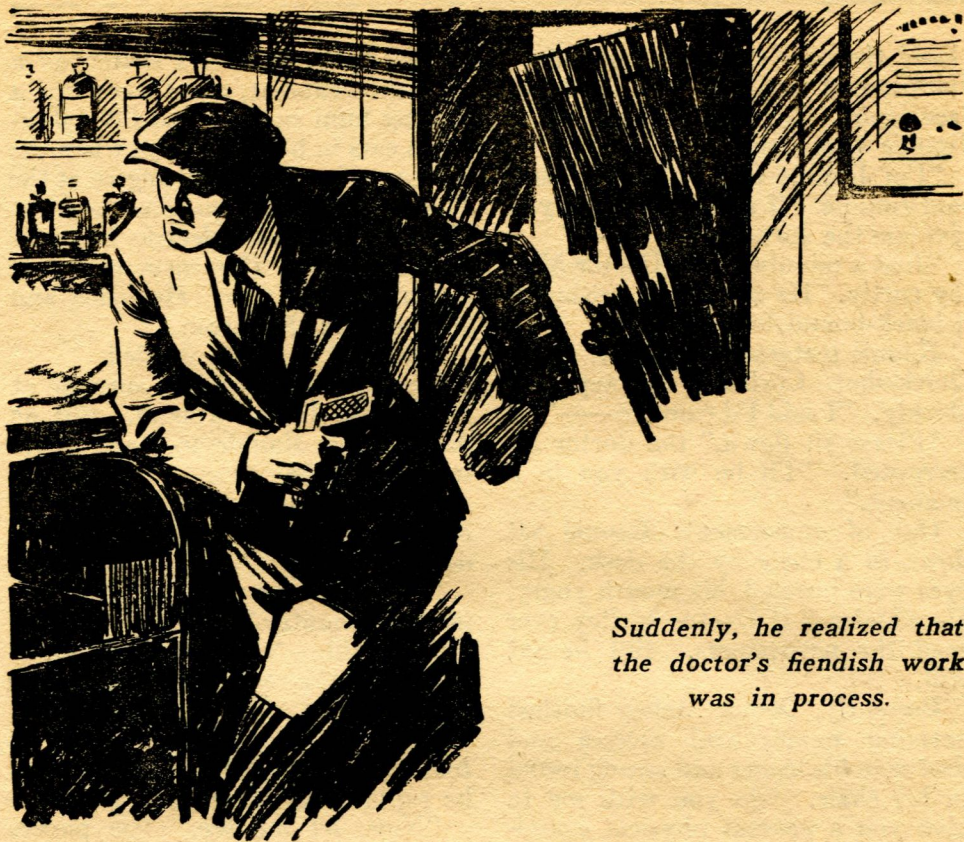
"The doctor," said the nurse, "is at lunch. He will see you in half an hour."

Corliss frowned. "Tell him who's waiting!" he ordered with a suspicion of arrogance. "Tell him Quick-shot Corliss, the guy who was arrested for the National Bank robbery."

The girl looked him up and down and then flushed. She was slim and tall, almost as tall as Corliss, had golden hair and blue eyes.

"The doctor will see you in half an hour," she repeated sharply and went out.

Corliss stared at the closed door. He took a step toward it and



*Suddenly, he realized that
the doctor's fiendish work
was in process.*

stopped. There was a baffled expression on his thin, dark face. He was not accustomed to have his requests taken lightly. Why, even the police knew better than to disregard his wishes. When he was arrested, he had sent Patrolman Murphy out for a dinner and red wine. This chit of a girl!

He resigned himself to wait. Possibly, she did not read the papers. He looked around for one, but the top of the one table in the room carried nothing more exciting than magazines. In them there was no picture of Jimmie Quick-shot Corliss or of the policemen he was supposed to have shot down in his flight (alleged) from the National Bank.

Corliss snorted—a mental snort. He had ceased making actual sounds through his nose since he had read

in an etiquette book that such were not suited to the ruling classes. The etiquette book did not tabulate the ruling classes, but Corliss imagined that, if it had done so, the élite of gangland would have been represented.

On one side of the waiting room, there was a full-length mirror which concealed a door. Opposite this, Jimmie Corliss lounged in a chair of the period of Louis XIV.

After an interminable wait, the nurse reappeared.

"The doctor is ready now," she said. "Will you come this way?"

She turned as she spoke, and so Jimmie saw nothing but her back as he followed her into a very large consulting room. Doctor Melloy was seated at a wide desk at the far end of the room, writing. The nurse

closed the door and went out before Jimmie had a chance to look at her face again. The doctor looked up as Jimmie approached.

"I'm Jimmie Quick-shot Corliss," said Jimmie. "I reckoned I'd let you give me the once-over and——"

"Just a minute," said Doctor Melloy curtly. He continued writing in a black-bound ledger.

Jimmie teetered on his feet. "I'm Quick-shot Corliss," he repeated thickly. "I said I'd come to——"

"Please sit down," the doctor interrupted. "I'll be with you in a moment."

Out of amazement, Jimmie sat down in a chair by the desk. His eyes were puzzled, his mouth angry. He wondered if Doctor Melloy ever read the newspapers. But he sat still.

Presently, Doctor Melloy finished entering names and crosses and dashes in his ledger and swung round in his chair. "So you wish me to give you a general physical examination, Mr. Corliss?" he said.

Jimmie scowled. "That's what I said."

"Very well. Please, stand up."

Jimmie stood. The doctor produced a stethoscope and prodded Jimmie's back. "Please, remove your coat," he said.

Jimmie eased himself out of his tight-fitting coat with padded shoulders, and turned so that the doctor could see the monogram embroidered on his shirt sleeve. But the doctor whirled him round again and applied the stethoscope to Jimmie's ribs.

"Cough!" he commanded.

Jimmie made a hacking noise.

"Say 'Ah!'"

Jimmie growled.

"Come here," said Doctor Melloy, and Jimmie found himself back to a white screen.

The doctor turned a switch on a varnished cabinet, and there came a roaring hum such as had filled Jimmie's ears in his early days when the cops gave him the third degree at the Fourteenth Street precinct station. They had applied electric batteries to his spine. The memory made Jimmie shrink now. He paled and sprang from the screen.

"None of that," he snarled.

The doctor showed no surprise at the gun in Jimmie's hand. But he did not ask Jimmie to stand again in front of the screen.

"Why did you come to me?" he asked, reseating himself behind the desk.

"'Cause you're the biggest doctor in the country," Jimmie replied. "They said: 'Go to a big shot if you want the real goods'; so I come to you."

Doctor Melloy studied a paper in front of him intently. He seemed to be suppressing some emotion.

"Now, let me see. The papers said you were twenty-five," he murmured.

Jimmie's mouth dropped. So the doctor *did* know who he was, after all. "Twenty-five next January," he snapped after he recovered from his surprise.

Doctor Melloy played with a gold fountain pen. "I wonder," he said, "that you bother to look after your physical condition. The men who come to me expect to live to a good old age; they prepare in advance for the ability to enjoy the riches they amass while young. Now you, I imagine, will die before the physical trouble you suffer from actually detters you from enjoying life."

"You mean," said Jimmie sharply, "that a cop'll plug me?"

"Or perhaps a jury may forget to bring in a verdict of not guilty," murmured the doctor.

Jimmie waved a ringed hand. "Ferget it! It's six years since a cop knocked me about. I got a dozen on me pay roll. And juries!" He laughed hoarsely. "Tell me, did that jury in Poughkeepsie bring me in guilty?"

Doctor Melloy looked down his nose. "Accidents will happen," he said.

"*Acht!*" Jimmie grunted. "Anyways," he went on quickly, "all that don't bother me none now. I've reformed, see? I thought it all out and I says to meself: 'Jimmie! Don't you be like them boxers what go on fighting and spending until they're punch drunk and end up in a home! Or like them crooks what let the government put 'em in jail for nonpayment of taxes!' I says to meself: 'Jimmie, you cleaned up a tidy bit of dough. Now, you go an' invest it safely and settle down and travel a bit and get your name in the high society papers instead of on the front page of the dailies.'

"Of course," Jimmie added without false modesty, "the society papers ain't so hot, but, still, I can't be headline news all me life, now can I? A man can't expect everything all the time."

When this was finished, Jimmie relapsed into a stiff silence. He had the look of a man who was slightly ashamed for talking too much. Doctor Melloy leaned a little farther back in his chair and regarded his patient thoughtfully.

"You're yellow about the eyelids," he mused aloud.

"I can see that myself," said Jimmie.

"And there are too many veins showing under your skin."

Jimmie fidgeted.

"Your hair is too dry for black hair," continued Doctor Melloy, "and I notice that your hands trem-

ble when you're not doing anything. On the other hand, your reflexes are good and your reactions prompt, which probably accounts for the escape you made from the detectives who crawled in the rear window of the National Bank."

"That didn't prove it," Jimmie put in as a formal protest. "But I admit that I'm quick on the trigger. That's why they call me 'Quick-sh——'."

"On the other hand," the doctor went on without taking notice of the interruption, "your nerves are shot to pieces. Living on the verge of a precipice is not good for the human organism, whatever faddists may say. Our ancestors, no doubt, flourished in the midst of alarms, and did not go into nervous breakdowns when hostile tribes raided their caves and camps. But the present-day human is two thousand years removed from the latest known cave man, and so he depends for health on a certain security of life.

"You have, by putting yourself outside the pale of the law and society, removed yourself outside the security which enhances life and health. Your whole organism is a quivering mass of deteriorated nerves. In five years, you will end up in a lunatic asylum."

"Aw, doc!"

"That is, under your present living conditions."

Jimmie rose. "But I'm changing, doc. I got a million cached away and——"

"Don't," said Doctor Melloy, "strain my professional secrecy by telling me where it is cached. I might feel it incumbent on me to inform the police, or the district attorney. Here are three prescriptions: take one after meals."

He wrote as he spoke. When he had finished, Jimmie was the pos-

essor of three slips of paper and a good deal of advice. He held out his hand.

"Thank you, doc."

Doctor Melloy put his hands behind his back. "You know your way out?"

A shadow passed over Jimmie's face. He had drilled "Kelly, the Nail" for a lesser insult.

"I guess you don't like me, doc," he said slowly.

"To be frank, I do not," was the unpromising reply. "My candid opinion is that you and all your kind should be turned over to a vivisection clinic; by submitting to scientific research on your bodies, you might prove of some use in the world."

A sense of humor sometimes helped Jimmie at critical moments. He released hold of the automatic in his right-hand coat pocket.

"Phew!" he ejaculated. "You reckon I'm better dead."

"Much better."

"Even now I've given up the game?"

Doctor Melloy shrugged impatient shoulders.

"What use will you make of your money now you've given up the game, as you call it?" he said shortly. "Spend it on women and drink and luxuries which don't return in pleasure the money spent on them. Your ideas of amusement are limited, you know."

"Any more than yours?" put in Jimmie sharply.

There was a brief silence. The doctor turned and paced the room. When he again faced Jimmie, there was a curious expression on his mobile mouth.

"My amusement is my work," he said slowly. "Now and then, I get a rather more poignant pleasure out

of counteracting some of the wickedness which comes my way. Sometimes there is even a little danger—yes, a little danger."

Jimmie's eyes shone. "You're tellin' me," he said.

A second time, the doctor traversed the consulting room. He picked up a scalpel from the desk as he passed and played with it.

"Did you notice," he asked suddenly, "the nurse who ushered you into this room?"

Jimmie's eyes became blank. "Nurse?" he said vaguely. "Well, I guess a nurse did show me in. I never took no notice. I was thinking of my health, I guess."

"Hm-m-m!" The doctor grunted. "She's really a remarkably pretty girl."

"I never did go in much for dames," said Jimmie quickly.

"Just as well," Doctor Melloy mused. He went to a wall safe and manipulated the combination.

Jimmie stayed in the center of the room. He could not tell why he had denied noticing the nurse; instinct, he supposed, the instinct to deny any and every statement, innocent or otherwise; the instinct of the school child and the criminal. He did not reason this out, but he was conscious of the workings of his own mind at times. Though unread, he was not unintelligent. Now the doctor was selecting a record sheet out of a bundle of documents. He placed this sheet on the desk and signaled Jimmie to approach.

Jimmie did so. His step was springy and light. All at once, the atmosphere of the consulting room had changed. There was secrecy in the air, a hint of mystery, and those deviations from social customs which are the essences of crime.

"Just look at this," said the doctor.

CHAPTER II.

AT LULU'S.

WHEN Jimmie stepped out into Park Avenue, his face was very grim. The document had proved disappointing, yet what the doctor had managed to piece together of his nurse's history indicated a deeper and more ugly meaning to what on the surface seemed a very harmless recommendation of the nurse's services. Jimmie had not seen the nurse again, managing to beat her to the front door on his way out. He did not want to see the nurse again—not yet. He went to see a lady friend of his who lived in an apartment on Eighty-fourth Street.

This apartment was the rendezvous of many of Jimmie's type. But it was too early for company when Jimmie rang the bell, and, as the buzzer clicked, he let himself into a heavily scented hall. A girl, rather heavily built, with heavily made-up eyelashes and a cupid's bow of a mouth came out to meet him. She was dressed in a Japanese kimono.

"I can't stay, Lulu," Jimmie protested as she drew him into the living room. "What I come for was to ask you something."

Lulu lighted a cigarette and stuck it in the corner of her vivid mouth. "Spill it, big boy," she said laconically.

"How did you come to be in this game?" asked Jimmie boldly.

The black eyes flashed anger. "Get outta here if you're in a funny mood to-day."

"I'm not funny," Jimmie protested. "Listen here, Lulu. I'm on the track of something. It's this way. I went to see a high-brow doc to-day, and, after we gab a bit, he spills me something. Seems he's got

a nurse, see, and this nurse worked for some doctor who ran a convalescent home: Well, she didn't like it at the home 'cause she used to get funny dreams at night, and calculated she might be doped by the doctor without her knowing, so she left. And the doc gave her a reference, you know, testimonial, saying she was a good girl and a hard worker and all that."

"You're kind of crazy to-day," Lulu remarked wonderingly.

"Aw! Hear me out, can't you?" said Jimmie. "Here's where the funny stuff begins. The girl took her testimonial around with her, and she got a job with a friend of this doctor who runs the home. Well, she got a job quick even though the doc she went to had to throw another girl out of a job. But while she was on a private job this doctor sent her to, the funny dreams started again. She had a nervous breakdown and went to a hospital where they told her she was doped."

Lulu sneered. "What's this fairy tale gotta do with me?"

"I'm comin' to that," said Jimmie. He narrowed his light-gray eyes. "Now, looka here, Lulu; this nurse I'm talking about had to hunt fer another job. And you know times got bad a few years ago. But it didn't matter how many nurses were looking fer some of the jobs she applied for, the testimonial the doctor of the convalescent home give her, got her employment. Just opened the doors. And she'd get a good wage—more'n the usual."

"It must have been a good testimonial," Lulu remarked sagely.

"Nothin' wonderful," said Jimmie. "I read it. It wasn't good enough to get her in with doctors like the one I went to to-day, but she'd get an awful lot of them jobs where the nurse has to go out visiting rich

men's homes and nursing their children; you know, the kind where the man hovers round and asks whether nurse is getting on O. K. And she'd have to sleep in a lot of these houses to look after the children, even though she said the kids didn't seem sick a bit."

"Well, you know what them rich kids are like," drawled Lulu. She exhaled twin clouds of smoke through her nostrils. "There's nothing the matter with 'em but they gotta have a nurse."

"They ain't gotta have a good looker what sleeps in at night and gets bad dreams," snapped Jimmie.

"What's that gotta do with you?"

Jimmie looked uneasy. He did not feel capable of revealing his sentimental agreement with Doctor Melloy. At least, to Jimmie it sounded sentimental.

"Nothin'," he said, "but I wondered whether you ever came across this doctor I was telling you runs a nursing home. You said you was a nurse one time."

Lulu started up. "What's the bloke's name?"

"Doctor Cavendish," said Jimmie.

"Tall, dark fellow?"

"I never seen him."

"Where's he live?"

"His nursing home's near Stamford, Connecticut."

Lulu bent her head forward. "What kind of a racket you runnin' into, Jimmie?"

"I'm not running into anything," said Jimmie stoutly.

"Yes, you are," accused Lulu. "You're running into a nasty kind of racket. I was a nurse once; at least, I was a probationer, and there was things said about Cavendish that'd make the devil turn green with envy."

"I'm no angel myself," Jimmie boasted.

Lulu sniffed. "You're a blessed innocent," she jeered. "All you know is shooting up cops and takin' the third degree without squealing, and the color of gold certificates. These doctors what you're talking about, if they *are* doctors, which I don't believe, don't need to hold up no bank. They don't need to shoot no cop. You touch 'em, and the cops'll come runnin'. But——" She closed her mouth firmly.

"Spill it!" snapped Jimmie.

"I got nothing to say," Lulu returned. "If I knew anything, I'd tell you, Jimmie, but I don't. There's girls what have worked in the nursing home you talk about and what have committed suicide afterward. There's others what seem to get jobs fer a while until they get blousy, and then you don't hear of 'em no more. But there's not one who could say a word against Cavendish or any of his patients. Why? 'Cause they don't know anything, that's why?"

"Then what's it all about?" Jimmie pleaded.

"How do I know?" was the unresponsive gibe.

"But you reckon Cavendish is crooked."

"Ain't we all?"

"I mean, crookeder than you and me."

"Boy! If you mention me in the same breath with Cavendish, I'll scratch your eyes out."

Jimmie threw his cigarette butt in the electric fireplace. "That's all I wanted to know," he said with a sudden return to stiltedness. "I'll be seeing ye."

"Goin' now?"

"Sure. Give the boys my love. And, say, forget what I asked you, will you?"

"I don't know what you asked me if anything," said Lulu carelessly

"But open up a bit—what made this doctor friend of yours hire this nurse he's worrying about?"

"She come to him as a patient," Jimmie told her. "Seems he works free one afternoon each week at a psychopathic clinic, and he sees this girl there, and, after hearing her story, takes her to work for him. Then I turn up, and he gets the idea of telling me the story."

"You ain't mixin' yourself up with Cavendish, are you?" snapped Lulu.

"Haven't I told you I'm going to Europe?" Jimmie laughed. "So long!"

He dismissed his armored limousine when he returned to the street. An elevated train took him to Grand Central. He swung aboard a Stamford train at four thirty in the afternoon. A railroad detective met him in the smoking car.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Corliss," he said.

Jimmie stared at him inimicably. "When I was a kid, one of you railroad guys beat up and killed my brother fer sneaking a ride on a freight," he said in a low, repressed tone. "If I wasn't a law-abidin' citizen, I'd plug you right now on general principles."

The detective looked ugly. Jimmie smiled and passed on. Though conscious of being watched the balance of his journey, he found the society pages of the evening papers none the less thrilling. Mrs. van Thor and her daughter were spending the week-end on their estate near Stamford, were they? Perhaps, it would be possible for Jimmie to combine knight errantry with his social progress.

He grinned to himself and laid down the papers to think. Catching sight of the detective's scowling face reflected in a glass-framed advertisement at the end of the car, he

grinned still more. No detective could lay a hand on him again. He had retired.

At the station before Stamford, he alighted and hired a taxi. To Doctor Cavendish's nursing home, it was twenty miles. He bought a bag and some clothes before leaving the town, and then lay back in the cab seat, reciting to himself the symptoms of the illness which Doctor Melloy had described and from which, for the purposes of this visit, he was supposed to suffer.

CHAPTER III.

NURSE REYNOLDS.

THE Home For Convalescents of Doctor Richard Cavendish proved to be a long colonial house with many sun rooms attached and a large solarium built behind it. The air of the place was happy; the green lawns were spacious. The cab wound up a graveled drive and stopped before a doorway ornamented by old-fashioned lamps. The steps were white and holly-stoned. Late flowers bloomed in the beds beside the door, their blossoms and golden leaves tinged with fire by the rays of the setting sun. There was a clean, autumnal smell in the air, the fragrance of burning leaves and twigs. Jimmie opened his lungs; he never felt better in his life.

"This is a great place," he said to the driver as he paid the fare.

"Costs dough," said the driver practically.

The sound of a door opening made Jimmie look round. A trim nurse was standing on the steps. She was pretty but rather stern. She had no color in her cheeks.

"I've come to be treated," blurted Jimmie, putting his bags on the steps.

"Have you an appointment?" asked the nurse.

"Appointment? Who with?"

"Doctor Cavendish. You must have an appointment. When did you reserve your bed?"

"I didn't know a guy had to reserve any bed like at a hotel," Jimmie explained. "My doctor said I should go to Doctor Cavendish for a rest cure and here I am."

"Who's your doctor?" the nurse demanded. She had not moved aside to let Jimmie in.

"Melloy," said Jimmie.

The nurse's expression cleared like magic. "Oh! Perhaps, you'll wait a few minutes for Doctor Cavendish's arrival. We expect him soon."

"Don't he live here?" Jimmie demanded.

The nurse answered him by pointing through the mullioned window of the room they entered. Across the lawn, shaded by trees, was a low-roofed house whose windows, on either side of a pillared doorway, looked like watching eyes.

"No," she said, "he lives over there. In the grounds, of course."

She busied herself with a table lamp, which she left lighted against the coming darkness, and left the room. Jimmie kept his gaze on the far-off house. No one entered or came out of it. And yet, when he heard a cough behind him, he sensed that the doctor had arrived.

He wheeled and found himself facing across the table a stoutish man with graying hair, silvery at the temples, a wide candid mouth, soft brown eyes, and a thin neck inclosed in a high, starched collar.

"Doctor Cavendish?"

The newcomer nodded and extended his hand. "Miss Pierce tells

me that Doctor Melloy recommended you."

"Recommended you," Jimmie corrected. "He says my nerves is shot up and I should live here a while."

Doctor Cavendish smiled and waved to a chair. "Let us sit down."

Jimmie sat, studying the doctor intently. He was accustomed to criminals of all degree; those who languished behind bars, and those who held responsible positions in the law courts and on the police force and sometimes on the bench. He knew criminals when he saw them—with the unerring instinct which is part and parcel of all predatory animals. There was something in a man which said, "Criminal," so he searched for this something in the doctor's face.

"Any one Doctor Melloy speaks of is, of course, entitled to our very best consideration," said Doctor Cavendish smoothly. "Now your trouble, my dear man, is what?"

The words: "Is what?" came out with sudden force, and Jimmie leaned back content. He had seen the sign, the brand of the beast. Just for a second, he had seen it.

But Jimmie lacked finesse.

"I gotta pain here," he said, holding the back of his head, "and a kinda numbness in my legs. And I got fifty grand in my pocket. Now what can you do for my pains for fifty grand?"

The doctor stroked his chin. "You say that Melloy sent you to me?"

"Sure thing."

"Do you mind if I telephone him. You see, he may be able to give me some data about your case."

Jimmie grinned. "Go ahead!"

He heard the doctor on the phone in the next room. But he was not worried. Melloy had arranged a plan that would let Jimmie in the home and yet not implicate himself.

Cavendish returned after a quarter of an hour.

"I—I could not get Doctor Melloy on the phone," he said carelessly. "But there was a nurse there, a girl who learned most of her profession in this home, and she described your appearance. You visited Doctor Melloy this afternoon, she says."

"Uh-uh!"

"Then," said the doctor, "I think we can take you in. First of all, we will give you an examination."

It took place on the spot. Jimmie was amazed to find how thorough it was. Apparently, Doctor Cavendish intended to know exactly what was the matter with his patients, even though a minor illness was sufficient to enter them into the home. But Jimmie's natural nerve trouble, combined with the symptoms he had memorized, made a good showing, and the doctor warmed up as the examination progressed.

"A very interesting case," he assured Jimmie. "But a few months in this salubrious atmosphere will put you all right. My—ah—my bookkeeper will look after the financial affairs. You will find her in the office."

Jimmie parted with ten thousand dollars. The bookkeeper, a wizened old woman of fifty or more, scowled as she took the money.

"That's the first payment," she said in a high, cracked voice. "The doctor doesn't want any one who can't afford to stay long enough to be treated right and made entirely well."

"I'll pay the balance next week," Jimmie assured her.

He scanned the room thoroughly while the woman made out a receipt. He wanted to get the plan of the house well in his mind. The office he was in led off the room where he had waited for Cavendish;

that room led off the hall. The old woman put the money into a green safe behind the desk—a safe Jimmie could have opened in an hour. There was another safe in the room, with a great aluminum-colored door five or more feet high and at least two feet wide. A door through which a man could go! Doctor Cavendish entered the room while Jimmie was looking at this door.

"My store of drugs," the doctor volunteered easily. "We have some unfortunate dope fiends who excel in ingenious stealing of the poisons they crave. Therefore the safe. Now, you will please follow me."

They went into the hall. A wide, shallow staircase led to a corridor lined with plain, white-painted doors and illumined by lamps with adjustable, resistance sockets. The nursing home was dim and quiet. The doctor struck a little brass bell dangling from a hook below a fire extinguisher. A white figure appeared at the top of the stairs.

"Nurse Reynolds will show you your room," said the doctor. He called a few unintelligible words up the stairs.

Apparently, Jimmie had to carry his own bags. Halfway to the top corridor, he turned and looked down into the hall. The doctor had gone. He proceeded on his way. The nurse went in front of him to the end of the corridor. Here, she opened a door.

It was a cheerful, homy-looking room. There was a bed with a white counterpane, white enameled tables with arms to stretch over the bed or across one's knees while sitting in a chair. The paneling round the walls was brown, and there was an open fireplace in which crackled a pine log.

"This," swore Jimmie, "is the nuts."

He dumped his bags on the floor by the bed and looked round at his nurse. Then his breath came in a quick gasp. The girl was extraordinarily pretty, but there was something about her which made him look twice. Her golden curls, peeping from under a uniform cap, and eyes and rounded chin reminded Jimmie quite a bit of Doctor Melloy's nurse.

His scrutiny, hard and bold, embarrassed the girl. She went swiftly to the windows and drew the blinds.

"Supper is served at eleven in the evening," she said. "Are you hungry?"

"I haven't eaten since noon," said Jimmie. "Say, what's your name?"

"Nurse Reynolds," was the coldly given answer.

"Any relation to—to the nurse who works for Doctor Melloy?"

The girl turned quickly. "Why?"

Jimmie went close to her. "You look alike, that's all."

There was a moment's indecision. "She's my half sister," said the girl at last.

"She is, is she?" said Jimmie quietly. "And how do you come to be here?"

The girl recovered her self-possession. "You're asking foolish questions," she said softly. "Nurses have to work."

"Yes, they do," Jimmie murmured. "Hey, come here a minute."

The girl was hovering on the threshold. "You can undress yourself and get into bed. Doctor's orders that every patient must spend twelve hours in bed, four in the open and——"

Jimmie slid across the room. "Is it doctor's orders that you should get your wrists bruised like that?"

"Let me go!"

"Is it?"

He pulled the girl into the room

and shut the door. "Now tell me—how you get marked up so?"

Cold blazing eyes met his.

"I hurt myself by banging my wrists on the rail of my bed while I was asleep, if you want to know," Nurse Reynolds whispered. "Now, let me go; the doctor doesn't like us talking to patients in a closed room."

Jimmie released her elbows. "Don't get me wrong," he apologized. "I didn't mean any harm. So you hurt yourself in your sleep, eh?"

The girl stared at him. "I don't like the way you said that," she whispered.

"I don't like to see a woman bruised up," Jimmie returned. "However, there was nothing bad meant. I just liked the looks of your sister and was kind of interested to see you. I suppose you got a good job here?"

"And one I don't want to lose," said the girl sharply. "Please never lay your hands on me again."

"I won't," said Jimmie.

Nurse Reynolds went to the door and there hesitated.

"I don't want you to be offended," she ventured. "You know a lot of patients think they can get fresh with nurses, and we have to teach them different."

Jimmie was taking the things from his pockets and placing them on the sideboard.

"I won't get fresh with you," he assured the girl. "But I wish you'd tell me two things."

A smile quivered the girl's lips. "What are they?"

"Well, for one thing," Jimmie asked quietly, "what's your other name?"

The smile broke, and she replied: "Ardine."

"Ardine Reynolds, eh?"

"Ah-ah!"

"Your sister's is what?"

"Didn't she tell you?"

"No," said Jimmie truthfully.

"Then I won't."

"All right," Jimmie allowed after a pause. "Here's the second question. Did you really get bruised up in your sleep?"

The girl nodded.

"Had a bad dream?"

Ardine gasped.

"That's enough for to-night," she said quickly. "You've had your two questions."

Then she was gone.

Jimmie glared at his reflection in the mirror. He needed a shave. His eyes were dark; they changed color at odd moments.

"I don't think," he said to his image, "that this business is goin' to be worked out by respectable ways. You can't convict a guy because a girl dreams bad dreams and hits the bedpost in her sleep.

"You can't even convict me fer robbin' banks," he added cynically.

Then he undressed and got into bed.

CHAPTER IV.

LOOKING AROUND.

THERE were over two hours to pass before supper. Jimmie knew little about the routine of nursing homes, but he had once spent a month in a hospital while a collar bone, shattered by a bullet, healed, and he adjudged that Ardine was the night nurse, or one of the night shift. He did not expect to solve the mystery of Doctor Cavendish and the girls who dreamed, within less than a fortnight.

Doctor Melloy had suggested a stay of two months in the home, but, to Jimmie, two months was too long

for planning even a major bank robbery. Hadn't he arranged and executed the Farmers & Drovers Trust Co. smash in ten days, dating from the hour that "Big Bill" Williams tipped him off to the agricultural loans that lay in the bank vaults around sowing time?

But even with two weeks to work in, there was no need to waste time. For example: Who lay in the next room? What vista did the window overlook? He pulled the chain on the adjustable lamp socket until the bulb above his head merely glowed red, and then slipped to the window. At first, he could see nothing. Wild, ragged clouds were chasing over a greenish moon. A storm was blowing up from the southwest. There was a dark patch straight ahead, and, in this patch, two yellow lights began to glow; the windows of the doctor's private house, Jimmie surmised.

He wondered how the doctor had crossed the intervening lawn without showing himself. The nurse seemed to be speaking truthfully when she said the doctor was out when Jimmie called. She had had the air of a mouse when the cat's away. Jimmie pulled the blind and went to the door. He opened it an inch. The corridor outside was quiet and dim. He opened the door a foot. There was no sound in the nursing home.

Jimmie reflected. The stairs were fifty feet away at least, at the far end of the corridor. He would have time to peep into the adjoining rooms. He tightened his pajama strings and tiptoed over the polished floor. The next door, fitted with a china handle, opened without creaking.

It was dark inside; the electric light was turned down to a glimmer like the one in Jimmie's room. But,

as he stood motionless in the doorway, things took shape under the dim glow: a bed with a hump in the middle, a chest of drawers, a medicine vial which glittered redly; the fire in the fireplace was out.

He closed the door and tiptoed to the opposite room. So long as he knew what was on either side of him, he felt more oriented. This door, too, opened without noise. But the room was brilliant.

A fat man was sitting up in bed. The furniture of the room was the same as Jimmie's. The man had on a pair of scarlet pajamas of Russian design. His white jowls quivered with anger.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

His voice was softly venomous. Jimmie knew voices like that.

"I," said Jimmie, "am a patient, like yourself."

The fat man leered. "Dope fiend, eh?"

"No; nerves," replied Jimmie.

The man giggled. "Don't tell me," he said.

Jimmie thought he might take the lead. "What are you in for?" he inquired.

The face of the man grew cold. Cunning crept into the piglike eyes. His hand went to a bell push hanging down the wall beside the bed.

"Don't do that," said Jimmie. "I'm supposed to be resting."

"You're a jailbird," said the fat man. "That's what you are. What am I in for?" he mocked. He frowned. "Cavendish takes all kinds nowadays."

"I am," lied Jimmie, "a sports reporter. Had a breakdown after losing ten grand on my own advice."

"What's your name?" snapped the fat man.

"Nype Boles," said Jimmie. He edged farther into the room.

"Never heard of you," said the other doubtfully. But his hand left the bell push.

"What does it matter?" said Jimmie genially. "We're all in the same boat now. I'll be glad to leave this dump."

The fat man looked at him suspiciously. Jimmie saw that his name, by the gold letters on a handsome cowhide suitcase by the bed, was J. Holmer. J. Holmer's voice was edged with curiosity as he replied to Jimmie's observation.

"How long have you been here?" he asked.

"Not long," Jimmie evaded.

"I thought not," said Holmer. "When you've been here a time and Cavendish knows you're all right, you'll like it better."

Jimmie thought fast.

"Oh, I don't know," he said lightly. "I've had most experiences in my time."

He seated himself on the edge of the bed and took a cigarette case from his pajama pocket. "Smoke?"

Holmer made a grimace of distaste. "Not those!" He took an oval, fat Turkish cigarette from a gold box on the table by his pillow. The air was filled with incense and a peculiar pungent aroma. Opium, Jimmie speculated.

"How do you like your nurse?" Holmer asked with a sidewise glance.

Jimmie controlled his mouth. "Fair," he said.

Holmer chuckled. There was something horribly odious about the chuckle, something evil and malevolent. Jimmie, who had shot down men without a tremor, now shivered.

"I ain't particular about dames," said Jimmie.

The fat man sobered. "You mean about live ones."

Jimmie felt his throat contract. He looked up from under his eyelids at Holmer's white, thick neck, and felt a terrible desire to grip that neck and squeeze it until the life went out of it. To resist this temptation, he looked down at the foot of the bed. It was not his business merely to find out what went on in the nursing home or in cellars under the building, but to discover why it was that a testimonial given to a nurse should obtain her employment by certain society doctors. Moreover, why during such employment, should she have nightmares at night?

"I don't reckon——" he began when Holmer's feet moved quickly under the covers. Jimmie looked round. Doctor Cavendish was standing in the doorway, swinging a pair of spectacles from a black silk ribbon.

"I came to see how my new guest was getting along," he said gently. "I see you have made one acquaintance already."

Jimmie felt at a loss. The doctor's words were casual, but his manner disturbing. It was the way in which he swung the black ribbon.

"I just dropped in for a chat," Jimmie said, getting off the bed. "I like company, I do."

"A friendly spirit," said the doctor, "that I approve of." He looked sharply at Holmer. "But patients must obey orders," he added, "and one order is to stay in bed and obtain that refreshing repose that recreates the physical mechanism of our delicately constituted apparatus."

Jimmie rubbed his hands against his sides. Long words always comforted him.

"Guess I'll be going," he said to Holmer.

The fat man's face was expressionless.

"I'll see you safely in bed," said the doctor humorously.

He followed Jimmie to his room.

"You prefer a dim light," Doctor Cavendish observed, looking at the nearly extinguished globe.

"Light hurts my eyes," said Jimmie.

The doctor made no reply. There came a patter in the corridor. Ardine entered, carrying a tray.

Doctor Cavendish stood aside for her to pass. Jimmie put the light to its full brightness. He was surprised to find a jovial expression, almost paternal, on Cavendish's face.

"I will," said Cavendish, "leave you to the capable care of Miss Reynolds."

When he had gone, Ardine laid the tray on Jimmie's lap. Jimmie sniffed the soup. Its odor was appetizing.

"This will do you until six tomorrow morning," said Ardine.

"Tell me," said Jimmie with a casual gesture, "do many girls die in this dump?"

Ardine was behind him so that he had no chance to observe her reaction. But her voice was strained as she replied: "Why do you ask?"

"I wondered," said Jimmie. "They say that nurses often die from the diseases their patients have."

"Doctor Cavendish accepts no infectious cases," said the girl.

"Then," snapped Jimmie, "what do the girls die from?"

A short pause! When Ardine came round so that Jimmie could see her, there was a hard twist to the corners of her mouth.

"Some nurses *have* died here," she said in a low tone. "But I don't know from what. Doctor Cavendish has an operating theater in the left wing and a separate staff of surgical nurses. Sometimes septic poisoning

will attack a nurse who binds up wounds."

"Are you a surgical nurse?" Jimmie asked when he had digested this information.

"All qualified nurses have done work in operating rooms," was the short reply.

"You could be sent to the left wing, then?"

"If Doctor Cavendish wanted me, yes."

"I see," said Jimmie. He reached out suddenly and caught the girl's hands.

"Will you," he said gravely, "tell me when Cavendish orders you to the left wing? I mean, tell me before you go?"

Ardine drew away. Her eyes were angry, her voice cold.

"I thought," she said, "that you promised not to catch hold of me again."

Jimmie dropped her hands. "I'm sorry. I just wanted to get your attention."

The girl looked troubled. The resolute demeanor which went so well with her white uniform and capable movements faded away. Her lips whitened.

"I don't mean to be nasty," she whispered. "But—oh, I don't know. You've frightened me."

"Maybe," said Jimmie, "you've got something to be frightened of. You don't like this place."

"I've never thought about liking it or not," came the low reply. "I've got to live, and the pay here is better than any other private nursing home in the country. And then it's funny, but it's very hard to get another job if you leave this home."

"I thought it was easy," said Jimmie, thinking of her half sister's testimonial.

"Only easy with certain kinds of doctors," Ardine replied. She was

whispering. "Good hospitals seem to avoid taking on girls who've worked here."

In the mirror of the dressing table, Jimmie saw the door of the room open the slightest bit. He yawned loudly.

"Is that so?" he said in a bored tone. "Well, some like the city and some the country, but I sure miss the rattle of New York."

And he gulped his soup.

Ardine must have taken his hint, for she made no reply, but busied herself with clean towels. When the soup was finished, she removed the plate. Jimmie feigned sleep. Ardine turned down the light to a glimmer and left the room.

Jimmie counted one hundred slowly. Then he eased himself out of bed, and, finding one of his shoes in the darkness under the bed, ripped the sole. He felt on the inner side of the leather, prying a flat, metal thing from a long cavity therein. Pressing a button on one end of the metal produced a faint, metallic click. Two strips had sprung out on hinges on either side of the head. He now held a short poinard, six inches long, sharp as a razor, complete with a guard for the hand. He had abandoned his guns when he "turned honest," but he had also provided for emergencies.

Jimmie believed that he was in an emergency in which the use of the deadliest weapon fashioned by man was none too drastic.

Then he lay in bed again until padded footsteps in the passage assured him that his unseen guardian had left his post. He lay still for a time longer, the cold poinard against the smooth part of his forearm, hidden by his sleeve. He would wait until midnight, he calculated.

Unwittingly, possibly aided by the soup, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

BEFORE BREAKFAST.

GRAY dawn was breaking outside when he woke. He moved uneasily, wondering where he was. The events of the previous night came back to him one by one. He shifted up on his pillow and felt a warm, sticky substance on his wrist.

He knew what had happened. The hard feel of the poinard told him. It had cut him in the night, and yet so sharp was its blade that it slit the skin without pain to wake him. Besides, he had probably been drugged. In homes of this sort, a hypnotic to a new patient was usually the routine, he imagined.

He took the knife from his sleeve, and getting out of bed, washed it in the basin. The silvery blade glittered when he laid it on the dressing table. The poinard was a present from an Italian whom Jimmie had helped one period in prison. It was so sharp that it needed but a slow pressure against a throat to drive it clean to the spine where it met the skull.

"You can shave with it," the Italian had said, "but, if you do, the edge will be spoiled forever."

Jimmie preferred a gun, but, as he dressed, he eyed the knife affectionately. After all, it was quieter than a gun. He had some trouble in affixing the sole to his shoe again. The poinard, he attached to his shirt sleeve by four threads unraveled from his socks. It was light, invisible, handy; one tug would bring it into action.

His watch told him that it was four o'clock. He could not see the sun for the room faced the west, but he saw the coming dawn reflected in the windows of Cavendish's house

across the lawn. He had two hours now in which to make an investigation of the nursing home. Holmer's sly giggles intimated that the doctor's activities were such as left clews if the eye could recognize them. Jimmie did not like to put his suspicions into words. There are some things beyond the pale even of bank robbers.

He went boldly into the corridor. If a night nurse were about, a stealthy attitude would only rouse suspicions. He walked down the stairs and turned right. The door of the office was open. He paused on the threshold, studying the aluminum door of the larger safe. The doctor said he kept drugs in there. Did he?

Jimmie grinned to himself. He tried the combination. He ran a finger round the edge of the door, then looked back at the small, green safe. That was where the book-keeper had placed the money he had paid.

A general plan of action formed in his mind. There was nothing to be done at the moment in the office. On tiptoe, he went out and down the hall to a swing door. Pushing it open, he looked into a white orderly kitchen. A black cat was dozing by the side of a storage gas heater. It raised its head and yawned. Jimmie let the swing door close.

To his right, under the stairs, was a low, arched door. He tried it; the lock snapped loose. It made a startling sound in the quietness. Jimmie frowned. He had no way of telling whether the door had been purposely left unlocked.

After a second's indecision, he descended the stone steps under the stairs, leaving the door open an inch behind him. He was in pitch darkness, but he felt his way by his hands on the walls. When he came

to the foot of the steps, he stood for a while to get accustomed to the blackness.

A chill draft indicated a passage or an opening close to him. He wet his middle finger and held it above his head. The skin went cold on the left-hand side. That meant that the draft was coming from that direction. Holding his arms before him, he stepped cautiously to the left, and came upon an iron grille. He felt down until he touched a lock. There was a key in it which he turned.

Now he felt certain that some one was in the cellar. The cellar would not be so well-guarded with heavy doors and grilles unless it concealed secrets of a sort; these doors would not be left open or with their keys in the locks unless some one had passed through them and intended to pass back within a short time. This deduction tightened Jimmie's nerves. He saw no way to explain his ramblings down here should Cavendish discover him.

There were only two ways to go—back and forward. He chose the latter. He opened the grille, left it open, and went carefully along an arched tunnel. The tunnel sloped; its walls were damp. He felt a wooden door frame. A dim light was coming from somewhere, but he did not see its source.

He took a long stride this time, being worked to a pitch where he could no longer stand suspense. He was in a small room, and, on his right-hand side, in the same wall in which the tunnel entrance was cut, was a narrow doorway. The width of this doorway was naturally lessened by the angle at which Jimmie viewed it, yet he saw enough through it to make Holmer's unholy insinuations of practical horror. There was a table, and on it a box. He could not judge the length of the

box, but, from another, which leaned against the far wall of the inner room, he guessed that it was a coffin.

A shadow fell on the latter box. Jimmie edged away into the corner of the chamber in which he was. The shadow remained on the coffin a while, moving but slightly. A man was working at the table, out of sight, doing something to the box on it. The end of a lid came into view. The man was fastening a cover over the coffin.

There was an unhealthy odor about the cellar—the sickening odor which is associated with dead things; also a pungent aromatic tang of spices. It was just like an undertaking parlor.

Jimmie knew that Cavendish killed his nurses and buried them in marked cemeteries. The shadow in the other room grew larger: the man had retired nearer the shielded light. Jimmie slid back into the tunnel. He felt justified henceforth in all that he might do in this nursing home. As yet, he had not discovered the secret of the testimonial which obtained highly paid positions for nurses who injured themselves in nightmares.

His journey back to his bedroom was taken in breathless silence. He left the iron grille closed, as he found it, and the door at the top of the cellar stairs just on the latch. The hall was empty, but a shuffling came from the kitchen—the beginnings of a working day. He got a whiff of freshly roasted coffee. The six-o'clock meal was being prepared for the patients.

Ardine brought Jimmie's tray at exactly six o'clock. She looked pale and tired but not upset. Jimmie rubbed his eyes and stretched.

"Had a good night's rest?" the girl inquired.

"Sure," said Jimmie. "Say, where

do you stay all night—when you're on duty, I mean?"

"There's a nurse's sitting room at the other end of the corridor—past the stairway," Ardine replied.

Jimmie lost interest. The girl pulled up the curtains. Jimmie saw a man open the door of the house across the lawn.

"That's Doctor Cavendish," Ardine told him.

The man went back into the house. While Jimmie drank his coffee, he kept watch on the lawn.

He was handing the tray back to Ardine when he heard a voice downstairs.

"Isn't that the doctor?" he asked Ardine.

She swept the crumbs off the bed. "Yes!"

"Which way does he come into the house?" Jimmie asked.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—does he come in the front door?"

Ardine knit her brows. "I don't know; he's usually here earlier than this. I'm always preparing breakfast when he arrives."

"Well, where is the first place you see him?" Jimmie persisted. "When he comes into the house, where does he go first?"

Ardine paused by the door. "He's usually in his office," she reflected.

Jimmie pulled the covers over him. He did not want Ardine to note the effect of her statement. The girl went out.

So Doctor Cavendish could be seen one minute by his front door and within five minutes afterward in the office of the nursing home! And he did *not* cross the lawn between the two buildings!

Jimmie wondered whether he could open the safe with the aluminum door, without the professional tools for that purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

JIMMIE LEAVES.

LATER in the morning, he took occasion to peep into Mr. Holmer's room. The bed was empty. The bag was gone. Mr. Holmer had been moved apparently. Jimmie imagined it was because Mr. Holmer talked too freely.

Doctor Cavendish gave Jimmie another examination at noon. He seemed doubtful of Jimmie's illness. He asked Jimmie a great number of questions.

"Ask Doctor Melloy about me," Jimmie said. "I ain't no doctor. Melloy says I gotta have a rest cure and he says this is the dump to go to."

"I don't seem to be able to get Doctor Melloy on the telephone," Cavendish told him. He was nervous and fidgety to-day.

Jimmie remembered something.

"Doctor Melloy gave me three prescriptions," he said. "I fergot to get 'em made up at a druggist before I come here. Maybe you can fix 'em up."

"Where are they?" asked Cavendish.

Jimmie produced them. The doctor studied them through gold-rimmed eyeglasses.

"These are not the right medicines for the illness you suffer from," he said sharply. "You say you have a pain in the back of your head?"

"Yes," said Jimmie. He realized too late that the symptoms Doctor Melloy had taught him to imitate and those he actually suffered from were not compatible.

Doctor Cavendish laid the prescriptions on the dressing table.

"I'll have to speak to Doctor Melloy personally before I can do any-

thing more for you," he said curtly. "By the way, Mr. Corliss, what is your profession?"

"The newspapers say I'm a bank smasher." Jimmie grinned with diabolical intent.

The doctor dropped his eyeglasses to the full length of their silk ribbon.

"I thought I recognized your photographs," he said dryly. He thought for a moment. "Why," he asked suddenly, "do you think Doctor Melloy sent you to me?"

"'Cause he didn't want to treat me himself, I guess," Jimmie said.

The explanation was credible if not creditable to Cavendish. The doctor made no reply, however, but hurried from the room.

"Now," thought Jimmie, "what's going to happen?"

Ardine reëntered. She carried a glass of medicine.

"Have I got to drink this?" Jimmie asked with a wry face.

"All of it," she said firmly. Then, as Jimmie took the glass, her expression changed.

"You asked me to tell you when I was ordered to the operating theater," she whispered. "Doctor Cavendish told me just now that I must report to-night. A patient is coming in who needs an operation."

"Whew!" Jimmie sat up. He looked hard at Ardine, noted the involuntary tremor about her mouth, the red rims of her eyes. He stared over her shoulder until she turned, then he emptied the contents of the medicine glass under the bed.

The girl turned back from the door, with a doubtful glance. "I don't know why I should tell you or why you ask," she murmured.

"No reason at all," said Jimmie. "I'm just interested in how nursing homes work—this kind of home," he added under his breath.

He lay motionless for a long time

after the girl left. It seemed that he was being precipitated into action. The difficulties before him grew larger as he considered them. For example: to accuse Doctor Cavendish of murder meant that he would be called upon for proof. Where was his proof? Suppose he repeated all that he had seen and heard, what jury would convict? Juries have to understand the crimes for which they sentence men. They wouldn't understand. Coffins? If coffins convicted a man, Cavendish would guard his better. No; hospitals and nursing homes have a right to look after their dead.

Large hospitals sometimes have undertakers on their staffs. The collection of legal proof against Cavendish was beyond Jimmie's limited powers. Even Melloy, amateur crusader as he was, would not undertake open warfare against his well-known colleague.

Then there was the case of Ardine's half sister and the testimonial. Certain doctors recognized Cavendish's testimonials. It came to Jimmie that, if Cavendish was one of many unethical or pseudo-medical men who preyed on women, there must be a record of this clan. Birds of a feather flock together, and, in all organizations, large and small, records, names and addresses, telephone numbers, accounts of payments and income, are necessary. Cavendish, no doubt, kept such records. Where could Jimmie find them?

He was pondering over this when Doctor Cavendish came into the room. His brown eyes were like brown stones, and his soft mouth was now grim.

"I am unable to get in touch with Doctor Melloy," he said in a flinty voice. "But I think you had better leave."

"Why?" snapped Jimmie. "I've paid my way."

"Your money will be returned to you," said Cavendish. "I have ordered a cab to take you to wherever you want to go."

Jimmie forced a whine. "You can't turn a sick man out like this," he wailed.

"I can send you away if, in my opinion, you will fare better elsewhere," said the doctor slowly. He looked at Jimmie's bag. "Fortunately, you have not much luggage; you did not come prepared for a long stay."

There was that in his tone which augured menace. Jimmie thought of his chances of escape if the doctor framed a robbery case against him and turned him over to the police. He got reluctantly out of bed.

"This is a devil of a way to treat a guy," he grumbled.

The doctor's expression lightened. "I'm sorry," he said briefly, "but I don't think this is the kind of attention you need. A trip to California will do you most good."

"Maybe it will," said Jimmie carelessly. "I'm tired of the East, anyways."

He dressed slowly and methodically. The doctor went downstairs. Presently, Ardine came into the room.

"I've been waiting," said Jimmie, "to say good-by."

The girl was pale.

"Doctor Cavendish said you were leaving," she said quietly.

"Did he tell you why?" asked Jimmie.

She hesitated.

"Did he tell you I was a crook?"

Ardine nodded.

For the first time in his life, Jimmie did not feel proud of his career.

"Say, listen," he urged as the girl was about to leave the room.

"Maybe I am a crook. But that isn't why the doc wants to get rid of me. Get me? I'm here to——"

The girl stared at him. "To what?" she asked coldly.

But Jimmie held back.

"I'll tell you later," he mumbled.

Ardine smiled without mirth. "The doctor says you were here to rob the safe."

"Yes?" snapped Jimmie savagely. "Well, tell him—— No, don't tell him nothing. Tell me—how do you get to this operating room you talked of? I mean, which is the door to the left wing?"

"There is nothing in there of value," was the gelid reply.

"Gosh! I know that," Jimmie blundered. He grappled helplessly with the problems of telling this charming girl that he was not, at the moment, a crook; that he was helping her and her sister. Words failed him, so he went quickly across the room, where the girl stood motionless, and caught her arm.

"I asked you how to get in the operating theater," he whispered harshly. "I don't want nothing out of it. I want to help some one. Don't you get me? I'm here to help some one."

Ardine froze. "You forget," she said in a low tone.

"Forget what?"

"What you promised."

Jimmie released his hold.

"I'm sorry," he pleaded. "I didn't mean no harm. It's just my way. When I want a person to listen to me, I catch a hold of them. Now be a sport and tell me about this operating theater."

Something in his tone or manner thawed Ardine's frigidity. She smiled suddenly and quite delightfully.

"I don't know why on earth you ask," she said, "but the door to the

operating theater is opposite the stairs. There's two doors, one leading down to the cellar, and the one opposite goes to the left wing. There's also another door from the wing leading directly out of the house. "That's the way patients often come in."

"Atta girl," said Jimmie. "And don't you worry none. I won't catch a hold of you again."

"Why? Are you coming back?"

"No—no," Jimmie denied hastily. "But I might run across you some time. It's a small world."

"Miss Reynolds!" came a voice from the hall.

Ardine slipped through the doorway. "It's the bookkeeper," she whispered. "I go off duty now."

"You worked overtime, didn't you?" Jimmie said.

She nodded. "We're understaffed. A girl left last week."

"You see her go?"

"No, I was off duty, sleeping. I heard she was sick. What are you driving at?"

"Miss Reynolds!"

"That's her again. I must go. Good-by!" Ardine said.

"Good-by," said Jimmie. He watched her go to the head of the stairs. He liked the way she held herself, straight. Her slimness and neatness pleased him. She was so different from Lulu and all the Lulus he had known.

Then, as her golden head disappeared down the stairs, he turned into the bedroom and picked up his bag. He was leaving. Oh, yes! He was leaving!

The bookkeeper returned him the identical notes he had given her. The doctor was not in evidence at the parting. A dusty cab took Jimmie into Stamford.

He dismissed it at the Palace Hotel. After registering there, he went

to the Western Union office and sent a wire to Doctor Melloy. He had the sensation of being watched, but could pick on no shadow. Cavendish might have phoned ahead to the Stamford police.

Well, Jimmie was accustomed to being shadowed. He went into a movie house, climbed to the balcony, left by an emergency exit, and climbed a fence in an alley. As soon as he gained the street, he hailed an independent taxi and drove to a hardware store. He had no license to purchase a revolver, and he knew the rules were rigidly enforced in this district, so he purchased an expensive shotgun. While the salesman was busy demonstrating the virtues of the weapon, Jimmie "snatched" a .32 automatic and a box of cartridges from a drawer under the show case of rifles.

He took the shotgun to the taxi and ordered the driver back along the road of Cavendish's nursing home. The automatic, he loaded and placed in his hip pocket. The shotgun, he meditated keeping, but finally tossed through the window.

Half a mile from the nursing home, he stopped the cab and alighted.

"Take a long ride back, feller," he told the cabman and gave him treble the fare asked. Then inspiration seized him. "Meet me about eight o'clock a mile from here along that road we just passed; where the turnpike was."

The cabman, a "close-eyed" man, nodded and backed his cab around. Jimmie watched it disappear in a cloud of dust. If the police picked up his trail and commandeered the cab, they would wait a long while at the rendezvous Jimmie had mentioned.

Then he climbed a telephone pole to get his bearings. Spotting the red

roofs of the nursing home, he made his way to a coppice of myrtles about three hundred yards behind the doctor's private residence. This is where he stayed, chewing on a cigarette, until nightfall.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESCUE.

WHEN the sun went down, Jimmie crawled through bracken to the rear of the house. He had heard the sound of a car enter the nursing home grounds, but spied it on its return and found that it was a grocery wagon. No patient had apparently arrived during the afternoon, so he doubted whether the doctor would be in the operating theater so early.

Yet he did not seem to be in the house. Jimmie scrutinized the pantry through a window and then crept round to the front. A peep through one of these larger windows showed a comfortable study with a lamp stand by a table, but no occupant. The other room at the front was unlighted.

Jimmie went back to the pantry window which possessed a burglar-proof catch. He stuck a wire through the slit between the sills, lifted the safety lock, and shot back the catch with his penknife blade. It did not seem that the doctor kept any personal servant in the house; Jimmie imagined that all dining was done in the nursing home proper. At any rate, he went unchallenged from room to room.

He found nothing out of the way. To all intents, Doctor Cavendish was a man who liked books and comfort. The books were of no interest to Jimmie; they lined the walls of

the unlighted room as the scratch of a match showed. But when the second tour of the house produced no results, Jimmie bethought himself of the aluminum safe and returned to the library.

About to make a more intensive search, he was interrupted by a telephone ringing. It was in the sitting room; he waited for some one to come, and, when no one did, raised the receiver himself. The bell stopped ringing just as he touched the instrument.

He heard a voice: "Cavendish?"

He was about to make an evasive answer when the doctor's voice came over the wire. The call was being answered from an extension in the nursing home. This conversation followed:

Unknown speaker: "Morley wants a girl to-morrow."

Doctor Cavendish: "Which one?"

Unknown speaker: "A blonde'll do. Got one broken in?"

Doctor Cavendish: "Only one. Morley ought to know better than make a demand now. This girl's hardly accustomed to hashish."

Unknown speaker: "She's been taking it for a month. You're talking of that Ardine kid, aren't you?"

Doctor Cavendish: "Yes, but I don't consider her a good subject. She reacts badly. The last time I dosed her, she went into a delirious condition in which we had to tie her hands."

Unknown speaker (anxiously): "Does she remember anything about it?"

Softly, Jimmie replaced the receiver. He had the whole story now. Cavendish drugged his nurses without their knowledge, accustomed them to stupefying doses of dope which would render them helpless and unconscious in the hands of bestial men. Cavendish was the

main operator of a system; the nursing home was the trial ground where he hired nurses and, drugging them through their food or drink, experimented with their reactions to narcotics.

Those who were not rendered passive by medicinal quantities of dope, or whose memories were not destroyed, were killed. Those who became mental and moral slaves were sent out to get jobs with pseudo-medical men with whom Cavendish was connected—carrying cleverly worded testimonials—passports of evil. They were doped and ill treated and knew not what had happened to them. Ardine's half sister was one of these. By chance, she had come under Doctor Melloy's care.

Melloy had been given the opportunity to pierce the masked evil which permeated the medical profession. Ardine's half sister was one of many, one of a legion of girls, who, unknowing, hopeless and helpless, were under the dominion of their bestial employers.

Further speculation was impossible for Jimmie. He ran into the front hall and unbolted the front door. He subconsciously noted that Doctor Cavendish could not have left his house by the front door and bolted it on the inside behind him. His breath came in short gasps as he skirted the nursing home, running around it to find a quick, easy entrance.

He found what he judged to be the door to the left wing and tried its handle. It would not open. To close the trap against Cavendish, he bound the handle of the door to a staple let in the wall with rusty wire taken from a garden roller. Then he ran round to the front, trying the leaded windows on his way. They were all of the casement pattern and

locked on the inside. The front door seemed the only chance.

He rang the bell. There was no answer. He rang again, wondering where the bookkeeper was. A light on the second floor of the left wing indicated that Cavendish was probably engaged in that section. After waiting another minute, Jimmie turned to the nearest window and, finding a rough stone by the side of a flower bed, hurled the jagged thing through the pane.

But the steel frame held. The individual panes were too small to crawl through. Jimmie reached inside and unloosened the catch of the window. The next minute, he was in the waiting room where he had first met Cavendish.

He glanced into the office before he ran upstairs. Both safe doors were shut, he noticed, but, before he left the office, he placed an ebony ruler against the edge of the aluminum safe door. It was a schoolboy trick, but there was method in it.

He did not hesitate at the top of the stairs, but ran to the door Ardine called the nurse's quarters. There was a night nurse on duty, a dark-haired little thing whose brown eyes were full of alarm.

"What made that noise?" she asked.

"Where is Ardine at?" Jimmie snapped.

"I don't know. She's on duty in the operating theater. I heard a crash. What was it?"

"A window," snapped Jimmie. "You get outta here, see? Get your bag and beat it. Don't come back."

He thought for a moment of the patients in the home, remembered Holmer, and decided the patients could look after themselves. He slid down the banisters. The door under the stairs was locked; so was the one opposite it.

In the kitchen, he found a coal hammer. He returned to the hall and deliberately set about smashing in the door to the operating room and the left wing. The lock splintered, and the door burst open on the third smash.

A short corridor faced him. There were two doors, one to the right, one to the left. He took the one to the right and burst it open. Staring into a vacant room, he heard a noise in behind him. He turned to meet Doctor Cavendish.

The doctor was clad in a white apron and cap. He wore rubber gloves and carried a hypodermic syringe in his right hand. The left was hidden under the folds of the operating tunic.

"What," said the doctor, "are you trying——"

Then he recognized Jimmie's face and tugged with his left hand at something under the tunic.

Jimmie hit with all his force. The doctor staggered back. There was a spurt of flame from his side; he was firing through the tunic. Jimmie reversed his automatic and smashed the doctor's head above the temple.

He jumped over the fallen body. He was in an operating theater, white-tiled, circular in shape. Great shining lamp shades focused the beams of thousand candle-power globes on a table in the center. The table was uptilted, and on it lay a girl. Her mouth was covered with a cone. There was the sweet, sickly odor of chloroform in the air.

Jimmie knocked the cone to the floor. It was Ardine on the operating table. She was fully clothed, breathing stertorously, and was blue-veined about her forehead. Jimmie raised her up and looked around helplessly.

The doctor was lying on the threshold. A thin trickle of red ran

from his temple to the spotless floor. But he was not dead; his chest moved. Jimmie thought for a moment, and then slung Ardine across his back. Carrying her fireman fashion, he staggered back through the corridor and into the main hall.

The dark-haired nurse was standing on the stairway, a small bag in her arms. She looked at Jimmie with wide, startled eyes.

"Hey!" shouted Jimmie. "You're a nurse. What do you do to her?" He pointed to Ardine whom he had lain on the floor.

The nurse dropped her bag and went on her knees beside the unconscious girl.

"She's been chloroformed," she cried.

"Doped, too," Jimmie suggested. "I want to get her away from here. Bring her round, can't you?"

The nurse looked up. "I'll get something."

She ran upstairs. Jimmie went back to the operating room for his coal hammer. The doctor was still motionless. When Jimmie returned to the hall, the dark nurse was bending over Ardine, applying a capsule to her nostrils.

Jimmie said nothing. He attacked with the coal hammer the door under the stairs. He beat it in by the time Ardine had come around to life. Now, there were half a dozen heads looking over the banisters at the top of the stairs.

"You'd all better get out of here," Jimmie called up.

The heads moved. Came patters of unshod feet. "Who are they?" Jimmie asked the dark nurse.

"Patients," she said. "Look! She's come round."

Ardine stared with blank eyes at Jimmie. She looked very ill.

"That's the girl," said Jimmie cheerily. "Now we'll get a car. Has

the doctor a car?" he asked the dark nurse.

"There's a coupé in the garage," she said fearfully.

Jimmie turned to the front door. A sharp cry made him swing round, dropping as he wheeled. A bullet splintered the wood above his head. He fired from his hip, missing the doctor by an inch.

The doctor did not return the shot. He was out of sight, having slipped across the hall to the office. Jimmie leaped and, putting the muzzle of his gun to the office door, splintered it with bullets.

The crash of gunfire drowned all sounds. He kicked the door open and pushed his gun in front of him. The door of the aluminum safe was open, the ebony ruler lying half inside the opening. The doctor had swung the door to behind him, but the ruler, falling in, had prevented the lock catching. Jimmie pulled the safe door wider and was rewarded by a shattering roar of explosions inside the tunnel to which the safe door was an entrance.

He returned the fire and found his gun empty. By the time he reloaded it, the hall outside was swarming with patients and nurses in all stages of undress. There were two things to do, and Jimmie took the one nearest his heart first. He pushed his way through the screaming, hysterical crowd, and, lifting Ardine in his arms, carried her into the open.

"Where's the garage?" he snapped to the dark nurse.

"Over there," Ardine said in his ear. "And, for goodness' sake, put me down. I'm not a cripple."

Jimmie eased her to her feet. She stood, but shakily.

"Are you O. K.?" he demanded.

"Quite." She laughed a little, nervously. "What has happened?"

"Plenty," said Jimmie grimly.

"I must go back to my patients."

"You're going to see Doctor Melloy in New York," Jimmie said. He spoke quickly. "Tell him or your half sister all that's happened."

The dark nurse could drive as well as Ardine. Jimmie saw them off. He did not bother to return to the nursing home, but made his way across the lawn to Doctor Cavenish's house.

The place was vacant, as he expected. But the front door was locked. He had left it open. He broke in the library window and turned on all the lights. Then he started to examine the bookcases.

He fixed on the largest one, pulled it this way and that. It fell forward, disclosing a blank wall. In the noise of falling books, a faint sound of another nature made itself heard. Jimmie fired as he turned, sweeping the library doorway with lead.

A sharp pain ran up his side. The doctor fired twice before Jimmie bored him through the head. The pain in his side lessened. He was bleeding freely.

He ripped off his coat and staggered into the next room. There was a first-aid kit in a cabinet, also various surgical instruments. He tried to probe the bullet but desisted because of the pain, so he contented himself with stanching the flow with gauze.

It was only the matter of half an hour or so before some of the patients would get in touch with Stamford through a phone in an adjoining farmhouse. Jimmie did not see any point in waiting for his old enemies the police. But there was still one thing that needed attention. He traversed the house, looking for the doctor's secret entrance and found it to be a door off the coal cellar.

He did not go the whole length of

the tunnel to the nursing home. An artificial cave halfway along the tunnel held all that he needed: books, ledgers, account files. He gathered up those with the most names and addresses in them, and made a painful exit from the cave and the tunnel. The lawn, he saw through the library window, was swarming with inmates of the home and some men in country clothes. The lights from the two houses illumined the intervening space clearly.

The coppice behind the house afforded temporary shelter. Jimmie started in that direction. Almost immediately, he came across a tumble-down car left by a neighboring farmer who had responded to the shouts of alarm from the home. With a sigh of thankfulness, he got into the machine and trod on its wheezy starter. In another minute, he was rattling down the road, away from the home, and in the opposite direction to Stamford.

CHAPTER VIII.

WELCOME.

AT nine o'clock next morning, Jimmie descended from the old flivver and walked across the sidewalk to Doctor Melloy's office and residence in Park Avenue. There was less swagger in his stride; a bullet lodged somewhere in the hip is not conducive to swank. But when he rang the bell, the nurse who answered gave a little cry of admiration and delight and tucked her arm under his.

"Let me," she said, "help you."

Jimmie smiled.

"Tell Doctor Melloy," he said, "that Jimmie Quick-shot Corliss is waiting to see him."

Then a voice of greeting boomed in his ear, and his hand was grasped by one that was both friendly and gentle.

"You'll never have to wait to see me," Doctor Melloy rumbled. Then he saw the red-stained coat. "Come in here. You need fixing."

Jimmie pointed to the door. "There's books in the flivver outside; the names of the guys Cavendish sent his girls to. The whole dope."

Doctor Melloy beckoned to some one in the surgery in which they entered. "I'll get the books," he said. "And now you let some one dress that gunshot wound."

Jimmie saw Ardine advancing. Her eyes were starry, her mouth tremulous.

"You—you——" she began.

"Cut it out," said Jimmie before she spoke coherently at all. "All I need is a little fixing."

"And say," he added, catching hold of her hand, "I want you to look after me while I'm convalescing."

She made no move to draw her hand away. "I'll look after you plenty," she whispered.

Jimmie grinned. "Even if I catch hold onto you sometimes?"

"Even so!"

Jimmie grinned again. "I told you I only caught onto you to get your full attention while I told you something," he said. "Now, listen here, I got something to ask you about taking care of me. Suppose you and I——"

But then the anæsthetic, which was to put him to sleep while they extracted the bullet, began its work, and Jimmie began to ramble.

"Must be getting high up in the world," he said light-headedly, "when I don't have to wait to see a big society doctor."



CAGED HOPE

By DONALD G. McDONALD

To avert a tragedy, he worked madly for fifteen dollars.

LITTLE two-year-old Peter tossed restlessly in his crib that had been improvised from a huge packing case. Grant Eddystone, the father, a tall, rawboned man with hungry, stricken eyes, caressed the youngster's feverish cheek with a touch as light as a woman's. His own horny hand was slightly bluish, for it was November and there was no fire in the three-room frame cottage. Sue, his wife, sat on the edge of a metal bed, her brown eyes peering solemnly down

upon the face of the little sufferer. She was an attractive young woman in spite of the frayed black dress and the torn red sweater which was pinned high about her neck for added warmth.

Grant looked from the child to his wife. "'Bout the same, Sue?"

"Just about," she said bravely. "Perhaps a little more fever."

He considered this for a moment. "Any milk left?" he asked presently.

"One can."

"You eaten anything to-day?"

"Some," the woman replied. "Some—some bread. Where are you going now, Grant?" Her eyes rested on his cap.

"To town, to look for work. There ain't nothin' in these parts. I've walked eight miles, just about."

"But it's late," she reminded him. "It's most four o'clock. Places in Chicago close up at five and five thirty."

He nodded. Sue was a Chicago girl. She knew the city and city ways.

"Well, I'm agoin' just the same. I might get a lift for the two miles to town and somethin' might turn up." He paused. "Doc Glover ought to be around some time to-day, Sue. I heard that he's head of the county relief board. Maybe he'll tell us that they'll do somethin' about helpin' us—like I asked 'em two days ago. Some coal, maybe, and some food and milk. I ain't never asked for help afore. I've lived in these parts a long time and folks know I'm all right." He stared hard at Peter's tossing head. "Besides," he added, "no one kin see a little kid sick without raisin' a hand to help him, to give him medicine or somethin'."

"Hm-m-m!" said Sue, rubbing her cold hands briskly together, "I'm not counting much on Doctor Glover. Always struck me he would think himself too good to fuss around with poor people. He's hard, Grant. About the best chance we have, though, is your good name. If he thinks you're an upright citizen," the woman continued, "and mean to be sober and honest, he may help us. He's that way."

Grant shuffled his big, awkward feet, bent over the improvised crib, and touched Peter's curls with his lips; then he sat down upon the bed, put one arm around his wife, and

drew her head to his shoulder. "You're a great kid, Sue—the best wife a fella ever had. If I had knowed this was a-comin', I'd never have asked you to marry me."

She kissed him and assured him that it was all right—that she wasn't complaining. As he arose to leave, she said:

"Grant, city folks like to see a man with lots of pep—a man who walks fast, talks fast, acts fast. When you're looking for a job in Chicago, you'll remember that, won't you? That's a dear."

Outside, in a whipping, cold wind, the man buttoned up his old, worn sheepskin coat and set off at a rapid pace for the nearest road, a full half mile from their lonely cottage. Here, a passer-by gave him a lift and took him into the manufacturing section of south Chicago. Then began the wearisome, disheartening search for work.

He remembered Sue's words and walked briskly and his usual salutation, "Hello, mister. Got any job for me to do?" tripped from his lips with a crisp freshness that was a surprise even to himself.

Between one call and the next—for he was conducting a building-to-building canvass—a dismal array of thoughts hammered persistently at his tired mind. He *must* find work, *must* get help for Sue and for Peter. He *must* find money, coal and food. He had had nothing himself save a piece of dry bread early that morning; but he gave his own plight scant consideration.

His nearest neighbors, out there in that desolate section where he lived, were just about as badly pressed as himself, Sue and Peter. They were all truck farmers. Their summer crops had been failures; and prices had dropped so sharply that they had nothing left upon which to sub-

sist after the major portion of their accumulated debts had been paid. Sue had insisted that she and Grant keep their troubles to themselves as long as possible; but he knew he would have to do something and do it quickly.

His thoughts terminated abruptly when he pushed open a squeaky door and found himself in the dark interior of a warehouse. As he peered through the gloom, a bulky and shadowy form manifested itself and a rough, deep voice demanded:

"Whatcha want?"

"Hello, mister. Got any job for me to do?"

The bulk of a man moved closer, and the shadowy outlines gave way to greater detail. Grant found himself confronting a square-jawed individual whose broken nose and cauliflower ears suggested the prize ring.

Then the fellow fixed beady eyes on the questioner. "Naw," he said slowly, then added as a sudden afterthought: "Wait a sec," and disappeared into the gloom of a distant corner. When he returned, he held a paper in his hand and he waved this at the caller. "Come on over to the desk," he said and led the way through a maze of passageways flanked by boxes and barrels.

The "desk" was composed of three broad, long planks supported by two carpenter's horses. Sitting down on a three-legged stool, the man reached up into the darkness, and flicked on a light; then he produced a stub of pencil from the recess behind one of his knoblike ears, touched the lead to his tongue, and turned his gaze on the applicant.

"So you want a job, eh, buddy?"

"Yeah, I need it," said Grant, wondering if a miracle were about to happen.

"Hm-m-m! I don't know whether

you'll get it or not, fella. K'n you drive a truck?"

Grant nodded.

"Could you find your way out to the airport?"

"Sure," said Grant. He didn't have the remotest idea of the airport's location but knew that he could find it by making inquiry.

"This ain't no steady job," explained the other. "Our regular driver's sick and we've got to get a load out to the airport, pronto. I can't leave, and we ain't got no one else to send. Now, I'm goin' to fire some questions at you." Without further parley, the speaker began:

"What's your name?"

Grant told him.

"Hitched?"

"Huh?"

"You married?"

"Sure."

"What's your wife's name?"

"Sue."

Grant's interrogator looked up quickly. "Sue? What was her last name fore you married her?"

"Sue Gaines."

The other's mouth suddenly hung open. "Was her dad a dick?"

"You mean a detective?" asked Grant. "Yeah, he was. Did you know him?"

"I'll tell the world! I knew him well. Sue maybe'll remember me, too. What's your address?"

Grant gave it; then other questions followed rapidly. When the sheet was covered, the questioner slid from the stool and once more vanished into the gloom of the distant corner which seemed to house an office.

"You'll do," he announced upon his return. "And when you get back here," he continued, "and you've done the job O. K., you'll get fifteen bucks. Huh! That sort of gives you a jolt, eh? Well, we pay liberal

but we're as fussy as the devil about you tendin' to business and doin' the job right." The man reached in his pocket and took out a revolver. "Here," he added, "tuck this away where you can get at it quick if you have to."

Grant started, took the weapon mechanically, turned it over in his horny palm once or twice, and raised questioning eyes.

"Listen, buddy," continued the other, "here's instructions. You're takin' somethin' valuable over to the airport. Don't get me wrong. It ain't gold bricks or nothin' like that; but it's valuable to the person that's gettin' it. When you reach the airport, ask fur Tip-top."

"Tip-top?"

"Yeah. He's an aviator. He's got his plane there—a big, three-motored ship—and you'll help him to shove your load onto his plane. First, though—this is important—before you unload, he'll give you a parrot."

"A what?"

"A parrot. The bird'll most likely be in a big cage. You bring it back here to-night and collect fifteen bucks."

"But the gun?" asked Grant. "You afraid that somebody'll try to steal my load?"

"No one'll monkey with you while you're goin' to the airport, though you better be on your watch. The time you may have trouble is when you're comin' back here with the bird."

Grant blinked in bewilderment, but the individual with the cauliflower ears got to his feet and seized the arm of his new delivery man. "Out here," he said abruptly, "the truck's all ready fur you to get goin'."

"But," protested Grant, as they walked toward a distant patch of

light that marked an exit, "how come, if you're lookin' for trouble, that you ain't called the police in to guard the truck?"

"'Cause we ain't got nothin' but suspicions. 'Cause we jus' heard somethin' half an hour ago that sounded funny and we can't take time to beef around with the cops. Besides, they wouldn't pay no attention, nohow. The plane is leavin' in an hour and you'll have to go like blazes to make it. I was goin' to call the express company when you showed up, but it struck me you could do the trick as well as they could—provided you kin shoot straight."

Grant nodded slowly.

"Of course," volunteered the other, "if you're scared of the job or don't want it, say so—only say so quick! The load's got to get to the plane."

Fifteen dollars! Food, medicine, coal for Sue and Peter, and the truck stood—waiting!

Grant nodded and climbed up into the driver's seat. There followed a few uncomfortable moments as his eyes studied the dash and he acquainted himself with the various controls. But, in less than a minute, he was rolling down the drive that flanked one side of the warehouse. When he reached the street, he stopped long enough to jot down the street and number, then he turned in the general direction of the heart of south Chicago.

A policeman gave him instructions that carried him part way toward his destination; information elicited from two pedestrians brought him to the particular airport to which he had been directed.

"Tip-top" and his ship were waiting; so was a large cage covered with a dark cloth.

"Here's your parrot," said the aviator. "Don't let him fly away,

and keep the cover on the cage or he'll pass out with pneumonia."

Fifteen minutes' work transferred the load of heavy boxes from the truck to the plane, and Grant found himself started on the return trip.

It was quite dark, but the streets were so well lighted that, for a time, the probability of a holdup seemed remote. As he drew away from the brilliantly illuminated retail section, however, and rolled on into the manufacturing and wholesale area, a vague uneasiness made itself felt. What would he do if he were stopped by bandits? Would he shoot it out or would he surrender the cage and—the parrot? And why should robbers want to risk their lives for a bird?

It was plain, however, that the individual with the cauliflower ears expected him to use the revolver. If thieves were sufficiently covetous of Polly to stage a holdup, it was equally plain that he was expected to defend the creature at all cost.

Grant took one of his horny hands from the wheel long enough to scratch his head. The whole thing was baffling. He wished fervently that Sue were with him just to offer a word of advice, for she knew the city and city ways. A hopeless tangle to him would be an open book to her, and it was possible, he reflected, that she might have an explanation to offer for the parrot.

He gave consideration to one point. Mr. Cauliflower Ears knew Sue, hence it seemed logical to believe that the former was entirely on the level. That being true, there was really only one answer as to what he, himself should do if—

Grant's foot jammed down on the brake. A large sedan, crossing at an intersection, had stopped directly in his path. For an instant, a collision seemed inevitable; but the brakes

gripped and held tenaciously, and the truck came to a stop a scant two feet from the running board of the stalled car.

Two objects suddenly appeared in the open front window of the sedan: a face and a gleaming revolver. At the same instant, another man came streaking around the rear of the car, darted up to the side of the truck, and, gesturing with an automatic, ordered Grant to throw up his hands.

Grant's reply came in the form of an explosion that roared from the gun he had whipped from his sheepskin coat. The man in the street slumped to the pavement in the same instant that Grant jerked sideways and threw himself to the floor of the truck. But he was a fraction of a second too late. A bullet from the gun of the fellow in the front seat of the auto, ripped through the sheepskin coat and the fleshy part of his left arm. Then the driver of the sedan threw in the clutch, stepped on the accelerator and roared down the side street, leaving his partner in the road.

Grant felt no special pain in his arm, though it was bleeding profusely; but his mind was in a whirl. The police would be there in seconds, and, while he believed he had been right in resisting the bandits, he knew he would appear in an unsavory light when they questioned him. He had no permit to carry a gun; he didn't know the license number of the truck; he didn't even know the name of the firm for whom he was working. Nor did he know the nature of the merchandise he had carried to the airport; nor could he, in any way, give the police a reason for the holdup. To tell them that the robbers had probably been after the parrot was obviously silly.

He climbed down, felt for the first

time the sharp twinge of his own wound, and bent over the still form in the street. Police or no police, he couldn't run off and leave this chap in the road. He laid his right hand over the man's heart and knew instantly, with a shuddering sense of disaster, that the fellow was dead. Gritting his teeth from the pain the effort cost him, he picked up the body, carried it off the road and laid it on the sidewalk; then he looked up.

People were running toward him. He must decide quickly what to do. In spite of a blameless past, in spite of his present innocence, every nerve in his body urged him to keep out of the hands of the police. Even though he ultimately was cleared of all charges and released, he was certain that for to-night, at least, he would be locked in jail. That couldn't be—not with home conditions as they were—no fire, Peter sick, Sue cold and hungry.

He darted out to the truck, started to climb to the seat when he realized the futility of trying to use this slow, lumbering thing as a means of escape. He would be safer on foot. But the parrot in the cage—he couldn't leave that here. It was apparent that the thing was valuable for some reason or other. He had been ordered specifically to guard it and to bring it back to the warehouse in safety; and only when he did that was he to receive the fifteen dollars. And he had to have that money! It would mean so much! It might avert a tragedy. If the house were heated and Peter were given some fresh, warm milk, the little chap might get better quickly. If these things were denied, who knew what might happen?

So he caught the cage up in his arms, dropped to the pavement and darted across the road into the shad-

ows of a passageway. Through the blackness he stumbled—one hand holding the cage by the ring in the top; the other arm—the one that was soaking his coat sleeve with blood—was stretched out before him, feeling out his course.

On and on he hurried—seemingly, for hours; then, suddenly, he collided painfully with something—a brick wall or the side of a building. His heart leaped in the agonized fear that he might be trapped; then he turned his head and saw a patch of light. The passageway simply angled, and, if he followed on to the right, he would come to a street.

As he approached the dimly lighted thoroughfare, he moved with greater caution and it was well that he did so; for when he was twenty feet from the street, he caught a glimpse of a policeman hurrying across the pavement toward his hiding place.

Instantly, Grant stopped and turned back. He remembered that his hand, a moment ago, had passed across the wood of a doorway. Searching for it now, he prayed that it would be unlocked.

Ah! He had found it! Expecting any moment to find himself the target for the policeman's flash, his free hand swept over the woodwork and discovered the knob. His heart leaped in thanksgiving when it turned under his touch and gave him access to the building. Inside, he began to breathe off his excitement. But what if the policeman tried this same door? He put down the cage, grasped the knob with both hands, and pressed the full weight of his heavy body against the entrance. Seconds later, he felt the knob seized from the outside, and the attempt was made to turn it; but Grant's muscles held rigid. The pressure ceased, and heavy foot-

steps moved on and soon were lost in the distance.

He waited a suitable length of time, then emerged and hurried on to the street. The thought had come over him a moment before, that, if he returned to the warehouse, he would find the police awaiting him. He remembered that there had been some dim, dirty lettering on the side of the truck. No doubt, it was the name of the firm that had given him this singular employment. The officers would note the address and go there at once to see who and what they could find.

The only thing left for him to do, therefore, was to go home and take the parrot and cage to the warehouse on the morrow. That meant, of course, that he would return to Sue and Peter empty-handed—a consideration which made him wince. Nor was it pleasant to know that he had slain a human being—that he, a lover of peace, had killed a man. But most of all, his thoughts reverted to his wife and child, and he writhed in exquisite torture as his imagination pictured the dismal home-coming. No food, no money, no coal!

He had scarcely walked a block, after leaving the passageway, than a swimming dizziness seized him and the street, the lights, the warehouse suddenly came to life and billowed and careened and tossed themselves about until, in sheer self-preservation, he allowed his worn body to slip to the sidewalk. So far, sheer nerve had carried him through; now the reaction had set in. Insufficient food and a loss of blood had begun to take their toll.

A sunburst of lights engulfed him and from somewhere in the midst of the blinding glare came a voice.

"Up! Up! That's the stuff. Put your arm around my shoulder."

Grant was partially conscious of some one half carrying and half pulling him over the swirling pavement—lifting him up and up and setting him down on something soft.

"Where do you live, pardner?"

The question was repeated numberless times without awakening any response; then Grant's lips mumbled his address. He was not conscious that the good Samaritan had taken off his sheepskin coat and bound up his bleeding arm with a handkerchief; but strangely, he did think to mutter: "Parrot. Where's the parrot?" And the reply: "I've got the cage in the car," was soothing, so filled with refreshing consolation that he gave himself over to a deep and blissful unconsciousness.

When he awoke, it was to feel something warm and wet fall upon his cheek—a tear that had slipped from Sue's eyes as she bent over him. As if from a great distance, he heard her call him by name, and, with a great effort, he replied and tried to raise himself on his elbow. She pushed him back gently, with soothing words.

He fell into a doze and this time, upon awakening, he found everything restored to normal. He was lying on an old couch in the living room—covered with a blanket that Sue had brought from the bed. His wife sat in a creaky rocking-chair at his side, both of her hands now thrust up into the sleeves of her frayed sweater the better to keep them warm.

The house was cold.

Again, he tried to rise, and again she made him lie down.

"You must keep still until the doctor comes," she said.

A groan escaped his lips. "Hasn't he come yet? Hasn't he been here to see Peter?"

"No," she replied simply.

"How's Peter?"

"'Bout the same." She leaned forward and kissed him. "Grant, how did you get shot?"

He started to tell her, then stopped in apprehension. "Sue," he cried, "the parrot. The cage. Is it here?"

She pointed. He jerked his head up, saw it, and his heart resumed its beating. The parrot—safe, meant fifteen dollars—maybe—if he could ever get back to the warehouse to collect. And that money would buy quarts and quarts of milk and dozens of loaves of bread and a few bushels of coke or soft coal.

He pushed himself up suddenly, a wild light in his eyes. Sue tried to prevent him; but he tottered to his feet. "Sue," he cried hoarsely, "I've got to go out. Got to get some wood. Got to go to the neighbors for some help. Don't hold me, Sue. Let me get up!"

"Listen, Grant," she begged, "please rest for a little while longer. 'Tain't quite so cold now as it was this morning. Maybe, while you rest, you could tell me how you got shot. That's a good boy."

So he lay down again, held one of her hands tightly, and told her the story. He was too interested in the recital, in trying to make everything plain, to notice the growing expression of alarm on his wife's face. She listened quietly, but, when he had finished and looked into her eyes, he saw, for the first time, that she was speechless with fright.

"W-what is it?" he cried.

"Oh-h-h!" She looked at him and shuddered. "Grant—Grant—didn't you know what you were doing?"

He shook his head dumbly.

"You were carrying a load of liquor. That's why this man who hired you didn't call the police to

guard you and the truck. Sure, I know that fellow. He used to be a prize fighter. Then he became a bootlegger, a gambler—I don't know what else—and my dad sent him to prison, finally. You see, you were held up by hijackers who were after the money that had been paid you by the aviator.

"But he didn't pay me any money," protested Grant. "He never gave me nothin'."

"He gave you the parrot, the cage, whatever it is, didn't he?"

"Sure, but——"

Sue slipped from her chair and unfastened the cloth that was swathed around the cage.

"There's your parrot," she cried, flinging the covering aside.

"A peach, ain't he?" said Grant, viewing the brightly colored plumage of a huge bird.

"'Tain't real, though. It's stuffed! It was just a—a blind, most likely. But, wait!" Excitedly, Sue raised the cage to the center of the one table the room possessed, fingered and pried a bit of some projection she had discovered in the thick bottom until suddenly, the base opened. Grant got up on trembling legs and joined her as she reached down and picked out a thick packet of money—currency bound together with a strip of paper. There were six of these bundles fitted neatly into the hollow receptacle formed by the bottom of the cage.

Grant was speechless. His wife uttered a little cry and turned horrified eyes in his direction. "Oh, Grant, what if you've been followed!"

"Followed?"

"Yes. By the holdup man who got away. Suppose he were to come here and——"

A sharp knock sounded on the cottage door.

The woman's face blanched. "That may be him now," she whispered. "Quick! Help me put this money back!"

He picked up three of the packages, fumbled them in his nervousness, and weakness and dropped one. His hand snatched for it; a finger nail struck the paper binding tape, and three or four dozen fifty-dollar bills scattered themselves upon the floor.

The knocking upon the outer door was repeated, this time with redoubled energy.

Grant caught up the money and crammed it into the base but was unable to replace the cover. However, it seemed impossible longer to ignore the summons, so he clapped on the wire cage which contained the stuffed parrot and placed the whole thing in a far corner of the room where Sue covered it hastily with the dark cloth.

To their intense relief, the visitor was Doctor Glover, a smallish man with a thin, stern face and sterner spectacles, and a little patch of grayish hair that perched high up on his head.

Grant had retired to the deeper shadows in the corner of the room so the caller addressed the woman.

"You have a sick baby here?" The words were crisp, precise, and quite in keeping with the man's character.

"Yes," said Sue breathlessly, and she immediately led him into the bedroom.

"Whew!" exclaimed the doctor. "It's too cold in here. Haven't you a fire?" He wheeled suddenly upon Grant who was peering through the doorway, trying to catch a glimpse of Peter through the murky illumination given off by a kerosene lamp. "How does it happen, young man, that you can't build a fire?"

"W-why," stammered the younger man, "it just seems, doctor, that there ain't no more wood to get anywhere. The country for miles around is clean as a whistle. We've burned most of the furniture we kin spare."

A grimace that was supposed to pass for a smile of recollection crossed the physician's face. "Oh, yes," said he, "you are the man who applied to the county relief. I'll have something to tell you about that in a moment. Right now, we'll look over this youngster." For the next ten minutes, he devoted himself to a careful examination.

"Intestinal flu," he pronounced finally. "If he's kept warm and has the right food, he ought to pull through all right. What does he get to eat?"

"We've had a little canned milk," began Sue and then paused.

"Yes, yes, and what else?"

"Nothing else," said the woman.

The doctor's eyebrows arched. "That will never do, my dear girl. You must have fresh milk, oranges, prunes, vegetables."

"But——"

"I'll see that it's provided." He wrote out a prescription, tore it from his book, and poked it in his own pocket. "I'll see that this is filled, too, and sent over. The county relief, which I head, is glad to help deserving cases. Naturally, we have to guard against fraud which we find in the most unexpected cases; but where folks are honest and law-abiding and are in actual want, we will give them every help. I understand you have been unable to find work, young man?"

There was no answer.

Doctor Glover looked sternly toward the vacant doorway.

"I—I guess Grant must have gone into the living room. He doesn't,

feel well. He got shot and——” Too late, Sue realized her mistake.

Doctor Glover stared at her blankly. “Shot,” he repeated after her. “How did that happen?” He started toward the living room as if he intended to have the man himself answer his question.

Grant was lying on the couch. The stern-faced physician advanced to his side like a magistrate taking the bench. He reached for and seized the riddled arm though the wounded man shook his head in feeble protest.

“How did this occur, young man?” persisted Doctor Glover, working swiftly on the wound.

Grant tried to answer, but Sue interposed.

“He went to South Chicago, doctor, and found a job delivering a load of goods to the airport. When he was coming back, two robbers attempted to hold him up.”

“For what?” came the crisp inquiry while the bandaging proceeded.

“For the money that had been paid him for the load.”

“Did they get it?”

“No, sir.”

“Where is it?”

“W-why—it’s—it’s——”

“Where is it?”

“It’s here.” Sue motioned toward the covered cage.

Doctor Glover went to it, pulled off the cloth and started in surprise. “Young woman,” he said icily, “I wouldn’t advise you or your husband to trifle with the truth—to me. There is——” He stopped as if struck by a bullet, leaned over, and plucked at something with thin fingers. When he straightened up, several new fifty-dollar bills crackled in his fingers. “To whom does all this money belong?” he fiercely snapped.

“To the firm who sent my husband with the load.”

“Well, what is the name of this firm?”

“Grant doesn’t know.”

Stark unbelief, mixed with more than a touch of scorn, sat upon the doctor’s lips. “So he doesn’t know, eh? What an amazing lack of ingenuity you two display. That this belongs to somebody other than yourselves, I haven’t a doubt. I’ll make it my business to find out who the rightful owner may be. No doubt, the police——”

“No! No!” cried Sue, remembering that her husband had killed one of the bandits. If the authorities learned that Grant had carted a load of liquor and had slain a hijacker, they would mete out the law with a harsh hand.

“That convinces me,” snapped the doctor. “I can tell you two things. I shall get in touch with the police, and I shall prevent county aid from being grossly misplaced.” With this parting volley, he started for the door.

“Stand right where you are, saw-bones!” The command, uttered in a sharp, throaty voice, came from a window opposite the couch. The sash had been raised a scant three inches—at a moment, probably, when Sue or the doctor had been talking. Now the window flew up with a bang, and a dapper youth wriggled his way into the room without once permitting his gun to waver. He glared at Grant. Said he:

“I have a score to settle with you. You killed my buddy so I’m goin’ to drill you for keeps! My, my! You act surprised. Did you think I wouldn’t find you? Huh!” The fellow’s teeth clicked together with a snap. “I just called your boss, told him I was a dick down at headquar-

ters and asked him for your address."

Grant had raised himself on one elbow. Doctor Glover stood as if transfixed, his face as ashy in color as his scanty tuft of gray hair. Sue clung to a corner of the living-room table, her horror-filled eyes upon the awesome visitor. She cleared her throat.

"Please, mister, there's the money. Take it and—and go. Please take it and go away!"

"Thanks, my dear, I'll do just that." Keeping his gun leveled on the group, the fellow backed into the corner, kicked off the cage portion, and, stooping, crammed all the bills into his pockets. "Now," said he, standing stiffly erect once more and swinging his gun so Grant looked directly in its black bore, "now I'll get even with you, you——"

The sentence was never completed. A thunderous report shook the cottage, and a spurt of sudden fire came from the same window through which the gunman had entered. An expression of profound surprise stamped itself fleetingly on the latter's face; then he turned half around and dropped like a heavy sack to the floor.

The horrified witnesses heard running steps crunching on the gravel walk that encircled the house; heavy shoes took the outside steps at a single bound, and the door burst open.

A great bulky figure, with a broken nose and knoblike projections on either side of his head, stood gaping at them while his smoking revolver dangled from the trigger finger of his right hand. Then other feet sounded outside, and two square-jawed individuals appeared at his side with the suddenness of a magician's "presto."

"Boys," volleyed the man with the cauliflower ears, "it's all over!" He

strode across the room to Grant. "Buddy, you got that parrot and cage?"

Grant gritted his teeth. "The parrot," he groaned, "is over there with pieces of the cage. The money is stuffed in the pockets of the fellow you shot."

"So you got drilled comin' back from the airport, eh?" commented the enormous one after he had satisfied himself of the truth of Grant's statement. "Huh. When you didn't show up, I suspected it. That's tough." He wheeled about.

"And here's Sue, just as pert and spry as ever. I'm glad to see you. You're dad was a great guy—as true shootin' a dick as ever lived." He called to the two square-jawed individuals who had maintained their post at the door. "Boys, remember Sam Gaines?"

"I'll say!" the two replied, virtually in one breath.

"Then meet his daughter, Sue."

"Sure glad to know you," said one of them, extending his hand.

"There never was a whiter detective on the force," amended the other.

Sue gasped. "Are you men detectives?"

"Sure," they replied, and two stars glittered in the lamplight.

The woman stared at the man with the enlarged ears. "B-but you aren't a detective?"

"No, Sue. I'm goin' straight enough now to be one, but I ain't. I'm in the manufacturin' biz."

"Then, you aren't——"

"In the bootleg racket?" he concluded. "No. I told your dad I'd go straight after I got out of stir, and I did. He used to send me a card every month remindin' me of my promise until—until they stopped comin'," he concluded somewhat gravely.

"Then, that load you sent out to the airport wasn't booze?"

"Imagine!" exclaimed Mr. Cauliflower Ears in mock indignation. "Hardly," he said. "Them cases was filled with expensive tools for a South American firm that was slow pay on the last shipment we sent 'em. This time, we told 'em that they'd have to fork over the actual dough 'fore we'd load 'em on the plane. They needed them tools powerful bad and awful quick so they sent the dough."

The speaker waved his hand in the general direction of the parrot and the cage. "That was just camouflage. But some wise crooks caught on, somehow. Like I told your husband, we just got wind of somethin' phony a few minutes 'fore he came in on me lookin' for a job. Course, soon as I learned he was your hubby, I says to myself, 'He'll do first rate.' And he did, too." Having delivered himself of this, the speaker pawed over some bills and dropped a ten and a five into Grant's lap.

"Gosh! Thanks for——"

"It's all right, buddy. Say, when you're arm's mended, come around. We've got a job at the plant you kin have if you think that you would like to have it."

Doctor Glover advanced meekly

and addressed himself to Sue and her husband. "I've got to be running along now to turn in this prescription. You get milk every morning, and I'll send my son over here with some food and coal as soon as I get home."

"That's swell of you, doc," said Grant huskily.

When the door closed behind the physician, Sue spoke: "But what about my husband? He's worried you're going to put him in jail or something for carrying a gun without a permit."

"Hm-m-m!" snorted the man with the puff-ball ears. "I gave it to him, didn't I?" He picked up the body of the crook and threw it over his shoulder like a bag of flour.

"Girl," said one of the detectives bluntly, "you're Sam Gaines's daughter and this fella's your husband. That's the answer." As the three men turned toward the door, the speaker rubbed his palms together and was heard to mumble, "Gosh! It's cold in here."

A smile—a broad, beaming, dazzling smile spread over Grant's face as he held out his hand and beckoned to his wife. "Come back in a couple of hours, fellas, and you'll be able to fry eggs on the floors. Sue, let's you and me go and tell Peter."

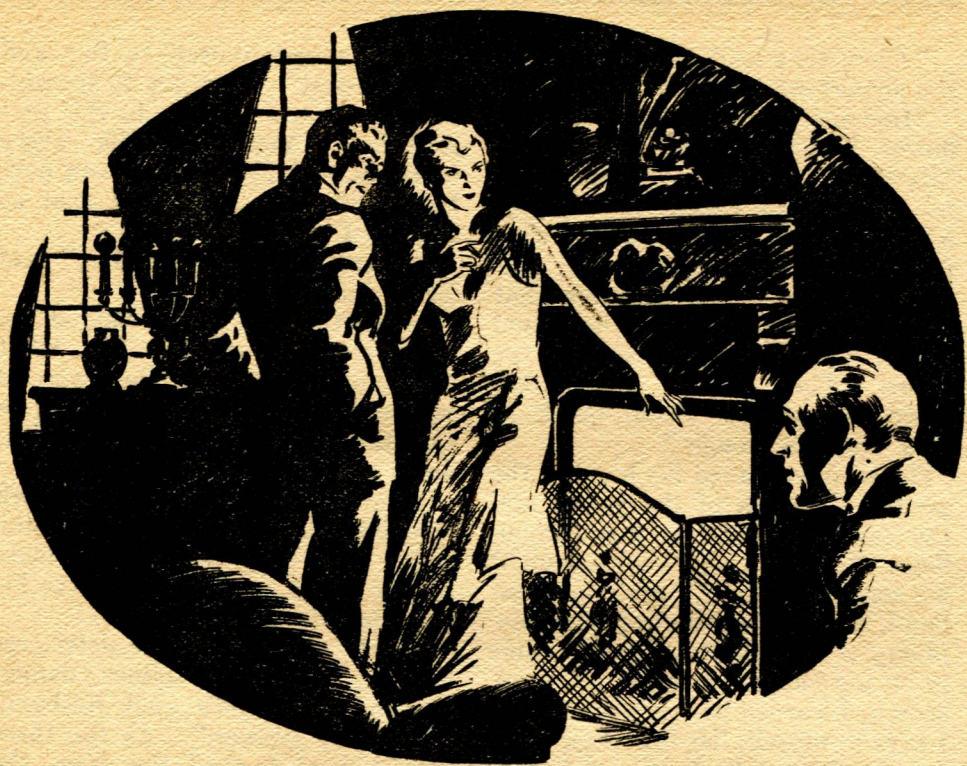
A Thrilling Novelette, "THE STILLED HEART,"

by PAUL ELLSWORTH TRIEM,

will appear in Next Week's Issue.

PRICE REDUCTIONS HURT BOOTLEGGERS

AS every one knows, prices in a great many commodities have been reduced, in order to stimulate business. In a recent research, it has been found that the bootlegger has been suffering among others. Gin, it is said, is now twelve to twenty-five per cent below prewar prices. The poor bootlegger is to be pitied.



They were all three in the same boat, wanting to benefit by his foul death.

THE UNLOVED BRIDEGROOM

By CHRISTOPHER B. BOOTH

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

DESIROUS of improving her position, Mrs. Quimby has induced her daughter, Jeanetta, to agree to marry Huston Potter, a man of wealth and position. The girl's heart, however, belongs to an impetuous lover, Roscoe Carver. When Roscoe hears of the coming marriage, he pleads with Mrs. Quimby and Jeanetta.

The girl, discouraged by the picture of poverty she would face if she married Roscoe, and repelled by his unkempt appearance, tells him to go. Roscoe rushes out with intention of having it out with Huston. He meets Huston on horseback, drags him off the horse, and asks him to call off the wedding. The mad lover is about to strike Huston

when Baxter and Hildegard Potter and Fletcher Chandler—who would benefit by Huston's death—come on the scene. Roscoe leaves, muttering a threat.

The marriage takes place. At the reception, Kitty, Huston's divorced wife, comes upon the scene and tells Baxter that she is afraid that her brother, Buck, intends to take vengeance on Huston for the shabby way he treated her.

Baxter makes the remark: "With two of 'em after Huston, it's really too bad that one of us hasn't got the nerve to see that something comes of it."

When Mr. and Mrs. Huston are on the threshold, ready to enter the limousine which will take them for their honeymoon trip to Portland, a pistol shot comes from somewhere and Huston drops dead.

CHAPTER VI.

AT BRIDGE.

THE wife of the county attorney had asked in a few friends for an evening at bridge, and one of the county attorney's violent aversions was bridge, both auction and contract. Had he known in advance of the arrangement, he would have provided himself with a diplomatic excuse to be absent. However, his wife had not informed him of her plan for a social evening until she had first neatly trapped him into an admission that he had no after-dinner appointment with an important client, necessitating his presence at the office.

It is by no means impossible that one reason County Attorney Chapman so thoroughly disliked bridge as

an evening's diversion was that he stood six feet two in his shoes and was the possessor of a very long pair of legs. The designers of those folding bridge tables have, it must be admitted, neglected the comfort of the big fellows; their legs are continually getting in the way of somebody else's legs, and to attempt crossing their knees is to run the risk of spilling the dummy into someone's lap.

Another reason that Frank Chapman so completely detested an evening of bridge was that he had no patience for small talk and neighborhood gossip. He had yet to see a gathering of eight or more without one among the number who had a tongue loose at both ends—and nothing either important or interesting to say. Mrs. Beatty with her endless quotations of all the cute little things her favorite grandchild had said! Miss Handpicker, a spinster inwardly resentful of every woman who had a husband, going out of her way to say unkind things! Dick Couzens addicted to anecdotes about his boyhood!

This evening, the topic of conversation was the Potter-Quimby wedding, an event in which County Attorney Chapman did not realize that he was soon to become earnestly concerned. As he listened to the chatter, it did not even remotely occur to him that any number of the details were to stick in his mind and to become important. For the moment, he was merely extremely annoyed, and wished that it wasn't a trait of human nature to be interested in other people's affairs.

Mrs. Beatty was talking volubly, and, naturally enough, trumped her partner's ace.

"Sorry, partner; my mistake. As I was saying, Mrs. Quimby reminded me of a pouter pigeon—just

that puffed! It was sickening, positively sickening, to look at her conceit. As if it's anything to get conceited about—marrying off her daughter to one of those Potters! With all their money, they're a no-good lot. Common, that's what they are; downright common, all of 'em. Well, I guess Mrs. Quimby won't be so stuck up on herself after Jeanetta's husband has divorced her and dragged her name through the mud, like he did his first wife. Turned her out without a dollar, so they say. Was that your king, partner? Oh, I'm so awfully sorry; my mistake."

"Jeanetta's such a sweet girl," observed Marie Loescher. "And terribly in love with Roscoe Carver—so I always thought. She's still in love with him, if you ask me. At the wedding, she looked wretchedly unhappy. I momentarily expected that she'd burst into tears. It was plain to everybody that her mother was driving her into it."

"All the Potters drink," chimed in Bertha Handspicker from an adjoining table, "like fish. They say that Baxter Potter hasn't drawn a really sober breath in five or six years. And the girl—she drinks, too. I've heard she's awfully fast."

Mrs. Beatty sniffed. "What else could you expect from her?"

"She couldn't be any worse than the Potters, even if she was a foundling," said Bertha Handspicker.

"Foundling?" Mrs. Beatty expressively raised her eyebrows. "My dear! Is it possible that you don't know about that?"

County Attorney Chapman groaned under his breath, cautiously moved his feet, and wondered how much longer he could endure it without exploding.

"I believe it's your play, Mrs. Beatty," he suggested.

"Oh, so it is. Awfully sorry." Mrs. Beatty discarded indiscriminately. "Why, I thought every one knew about *that*! She's as much a Potter as any of them. Who her mother was, nobody knows, but Gregory Potter was her father. He was the wildest of any of them; he was drowned, you may remember. Well, it was right after that when the girl, Hildegard, was left on the doorstep. Enoch Spaulding was working there that summer; I had it from Enoch himself. He saw the note the mother had pinned to the basket; it said the child was Gregory Potter's and that it was up to the Potters to see after her. Rufus Potter legally adopted her—one of the few decent things he ever did in his life. I've always said——"

County Attorney Chapman heard the telephone ringing, and hoped the call was for him; if so, no matter whom it was from, he meant to twist it into an excuse for a quick exit. But heavy bodies move slowly, and, while he was trying to get himself disentangled without completely upsetting the flimsy table, his wife had beaten him to it. She gave him a knowing smile as if to say, "I'm onto all your tricks, old boy; you'll not put one over on me this time."

The Chapmans' telephone was in the hall, at the foot of the stairs. Mrs. Chapman took down the receiver and answered. Instantly, she knew that the call came from the sheriff's office at the county jail, for the voice was undoubtedly that of Bert Winthrop, the turnkey; she had heard it often enough to know. "Frank there, Mrs. Chapman?" Bert was unusually brusque, even for him.

"Yes, Bert, he is, but——"

"Get him to the phone quick as you can, Mrs. Chapman," barked Bert.

Mrs. Chapman handed the telephone to her husband. "It's for you, Frank."

"Hello!" The county attorney's voice, robust as the man himself, boomed out with an almost thunderous vibration. His wife remained standing in the doorway. "Yes, Bert. . . . What's that? The devil you say! All right, I'll be ready."

With almost the same motion that he hung up the receiver and put down the telephone, he was reaching for the closet door under the stairs to get his hat. It was a wide-brimmed ten-gallon Stetson which had, from fifteen years of wearing, become an inseparable part of him—as much a part of his individuality as either his eyeglasses or his close-clipped black mustache.

"Just a moment, young man. Where are you going so fast? I've a suspicion that you're running out on me. I'm not so sure but that you arranged with Bert Winthrop to call you." The next instant, however, Mrs. Chapman realized this suspicion was groundless, for she saw that her husband's face was set into lines of grimness, and that his eyes, behind the gleam of his eyeglasses, had a dazed look.

"Shut the door," he said tensely. "I don't want that crowd in there yapping at me with a hundred or more questions I can't answer. Tell 'em after I've gone if you like." A car came racing down the street in front of the Chapman house. "That's Sheriff Cooper now; Bert called to tell me that Clyde was on his way to pick me up."

"But, Frank! You haven't told me what all this is about. What's happened?"

"Murder, that's what's happened. Up at the Potter place. Talk about coincidence!"

Outside, Sheriff Cooper was

sounding his horn. Chapman moved swiftly toward the door.

"But, Frank, you haven't told me who——"

"The bridegroom," he hurriedly explained. "Don't try to ask me any more questions. That's all I know. Somebody shot Huston Potter, and he's dead. Don't sit up for me; no telling when I'll be back." And, with that, he was gone.

Clyde Cooper, the sheriff of Walden County, put his car in motion scarcely before Chapman had gotten his foot on the running board, and the latter almost lost his hat.

"Sorry, Frank; my foot slipped off the clutch pedal."

"Excited as that, eh?"

Sheriff Cooper trod heavily upon the accelerator, and the machine fairly leaped forward on the down grade.

"Suppose Bert told you where we're headed for and why."

The county attorney nodded. "Merely that somebody had shot Huston Potter and killed him. Know any of the details?"

Cooper shook his head. "Only that the shot was fired as he and Jeanetta were getting into a car, starting on their honeymoon. I didn't ask many questions; thought that had better wait until we got there. The important thing, it seemed to me, was for you and me to get up there as quickly as possible."

Chapman agreed with a nod. "Didn't happen to slip your mind to call Doc Bellamy?"

"Told Bert to call him, as soon as he'd called you. Doc will come out in his own car." The sheriff swung sharply into High Street, and turned westward, heading swiftly for Signal Hill.

The county attorney tried to stretch out his long legs into a posi-

tion of ease, but discovered that the sheriff's car had not been designed to meet his individual comfort. He fumbled at his pocket for a cigar and lighted it with an electric gadget on the dash.

"Odd thing," he said. "The missus had some of the neighbors in for a couple of tables of bridge; they were talking about the Potters as Bert's phone call came through. Know who they are, of course, but never paid any particular attention to them. They certainly must be one grand family if half the stuff one hears about 'em is true."

A grunt was Cooper's only answer to this attempt at conversation, and Chapman, knowing the other pretty well, sensed that his friend, the sheriff, was mentally disturbed. A look into the latter's face confirmed it.

"Murder's not a nice sort of business, Clyde, but there's no sense making a personal concern of it. Snap out of it, old man."

The sheriff drew a deep breath. "I've got a feeling," he said uneasily, "that we're going to run into something I won't like—a personal concern that can't be avoided."

"That's a riddle to me. Exactly what do you mean?"

Sheriff Cooper slackened the car's speed. "This afternoon, Huston Potter married Jeanetta Quimby," he explained. "Now you wouldn't think that would mean anything to me, one way or the other."

"Well, how *does* it mean anything to you?" grunted Chapman. "I'm still waiting for the answer." He was inclined to be impatient of long-winded, roundabout explanations. Direct and straight to the point—that was his way.

"It was all set that Jeanetta was to marry Roscoe Carver," went on the sheriff. "Then Huston Potter

stepped into the picture, and that pushed Roscoe out."

"And you're guessing in advance that Roscoe did the shooting. Isn't that what you're driving at, Clyde? Too bad, if true. Rather liked Roscoe myself; he used to do the repairs on my car. But I thought he'd got a job down below—Boston, somebody told me."

"He came home this morning. Seems he didn't know until yesterday that Jeanetta was marrying Potter. I'm worried about what we're going to find up there on Signal Hill."

"What makes you so interested in Roscoe Carver?" inquired Chapman as he lowered the window of the car to knock off the ash from his cigar.

"It happens," replied the sheriff, "Roscoe is my wife's nephew."

"Oh, I see. Guess I should have known that. Naturally, it wouldn't be very pleasant, arresting your wife's nephew for murder. But we won't cross that particular bridge until we've come to it. Step on the gas, Clyde; the quicker we get to the Potter place, the sooner we'll know what we're up against. I wouldn't put Roscoe Carver at the top of the suspects, if I were you."

He was thinking back over all the talk the garrulous Mrs. Beatty had made about the Potters, especially what she said concerning Huston Potter's divorced wife.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THREE OF THEM.

JEANETTA had fainted. Standing in the open doorway, staring down at the motionless body of her husband, a black, swimming mist had gathered in front of her eyes.

It swallowed her up with a merciful respite from the awful horror.

When her senses returned to her, she had the feeling of emerging from a sleep that had been harrowed by a terrible nightmare. Some one had carried her inside the house and upstairs. She was lying on a bed.

Had it really happened, or had she dreamed it? If only she could open her eyes and discover that she was in her own room, and that none of it had actually happened—not even the wedding!

There were voices; she heard her mother's name spoken.

"She'll be all right, Mrs. Quimby. Not a scratch on her. Fainted, that's all. And small wonder she did."

Jeanetta slowly opened her eyes. Anxiously her mother leaned down over her.

"Are you all right, dear? Are you sure that you're all right?"

The bride, tragically a widow within less than five hours of her marriage, found it difficult to speak. Her lips seemed stuck together, and she had to pry them apart with the tip of her tongue before she could make them move.

"Huston," she asked in a halting whisper, "is he—is he dead?"

No one answered her question, but the very silence gave reply. Jeanetta closed her eyes again. She tried to feel grief that death had snatched her husband from her; but the effort was insincere. It was wicked, she supposed, but it was impossible for her to deceive herself; she welcomed escape even upon these ghastly terms.

Baxter Potter pushed some one aside and came around from the foot of the bed where he had been standing, watching her. His face had a mottled look, and there was a tight expression about his eyes.

"Listen, Jeanetta; I want to ask you——"

"Please!" begged Mrs. Quimby, catching at his sleeve with a violently trembling hand. "The poor child is in no condition to be questioned. Do you want to drive her into hysterics?"

But Jeanetta did not feel the least hysterical, but just numb. She opened her eyes again. "Yes?" she said.

"Did you see who it was who shot Huston?" Baxter Potter blurted.

A shudder ran through her body. Until Baxter Potter had asked this question, she hadn't thought of Huston's death in terms of murder. Some one had fired the shot—of course! How strange it was she had fully realized this! Fresh horror gripped a hold of her, and her heart went cold with dread, as her mind raced back to the morning. Again, locked within her room but listening with her ear pressed against the door, she heard Roscoe shouting at her mother: "He can't have her! I'm going to stop it. You think I can't? All right, I'll show you whether I can or not. Wait and see!"

Some one had stopped it. Who but Roscoe would have possibly wanted to stop it? Jeanetta felt as though her heart were going to cease beating. If, against the pillow, her head seemed to nod "Yes," it was merely that she was trying to get her breath.

"Who?" demanded Baxter Potter.

Jeanetta was greatly confused. "I—I don't know!" she gasped.

Baxter Potter leaned slightly closer. "Was it a man or a woman?" he asked.

"I think"—Jeanetta hardly recognized the voice as her own—"that it was a woman." Had she actually said that? Why had she lied like

this? She had seen no one, not even the spurting flash of fired gunpowder coming from the clump of evergreen trees on the far side of the driveway. Suddenly, she covered her face with her hands and gave way to a violent outburst of weeping.

Baxter Potter drew a deep breath and abruptly turned away. Whatever had prompted him to question Jeanetta, her answers seemed to have satisfied him, and he made no further attempt to pursue the rôle of interrogator. He passed out of the room and vanished into the hall.

Mrs. Quimby was asking the others to leave. She wanted to be alone with her daughter a few moments, and, when she had gotten rid of them, she closed the door and drew a chair close beside the bed. Jeanetta had turned over on her side, her face averted, her shoulders heaving in intermittent spasms of muffled sobbing.

"Jeanetta!" Mrs. Quimby's voice was lowered to a strained whisper. "Was—that true what you said just now?"

No reply!

"Why don't you answer me, dear? Was it true?"

Still no reply from the girl! Mrs. Quimby's lips settled into a grim line as she moved her head.

"Then it wasn't. That's what I suspected. You were lying; it wasn't a woman you saw. It was Roscoe! That's why you lied!"

Jeanetta discovered herself in a completely unpremeditated situation. She wouldn't have deliberately gotten herself into it, but, having already committed herself, she found it very easy to persist in the deception, even to elaborate upon the falsehood.

"It wasn't Roscoe. I tell you it wasn't!" she cried. "I'm sure it was

a woman. I saw"—she paused for an instant, fumbling with her words—"I saw what looked like a woman's skirt."

Mrs. Quimby was unconvinced and deeply agitated. She fairly wrung her hands.

"Do you realize what you're doing, Jeanetta? You're protecting a murderer. That's what you're doing."

"It wasn't Roscoe," fiercely persisted Jeanetta. "It couldn't have been Roscoe! He wouldn't have done such a cowardly thing. No matter what you think, or anybody thinks, I don't believe it; I'll never believe it!" She caught her breath. "I'll swear it wasn't Roscoe; no matter who asks me, or how many times they ask me, I'll swear it wasn't Roscoe. It was a woman. I tell you it was a woman."

Such is the magical power of the human imagination, that it seemed to Jeanetta, thinking back to the dazed moment on the stoop of the rear entrance, that she actually *had* seen the flash of a woman's skirt through the darkness.

As Baxter Potter descended the stairway, immediately after having spoken to Jeanetta, he met Phelps, the family butler, coming up.

"I have a message for you, sir," said Phelps, who appeared to be taking the murder quite calmly; it was as though so many amazing things had taken place in this house that it was no longer possible to startle him. "Miss Hildegard asked me to find you; she would like to see you in the library."

Baxter nodded and passed on down the steps. Reaching the downstairs hall, he paused for a moment before the mirror and observed his own reflection. His bathing tie had become slightly pulled out at one end; he straightened it

with a meticulous rarely to be found in men who have been heavy drinkers over a long period. A very faint smile broke through the habitual gloom of his countenance, hovered at the corners of his mouth for a bare instant, and then was gone.

As he turned and approached the closed door to the left, he paused and put his ear close to the panel, listening. From within came the murmur of voices, too subdued for the words to be more than an unintelligible undertone of sound.

As Baxter entered the library, Hildegard Potter and Fletcher Chandler were standing quite close together in front of the fireplace. The room was plunged into long, deep shadows, except for the illuminated spot in front of the hearth. The light from the shaded wall bracket above the mantel shone across her face. It was pale and tense. She was nervously smoking a cigarette.

Fletch's back was toward the door, his feet braced wide apart and his hands rammed stiffly into the pockets of his dinner coat. It was not necessary to see his features to know he was laboring under a heavy nerve strain. He swung around quickly as he heard the door open.

"Shut it behind you, Bax," said Hildegard and tossed her half-finished cigarette into the fireplace.

"Yes, I meant to," said Baxter. "I anticipated that this was to be a star-chamber session." He closed the door and sauntered across the room, as though to impress upon the other two how calm and collected he was in comparison with their mutual state of tension. He picked out a chair and sat down. Whether or not its location among the shadows dictated his selection, he was shrouded in a gloom which made his

face a mere patch of gray, vague and indistinct.

For perhaps the measure of two dozen seconds, neither of the three spoke. Fletch Chandler took a cigarette case from his pocket, and his fingers were so clumsy that he almost dropped it. Mechanically, he offered the silver container to Hildegard before taking one himself; she, just as mechanically, took one of the cigarettes, put it to her lips, and waited for him to provide her with a light. One of her slipper heels clicked nervously against the tiles of the hearth.

Baxter Potter clasped his hands about one knee and gently swayed his foot. Another faint smile played briefly across his mouth, unseen by the other two.

"If either of you have got anything to say, why not have it over with?" he said. "I really don't see why it should be so difficult. Unless, of course——"

"Please don't joke about it! Please, Bax!" pleaded Hildegard, a nervous catch in her husky voice.

"Did it sound as if I were joking? That wasn't the intentional effect, let me assure you. It would be rotten taste, wouldn't it? No, I wasn't attempting humor. Murder's a pretty serious thing."

Fletch Chandler pulled at his collar as though it had suddenly shrunk a size or so and were half choking him. He swallowed, making a gulping sound, and moistened his lips with his tongue.

"It's become an unpleasant situation for—for all three of us," he said. "We thought—Hildegard and I—that it would be best if we talked it over before—well, before the police get here. You know what I'm driving at."

"Being reasonably intelligent, and, as it happens, at the moment unbe-

lievably sober, I rather fancy I do," responded Baxter Potter.

"All that nonsense about mental suggestion and about taking advantage of the situation," Fletch plunged on, "puts all three of us in an awfully bad light, you see. Embarrassing, no end. No telling what the consequences might be."

"Humph!" grunted Baxter Potter. "Being suspected of murder has never been one of my experiences, but I imagine it would be slightly unpleasant."

"Of course," Fletch said, "all that pother we were getting off was just so much conversation. Not a word of it was meant seriously, but, you see, what gives it such an ugly look is that all three of us stand to benefit by Huston's death."

"Three of us, did I understand you to say?" asked Baxter with a rising inflection.

Fletch tried to smile, but the effect was rather ghastly. He looked at Hildegard who took a puff at her cigarette and nodded.

"We might as well tell him, I suppose," she said.

"The truth of the matter, Bax," blurted Fletch Chandler, "is that Hildegard and I are married."

Baxter Potter was completely surprised. "The devil you say!" he exclaimed. "And when did this happen?"

"Three weeks ago," answered Fletch; "the week-end we drove up to Bar Harbor for the Bennings' house party."

"House parties have been known to have that effect on people," observed Baxter. "But, if I may ask, why should you two be so clandestine about it?"

A flush crept up over the top of Fletch Chandler's collar.

"You know the answer to that. Don't rub it in, old man."

Baxter did know. The reason had to do with the terms of Rufus Potter's will, which gave Hildegard a home and a fairly generous allowance so long as she remained unmarried. When she took a husband, the income from the estate stopped; and Fletch, having a hard enough time making a go of it alone, was in no position financially to take on the added burden of supporting a wife.

But now it was different; Huston's death removed the necessity for secrecy. The bullet that had ended Huston's life put Hildegard into a snug sum of money, enough to support her and Fletch in pretty good style, for some time to come.

"We're all in the same boat, and it's not a nice kind of a boat to be in, either," said Hildegard. "Fletch and I thought that the three of us should agree to be careful of what we say."

Fletch jerked a handkerchief from the breast pocket of his coat and dabbed at his forehead. He was perspiring rather freely.

"You're bound to agree with us, Bax; it's the sensible thing."

Baxter reached out his hand. "Toss me your cigarette case, will you, Fletch? I seem to have misplaced mine somewhere or other." As he struck a match, the flare of flame illuminated his long, thin face for a moment. He appeared to be grimly amused. "Don't work yourself up in a stew. Does it relieve you to be told that you and I are in the clear?"

Fletch Chandler's chin jerked up. "What do you mean—in the clear?" he asked.

Baxter took a leisurely puff at his cigarette. "I've just come down from the blue room. Jeanetta fainted, y'know, and we took her up there. I stuck around until she

came out of it. Took it upon myself to ask her if she saw who it was who potted Huston, and she said"—he paused for a bare instant, staring steadily at Hildegarde—"she said it was a woman."

Hildegarde's hands clenched so tightly that her knuckles stood out in shiny little knobs.

"That's a lie!" she cried, her voice rising shrilly.

Baxter shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know whether it's my veracity or Jeanetta's you're questioning, but you do speak most positively. But why do you get so excited about it, my dear cousin? Even if Jeanetta did see a woman, it might have been Kitty, you know."

"Oh!" said Hildegarde.

"By Jove, yes!" exclaimed Fletch with considerable vigor. "I'd forgotten about Kitty. Hanged if I hadn't! That stuff she told you about her brother may have been just a tale."

Hildegarde drew a deep breath. "Bax, are you going to tell the police that Kitty was here?"

"Got to," Baxter answered. "Hate like the devil having to drag her into it—always rather liked her, you know—but it can't be helped. Dug Meeker, I'm sure, saw me talking to her out there on the porch; Dug was pretty soused, but he always remembers things that happen when he was drunk."

There was a moment of silence. Fletch again had his handkerchief out and was swabbing his forehead.

"See here," he blurted, "we haven't really settled things. It is agreed that we're to keep our mouths shut about the other end of this awful business?"

"Oh, that," said Baxter. "Absolutely!" He suddenly straightened and cocked his head to one side.

"Isn't that a car driving up? The village constabulary, I fancy. Am I to be the chairman of the reception committee?"

"Yes!" said Fletch, and Hildegarde moved her head in assent.

Baxter Potter got to his feet without haste and walked toward the other two.

"By the way," he inquired, "where were you two when it happened?"

Fletch and Hildegarde looked at each other.

"Mind you," went on Baxter, "I don't insist upon an answer; personally, I don't care. But—um—we have awfully heavy dews up here in Maine; grass gets awfully wet, and satin does stain with moisture. If I were you, Hildegarde, I think I should run upstairs and change my slippers."

Hildegarde looked down at her satin slippers.

"You think you're clever, don't you, Bax? And you are clever!"

"I was making up a drink and missed the glass with the seltzer bottle," interposed Fletch. "That's how her slippers got wet."

Baxter made a brief gesture. "That's all right by me. Mum's the word between the three of us."

Hildegarde raised her head and stared at him with narrowed eyes. "If you want to know what I think, Bax, you killed Huston yourself."

CHAPTER VIII.

QUESTIONING PEOPLE.

LET'S get out of here," said County Attorney Chapman with a grimace of distaste. "I don't enjoy looking at a dead man."

Sheriff Cooper slowly replaced the

sheet over Huston Potter's lifeless body, and himself turned away.

"I'll be interested to see the bullet that did this job, Frank; looks like he'd been shot with a cannon ball. The caliber of it has got me guessing."

Baxter Potter had met the two county officers upon their arrival a few minutes previous; he had, at their request, conducted them to the room where Huston's body lay, and he now waited outside the door. So far, much to his surprise, there had been no questions; also to his surprise, neither the sheriff nor the county attorney seemed to be in the least overwhelmed by coming to grips with murder which, in a place where crimes of violence were rare, must be an unusual experience for them.

In fact, both Chapman and Cooper completely disappointed Baxter's preconceived picture of a comedy constabulary, swaggering and blustering in an ineffectual effort to conceal a hopeless inability in such matters. They neither swaggered nor blustered; nor did either of them appear to be in the least awed, or even impressed, by the fine and luxuriously furnished summer mansion.

Frank Chapman came out into the hall, towering nearly a full head above Baxter Potter. The high-crowded Stetson made him appear even taller than he was. Baxter was helping himself to a cigarette; he offered his case to the county attorney, and the latter took one, furnished his own match, and blew a thin spiral of smoke toward the ceiling.

"Ghastly, isn't it?" said Baxter.

County Attorney Chapman nodded. "Murder always is," he answered. "Who, in your opinion, killed your cousin?"

Baxter Potter flicked off a gray bit of ash from his cigarette, and raised his eyes to meet Frank Chapman's gaze.

"A man doesn't like to have an opinion about a thing like this, unless he's absolutely sure, or at least reasonably so," he replied. "Please do not misunderstand me. I mean to give you all the help I possibly can, but I'd prefer leaving opinions to some one else. You'll want to ask questions of every one, and, if you care to begin with me, it suits me all right."

"Then, I take it, you were not an actual witness to the shooting," said Chapman.

"You're right; I wasn't," responded Baxter. "There were only two persons, so far as I know, who were actual witnesses. One was Clarence, our chauffeur, and the other was Jeanetta. You see, Huston and his bride were driving down to Portland to-night. To-morrow they were to sail for Yarmouth. Clarence had the car at the side entrance. Huston and Jeanetta had come down the back stairs, sneaking away from the bunch. When you take a look——"

"Let's take a look right now," broke in Sheriff Cooper. "We'll have a clearer idea of what we're talking about."

"This way, then," said Baxter Potter, and moved down the hallway toward the rear stairs. At the foot of the steps, in the small, square side entrance hallway, he opened the door. Above their heads, the light which Huston Potter had turned on, a few seconds before the shot from ambush had ended his life, was still burning. It illuminated the splotch of crimson just over the threshold, marking the exact spot where the murdered bridegroom had fallen. The Potter limousine was standing

where it had awaited the newly wedded pair.

"I doubt," said Baxter Potter, tossing his half-finished cigarette into the driveway, "that any one but the chauffeur and Jeanetta heard the shot. Huston had a jazz orchestra up from Boston to furnish music for the dancing; the melody boys were hitting the high spots when it happened. At least, it's to be presumed they were; the orchestra was getting to the end of a number when somebody came rushing in to tell us what had happened."

"Was this outside light burning?" asked Chapman.

"Yes, I think so," replied Baxter.

"Then that made your cousin a clear target," said the sheriff. He squinted one eye half shut and tried to peer ahead through the darkness, made all the more impenetrable because the light above his head made the night seem even blacker than it actually was. "The shot must have come from over there; the bullet must have passed over the radiator hood of the car. It couldn't have possibly come from any other direction."

Baxter Potter jerked his head in assent. "From that clump of evergreens, no doubt," he said. "You're right about the direction, sheriff; unless the car has been moved, and I'm pretty sure it hasn't."

Cooper went down the three steps to the level of the driveway and started toward the clump of shrubbery.

"Careful there, Clyde!" Chapman called after him. "Don't spoil the chances of footprints." But the chances of footprints were negligible on a sod so firmly packed, and the sheriff explained this as he kept moving. His form became more indistinct and, a moment later, was completely swallowed up in the

darkness. The other two could hear him mutter in annoyance as his pocket battery lamp failed to work with the first pressure of his finger against the contact button. A little jiggering was necessary before its beam shot forth, sweeping slow-moving paths of light over the grass, with particular attention to the ground about the neatly landscaped clumps of evergreen.

Nothing came of it; if there were any clues, daylight would be needed to discover them. As Cooper came back to the stoop, Baxter Potter glanced down at the sheriff's shoes; the tan leather was slightly discolored by contact with the dew-drenched grass.

"We'll have another look out there in the morning—if we don't get to the bottom of this business before morning," said Cooper. "Now let's start digging for facts. We might as well start with Potter."

"Suppose we go inside," suggested Baxter. "I'll turn the library over to you, if you like. I fancy you'll be wanting to question practically everybody, and that's likely to take time; no reason you shouldn't be as comfortable as possible."

The county attorney agreed to this plan of procedure. Baxter conducted the two officials toward the front of the big house, and into the library where he, Hildegard and Fletch Chandler had held their little conference some ten or fifteen minutes previously. He turned on a flood of light and gestured toward a desk large enough to be the pride of a motion-picture magnate.

"If you should care to make notes," he offered helpfully, "the desk will probably be a convenience."

But County Attorney Chapman ignored the desk. Baxter Potter be-

gan to irritate him. There was something about the latter's calmness which made it unmistakably evident that he was emotionally unconcerned by the tragic death of his cousin; he was less affected than one might expect him to be over the passing of the family dog.

Chapman sat down in one of the easy-chairs. The sheriff and Potter remained standing.

"Now, let's get started," said Cooper. "Go ahead, Potter. Tell us what you know about the murder."

Baxter Potter took a fresh cigarette from his silver case, tapped it against the back of his hand, but did not immediately light it.

"Probably, you already know," he began, "that this afternoon wasn't the first time Huston had been married. It was his second venture. Three years ago, he had his first try at it with a girl named Kitty Parks, but it didn't last long. Expect you read some of it in the papers; the tabloids made a seven-day headline carnival out of it. He sued her for a divorce and got it. Kitty claimed Huston had framed her to get out of paying alimony.

"Nice sort of girl, Kitty; she had my sympathy all through the mess. Hate like the very devil seeing her get smeared up again, but"—he made a gesture with his hands—"it's a pretty risky thing, trying to cover anybody up, when murder's been done."

"Humph!" grunted Chapman. "Without venturing an opinion, you're telling us that your cousin's former wife shot him. Is that the size of it, Potter?"

If Baxter got the broad hint of sarcasm in the voice of the county attorney, it didn't in the least disturb him.

"I'm telling you nothing of the

sort, Mr. Chapman. I'm merely going to tell you what I know for a fact. About an hour before Huston was killed, I happened to step out onto the front porch. Who should be coming up the steps but Kitty. Naturally, I thought she was here to make a row, and I told her such things weren't being done. Her answer was that she wanted to avoid trouble, that she had a brother just out of the navy, that she'd told him about the raw deal Huston had given her, and that big brother was gunning for Huston.

"She didn't so much mind Huston getting put on the spot, but she didn't want her brother spending the rest of his life down at Thomaston. I told her there wasn't anything to worry about as, within less than an hour, Huston and Jeanetta would be on their way to Boston." He made another gesture, one of finality.

"The last I saw of her," he concluded, "she was walking away. I took it for granted she came out from Lockport by taxi; I suppose she went back to town the same way. And that's all I can tell you—about Kitty."

Chapman was not at all surprised; this exactly fitted his own premature theory, or hunch, based upon the fragments of gossip he had picked up in his own home during the bridge game.

Sheriff Cooper drew a deep breath of relief; the murdered man's divorced wife so obviously supplied the motive of the crime that it no longer seemed possible that Mrs. Cooper's nephew was to be seriously considered as a suspect. But the sheriff's relief was premature.

"Did you tell your cousin of Kitty's visit?" the county attorney demanded of Baxter.

"No," the latter admitted, "I

didn't. That, of course, was a mistake, a most unfortunate mistake."

"Extremely unfortunate for your cousin," grunted Chapman, again deeply irritated by the manner of the witness; he could not get rid of the feeling that Baxter Potter was secretly amused rather than appalled by the situation. "Well, if you think you've told us all you know, then——"

"About Kitty, yes; but there's also the matter of the young chap, Carver, and, in all fairness to Kitty, you'd better know about that, too."

Sheriff Cooper looked startled, and Baxter Potter, little knowing that he was treading upon family ground, calmly and easily proceeded with his voluntary testimony.

"I gather," he said, "that Huston took another fellow's girl when he married Jeanetta. Anyhow, Jeanetta's mother rang up this morning to say that this Carver chap had made some threats—going to stop the wedding and some stuff like that. Huston had gone down the road, taking his daily ride. We meant to tell him when he got back, none of us taking it very seriously, you know."

"Along about that time, the Carver chap came driving up. His radiator was boiling over—and so was he. But it really didn't dawn on us who he was until Huston's horse came galloping up the hill with the saddle empty. Hildegarde, Fletch Chandler and myself cranked up the station wagon and went racing down the road to see what had happened. We'd begun to think it might be pretty serious."

Perhaps unconsciously, a smile flickered briefly across Baxter Potter's lips. Chapman frowned; he didn't like that in the least.

"But nothing serious had happened," went on Baxter. "Carver

had pulled Huston out of the saddle and was trying to give him a thrashing. One thing prevented it; Huston was lying flat on the ground and wouldn't get up. It's against the sporting rules, you know, to hit a man when he's down."

"Well, we chased Carver off and brought Huston on back to the house in the station wagon."

"Roscoe make any threats?" asked Chapman.

"Roscoe?" Potter repeated quite blankly.

"That happens to be Carver's first name," explained the county attorney.

"Oh, I see. Then you know the fellow personally? But, of course, you would in a town like Lockport. Threats? Hm-m-m—well, I suppose, under the circumstances, they might be classified as that." He pursed his lips, silent for a moment. "I'm trying to remember exactly what he did say; a man ought to be careful, quoting a fellow who's suspected of murder."

Sheriff Cooper wore an expression of worried concern.

"All right, let's have it," he said tensely. "What *did* Roscoe say?"

"You'll have to understand," qualified Baxter with apparent fairness to Roscoe, "that it was a kind of repartee. Hildegarde, Fletch and I found it no end of amusing to see Huston groveling there on the ground, not a scratch on him, and I jokingly said something about being awfully disappointed not to be finding him quite dead. Carver muttered something to the effect we'd find him like that some time. Dead, you know. I honestly think he didn't mean a word of it."

Cooper looked at Chapman and hoped the latter might agree with this opinion, but at the moment there was a rap on the closed door.

It was Phelps, the Potter butler, announcing the arrival of Doctor Bellamy, the medical examiner, a formality with which Doctor Bellamy, genial but gruff and blunt, had small patience. He pushed brusquely past the butler and entered the library. He was a stockily built man of about fifty, with a pouchy stomach, a cigar always clamped between his teeth, and an untidy way of allowing his cigar ashes to sprinkle down across his vest. The surgical kit he carried in his hand was worn and shabby, but you could depend upon it that the contents were up-to-date and that he knew how to use them.

"What have we got here? Murder, I understand. Humph! Attended the wedding this afternoon. The Quimbys are neighbors across the street. Didn't expect that I'd be performing an autopsy on the bridegroom before the day was over. Nice girl, Jeanetta! Too nice for Huston Potter! Told her so. How's Jeanetta taking it? Not exactly prostrated with grief, if I know anything about human nature. And a doctor does; take it from me, he does."

Both the county attorney and the sheriff were accustomed to these unsolicited outbursts of frankness from Doctor Bellamy. There wasn't another man in Lockport who could speak his open mind and get away with it as Doctor Bellamy did.

"The sheriff and I," said Chapman, "are particularly interested in knowing the caliber of the bullet. You go with the doctor, Clyde. I'll wait here."

Cooper looked uneasy; it occurred to him that perhaps the county attorney wanted to ask a few questions which might prove rather embarrassing with him present, considering the personal element of

Roscoe Carver being Mrs. Cooper's nephew.

But this was not true; it was merely that Chapman saw no necessity of again subjecting himself to the morbid, and he thought he might as well get things moving in the direction of questioning other witnesses. None of them might be able to give information of vital importance, but thoroughness demanded it nevertheless.

"First," he said to Baxter Potter as the door closed behind Doctor Bellamy and the sheriff, "I'll want to have a talk with your chauffeur. What did you say his name is?"

"Clarence," answered Baxter. "Clarence Hawes."

Chapman took an envelope from his pocket and jotted down the name of Clarence Hawes; his memory for the names of strangers was not the best.

Sheriff Cooper came back while Baxter Potter was getting hold of the chauffeur.

"Doctor Bellamy," said the sheriff, "is as puzzled over that wound as I am; he never saw anything quite like it, but he'll have the bullet for us within a few minutes. Frank!"

"Yes, Clyde."

"What about Roscoe? No soft-pedaling now. Give it to me straight."

The county attorney gestured impatiently. "I think Roscoe's a hot-headed young fool who's probably extremely lucky that Huston Potter's divorced wife showed up here to-night—especially if he can't account for his whereabouts between eight and nine. Oh, don't be such an old woman, Clyde. Either Kitty or her brother—perhaps the two of 'em together—there's our answer to this murder."

Cooper looked relieved. "Thought maybe you'd chased me out because

there was something you wanted to ask Potter."

The door opened and Baxter Potter brought in Clarence Hawes, the chauffeur. Clarence was extremely nervous and ill at ease. One would almost think that he expected to be accused of the murder. His eyes shifted and fell before the gaze of the two county officials.

"Well, Hawes," boomed out the resonant voice of Chapman, "what can *you* tell us about the shooting?"

For an instant, it appeared that Clarence wouldn't be able to tell them about anything. The fellow was tongue-tied.

"Don't go after Clarence too roughshod," interposed Baxter Potter in the chauffeur's behalf. "It's just his self-consciousness. Come on now, Clarence; talk up and tell 'em what you know."

Clarence gulped noisily. "I don't know nothin' about it," he began flounderingly. "I—well, I was sittin' behind the wheel, waitin' for the bride and groom, them bein' my orders. The door opens, the light turns on, and I'm startin' to get down and hand 'em inside the car when I catches on that things ain't right—like things should be between bride and groom, you understand—and so I sticks to my seat and pretends that I ain't hearin' a thing."

"But you did hear a good deal, eh, Hawes?" broke in the sheriff. "Huston Potter and his wife were quarreling. Isn't that it?"

Clarence gulped again, and nodded. "I suppose you'd call it that, yes, sir; but their quarrelin' didn't have nothin' to do with—with the murder." Clarence Hawes's voice had become earnest. "The shot come from across the driveway; I seen the flash, and it come from somewheres out there among the shrubbery. Seemed like I could

almost hear the bullet clippin' past me."

"What were Huston and his wife quarreling about?" County Attorney Chapman wanted to know.

"I couldn't rightfully say, sir; she was sayin' something about calling it off, and Mr. Huston got mad and says he ain't goin' to let her make a fool of him, and that she's goin' to get in the car if he's got to put her in. Then there was a shot and I seen the flash—and then everything was awful quiet. Mr. Huston didn't make a sound, and neither did she."

"Did you see who fired the shot?" demanded Sheriff Cooper.

Clarence shook his head slowly, ponderously.

"Did you see anybody?" persisted the sheriff.

"No, sir; I didn't." The chauffeur's tone was very positive.

"Did you hear any one running away through the darkness?" chimed in the county attorney.

Clarence wrinkled his shallow forehead, reached up his hand, and fumbled with the heavy lobe of his ear as he considered this question. Then he shook his head again.

"That's odd," offered Baxter Potter. "Jeanetta saw the murderer and is quite positive it was a woman."

Chapman's head jerked up. "Why in the name of common sense didn't you tell us that before?" he cried. "I guess that just about clinches your suspicion of Kitty. Where's Jeanetta? We should have been questioning her instead of the chauffeur. Get her down here and let's not lose any time about it? But just a minute, Potter. Let me ask you this: How was Kitty dressed?"

Baxter Potter, already halfway to the door, paused at the question, but he did not immediately answer it. After a contemplative moment,

he tossed up both hands in an empty gesture.

"Hanged if I can tell you," he replied. "I'm not much of a hand to notice women's clothes."

"Dress or coat?" roared Chapman in that giant voice of his which so easily raised itself to the crescendo of thunder. "White, black, red, green? You're not color-blind, are you?"

Baxter Potter shrugged his shoulders. "Poor memory for such details—that's all. But now that I think back, I do seem to remember that she had on a black satin coat."

"That's better," grunted Chapman.

"And, by the way," said Baxter, "you'll probably save time by going upstairs. Jeanette had fainted. She was already in bed when I saw her."

With a nod, the county attorney was promptly on his feet and gestured the sheriff to accompany him. The three of them ascended the stairs, leaving Clarence Hawes to shift for himself.

It was Jeanetta's mother who opened the door for them. Jeanetta herself was not lying down but sitting in a chair, pale, tense and tragic-looking. Neither she nor her mother uttered a word as Chapman, Cooper and Baxter Potter entered the room. Mrs. Quimby seemed about to speak, but changed her mind, and the pleading glance she gave her daughter was eloquent of frantic appeal.

The county attorney got directly to the point, as was his way.

"Do you feel equal to answering a few questions, Jeanetta?"

The girl caught her breath, slowly relaxed her tightly clenched fingers, only to close them again, and moved her head in assent.

"Yes, Mr. Chapman," she said

faintly, haltingly. "I—I'll tell you anything I can."

Feeling very sympathetic, entirely unsuspecting that he might be dealing with deception, he moved a chair forward, and sat down facing her. His thought was to make the ordeal as easy for her as possible, and saw no necessity for dragging in the matter of the quarrel with Huston which, according to the chauffeur, had taken place a bare few seconds before the fatal shot had been fired.

"Now, Jeanetta," he said with a gruff kind of gentleness, "perhaps you would prefer, rather than my asking questions, to tell us in your own words how it happened—as near as you know."

Again, the girl caught her breath; her lips trembled and steadied.

"It—it all happened with such terrible suddenness." Her voice was very low, scarcely louder than a whisper. "Huston was speaking to me; he was telling me to hurry and get in the car. Then I heard the shot." Her shoulders moved with a shudder at the picture it brought back to her. "Then Huston was lying there at my feet. That—that's all I remember."

"Except the most important thing," Chapman reminded her. "You saw some one running away."

For the barest instant, Jeanetta hesitated. "Yes," she answered, "I saw some one running away. I think it was a woman." Her voice paused; perhaps, she feared that she had not been sufficiently positive, for she added, "I'm sure it was a woman. I saw her dress—a white dress."

This brought the county attorney up with a start. A white dress? Baxter Potter had told them that Kitty wore a black satin coat. Here, indeed, was a puzzling conflict of testimony, and it was highly unrea-

sonable to suppose that Kitty, coming to Signal Hill wearing a coat, would have discarded it on so cool an evening as had followed the warm June afternoon. Discard a protective black and make herself conspicuous in a glaring show of white? It was impossible to believe. Deliberate murder isn't so reckless.

A white dress? How could the chauffeur, facing the direction from which the shot had come and, having seen the flash from the muzzle of the murder gun, have failed to see what Jeanetta maintained to have seen so clearly? Chapman looked at the girl more sharply, and tried to put himself in her place, standing out there at the side entrance. Where would her eyes be—on the clump of evergreens across the driveway, or upon her husband, falling dead at her feet?

"Jeanetta!" Chapman's voice had become stern and impersonally cold. The girl flinched slightly, raised her eyes for a startled instant, and then looked away, unmistakably frightened and confused by the penetrating steadiness of his suspicious stare.

"You're lying to us, Jeanette, and it won't go, young lady. Now let's have the truth."

The girl's head lifted in stubborn defiance; she forced her eyes to meet the county attorney's without wavering.

"How dare you talk to me like that!" she cried, but the indignation she tried to put into her voice didn't quite register. "I tell you, I saw some one running away. It was a woman, a woman in a white dress. I tell you it was!"

The very emphasis she gave to her words supplied the clew to the motive for her falsehood; she was obviously determined to convince

every one that it was not a man who had fired the fatal shot. She was trying to protect some one. Who else would it be but Roscoe Carver?

The more firmly Jeanetta clung to her lie, the more strongly she was inviting the belief that she actually had something to conceal. She had made Roscoe a really definite suspect.

CHAPTER IX.

DUMDUM BULLET.

NO amount of cross-questioning had been able to break Jeanetta down; stubbornly, she clung to her story of the woman in the white dress. Not even the pleading of her mother could induce her to abandon the tale when Mrs. Quimby, wringing her plump hands, joined forces with the two county officials and moaned that she knew her daughter was lying.

Baffled but not deceived, Chapman and Cooper gave it up. It was fortunate for Jeanetta that she wasn't having a pair of metropolitan policemen with whom to deal. A hard-boiled copper would have scarcely hesitated in placing her under arrest as a material witness and locked her up until she told the truth. But this wasn't the way of small communities where people lived together in close personal contact and where such a relentless officiousness would be sure to meet with popular disapproval. Such a stern procedure did not even remotely occur to either the sheriff or the county attorney.

Clyde Cooper's face wore a grave, distressed look as he and Chapman descended the stairs. Baxter Potter trailed along behind them.

"What do you think, Frank?" asked the sheriff.

Chapman clamped his hat tightly upon his head.

"She was lying, of course."

"Oh, I know that, but why was she lying? That's what has got me worried."

"You know the answer to that as well as I do, Clyde; she's trying to cover up Roscoe. She's still crazy in love with him, and a little thing like perjury isn't going to stop her from trying to keep Roscoe out of State's prison. And she's going to keep right on lying; I know a stone wall when I bump into one."

Sheriff Cooper made an unhappy gesture. "That means, then, that it was Roscoe she saw."

Chapman snorted. "It doesn't necessarily mean any such thing," he answered; "it may be merely that she's afraid it may have been Roscoe who fired the shot. She didn't see anybody. When you went out there toward the shrubbery looking for footprints, you were completely invisible until you flashed on your battery lamp. The chauffeur saw the gunpowder flash, and she didn't; therefore, if Jeanetta had seen anybody sneaking off—and they'd have been concealed behind the ever-green hedge—he'd have seen it, too. Plus that, Clyde, the light, shining in front of her as she stood in the doorway, blinded her." He shook his head. "No, it's my opinion she merely jumped at the conclusion it must be Roscoe because of the threats he'd made to stop the wedding."

They had reached the bottom of the steps, and Baxter Potter overtook them.

"Who'll you have for your next witness, gentlemen?" he asked.

Chapman hesitated between the choice of moving at once to find

Kitty or spending the next hour or hour and a half questioning people who very likely knew nothing whatever about the murder except that it had occurred. To find Kitty seemed to be a move of prime importance; and, of course, for the sake of leaving nothing to chance, it was wise to check up on Roscoe Carver. There were recurrent moments where he shared the sheriff's uneasiness about Roscoe, despite his stout and scornful dismissal of Roscoe as a serious suspect.

Doctor Bellamy came bustling into the hallway.

"Got the bullet; here it is." The medical examiner's voice sounded grim. "Humph! No wonder Clyde thought the man had been shot by a cannon ball. Just take a look at this!"

Doctor Bellamy extended his hand, exposing to view a flattened chunk of lead. The sheriff and the county attorney peered down at this grisly exhibit.

"What's the caliber?" demanded Cooper with a perplexed frown.

"The caliber," replied the doctor, "is .22. What you see here is murder in its most determined form. In other words, this bullet is a dum-dum."

Neither Chapman nor Cooper appeared to be enlightened.

"A dum-dum bullet," explained the medical examiner, "is one that's been creased across the point before the cartridge is fired. An ordinary knife blade will do the trick. Slash an X mark and you get a nice, deadly splattering effect when it hits the target. A dum-dum bullet is murder in earnest."

Doctor Bellamy paused to shift his inevitable cigar to the other side of his mouth.

"Potter died instantly; didn't know what hit him," he went on.

"He was killed with this bullet, and it was fired from a rifle."

"From a rifle?" grunted the county attorney. "How do you know that?"

"Depth of penetration," replied the doctor. "Do you think I've been performing autopsies the past twenty-five years for nothing? Now you've got my report, and I've got a very sick patient who needs me. Good night, Frank. Good night, Clyde."

Abruptly, he picked up his worn, shabby surgical kit and briskly took his departure.

County Attorney Chapman now turned toward Baxter Potter.

"Do you happen to know where Kitty lives?" he demanded.

Baxter nodded. "Unless she's recently moved, yes."

"Then where?" snapped Chapman, irritated that Potter didn't supply the desired information without having it thus pried out of him.

"Place down on the shore road called Spruce Point. She's been trying to get along on her own running a tea room. Not having a lot of luck at it, I understand."

Chapman considered. Spruce Point was about eighteen miles away, and he was anxious to get there as quickly as possible. He turned toward the sheriff.

"See here, Clyde, one of us ought to stay here and question the rest of these people. Some of 'em have doubtless slipped away from us already, and the rest of 'em probably don't know a thing about it, but we're overlooking no bets. So one of us stays here while the other drives down to Spruce Point after Kitty. You can take your pick."

"You're a lawyer; questioning witnesses is your regular line of business," promptly answered Cooper.

"I'll go after Kitty. Better bring her back here; eh, Frank?"

"Right, and don't forget the brother. It occurs to me that a fellow who's been in the navy may be a pretty good marksman, and probably knows all about dumdum bullets. Now get into your car and step on the gas."

Sheriff Cooper took a step toward the door and paused.

"What about Roscoe?"

Chapman gestured impatiently. "A fellow who refuses to hit a man when he's down isn't the sort who shoots from ambush with a notched bullet. Forget about Roscoe!"

As Cooper climbed into his car and started the motor, he was fervently wishing that he could follow this advice and entirely dismiss the possibility of Roscoe Carver's guilt from his mind. Yet his uneasiness persisted, and there was but one sure way to dispel it; that was to take an extra five minutes and stop at his sister-in-law's house on Bay View Street.

This was what he decided to do.

CHAPTER X.

THE WILL.

THE Potter house had a billiard room; it was on the third floor, occupying what might have otherwise been waste space under the eaves of the west wing. Here Hildergarde and Fletch Chandler had gone, upon the arrival of the sheriff and the county attorney. They had a desire to be alone together, and here they could talk as freely as they chose, without interruption of their privacy.

Neither of them, however, at once spoke their minds. Fletch picked up

a billiard cue and started making some shots. He was extremely expert at the game, but he now appeared to be the merest novice as he missed some of the easiest ones. Hildegarde sat down in one of the leather chairs, lighted herself a cigarette, and stared at Fletch from across the width of the table's green surface. Her eyes, slightly narrowed and intense, followed him as he moved about; her gaze hardly left his face.

Suddenly, she flung the cigarette onto the floor.

"Fletch!" she said sharply. "Stop it! Whatever we've come up here to say, let's say it and have it done with. What's the sense of stalling like this?"

The billiard balls clicked softly. The cue twitched in his hand, and she saw his shoulders move, like a man bracing himself to face something unpleasant. As he turned, his lips were clamped very tightly. After a moment, they relaxed.

"Well?" he responded, and waited for her to take charge of the conversation.

"Kitty didn't kill Huston, and neither did her brother. I feel sure they didn't; you feel certain they didn't, and so does Baxter. And"—Hildegarde's voice became a whisper—"one of us especially feels sure of it!"

Fletch Chandler nervously twisted the billiard cue; it slipped down through his fingers, and the butt of it struck against the floor with a thump. His face had a pasty look under the light.

"Yes," he echoed, "one of us especially knows it. And you—you think, of course, it was Baxter." This was half assertion and half question.

Hildegarde was silent, her eyes fixed upon his face. Under this

scrutiny, he unconsciously drew back a little and attempted a laugh which sounded hollow and entirely mirthless.

"Oh, I say, my dear, what's the idea of staring a hole through me like that?"

"I'm trying to be sure," she answered slowly. "I am trying to be very sure that it was Baxter."

"Oh, I say!" he repeated, this time in a tone of more vigorous protest. "You surely don't think— Oh, come, Hildegarde! Come now! Don't be so absurd!"

"Nothing is absurd in this house to-night," Hildegarde said tensely. "Let's be honest with each other, Fletch. Let's be absolutely honest. I want to know the truth. Was it Baxter who killed Huston or was it you?"

Fletch Chandler laughed shakily; there was something very closely akin to hysteria in it.

"I?" he cried. "You can't be serious, Hildegarde! You're forgetting what Baxter told us down there in the library about Jeanetta having seen a woman. What do you think I am, a female impersonator? Since you're making this a triangle, don't forget that you're one corner of the triangle yourself—and that I *didn't* squirt the seltzer on your slippers. That was for Baxter's benefit in case—well, in case you couldn't explain how you did get them wet."

Hildegarde gave him another of her long, penetrating stares.

"I can't quite make up my mind whether to believe you or not, Fletch. If you *are* telling the truth, then I suppose you're debating between Baxter and me, just as I, myself, debating between Bax and you."

Fletch tried to smile, but the attempt was rather ghastly; any effort

at humor was bound to be grim under the circumstances.

"Frankly, yes," he admitted. "Can you be surprised? All that talk down there on the porch this morning; what Bax told us about Kitty coming here, and, on top of that, you doing a mysterious vanishing act."

"It wasn't a vanishing act," said Hildegarde. "There was nothing mysterious about it. I'll tell you the truth about it; Sid Mercer wanted to make love to me. I walked down to the summerhouse with him. I always get an awful kick out of Sid when he's had a few drinks and imagines himself the reincarnation of *Don Juan*."

Fletch was stabbed by a twinge of jealousy. Hildegarde read it in his face.

"Now, don't be silly, darling. I've always flirted and I guess I always will; you've got to expect it."

"You're married to me," began Fletch.

"Oh, of course, I am, Fletch dear, and simply mad about you. I hope it lasts; I wonder—I wonder if it will. Sid Mercer only amuses me. Let's drop it and get back to the main issue."

"Well," said Fletch, "if it wasn't you, then it must have been Kitty. Jeanetta told Bax that she saw a woman—unless Bax is lying."

"It's Jeanetta who's lying!" exclaimed Hildegarde with an impatient snap of her fingers. "And the reason she lied is perfectly obvious. She's still in love with that boy who looked like a chimney sweep when we saw him this morning. It's a little difficult to understand how she could be, but, as the words of the song go, 'love is like that.' It can't be explained—just as my falling for you so hard that I married you."

"But the important thing, Fletch,

is being absolutely sure about you. I'm asking you again for the truth. Did you do it?"

Fletch released one hand from its grip of the billiard cue.

"If I did," he answered, "would I be very likely to admit it, even to you?"

"Well, you could," Hildegarde told him, "with perfect safety. Don't you believe that?"

After a meditative moment, Fletch inclined his head. "Yes, old girl, I rather do believe it. And since it's so earnestly important to your peace of mind, I'll tell you, on my solemn word of honor, I didn't do it."

Even this did not really please her. Although she loved Fletch Chandler, loved him enough to marry him, even if it would be a sacrifice to her personal comfort if the secret marriage were discovered, she was in no way blind to his shortcomings. She knew his habit of borrowing, always giving his "solemn word of honor" to pay the money back; and he very seldom did.

"See here," said Hildegarde, trying a different method of approach, "I'll explain exactly what I'm getting at. Under ordinary circumstances, I wouldn't press you like this; if I suspected that you'd shot Huston, I'd know you did it for both of us and ask no questions. But it's a matter of elimination; if you didn't do it, then Baxter did it, and if it was Baxter"—she came a little closer and again lowered her voice—"it would be worth a great deal to us if the murder was proved against him."

"Eh?" said Fletch, looking vastly puzzled. "What are you driving at? I don't get you. I don't get you at all."

"Listen!" She was so close that her breath fanned against his cheek.

"You remember the Giddings case down in Massachusetts?"

"Giddings case?" he repeated vaguely. "Sounds familiar, but what the devil has that got to do with this?"

"John Peter Giddings poisoned his rich grandfather," explained Hildegarde. "Surely, you remember reading all about it in the newspapers——"

"Oh, yes, that. But still I don't understand."

"You will understand if you listen and stop interrupting me so much. John Peter Giddings was convicted of manslaughter; some of the jury wanted to acquit him; it was a compromise verdict. He tried to collect the money left him by his grandfather's will, but the law is, Fletch, that a murderer cannot benefit by the death of his victim. Do you begin to see?"

Fletch Chandler did. He drew in his breath sharply.

"It means a lot to us, Fletch, if Baxter did kill Huston and he was convicted of it," went on Hildegarde in the same tense whisper.

Fletch stared into her face with a look of dazed fascination. He moistened his dry lips with the tip of his tongue as he nodded.

No less than Hildegarde, he knew the terms of Rufus Potter's last will and testament. It was a strange will, the will of a queer man dealing with an unusual family. Rufus Potter may not have been aware of his own eccentricities, but he had always been uncomfortably conscious of those belonging to his three sons and his grandchildren.

Huston had been his favorite. But this favoritism had not blinded him to the expectation that Huston would sow prodigal quantities of wild oats; it was the old man's opinion, based upon his own life and the

observation of other lives, that the responsibilities of a family were what steadied a man down—not merely the acquisition of a wife, but having children. Therefore, he had bequeathed the bulk of the Potter fortune to Huston "to be paid over to him on the event of his becoming a father."

For Baxter and Hildegarde, Rufus Potter had entertained no particular affection. Hildegarde was to have a home and a small income so long as she remained unmarried, but, after marriage, her husband was expected to provide her with both. Baxter Potter was to have a hundred and twenty-five dollars per month, so long as he lived.

Then came the clause which made the death of Huston Potter such a profitable tragedy for the two surviving grandchildren.

In the sad event of death coming to my beloved grandson, Huston Potter, before the foregoing terms have been fulfilled, then my estate shall be divided between the two remaining heirs upon the following terms:

To Baxter Potter, three fourths.

To my adopted granddaughter, Hildegarde Potter, whom I have always believed to be natural daughter of my son and an unknown woman, one fourth.

Yes, Fletcher Chandler quite fully understood what Hildegarde meant. The death of Huston had put something like a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in her hands. For Baxter to be successfully accused of the murder would give her better than half a million.

Fletch jerked his head. "Yes, I see," he told her.

There was silence for a moment.

"This is why I wanted to talk with you," went on Hildegarde in a tight-packed voice of suppressed excitement. "Downstairs when we first talked, I was sure it was you.

Then when we saw Baxter, I was sure it was he. Even now, I am not absolutely sure."

Fletch fumbled at his pocket, but he had given his cigarette case to Hildegard when they had come upstairs. She turned to the chair where she had been sitting and picked it up. She took a cigarette for herself before returning the case to him. Fletch struck a match; the flame jiggled crazily with the unsteadiness of his fingers.

"But," he objected, his voice sounding thick, "just how would you go about it?"

"That's what I have been trying to answer myself," replied Hildegard. "Bax is clever, but a clever man is never so clever as he thinks he is. I was thinking—" Her words trailed off, the unfinished thought lost somewhere within the recesses of her own mind. Fletch waited for her to go on. He had, apparently, no suggestions to offer; in fact, he failed to register any noticeable enthusiasm for the scheme.

"I was thinking," went on Hildegard after this debative pause, "that it might be best to do nothing definite—just keep our eyes open and watch Baxter. Then I thought the thing to do was maybe to drop a hint to the police when they get around to me with their questions. Oh, a very careful hint, you understand; I'd be very cautious what I said. Only I first wanted to make sure—"

The tangled web of the mystery grows more intricate. Have you guessed yet who the murderer might be? Don't fail to read the following installment in next week's issue of Detective Story Magazine.

"Keeping an eye on Bax, that's all right," hurriedly interrupted Fletch, "but as for the other—no, I wouldn't do that. It might be a boomerang."

Hildegard drew in her breath sharply. "A boomerang? Whom are you afraid that it will come back and hit? You?"

Before Fletch could answer that, the door opened suddenly and there stood Baxter Potter upon the threshold.

"So here's where you two are! Been looking for you all over. Wouldn't have thought of finding you up here if I hadn't seen a light."

Fletch swung around sharply, a startled, uneasy look flashing across his face before he could conceal it. Even Hildegard had a momentary expression of consternation. She wondered if her cousin might have been listening outside the door, and how much he could have heard.

Baxter Potter laughed—a short, brittle laugh.

"There's nothing like plenty of rehearsal for a finished performance. Got your stories letter-perfect, I trust. Now don't get an attack of stage fright when the county attorney roars at you with that forhorn voice of his. Which one of you goes first to the rack?"

"I'll go," said Fletch Chandler.

Baxter laughed again.

"Take a bit of friendly advice, old man. Get that guilty look off your face before you do."

Favorite characters by a favorite author.
"SPUD GIVES A LIFT," by CHARLOTTE DOCKSTADER,
in Next Week's Issue.



HIS FIRST BREAK

By JOSEPH F. HOOK

He forgot fear of the law, hate against his enemy because of hunger.

[S]OLLY OGDEN had always hated Mose Bergman. The latter's bald pate, hooked nose and big ears gave him the appearance of a huge bat, and the black suit he always wore, seemingly two sizes too big for him, enhanced that effect. His smile, too, resembled that of a great cat that had made a satisfying meal of a fat rat.

And a huge, blood-sucking vampire, Mose actually was. He had grown rich, as a fence. With the ac-

cumulation of great wealth, he had remained ever the same—the blood-sucker who exacted a pound of flesh for every penny loaned.

Poverty and hunger made Solly Ogden forget all that now. Often, they make a man temporarily forget many things. The heat inside the secondhand store helped in that respect, too. It was a raw, cold night—deathly cold for even those who were warmly clad. Solly's clothes were little more than rags; and this was the dead of winter.

DS-4C

"Well, well, well!" Mose Bergman exclaimed, smiling and rubbing his hands. "Sure glad to see you again, Solly. Been expecting you a long while. Where have you been keeping yourself, now, all these years? Gee, you look sick!"

Solly started to reply, but his chattering teeth would not let him continue. Mose came from behind the counter, took him by the arm, and pulled him to the rear of the store, where a rusty stove radiated warmth. Then he reached up on a shelf, slid a hand under a pile of clothes, and drew out a bottle. Solly snatched it from him eagerly, and took a long pull.

"Feel better?" the fence inquired after a few moments.

"Some," Solly replied, coughing from the effects of the exceedingly potent liquor.

"You look like you was up against it, Solly," Mose observed shrewdly. "Better sit down on that stool. You're about ready to drop in your tracks. What a shame!"

"Thanks a lot, Mose," Solly said weakly. "I'm beginning to feel new life running through me already." He remained silent for a few minutes, and then confessed: "I never had much use for you in the old days, but I made a mistake, I guess. When all's said and done, you give a guy a break when he needs it bad."

Mose grinned at that, and rubbed one hand over the other. The skin was white, like parchment, and made a rasping sound; and the fingers were long and hooked like the talons of an eagle.

"I ain't as bad as I'm painted, Solly," Mose muttered. "Fellers call me names because I want my share. But I take big risks with the law, don't I? And where would a lot of them fellers be if I didn't buy

their swag, I ask you? You know what I mean."

"Yeah, I know," Solly said, "but I never looked at it that way—before."

The heat was beginning to get in its work. Solly's eyelids drew down halfway over the pupils, and his head sank on his breast. Mose noticed that right away, and began speaking quickly. Nothing like striking while the iron of weakened resolution was hot.

"Tell me what you been doing since you was—er—now——"

"Since I got outta stir? Why, everything that was on the up and up," Solly replied bitterly.

"Oh, you fell for that straight-and-narrow stuff, eh?" Mose cackled. "Take another drink, Solly. There's the bottle, and it's full. Lotsa fellers try the straight-and-narrow, Solly, but they soon come back to Mose Bergman for a hand-out. You know the kind of hand-out I mean, Solly."

Mose cackled again. His laugh was a high, shrill one, that used to drive Solly Ogden berserk in the old days. It failed to affect him that way now, though.

"Yeah," he agreed, "being on the square's too hard a trail. Look at me. Ain't I a sight? In rags, hungry, and cold. A feller can't hold out long when he's cold and hungry, Mose."

"I'll say he can't. Take another drink, Solly. You're beginning to look less like a ghost than when you first come in. Let's see. You been outta stir a year, ain't it?"

"Two," Solly corrected. "And they've been two years I ain't never gonna forget. Got a job in Tinkelman's bakery. That used to be my trade—baker. Got to going pretty good. Then the hard times hit, and I got laid off. Couldn't land a

steady job nowheres. Especially baking. Got an hour here and an hour there, piling wood and wheeling coal into basements. And me a baker!"

"Tough, that."

"And thin soup and sinkers for a year," Solly went on. "I don't never want to see no soup or sinkers no more, Mose. I wish I had a beefsteak! One of them thick, red——" His voice trailed off into a whimpering silence.

"I know," Mose said with crocodile sympathy. "Take another drink, Solly, and tell Mose all about it. They're still serving beefsteaks in the restaurants. Had one for dinner, myself."

Solly wiped a sleeve across his watering mouth, and took another pull at the bottle.

"I got to thinking about some of the hauls I usta make," he continued, "and the big feeds I had. It finally come to a fight between living on thin soup and sinkers and—well, eating beefsteak again. Good thick slices, cooked rare, Mose. Yeah, the soup and sinkers lost the day, so here I am, ready to go to work."

Mose reached out and placed a hand on Solly's knee.

"And you come to the right place. You know me, Solly." His voice was smooth, silky. "I never turned nobody down yet. What'll you have?"

"A gat, and some dough," Solly replied, brightening. "I'll tackle a job to-night, but I can't do it on soup and two sinkers. I wanna steak, a thick, red——"

"Come on, Solly," Mose said, getting up. "I'll fix you out."

He took a squat automatic from the show case and a package of shells. The pistol had seen more usage than had been good for it, but

Solly wouldn't know that. Mose added a flashlight and a five-dollar bill from the cash register. Then he went to one of the clothes racks and picked out an overcoat that looked like it had been salvaged from the city dump.

"Put this on, Solly," he invited, holding it out. "It'll keep you warm and sorta act as a disguise. And go two blocks down the street to Ike Bernstein's eating place. Don't give Paddy Meehan any trade. He wouldn't help you if he knowed you was about to drop dead."

"Say, you're sure white, Mose," Solly said gratefully, slipping into the overcoat. "I'll not forget this. Look for me about two in the morning. Now I'm gonna throw one of them thick, juicy steaks into me, and a half a dozen cups of Java, and——"

"Listen, Solly," Mose said, lowering his voice to a hoarse whisper. "Better watch your step. There's been a kidnaping case, and the bulls and dicks is on the prod."

"Bulls and dicks!" Solly sneered. "They got me once, but they'll never get the chance again."

"And listen to this, Solly; Jerry the Gyp was telling me of a likely-looking prospect on East Twenty-sixth Street. Here's the address. Some rich birds, now, moved in a while ago. They're probably well-fixed, 'cause it takes a wad of dough to lease a toney dump like that."

"Then why didn't Jerry crack it?" Solly asked, a trace of suspicion in his eyes.

Mose cackled like an old hen. "That's a good one! I'll hafta spring that on Gyp, next time I see him. Why ain't you read the evening paper?"

"Evening paper, my foot!" Solly retorted. "Why, I ain't had the

price of a paper in months. What about it?"

"Jerry got nabbed this afternoon," Mose exclaimed between cackles. "He went and made a botch of a bank job last night."

Solly went limp all over, and began to tremble. "Jerry the Gyp" had finally got his! That would mean a husky rap in stir, cold, steel bars and bare, gray cells, guards parading up and down, endless days in the prison sweatshops. Solly's stomach threatened to turn over.

The astute Mose instantly realized, from the expression of the other's face, that he had pulled a boner when he mentioned that about Jerry. He could see Solly weakening fast, and hopped right into the breach.

"All right, now, Solly," he said hurriedly, and began pushing him gently, though firmly, toward the door. "Jerry just got careless, see? We all do, sooner or later. But after a guy's put in a hitch in stir, like you done, he gets sly as a whole den fulla foxes. I'll be waiting up for you, Solly. Come to the rear door and give the— You ain't forgot the old signal, have you?"

"No."

"Well, it's still the same, Solly. Good night and good luck. Don't forget, now, Solly. I'll be waiting up."

Mose opened the door, and a gust of icy wind struck Solly full in the face, chilling him to the marrow despite the heavy overcoat. That drove the last vestige of hesitation from him. He breasted the storm and walked down the street until he came to Paddy Meehan's hash house. The aroma of cooking almost drove him insane, but he kept right on to Ike Bernstein's.

"Gotta patronize Mose's pals," he muttered as he entered. "Paddy

don't ever get no more of my dough. No, sir! I'm stringing along with guys that'll help a feller when he's up against it."

There was a smirk of satisfaction on Mose Bergman's face as he watched the young man disappear in a flurry of heavy snowflakes. Then he went back to the stove, picked up the half-emptied bottle and shoved it back in its hiding place. That done, he opened the safe and took out a fat ledger. Running his thumb down the index till he came to O, he flipped the book open.

There it was, the old account: Solly Ogden, January 14, 1925.

"How time flies!" the fence mumbled. "Let's see. He got a five-year rap and served three of it. And he's been out over two, trying to go straight." He cackled sneeringly. "Yeah, trying is right, but I've got to see one yet that ever made it. What a blessing this depression has been for me! Talk about bringing the prodigals home to Uncle Mose!"

He dipped a pen in an old-fashioned inkwell and made the following entries:

One pistol	\$25.00
One overcoat	25.00
One bottle	10.00
One flashlight	10.00
Loan	15.00

Total \$85.00

"Yeah, the depression's a blessing," he repeated, as he shoved the ledger back and locked the safe.

Solly Ogden shielded the flashlight and took careful inventory of the contents of the room. His eyes sparkled when he caught fleeting glimpses of the paintings, tapestries, and ornaments. Jerry the Gyp had made no mistake about this place.

The party who had leased it must be swimming in money.

If that room had made his eyes sparkle, the next one he entered caused him to gasp. It seemed to him as though the wealth of Midas had been neatly arranged in it. Dozens of valuable things stood out in the flashlight's skittering ray. Solly was like a kid in an orchard loaded with apples; there was so much good stuff in sight to be had for the taking, that he didn't know just where to start first.

Undecided, standing there in the center of the room, he heard a faint cry, then a soft moaning as of a fretful child in its sleep. Instantly, he became alert, ears strained. Then he stepped cautiously back against the wall, and waited for a repetition of the sound.

"A kid!" he gasped under his breath. "Just my luck to run into a dump with a blasted yowler in it! They've sent more good men up the river than you can shake a stick at."

When the child's fretfulness was not repeated, he stepped back to the center of the room and made a last survey, before going to work.

Suddenly, there was a click, and the room was flooded with dazzling light.

Solly whirled with an oath on his lips, then stood frozen in his tracks. But he snapped out of that in the flash of an eye, and reached for his gun. In that one second, he realized, with a sinking heart, that he had made a sad mistake. Lack of practice had made him careless. Instead of holding the flashlight in his left hand, he had held it in his right—his gun hand. And when that hand dropped to his overcoat pocket, the flashlight caught on the edge.

But the instinct of self-preserva-

tion was uppermost. He raised both hands high and stared at the pajama-clad man in the doorway. He was about Solly's size, though older and slightly gray. The gun he held, however, was steady, and the eyes behind it, hard.

"You'd better reach for the ceiling," he snarled, in a voice that sounded level, cool. "Now keep 'em up while I go through your pockets."

He came across the room confidently, and tapped the right-hand pocket of Solly's overcoat.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, as his groping fingers encountered the automatic.

Like a streak of lightning, Solly's right hand came down with terrific force. The flashlight he held, struck the man squarely on the top of the skull. Down he sank to the floor, without a groan.

Solly glanced at him hurriedly, to make sure that his escape from the house would not meet with opposition from that quarter, and then turned toward the door. There wasn't a doubt in his mind but that there were others in the house who must have heard the child's cry or the man's voice, or both, and would soon enter.

He took one step forward and then came to a sudden halt, a groan of dismay escaping his lips.

Another pajama-clad man was standing on the threshold, his hands at his sides, a gun in one of them. For a moment, he seemed bewildered, as though he were dreaming that the sight he saw was not real, was only a part of a dream. His eyelids were half closed and heavy with sleep.

Solly gave him no time to snap out of it, but launched himself at the man's legs in a well-aimed flying tackle. Down they crashed, with the burglar on top. Solly held

him with one hand and reached for his pistol with the other.

However, the backward fall had failed to stun the man, and he heaved Solly off with an exhibition of brute strength that surprised him. Solly promptly jumped up, and kicked the gun out of the other's hand, sending it spinning to the farther side of the room. The man on the floor retaliated with a thrust of his bare foot, which landed in the pit of Solly's stomach and doubled him up for the moment.

At the same time, the man leaped up and tackled Solly. Then a fierce struggle started for possession of the gun on the floor. Solly fought like a cornered rat. Over and over, they rolled, breaking holds and clawing for new ones. Solly cursed the deep pockets of the old overcoat, which prevented his snatching the pistol out and using it on the other's head.

The racket they made alarmed Solly. He realized that that sort of thing couldn't keep up long before help came. Gritting his teeth, he began to drag the man gradually toward the door, with the intention of suddenly letting go of him when he got there, and diving down the stairs to the outside door and freedom.

Solly finally reached the goal he was aiming at, and with a quick thrust of his hand, snapped the light switch off. If any one should come to the rescue, the darkness would be a handicap and make the task much more difficult as well as giving Solly a chance to escape.

He kicked the man in the face, causing him to let go all holds, and sprang through the doorway.

But he had not figured on the other man's ability to take punishment; for, before he could gain the head of the stairs, he felt a pair of arms go around his waist and begin

to tug him back. Solly back-heeled him, and was tripped himself. Down they crashed on the landing, rolled over in a tight embrace, and then bounced down the stairs, to pull up in the hallway with the wind knocked out of their bodies.

"Charlie! Oh, Charlie!"

The voice came from the head of the stairs and struck terror to Solly's heart. He recognized it as belonging to the man he had knocked out with the flashlight. His blood ran cold, when, a second later, he heard an unsteady tread on the stairs as the man started to descend slowly, laboriously, groaning audibly, his clutching hands making squeaky noises as they slid over the polished surface of the banister.

Two against one! Solly managed to get to his feet and reach for the front-door latch. But his antagonist was on him before his fingers touched it. He felt himself picked up bodily and tossed through the air. His feet struck against the jamb of a door, and, even before he hit the floor, he realized that he had been flung into a room off the hallway.

Solly lit on the back of his neck and shoulders, and rolled over and over like a ball, bringing up with a crash against a piece of furniture. Instinctively, he crawled away out of danger on hands and knees, gasping for breath. Then he managed to draw his gun from the deep recess of the overcoat pocket. With eyes and ears strained to catch the slightest movement or sound, he waited for the rush he felt sure must come. He hated to take life, hated to think of being caught and sitting in the hot chair, but he made up his mind to die fighting.

Moments dragged by, but no rush came. Solly couldn't figure that one out. He knew the man was in

the room; could even hear his labored breathing. Why didn't he make a rush, or shoot?

Then a more ominous sound reached Solly's ears. It came from the half-dazed man as he descended the stairs, gained the hallway, and staggered across it. Then there was the sound of something brushing back and forth across the wall paper in the room.

"Jim, don't switch the lights on!" Solly heard the man in the room whisper.

"Are you all right, Charlie?" came the whispered query. "Is he—is he in there?"

"Sure, he is!" the one called Charlie whispered back. "Wait till I get my wind, then I'll—I'll finish him!"

Solly heard the injured man drop complainingly to his hands and knees, enter the room, and join his companion. Accordingly, the burglar drew farther and farther back until his heels touched the opposite wall. Then he rose slowly erect and waited in almost breathless silence for the next move on the part of the other two.

He glanced toward the window. The blind was drawn down and the street lights outside shone through it, but too dimly to illuminate any part of the room. That window looked good to the cornered burglar, but he dare not plunge through it, realizing that his body would at once become outlined against it and form a target.

Reluctantly, he turned his eyes from it and waited, with cold perspiration oozing from every pore of his body, for the expected jet of crimson flame and searing pain of a bullet. The suspense, as moment after moment of silence passed, was nerve-racking in the extreme. Why didn't they shoot—he kept asking

himself. He felt his mind slipping as he crouched there and listened to the faint breathing of the men at the other end of the room.

Once again, he heard footsteps on the stairs, but they were light, hurried ones this time. Some one else was descending! Who could it be? Solly shifted his position, an inch at a time, and tried to pierce the gloom with eyes that hurt from the abnormal strain put upon them. The third party had entered the room now; was even then conversing in a low whisper with the two men. Would they never start shooting and put an end to the agony of it?

The whispering ceased. Then Solly caught the aroma of a delicate perfume. Next came the soft rustle of silk. A woman! The third party was a woman, and she was moving stealthily around the room!

Solly flattened himself against the wall. He tried to follow the woman's movements with his ears. She was approaching the window. Then, suddenly, he caught a glimpse of her, dimly outlined against the blind, as she passed the window in a crouching attitude. She was holding something out before her, something long and curved. It was a knife!

The burglar's blood congealed as the sinister form merged with the murk of the room. With cold perspiration pouring off his brow into his smarting eyes, he realized what her game was. She was groping around the room for him, ready to strike like a snake the moment her hand touched him! And if he retreated, he knew that the two men, waiting at the other end of the room, would blast him full of lead. If ever a man was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, it was Solly Ogden.

What was the big idea—Solly

asked himself. Why the knife and the silence? Why hadn't one or the other of them either started shooting or called the police? While asking himself those questions, Solly was not idle. He was moving cautiously forward, a step at a time, pausing to get the direction of the woman's movements and the men's breathing. But, so it seemed to him, all the furniture in the world was directly blocking his path and keeping him away from that window, through which he had now made up his mind to leap to freedom or—death.

He almost screamed aloud when something touched his arm. There was a swish, followed by a dull thud, as he jerked his body to one side, and Solly knew instinctively that the woman's knife had struck some article of furniture, missing him by a hair.

"Steady, girl!" came the whispered advice from the other end of the room, which seemed to split the silence wide open. "Take your time. We've got all night to turn the trick!"

To turn the trick! Solly shivered when the sinister meaning of that seeped through his brain. What manner of place was this he had entered? Had Jerry the Gyp made a mistake in the address? Was it a private insane asylum of some sort?

Solly had no intention of trying to figure out the solution to those questions. The only thing that interested him now was the window—the solution to his escape. He took two more cautious steps toward it, and then crouched for the spring that would hurl his body through it.

Then, even as his legs bent for the spring, the window was shattered, and the glass showered over him. His pent-up fear welled out of him

in a wild shriek, as the blind was torn aside, and hands were thrust through from the outside, each one holding a gun. Before he had time to step back, a glaring light stabbed through the darkness from the direction of the door.

A switch clicked, and the electric lights flashed on. Solly glanced around dazedly. The man he had knocked out in the upper room was standing at one side of the door; the other, who had flung him into that chamber of horrors, was at the other. Both held long-bladed knives in their hands.

A catching of the breath caused Solly to pivot on his heels. A pretty woman in negligee was standing not more than two feet away from him, her eyes riveted on the doorway, one hand pressed across her mouth, stifling a cry, the other holding a long, curved knife.

"Hey, you! Drop that gat!"

The burglar whirled and faced the man in the doorway, who had him covered. The pistol slipped from his limp fingers to the floor, and he raised both hands high above his head.

"What's all this?" the man in the doorway demanded of the men standing on either side. "I'm from headquarters, and so are those guys in the window, there. Besides, the house is surrounded by detectives. Speak up! What's that rat been up to?" he added, pointing to Solly.

"Stealing," one of them replied. "The miserable wretch broke in here and was so clumsy, he awakened me. When I held him up and started to search him for a gun, he knocked me cold with a flashlight. Look at that bump, will you?"

"Yes, yes," the detective said impatiently, "tell me the rest, please."

The other man spoke up then, and related the rest of the story.

"And the lady?" the detective inquired, nodding toward her.

"The noise the men made woke me up," she explained nervously. "I came down on tiptoe into this room, wondering why everything had suddenly become silent, and one of my brothers told me to hurry to the kitchen and bring back the butcher knives. They didn't want to start shooting, for fear of hitting each other in the dark. We figured we'd stab this—this wretch as he tried to run through the door."

"And you actually went in to drive that rat out, eh?" the detective observed, admiration in his voice and glance. "Well, you've got more nerve than a lot of women I'm acquainted with, I'll tell you that. Now sit down a minute while I attend to that sneak thief."

He called out an order over his shoulder, and another detective took his place at the door. Then he walked across the room toward Solly. Two paces away, he came to a sudden halt, and a smile lighted up his face.

"Well, if it ain't little Solly Ogden in person!" he said. "Say, you've sure changed a lot since we last met. You're only half the man you were. Where's the rest of you?"

"Rotted away, I guess," Solly sullenly replied. "And if you'd been through half of what I have, you'd be changed too."

"The surprise seems mutual, eh?" The detective laughed. "I see you don't recognize me, Solly. I dare say that this mustache and fat paunch of mine have changed me, too. Well, I'm Mike O'Leary. In other words, I'm the bird that nailed you, when you pulled that job in 1925, and sent you up the river."

"How—how did you get wise to me this time?" Solly asked.

"That's easy, Solly. I spotted you coming out of Ike Bernstein's hash house, and you didn't look good to me. I didn't recognize you, though; just followed a hunch—and you. I wanted to see what new racket you were in. Then, after you got in here and had had time to start work, I called up headquarters and had the house surrounded. Smart, wasn't I?"

"Oh, I dunno," Solly replied disdainfully. "It was more luck than smartness. And if that kid hadn't started bawling and woke these folks up, I'd 'a' made a good haul and given you a run for your money, Mr. Dick."

"A kid!" The woman laughed hoarsely. "Listen to him rave, will you? He says a kid awakened us. Why, my brothers and myself are the only ones in this house. A kid! Say, officer, I think that wretch must be a dope fiend."

"Most of 'em are, lady," the detective said, smiling. "They're always seeing and hearing funny things."

"Oh, is that so!" Solly flared. "Well, I ain't no hop head. And I wasn't imagining things, either. I'm telling you that bawling kid did the trick."

The smile slowly left the detective's face as he stared fixedly at Solly, and lines of thought began to rise on his forehead. He suddenly shifted his gaze to the woman. She was biting her lower lip till the blood came. A peculiar look crept into the officer's piercing eyes as he stooped and picked up Solly's pistol.

"Boys," he called to his men, "I'm going to take this rat upstairs with me and find out just how big a liar he is. In the meantime, don't let anybody leave this room. I'll be back in a minute or two." He

plucked Solly's sleeve. "This way, you."

At the foot of the stairs, he paused and jerked the man around. "Listen, feller. If this is a stall, I'll beat the everlasting tar outta you. Better think twice before we go upstairs."

"I'm telling you straight, and it ain't no stall," Solly persisted. "Come and see for yourself."

Not another word was said until they entered the room where Solly had been caught red-handed by the first of the two men. The place was a ruin of overturned furniture and broken vases.

"All right, get busy!" the detective ordered. "Show me exactly in which direction that bawling came from. I don't see any kid in here."

"From here," Solly replied, and went over to the wall. He gazed all around the room, and then stared blankly at the detective. "I don't see nothing here, now," he said.

"No?" the officer remarked, placing his ear to the wall. "Well, I don't either. However——"

He started alone to move along the wall, still keeping his ear pressed to it, tapping the plaster with his knuckles. Suddenly, a smile replaced the frown on his face, and he crossed over quickly to the door. Solly followed.

Without as much as a backward glance, the detective entered the next room and switched on the lights. A woman's lingerie at the foot of the bed met their eyes, and the aroma of a delicate perfume came pleasantly to their nostrils. The officer gave the clothes a passing glance, made his way to the clothes closet, and yanked the door open.

An oath escaped his lips as his flashlight fell on the face of a sleeping child in a tiny cot. The detec-

tive bent low over it and studied the face intently.

"Solly," the detective began in a voice that trembled slightly, "have you got any idea whose kid that is?"

"How should I know?" Solly countered. "Mebbe it's that woman's, and she don't want nobody to know it. Working gals ain't the only ones that have things to hide. Anyway, I was right about it, wasn't I?"

Ignoring the question, the detective bent down and lifted the sleeping child up gently, and cuddled it in the crook of his arm.

"That kid, Solly," he explained with sparkling eyes, "belongs to Harry Moline, the millionaire radio manufacturer, that's who! It was kidnaped and held for fifty-grand ransom!"

"What!" Solly gasped.

"Kick me for a sap, Solly," the detective said, chuckling softly. "Go on. Or call me a fool, if you like. I deserve it. Here I've had my men scouring every inch of the city except the toney residential section. And the kid was here, right under our very noses all the time, not two blocks from the Moline home! Can you tie that?"

"Well, you gotta hand it to them birds downstairs," Solly said, as soon as he had recovered from his first surprise. "They sure was slick. And, say, I savvy now why them men didn't plug me when they had me cornered in that room."

"That isn't hard to figure—now," the officer murmured, starting toward the head of the stairs. "Shooting would have brought out the neighbors and the police, and the possible exposing of their little secret. Yes, indeed, knives were quieter."

"But they didn't figger on you

and me," Solly said. "Don't forget me."

"No, they didn't, Solly. And that's the way with all crooks: they don't consider that element of chance."

"Young man," the judge began, while the spectators in the courtroom sat silent, tense, "inasmuch as you have pleaded guilty to burglary, thus saving the State the expenditure of a large sum of money, I shall be as lenient as possible in passing sentence upon you. However, you are old enough to know that you cannot offend against the law with impunity. Is there, then, anything you care to say to this court?"

Solly Ogden's lips were dry, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth, rendering him momentarily speechless. He turned a pleading gaze over the sea of faces, and then back at the judge again.

"I—I guess I was hungry, and slipped," he stammered, about on the verge of tears.

"Is that all?" the judge inquired.

Solly looked toward the prosecuting attorney, his own lawyer, and Detective O'Leary. What was the matter with them—sitting there tongue-tied? Weren't they going to say a word for him, as they had promised? He had pleaded guilty, and they— The young burglar's face went white. Now he had it! The dirty skunks had double-crossed him, gone back on their word! What a rotten break!

"Y-yes, sir," Solly almost sobbed.

"Then," the judge said, "it is my most painful duty to sentence you to ten and not more than fifteen years at hard labor."

Solly felt nauseated and a bit faint. A low murmur of disapproval rose from the spectators, and the

bailiff rapped for order, shouting, "Quiet in the courtroom, please!"

"You will be confined," the judge continued, "in the Moline Radio Company's plant. Officers, take him away."

There was complete silence in the courtroom for just a second, and then the spectators' pent-up feelings welled out in a roar of applause, at which the usually stern judge merely smiled.

A well-dressed woman arose from beside the prosecuting attorney, ran over to Solly, and took both his thin hands in hers, while the tears streamed down her cheeks. Words failed her entirely. She was Mrs. Moline, mother of the kidnaped child.

The man who was with her took the bewildered young man by the arm and started to lead him from the courtroom to a brighter world outside. He was Harry Moline.

Policemen were finally obliged to form a flying wedge and clear a way for them through the cheering crowd. At last, they gained the elevator and were soon deposited on the main floor of the courthouse.

The first man to greet them was the detective who had nailed Solly twice. There was a broad grin on his face as he held out a hamlike hand.

"Well, kid, how do you feel now?" he asked.

"Don't ask me," Solly replied, choking up. "You guys is sure white."

"Glad to hear you admit that, Solly. And now, if you actually feel that way about us, suppose you come clean with the law."

Solly looked surprised. "What d'yer mean? Ain't I shot square with you right along?"

"Not entirely. You've forgotten something. You forgot it the first

time I nailed you. Or, at least, you let on like your memory was on the bum. The law, kid, wants to protect, not hinder, guys like you, when you come out of stir and try to go straight. How about helping us in this matter, as well as aiding the thousands of unfortunate devils who'll one day be in your fix?"

"I don't quite get you, boss," Solly admitted, puzzled.

"Young man, who was the fence who bought your swag, before you

got sent up the river that first time?" the detective demanded. "And who was the guy that staked you so that you could start up again this time?"

"Tell him, Solly," Mrs. Moline urged.

"It was Mose Bergman," Solly quietly replied.

"Thanks a lot, kid," the detective said, smiling. "Now you're square with the law and your fellow man. So long and good luck."

KILLING CHILDREN

THE latest gang killings have aroused the people of not only New York City, but over all the country. This happened when one child was killed and four others were wounded. The mother of the child who was killed was quoted as saying:

"We Italians are not courageous enough to come out and tell what we know. There will not be one person on the street who will tell. We are afraid they will come later and kill our husbands or our brothers or our sons."

Chicago now points to New York City as being the chief gang center. One paper says:

"New York has gangland primacy with unclouded title these days. Chicago has cleared up its situation in better fashion than many of its citizens dared hope a year ago.

"New York, State as well as city, hasn't made a good effort. Part of its judiciary has been disclosed as unfit; its political system has been seared by charges, but not corrected; and its gangs have not even been intimidated."

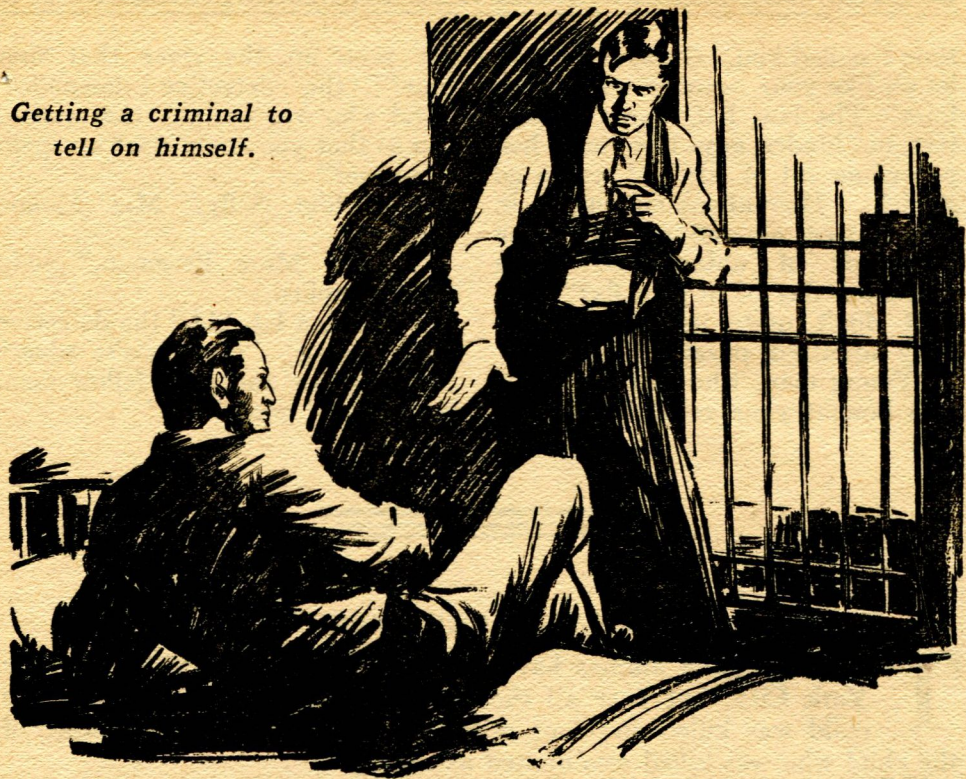
A London paper, referring to the baby killings, is quoted as saying:

"If anything can arouse Americans to the disgrace and perils of the lawlessness which has been allowed to grow up in their cities, this ought to.

"What makes the affair so doubly damning is the extreme improbability that the criminals ever will be arrested, and the virtual certainty, if arrested, that they will not be convicted, and if convicted, they will never pay the penalty."

Due to these baby-killing depredations, the city is more allied than ever toward stamping out the gangsters.

*Getting a criminal to
tell on himself.*



A CRIMINAL'S PRIDE

(A True Crime Story)

By HUGO SOLOMON

THE nude body of a young Englishman, Clarence Preller, was found in a trunk by the employees of the old Hotel Southern in St. Louis. With the body were clothes belonging to both Preller, and Hugh M. Brookes, who had shared a room in the hotel with the dead man. Telegrams, sent by the police of St. Louis, reached every city in the United States, and cablegrams were

transmitted to the destinations of all ships on which the suspect might have sailed. From Auckland, Australia, came the prompt answer that the wanted man was already under arrest, and would be held until St. Louis detectives could take him into custody.

Thousands of dollars and several weeks of travel were spent by the St. Louis officers before they succeeded in clanging the jail door on

Brookes. However, he sent consternation into their ranks by engaging lawyers who laughingly assured the newspapers that the police did not have enough evidence against the prisoner to sustain even a manslaughter charge. Day after day, the smiling face and facetious remarks of Brookes graced the front pages of the St. Louis newspapers. Finally, Ashley C. Clover, circuit attorney of St. Louis, sought the assistance of Thomas Furlong, chief special agent for the Missouri Pacific Railroad Co., whose headquarters was in St. Louis.

Thomas Furlong was one of the cleverest private detectives who ever caught a crook. To him, the apprehension of criminals was a profession worthy of any intelligent man's whole-hearted interest; for fifty active years of criminal investigation, graft and influence meant nothing to a mind busy with schemes for sending miscreants to their fate. The circuit attorney, who knew Furlong very intimately, explained his problem.

"Tom," said Circuit Attorney Clover, "you've got to help us. If your railroad investigations take your full time, I want you to get some reliable men to do the actual work while you direct their operations. We're up against a stone wall unless we can prove the guilt of the accused in the next session of court. Already, the newspapers are charging us with inefficiency, to say nothing of downright connivance with the murderer. Please, Tom, at least promise to do something!"

"Certainly, I'm glad to help," responded Furlong, "but you must let me proceed in my own peculiar way, without interference from any quarter. Give me the essential facts, and I'll start the ball rolling in ten minutes."

The circuit attorney told Furlong: "The case came to our attention when the Hotel Southern reported to the police that a trunk left for storage contained the dead body of a former guest, a young Englishman named Clarence Preller, who had been occupying a room with a man who registered as Mr. Maxwell, of London, England. Two or three days before the discovery of the body, Maxwell had paid the bill for the room. He asked that a trunk and some other belongings be left in the room. He said that Preller had been called out of the city on urgent business and might not return soon, but that both would be back in less than a week.

"This story sounded straight enough to the hotel people, until hot weather brought unpleasant odors from the trunk. Lacking other clues, the police suspected Maxwell, and found that his correct name was Hugh M. Brookes, that he was a native of Hyde Park, a suburb of London, and that he left England because the authorities at a law school he attended accused him of stealing clothes and jewelry from his fellow students. The police chemist reported that the victim died from an overdose of chloroform, but it is at present impossible to prove that the sleeping drug was administered with felonious intent. As I see it, there were only two witnesses to the tragedy—the murderer and his victim; the first won't talk, and the second can't talk. With that as a starter, can you help us, Furlong?"

The detective lost no time in answering.

"Sure, I can handle the case. I can't and don't care to take any fees, but I'll hire some competent operatives and send their bill to you when you win the case for the State. I've got to get busy now.

Good day, gentlemen. I'll report progress later."

Unceremoniously ushered out of the office, the circuit attorney and his assistants were at first disgruntled by their curt dismissal, but Ashley C. Clover summed up the attitude of every one when he said:

"Tom Furlong takes the short cut to the answer to every crime problem. His methods are unusual, and sometimes they are rough, but he catches crooks, and, after all, that is what detectives are hired to do."

Furlong's first act was to wire John McCulloch, in Philadelphia, to report directly to Furlong's home upon arrival in St. Louis. McCulloch, at that time, was about thirty-five years old, nearly six feet tall, broad-shouldered, and handsome. When he smiled, both men and women felt that they could trust him with their most prized possessions. To complete his qualifications, McCulloch did not look like a detective; his blond mustache and burnsides, which were then in style, made him look more like a new arrival from the British Isles.

"First you must read this pile of newspaper clippings describing the Preller murder, until you know every detail by heart," ordered Furlong, when his new assistant reported for duty. "When you have mastered the facts of the case, I shall cause you to be arrested, and you shall give the name of Frank Dingfelter, which will be corroborated by papers planted in your clothes. In jail you are to act reserved and secretive, but eventually you are to confide in Brookes that you have committed certain crimes, but do not care to discuss them.

"If I size up Brookes right, the publicity attending your arrest will take him off the front page, and he will have to boast of his prowess in

order to maintain his position as the biggest crook in jail. Lead him along until you get a full confession; we'll check up the story he tells and hang him higher than a kite."

Two days later, McCulloch announced to his chief that he had carefully digested the entire account of the murder. Furlong then presented a forged check and explained its purpose.

"I got the blank out of the office of D. S. Smith, treasurer of the local office of the Missouri Pacific, while he was out to lunch. My bookkeeper, who is an excellent penman, is familiar with Smith's signature, and has executed a fake check that, at first glance, appears genuine, and yet is poor enough to attract the cashier's attention when offered at the bank. You take it down, now, to the Mechanics' Bank, on Fourth Street, and go to the cashier's window at nine forty-five sharp. I'll do the rest."

Furlong stood on the sidewalk in front of the bank and watched his operative present the check. The paying teller seemed to hesitate; one thousand one hundred eighty-eight dollars and ten cents was a peculiar amount for a stranger to receive without identification, but, before any action could be taken, Detective Furlong rushed into the building and shouted:

"Is there any trouble here?"

"Yes," boomed the teller. "Arrest this man!"

"What shall I arrest him for?" asked Furlong, in a still louder tone.

"For investigation, at least. See, he has tried to cash this check. The signature looks phony to me!"

"You're right," countered the investigator. "I'm familiar with Mr. Smith's signature, and I know that's not it."

"Where did you get this check?" Furlong demanded of McCulloch.

"From Mr. Smith. Why do you ask? Can it be that you are an officer?"

"Yes, I'm chief special agent of the Missouri Pacific. Let's go up to Mr. Smith's office to see about this check."

Furlong left the bank with McCulloch within his grasp, and the two men walked toward the railroad offices until they encountered a policeman standing in front of a saloon. At a prearranged signal from Furlong, the Philadelphia detective punched his chief in the nose and cursed loud enough to attract the patrolman's attention. The blow was no weak gesture; it knocked Furlong to the ground. To enable the slow-moving officer to catch him, McCulloch pretended to trip over his captor.

Just as the policeman reached the scene of action, both men arose and simulated a scuffle that soon involved all three. Five minutes later, McCulloch was a handcuffed prisoner, while Furlong and the patrolman tried to dig the mud out of their bruised ears and noses. A crowd of spectators soon collected, and the newspapers reported the arrest of a member of a band of forgers that had been terrorizing banks in three surrounding States.

The reading public had grown tired of seeing statements from the attorneys of Maxwell, alias Brookes, to the effect that they could clear him five minutes after his case was called, and posed pictures of the suspected murderer no longer brought tears to the eyes of sentimental women. "Dingfelter's" arrest now brought welcome relief to a sensation-loving people, and Maxwell's remarks were thrown into fine type on the last page. This action

immediately brought its desired effect inside the stone walls of the city jail.

"I'm Maxwell. I'm the man they accuse of murdering Preller, who was found in a trunk at the Hotel Southern. They arrested me in New Zealand, and brought me here, but my lawyers say that there is not enough evidence to convict, so, of course, I'm sure to go free!"

McCulloch pretended not to want his fellow prisoner's advances. In a low voice, he offered some excellent advice:

"Yes, I'm Dingfelter, but I do not care to discuss my case, and I think that there has been too much talk about your case. Silence is best before trial; if they have nothing against you, you are certainly bound to be freed when court meets. Anyhow, I don't believe you have it in you to commit murder."

The criminal's pride was touched, especially since his new acquaintance had raised his voice so that several bystanders were able to receive the impression that the suspected forger looked down upon the man accused of murder.

For more than a month, Dingfelter kept to himself, and only discussed neutral subjects, such as the weather and the jail food, with his companions. Every day, thanks to Furlong's efforts, the newspapers had something to say about the long and vicious record of the master forger languishing in the local lock-up. All of this was too much for the fallen hero; more than six weeks after he had met Dingfelter, he unbosomed himself to the supposed check artist.

"I killed Clarence Preller, but I didn't do it with chloroform, as the police think. I had met him on a ship from Liverpool to Boston, and roomed with him until we reached

St. Louis. He complained of stomachache one afternoon, and I told him I could relieve his pain. I did, too; I knew enough about medicine to give him an overdose of morphine, and then, to polish off the job, I poured four ounces of chloroform into his mouth.

"I didn't know exactly what to do with the body. I go by the name of Maxwell, but my real name is Brookes, and that is the name on all of my clothes. To throw people off the scent, I tried to dress Preller in my suit, but he was about five inches taller, and several pounds heavier than I am. I tried cutting slits in the clothing, but that didn't work very well, so I just threw the body and the torn clothes into Preller's trunk and snapped the lock shut.

"I paid the bill for the room, ordered Preller's trunk sent down to the depot, and arranged to have the room we had been in saved for me. But the porter made a mistake by bringing me my own trunk and leaving the one with the body in the room. According to the newspapers, it was the odor from the body that started the search for me. I had already left the country, for my discovery of the baggage man's mistake removed any doubt as to the possibility of discovery. You can see that my job was not as tame as your paper-hanging stunts, yet the papers give you all the write-ups these days."

"I won't get publicity much longer; I'm leaving this place!" replied McCulloch. "I can't tell you who is springing me, but, if there is anything I can do for you on the outside, let me know and it is as good as done."

The murderer seized this chance to communicate with his friends on the other side of the cold stone walls.

"You can help me a great deal by finding two men who will swear that they met Preller and me in Boston, and that they walked with us to the depot, and, on the way to the station, had a farewell drink at a bar on money provided by me. They can testify that they saw me have six one-hundred-dollar bills in my possession; that will account for the six one-hundred-dollar bills that I took out of Preller's clothes when I killed him."

Dingfelter pretended to be puzzled.

"What will your lawyers say to this scheme?" he asked.

"Oh, that's all right; they suggested it to me. I want you to see them and tell them whom you select for the job. Here's one of my calling cards; I'll tear one half in two and give you the other half to give your friends that I'll surely know them if they come to see me here in jail."

Dingfelter left jail that night and resumed the name of McCulloch, but he remained in hiding to prevent any miscarriage of plans. Furlong, it must be explained, had secured his assistant's release on heavy bail bonds, knowing that any other method would expose his real status as a detective. McCulloch corresponded constantly with Maxwell alias Brookes over his "Dingfelter" signature, and thus secured a long series of letters from the prisoner which gave directions for preparing the false testimony to account for the money found on Maxwell's person when arrested.

At his trial, Maxwell took the witness stand in his own behalf and swore that he had given his friend, Preller, chloroform at the Hotel Southern in order to prevent suffering from a stricture. On hearing this statement, the prosecution im-

mediately had the body of Preller exhumed and examined for stricture; just as they had expected, the victim had never had an ailment of this nature.

McCulloch's appearance in court nearly created a riot; for nearly two hours, the defense questioned him closely about his part in the pretended forgery before they became convinced that he was a bona-fide detective, and not a criminal who belonged behind the bars. Finally, when the whole story had been explained, one of the State's attorneys pointed out the fact that there is no crime in forgery unless it causes some one to suffer, that no one had actually lost by the check planted on McCulloch by Furlong as a ticket to jail.

With this behind them, the prosecution was able to establish Max-

well's guilt from the testimony of McCulloch, reinforced by the letters the murderer had sent to his supposed friend. In less than an hour after they went out of the courtroom, the jury returned with a finding of guilty, and Brookes, alias Maxwell, received the sentence to be hanged.

A strange aftermath of this case occurred when two brothers named Johnston read in the newspapers that Dingfelter was really a detective. They remembered telling him intimate details of one of their forgery jobs, and decided that prompt confession to the prosecuting attorney might enable them to turn State's evidence against other forgers and gain a lighter sentence. Furlong's scheme thus reaped a greater harvest than he had expected.

PRAISING THE COPS

INSTEAD of glorification of cowardly gangsters," President Hoover is quoted as saying, in a recent radio address, "we need the glorification of policemen who do their duty and give their lives in public protection."

He went on to say: "There is a sentimentalism in some people which makes popular heroes out of criminals." He expressed the belief that it would be much better for the country if the people would make heroes out of the policemen.

"If the police had the vigilant, universal backing of public opinion in their communities, if they had the implacable support of the prosecuting authorities and the courts, if our criminal laws in their endeavor to protect the innocent did not furnish loopholes through which irresponsible, yet clever, criminal lawyers daily find devices of escape for the guilty, I am convinced that our police would stamp out the excessive crime and remove the world-wide disrepute which has disgraced some of our great cities," said President Hoover.

One paper, in commenting upon the president's speech, agreed with him, and said further that the stage and screen were partly to blame for glorification of the gangster. Another paper, however, took a slightly different slant, saying: "The American public is willing to back the police, but not until the police have earned its backing."



PLAYING COPPER

By RAY HUMPHREYS

He took the rap for another, and, when he got out, he knew enough about crooks to go after them.

CHAPTER I.

"PLEASE, HELP!"

LANKY "Dazzling Dan" Boyne, red-headed, was sprawled lazily in the big easy-chair. His blue eyes, roving over the cheaply furnished room, were contented. The reading lamp cast a soft, comfortable glow; the cigarette was one of his favorite brand. There were no easy-chairs, pleasant lights, or expensive smokes in the Canon City penitentiary. Dazzling Dan sighed happily.

"This is the life, Curly," he said quietly. "Only a week ago——"

"Don't remind me, Dazzy!" re-

monstrated the smaller man as he stretched luxuriantly on the tawdry sofa. "A week ago, I was No. 17,652 and you were No. 19,877—just a couple of cons—paying our debts to society, as the newspapers say. But what I'm worrying about now, Dazzy, is how we're going to pay the rent on this apartment and how we're going to be able to afford to keep up our costly habit of eating at least once a day. We got to get some dough."

The telephone bell cut in suddenly, brazenly.

Dazzy put down his cigarette. He put it down quickly but with such deliberate care that he seemed to

move slowly. He was always like that—calm, confident—but fast as a flash.

"Hello," he said, picking up the telephone, but his voice warmed immediately as a smile spread across his face. "Oh, hello, Miss Valerie. . . . Certainly, I remember you—Jimmy's sister. . . . Yes, I'm back in the old apartment again. . . . You have a good memory."

The smile vanished from his face. "What's that? . . . Serious trouble? . . . Why, of course! Yes, I can—right away. . . . Surely. The address? . . . Yes, I got it. . . . I'm on my way!"

And he was. He was reaching for his hat and coat when "Curly" managed to find his tongue. Curly came off the couch in a bound.

"What's up, Dazzy? What's the dope? Where you going?"

"That was Valerie Hawkins, Jimmy's sister," said Dazzy with tantalizing complacency. "You remember Jimmy—the lad the dicks tried to frame a couple years ago on that diamond job? Well, she's in trouble. She wants to talk to me. I'm going over."

A scared look came into Curly Graves's narrowed eyes.

"What kind of trouble is she in, Dazzy?" he demanded excitedly. "We're on parole, you remember. We can't go busting into trouble half cocked! You and me agreed to go straight, Dazzy. We're off the crooked stuff."

Dazzling Dan gave his partner a quizzical smile.

"You are," he said quietly. "I never was on the crooked stuff to begin with, kindly remember. I did another man's time at the big house, if you recall. But as for Valerie being——"

"You ain't going!" cried Curly desperately.

"You the warden?" asked Dazzling Dan softly, and he reached for the doorknob.

Curly, catching the look in Dan's eyes, shrugged in despair. He grabbed up his hat and coat.

"I'm going with you, Dazzy!"

"O. K., warden!" agreed Dan.

Curly winced at the other's sarcasm. Nevertheless, he followed Dan out of the apartment. If Dan was going to prowl around in dangerous parts, he was going to be right at his elbow, to warn him if he could, to back him up in any event. Dan had stood by him in the "big house"; now, he meant to stand by Dan.

"We'll take a taxi," said Dan placidly.

"Ain't we swell?" echoed Curly uneasily. "You seem to be in a big rush to get in a jam."

"Here's a taxi," said Dan, and Curly's protestations died away in a mumble. After all, Curly decided, perhaps his fears of calamity were groundless. But a man just five days out of the penitentiary, after doing the greater portion of a ten-year "jolt" for forgery, could be forgiven for being nervous. Dazzling Dan wasn't nervous, though. He gave the taxi driver the address coolly. He lighted a cigarette and held the match with steady fingers for Curly.

"This Valerie," said Curly. "Where did you meet her?"

"After Jimmy got in jail," said Dan. "Jimmy sent her to see me. He figured I knew the ropes, I guess. I got him out by luck—slipped one of the John Laws a century note, and he sprung him. The kid wasn't guilty. They had him pegged wrong."

"Did you get paid back?" asked Curly. "The century note?"

"We'll be at the house in a min-

ute," said Dan, "so quit your shivering. You'd give a nervous bird the creeps, Curly."

"It's sort of chilly," said Curly lamely.

The house was a two-story affair, and a light burned on the porch. They had hardly stepped up on the porch, however, when the door opened and a strikingly pretty girl, with a mass of golden hair, smiled at them. She gave Dan her hand.

"Come in," she said, in a voice hardly above a whisper. "I am so glad to see you, Mr. Boyne. I hardly dared hope to find you when I called you, but I remembered what you told me a long time ago—after you had helped Jimmy—to call you again if ever I needed——"

Dazzling Dan nodded. There was a smile on his frank lips.

"I'm glad you called me, Miss Valerie. This is my friend, Mr. Graves. You can talk before him. What is the trouble?"

The girl's lips trembled. She shook her head pathetically.

"It's father," she whispered. "I can't understand. He told me this evening that he was in serious difficulties. He looked so frightened—so old and broken—there were tears in his eyes. He said something terrible might happen. It alarmed me so. I tried to question him, but he wouldn't say more."

Curly looked around apprehensively. The girl misinterpreted his action. She flashed him a reassuring smile.

"Oh, father can't hear us. He's in his study. But I'm so worried. I asked him if I should call any one. I—I even mentioned a friend, or our attorney, or the police, and, when I said 'police,' father started up and said 'no' so emphatically that it frightened me. Then I thought of you, Mr. Boyne."

Dan's eyes were serious enough now to satisfy the wary Curly.

"Your father is still working for the——" he began.

"Yes, for the Red & Blue grocery chain," said the girl. "He's been with them for years, you know. I hardly think it's any business worries, though. But I don't know what it is."

Bang! The roar of the sudden shot crashed and echoed through the house. Then came a second or two of absolute silence while the three in the front hall stood horrified, seemingly paralyzed. It was Dan, starting forward, who broke the spell. Valerie screamed, and Curly clutched wildly at Dan's arm, but Dan shook him off.

"Where's the study, Valerie?" cried Dan, even as he ran down the narrow hall. He didn't hear Valerie's answer, if she made one. He saw a strip of light beneath a door. He flung the door open and stopped in his tracks. A man lay on the study floor. A gun lay near him. A tiny stream of scarlet was widening on the light rug.

"Father!" came Valerie's agonized scream.

Dan, advancing gingerly, bent over the still form. One glance and he knew the truth, but he went through certain rapid formalities. Then, springing up, Dan caught the swaying girl.

"Steady, kid!" he pleaded quietly. "You must bear up now. He's dead. You'd better call the police. We can't stay, much as I hate to desert you. They wouldn't understand. The phone, Miss Valerie, the phone. Call the police now!"

Valerie, dazed, reached for the telephone. Dan, throwing up his head, drew a long breath. Curly, white as a ghost, stared at him.

"Scram!" ordered Dan, nudging

Curly in the ribs. "We're going out of here before the cops come!" Curly faded into the hallway. Dan, taking another long breath, touched Valerie on the arm even as she lifted the receiver. "You understand, kid. You'll forgive us?"

The girl nodded through her tears.

CHAPTER II.

DAZZY TURNS COPPER.

DESPITE the fact that he was expecting Dazzy back any minute, the sound of the key in the lock of the apartment door caused Curly's blood to freeze in his veins. What if it were the police? What if he and Dazzy had been seen, recognized, trailed, as they had fled from the Hawkins death house the night before? Curly's heart seemed to stop beating as the door opened—but it was only Dazzling Dan.

"What was the idea of going out before I got up?" Curly demanded.

"Cigarettes and the morning paper," replied Dan with a good-natured grin. "You must have got out the wrong side of the bed, Curly."

"I'm sort of upset, Dazzy," admitted Curly abjectly, as he started for the tiny kitchenette to prepare breakfast. "I got to thinking last night—what if we was accused of shooting that old guy?"

Dazzy lighted a cigarette. He puffed at it contentedly for a full minute. Then he spread the newspaper out on the table.

"He killed himself!" he said.

"No!" exclaimed Curly, stopping in astonishment.

"The paper says it was suicide," suggested Dazzy, his blue eyes full

on Curly. "The paper states the police and coroner agreed."

"Fools!" muttered Curly, his eyes narrowing.

"Guess you and me think the same way, Curly," said Dazzy. "Old Hawkins never bumped himself. He didn't look like that kind to me. I didn't see no farewell note around, either."

Curly stopped to weigh his words carefully.

"I seen an open window," he said slowly. "I figured that was enough. And it wasn't no robber. The old man had an enemy that he knew—or thought—was coming last night. He was upset for that reason; he didn't want the police called, as the skirt said——"

"As Miss Valerie said," corrected Dazzy stiffly.

"Yeah," agreed Curly, "as Miss Valerie said. I wish to Heaven I'd never heard of that female."

"Lady," suggested Dazzy softly.

"Yeah," said Curly, "lady, as you say. But whatever she is, I figure she's jail bait. We'll be mixed up in this."

There was a rap at the door. Again, Curly almost leaped out of his skin. He went pale as he glanced at Dazzy.

"It's probably Miss Valerie now," said Dazzy easily. "I called her when I was out. She said she'd come over."

"Well, you big chump!" exploded Curly. "You crazy boob!"

It was Miss Valerie, but Curly hardly recognized her, so greatly was she changed from the night before. The merry blue eyes that had been so full of life the preceding evening were dull and red now. The bloom seemed to have gone from the round cheeks. Grief appeared to have crushed the girl to earth and left her there.

"Suicide!" cried the girl without preliminaries. "Can you imagine that, Mr. Boyne? My father killing himself! It is an insult. Those stupid police officers they sent out there! That snooping, conceited coroner's assistant! I could have killed them all."

Dazzy ushered her to a chair with a courtly bow.

The fidgeting Curly could restrain himself no longer.

"Pardon," he faltered suddenly, "but you're sure you wasn't followed here, lady? Maybe them cops ain't so dumb."

"Followed?" repeated Valerie, amazed. "Why should I be followed?"

"Of course, you wouldn't be followed," cut in Dazzy, giving Curly a black look. "The police are all washed up on this case. They've branded it suicide, and kissed it into the files in one gesture. Was that gun we saw there last night your father's gun, Miss Valerie?"

"Yes," said the girl. "But some one else must have used it."

"Did they examine it for prints?"

"Yes!"

"Find any?"

"Just father's, they said later," answered Valerie, tears forming anew in her eyes. "Oh, Mr. Boyne, I hate to trouble you with my cares, but I can't believe it was suicide. I have no faith in the police since I learned their methods when they tried to send Jimmy up for something he didn't do, and when they sent you up for a thing you didn't do. I can't believe them when they say father killed himself. I couldn't believe it in a thousand years."

Dazzy, lazing back in the easy-chair, was watching the girl closely. As she hesitated, he shot in a question.

"But there are circumstances

you've found, Valerie, that puzzle you? Isn't that right?"

"Yes," said the girl, looking down at a package she carried. "Father died a pauper, it seems. I thought we had money in the bank. He always said we were comfortably fixed. But there is no money in the bank. He had bonds, I thought, in the wall safe at home. But there were none when I opened it this morning—nothing but some old stocks."

"Had the safe been tampered with, Valerie?"

"No, it wasn't in the study. I'm sure it hadn't been touched," said Valerie. "I brought the old stock certificates over to see if you thought they had any value. Father got them years ago. He once said they were worthless, but now, having no funds, I thought——"

Dazzy took the package. He unwrapped it. A fairly large bundle of stock certificates was revealed. Dazzy thumbed them over hurriedly—old mining stocks, most of them in companies Dazzy had never heard of, and all of them, most probably, not worth the paper they were printed on. Dazzy shook his head slowly.

"I'm afraid they're worthless." He extended his package of cigarettes to Valerie. She took one, thanking him.

"Your brand?" He smiled. She shook her head.

"Did your father smoke?" he asked, striking a light for her.

"Rarely, and then only a pipe," Valerie replied.

"Well," said Dazzy softly. "I'm going to turn copper for you, Valerie. I'm going to try to find out who killed your father, since the police won't. You'd better pretend to accept their suicide theory for the present. By the way, did your father have any enemies?"

"No, of course not! Father was very lovable."

"I know he must have been," said Dazzy, nodding. "You must bear up, Valerie. Mr. Graves and myself will do our best, I promise, to clear up the case for you. Won't we, Curly?"

"Why—why, sure!" agreed Mr. Graves without enthusiasm.

CHAPTER III.

EASY PICKINGS.

WHEN Dazzy had returned to the apartment at noon and informed Curly that they were going for an auto ride to Morgantown that afternoon, Curly had been amazed. However, he was more than amazed when, an hour later, as he waited on the curb with Dazzy, a low, red roadster slid up in front of them. Curly recognized the driver as one Jerry Voldona, whom he had once known in the penitentiary.

"Howdy, boys. Am I late?" was Voldona's greeting.

"Listen!" hissed Curly, as he pulled Dazzy to one side. "Is your name 'Dizzy' instead of 'Dazzy'? What's the idea of ganging up with another ex-con? What are we going on, anyway? I'm protesting."

"Hello, Jerry!" said Dazzy, ignoring Curly's whispers. "You're right on the dot. You know Curly here? Sure, you do. I guess Curly was kind of surprised. I didn't tell him you were taking us."

"Hello, Curly!" sang out Voldona.

"How do you do," said Curly grudgingly, as he climbed into the car after Dazzy. "You still on parole, Jerry?"

"Yep," said Jerry airily, "but it won't be long now. I've been out

a good year and a half. How do you like the boat?"

Both Dazzy and Curly made the required flattering remarks. Voldona seemed to swell up with pride as he slipped the car into high. Curly had gone white again. What if this Voldona bird were up to some nonsense and they were caught with him, in his car? It would be back to the stir again and no "ifs" or "ands." As though in answer to Curly's agonized thought, Voldona volunteered some inside information.

"I'm living on Smart Avenue again, boys," he bragged. "No working stiff has a chance at the big dough these days. I'm back in the booze racket, and believe me, I got an inside track this time."

Curly felt his hair rising under his hat.

"Wasn't it liquor you was in the pen for, Voldona?"

"Sure, but I was dumb then. I got caught. I'm wise now." Jerry blared his horn impertinently at a traffic officer. "You was down there for what?"

"Paper hanging—checks," said Curly laconically.

"What was you in for Dazzy? I forget," went on Voldona.

"They said I embezzled some dough from a bank," said Dazzy softly. "There was some money missing and I took the fall."

Voldona swore loudly. He nodded his head energetically.

"Yeah. I remember now. You was framed on that. I remember You got a sweet dish."

"Let's change the subject," said Dazzy grimly. "How long do you suppose it is going to take us to get to Morgantown, Jerry? I haven't ridden in a good car for a long time, and I've never been to Morgantown."

Jerry laughed. He slapped Dazzy on the knee affectionately.

"You're a good loser, Dazzy. Oh, we should get to Morgantown in about three hours steady driving. I'll hit it up, and, if we're lucky in locating Bull Farley, we can start back——"

Curly straightened and shuddered at that name.

"Bull Farley?" he asked quickly. "The same Bull that was——"

"Yeah, the big bruiser as was trusty in No. 2 cell house when we was there," supplied Voldona promptly. "He's out on parole. He was in for manslaughter."

Curly swallowed hard. But Dazzy's poker face did not change expression even as Curly nudged him frantically.

"What's Bull doing now?" asked Curly at length.

"Working for a oil-drilling outfit," said Voldona.

But the answer didn't satisfy Curly. He understood now—or he thought he did—why Dazzy had been so mysterious about the trip to Morgantown. Dazzy had refused to tell Curly why they were going there. A sudden inspiration struck Curly now, however. Dazzy, bent on sticking his nose into affairs that should not concern him, was undoubtedly going to see "Bull" Farley in connection with the Hawkins slaying. Had Bull anything to do with that?—he wondered. What had Dazzy found out about the killing, anyway, during his morning's absence? Where had Dazzy located Voldona? And what was Voldona's interest in the case? Curly drew a long breath.

"We're going pretty fast," he hinted. "We might get pinched."

"I got a roli," sneered Voldona, "if we do!"

And that was slight satisfaction

for Curly. A roll might square a speeding charge, but what would the parole officers say about the three ex-cons ganging up, particularly if they learned that one of them was prospering through law violation again? Curly gulped and shifted uneasily in the seat. But Dazzy seemed smugly content.

"This old can will do ninety," said Voldona proudly.

There was little conversation after that. Voldona, gripping the wheel in an iron grasp, shot the big car ahead at a reckless pace. Dazzy, relaxed, a slight smile on his face, seemed to be enjoying the scenery. Curly was too busy with his depressing thoughts to notice anything at all.

Once, when they stopped for a railroad grade crossing—a precaution on Voldona's part that astounded the suffering Curly—Dazzy offered the driver a cigarette. Voldona, looking at it, whistled.

"Imported, eh? I never seen one like it. You're stepping high!"

"It's a kind of rare brand," said Dazzy, smiling. "Will you have one, Curly?"

"No, thanks," said Curly. "I feel bad enough now."

Voldona and Dazzy laughed. Voldona, no doubt, thought that Curly was afraid of the speed they were making. Dazzy, however, undoubtedly knew what was the matter with Curly. But if he did, he made no effort to relieve Curly's feelings. He sat back, quite at ease, and continued to watch the pastures, the haystacks, the trim white farmhouses and the equally trim red barns flash past. Curly smothered a groan or two.

But, at length, Voldona began to slacken speed.

"Morgantown's around the next bend," he said in explanation. "The

next thing to do is to locate Bull Farley!"

Dazzy nodded but said nothing. Curly winced as if in pain. A minute or two more, and they entered a town that looked important. It was a new town, a mushroom town, sprawled hither and yon, with a silhouetted horizon of oil derricks behind it. Voldona proceeded down the main street, scanning the buildings sharply as he drove.

"There's a booze joint I'll ask at," he remarked.

It was while Voldona was in the joint that Curly got a chance to speak a little of what was on his mind. He blurted it out.

"You're dizzy, sure enough!" he exclaimed angrily, twisting around to look Dazzy straight in the face. "Teaming up with Voldona, looking for Farley, stopping in front of a booze joint—all in violation to the parole regulations. And what for? Risking our liberty just to please some pretty, silly female!"

"Lady," said Dazzy scrupulously.

"Lady, as you say," admitted Curly. "You're plain goofy."

"Listen, nitwit!" said Dazzy suddenly. "You were complaining only yesterday that we were somewhat short of ready money. We got the habit of eating and we can't break it, can we? Well, we came up here for some easy pickings—that's all. If we locate Farley, we're going to get an earful—and reap the harvest soon thereafter. We're going to cash in big, see? You better pull yourself together before I begin to think you got a yellow streak. And when you begin to doubt me again, just remember I didn't get that name 'Dazzling' hooked onto me at the big house because I was a dub, a wool-gatherer."

Voldona came out, all smiles.

"I got Bull located," he said, grin-

ning happily. "He's up at the Veezey drilling outfit. We'll go up there. I got a pint, also. It ought to be good stuff, seeing it come originally from me. We'll have a quiet little gargle with Bull, eh, boys?"

But it was only Dazzy who answered.

"Sure thing, Voldona," he agreed. "I'll bet Bull can kill that pint at one toss without our assistance!"

And Dazzy, it developed, was right in his surmise. Bull Farley did manage almost to drain the bottle at the first friendly gulp. Dazzy merely touched his lips to it. Voldona finished it after Curly rather ungraciously refused to partake of the refreshments at all.

Then, after a few commonplaces, during which Curly kept his nose pretty much in the air, Dazzy came to the point.

"Listen, Bull, old-timer!" he urged. "I've figured out a way to gather a little jack—safely, too. We can cut you in easy, if you can produce a little info. What I want to know is simply this: What bum wildcat well is liable to come in soon with a gusher? From the way they've been getting oil in this field every now and then, I figure that it's about time for another one to pop."

Bull Farley laughed softly.

"Leave it to you, Dazzling, to see the light before the other guy," he said. "And leave it to you to go to the right bozo for the straight dope. I'm your man, sure enough. What you ask me is easy. The drilling crew up on the Manitou dome, working for the Pine Grove Oil Co., expects a well to blow in within three, four, five days. And they know their onions, Dazzling. They're keeping it a real dark secret. The stock is away down now—around

twenty-five cents a share. It'll soar when the well comes in."

"The Pine Grove Oil Co., eh?" said Dazzy, grinning broadly. "What a pretty name, Bull."

"Yeah," said Farley. "That's your ticket."

"We'll cut you in," said Dazzy simply. There was a general shaking of hands. And then the roadster swung back toward the city. Curly Graves sighed in relief. But he was still wondering, too.

CHAPTER IV.

VALERIE IS CUT IN.

DAZZY was genuinely pleased, but Curly wasn't, when Valerie Hawkins called at the apartment the next morning. The girl was still crushed with grief. Funeral arrangements had been made for the next day, she said, and she had called, she told them, to ask Dazzy if he had made any progress in her father's case.

Dazzy nodded his red head emphatically.

"Valerie, I've gone copper with a bang," he informed the sad-eyed girl. "But it's a case that can't be rushed. I've done some digging around and I think we're getting somewhere, but it's naturally slow work. We got to work under cover, being mighty cautious, but so far we've exceeded our expectations."

Curly looked as surprised as Valerie at that revelation.

"You think you'll find out who murdered my father?" she asked hopefully. "You really think you can show up those bungling police?"

Dazzy avoided Curly's piercing stare.

"I think so," he said softly, and

then he smiled at Valerie. "But I have other news, too. Curly and I are going in the oil game. We're going to buy some oil stock and make a lot of money, and we've declared you in, Valerie, in on the inside with us."

Again, Curly stared in astonishment. But the statement didn't impress Valerie very much. She smiled sadly.

"I haven't much faith in oil stock or mining stock," she remarked wearily. "And, of course, I have no funds."

"Neither have we," said Dazzy grandly, "and you don't need any, either. You're in, Valerie, and, when we cash in, you'll get yours."

"Thank you," said the girl simply, as if to humor Dazzy's wild dream.

Curly got up and walked to the window, saying things under his breath. But when Valerie left, a bit later, Curly grew louder in his mutterings. He was becoming, Dazzy told him, a little garrulous. But Curly persisted.

"What's the idea of counting the girl in on a wild-goose scheme like that oil deal?" he demanded. "I didn't put much stock in Farley's dope or your plan, and you didn't try to sell me on it after we got in last night. You seem blamed mysterious about the deal, anyway. What if the stock does go up? We haven't any. And we can't buy any, even on margin. It looks like a hot-air deal to me, Dazzy."

Dazzy grinned patronizingly at his partner. He reached into a breast pocket and pulled out a wallet—a very thin affair—but still a wallet. He extracted a lone fifty-dollar bill from the wallet. He handed it to the astonished Curly.

"Take that," he said, "and go out and buy us a two-hundred-share certificate of Pine Grove Oil Co. stock

at twenty-five cents a share. Buy it at any broker's house, but I'd use an assumed name in getting it transferred, if I were you. Just use the name of Harry Jones."

Curly looked as if a mule had kicked him.

"Where in the world did you get this?" was his first startled question. "Why risk it gambling on stock?" he continued, almost incoherently. "What if the stock does go up, as Farley says, we can't make a fortune for us two—and Valerie Hawkins, also—on just two hundred shares of it. And what's to prevent the stock from staying just where it is or flopping to a cent a share, eh?"

Dazzy remained complacent. He continued to smile at the awed Curly until Curly began to flush and sputter.

"And why kid that poor girl about solving the mystery of her old man's killing?" went on Curly loudly, forgetting his instinctive caution at last. "Why tell her we're working on the case when we ain't done a blasted thing about it? She'd think a lot more of you if you told her plain outright that it wasn't none of our business butting in instead of stringing her along. When she does find out that you've been four-flushing her, she'll be furious. She might even get mad enough to tell the coppers we was at her house when——"

The look on Dazzy's face halted Curly abruptly.

"Take it easy, Curly," advised Dazzy calmly. "You've got a lot to learn before you begin to ask me so many questions in a string. You go out and get that stock and get it quick. I'll be waiting right here for it. And don't forget the name of it. The Pine Grove Oil Co. Nothing else will do. Nothing else

is just as good with me. And don't forget that you're Harry Jones when they transfer it to you. Please remember that!"

"Say, going under an alias is against the parole rules."

"Scram!" ordered Dazzy, his smile vanishing. "If you aren't back here in an hour and a half with that stock, I'll decide that you lost your nerve and beat it for the high timber, understand?"

"Sure," said Curly sourly. "You and me are going to land back in that pen yet, if I don't miss my guess."

CHAPTER V.

LIQUID GOLD.

WHEN Curly Graves, alias Harry Jones, returned in an hour and twenty minutes, breathless but triumphant, he was dumfounded to find two strange men in the apartment with Dazzy. Curly's first thought was that they were detectives, but a second glance reassured him on that point. The men did not look like detectives, but they appeared suspicious. Curly hesitated and stared.

"Friends," said Dazzy laconically, as he noticed Curly's impending stampede. "They're O. K., Curly. Boys, meet my friend, Curly. This tall man, Curly, is Bill, and the other one is Joe. No need of going into details on last names. Curly, did you buy that stock? Have you got it?"

Curly looked shocked. Apparently, since Dazzy was so frank in front of this strange pair, they must be muscling in on the deal, too. In spite of his wariness, Curly smiled weakly.

"We're getting to be a big company," he remarked as he handed Dazzy the certificate with the seal.

Dazzy, with merely a glance at it, handed it to Bill. Bill, holding it close up under his nose, scrutinized the certificate with infinite care. Curly watched him, wondering what the idea might be.

"Yes," said Bill at last, after what seemed an eternity. "It's a very nice piece of printing, but I can duplicate it all easy, in twenty-four hours' time—all except the seal and the signatures of the officers. I'll have to scout around a bit to find some of those type faces, but I can find them. Yes, Dazzy, I can do the job right. I can match the paper stock easy. It's a stock certificate blank form all the wholesale paper houses handle."

"Good," said Dazzy quietly. "You look at it, Joe!"

Joe took the certificate from Bill. He, too, studied the thing for a good three minutes. Then, fishing into his pocket; he brought out a small jeweler's magnifying glass. He looked at the certificate through the glass. Then he glanced up, nodding.

"Yes, I can duplicate that seal neat as you please—hand engraving—and not one man in a thousand can tell the diff," he announced with convincing sincerity. "I've made seals like this before. It'll take me a good eighteen hours to complete the job."

"Good again," said Dazzy calmly. "Take the certificate, Curly!"

Curly took it with trembling hands. A great light—a very dark and gloomy light, as it were—was beginning to dawn on him.

"Bill will be taking the certificate to copy when he leaves and Joe will have to have it a bit to trace the seal," said Dazzy. "So you got to

work fast. I want you to copy those signatures off that certificate—better trace them—and then practice up so you can dash 'em off free-hand a good many times. You'll have to sign those monikers to a hundred and fifty two-hundred-share certificates!"

"What?" exploded Curly, aghast.

"You heard me," said Dazzy sharply. "Get busy!"

Curly opened his mouth to protest, to refuse, to defy the order, to proclaim he would be signing his own warrant for a return trip to the State prison; but Dazzy, getting up rather leisurely from his easy-chair, came toward him, a bland expression on his face. Curly, mumbling incoherently, snatched up the certificate and walked over to the table with it, flung it down, threw himself down in a chair, and bent to the task of learning to forge the names on the certificate.

Dazzy turned and began to converse with Bill and Joe. They were waiting for him, Curly knew. And, with the perspiration streaming from his brow, Curly went grimly to work. It didn't take him a great length of time to copy the names—with all their peculiarly distinctive curves and flourishes. And then he stood up, glowering. Dazzy, without a word, came over and picked up the stock certificate. Joe took it and went to the table, produced a piece of tracing paper and got busy. In a few minutes, he was through, and Bill took the certificate, stuffing it into his pocket.

"Joe will get the seal to me as soon as it is finished," said Dazzy. "And Bill, you'll get me the certificates by this time to-morrow?"

"I will."

"Good!" There was a round of handclasps, and Bill and Joe departed. But hardly had the door

closed on them when Curly squared off as if he intended knocking Dazzy into the middle of the next month.

"You fool!" he cried. "You think I'll sign forged names to your fake certificates, do you? You'll guess again. You've gone daffy! I'm not going back to the penitentiary for you or any one else, and that is where your oil-stock deal is going to take us. But not me! I'm not going. I'm out. I'm through."

"You will be through—for good—if you desert me now, Curly," said Dazzy, and, for the first time in his life, Curly realized that Dazzling Dan was in a highly dangerous state of mind. "You'll not only sign those forged names to the certificates, but you'll also peddle the certificates when I give you the word. You sure will."

Curly sank into a chair, shaking like a leaf. He knew Dazzy spoke the truth. He'd do just as Dazzy told him to do, even if it did land him back in the cell house at Canon City penitentiary.

Dazzy picked up the telephone expectantly. The look of hope on his slightly haggard face changed at once to an expression of great satisfaction. He chuckled as he listened.

"Fine, Bull, fine. I'm glad to hear it. Blew in a half hour ago, you say? . . . A big one? . . . Good! . . . The news is out, is it? Good! . . . Yes, I'm all set. Been set two days now. . . . Yes, everything's jake. . . . I'll be seeing you, Bull, seeing you right soon, too!"

Dazzy slammed down the receiver.

"Curly, you lazy bum!" cried Dazzy, and Curly squirmed uncomfortably under the bedcovers. He had spent the greater part of the last two days in bed, more mentally ill than physically sick. He had signed

two forged names to a hundred and fifty two-hundred-share certificates of the Pine Grove Oil Co., and the exertion, in his frame of mind, had been too much.

"Curly, you hear me?" repeated Dazzy.

"Yeah, now what?" answered Curly in a thin voice.

"It's your move, kid. The Pine Grove well that Bull told us about has come in a gusher. The news is out. It'll be a sensation in the brokerage houses. We're peddling our stock pronto."

"Dazzy!"

"Yes, we're peddling it. You are, rather. Get up and dress before I kick you up! We got no time to lose."

Dazzy grabbed for a telephone book. He thumbed the pages hastily. He came to the classified advertising section and ran a finger down the line of brokers. Then he called a number, his voice hoarse with excitement.

"What's the news on Pine Grove Oil?" he shouted suddenly. "The well's come in a gusher, eh? Good! What is the stock quotation? A dollar ninety and going up? Good! Thanks a lot!"

Dazzy swung on Curly, who was pulling on his clothes.

"Get dressed quick, you fool!" he hissed, and there was no soothing tone in his voice now. "The time is hot to strike! Hurry!"

Curly, mute, hurried. There was no use in arguing. He knew he was going out to peddle the spurious stock and that later he was going back to the penitentiary for more long years.

Dazzy got the stock certificates from their hiding place under the mattress. He looked them over carefully for the last time. Then, holding them in his hands, he sat

down to wait for Curly to complete his toilet. When Curly had his hat and overcoat on, Dazzy handed him the certificates.

"You've seen these compared with the original, genuine certificate, and you know they match perfectly," said Dazzy, as if repeating a formula to Curly, who seemed dazed. "You can't lose. All you got to do is to play your part like I've coached you. You're Ralph Cummings, a Morgantown storekeeper. You've taken these stock certificates in from various debtors in the past, and, now that they've soared, you're selling—even a bit below the current quotations—for you need the ready cash for your spring buying. You've got thirty thousand shares. You want cash—all cash—quick."

"I know all that by heart," said Curly.

"Fair enough, but here is something you don't know," shot in Dazzy. "You're to go to Sobermann & Co., stockbrokers, 1989 Seventh Street, with them. You're to sell the certificates to Sobermann himself! No argument now! To him and to nobody else! You get me, Curly?"

Curly grimaced. Now that the crisis had come, he was game.

"The cops will get us both," he answered glibly.

"Beat it, and telephone me the second you have the cash. If they pay you by check, get them to go to the bank with you to identify you so you can cash the check immediately. You're going to New York on the first train, tell them. But act your part! *Act your part!*"

"Sure thing!" agreed Curly. "But as I told you, warned you——"

"Beat it!"

With Curly gone, Dazzy Dan stretched, laughed, and sat down in his easy-chair again. He thought of

Valerie and reached for the telephone. He was fortunate. She was at home.

"Listen, Valerie," he told her. "You stay home this afternoon because I may want to get in touch with you on something important. . . . Yes, it is on your father's case. . . . Yes, I think we are getting right on the bird's tail. Wait for the call, won't you? That's a good girl. I'll tell you more when I call you."

He hung up the receiver for a moment. Then, lifting it, he called police headquarters and asked for the chief of detectives.

"Hello, chief," he spoke softly now. "This is a friend. I'm just tipping you off that maybe you can get hold of the man who killed Hawkins the other night. Oh, no, it wasn't a suicide, chief, not at all. It was a murder. Yeah, a murder—but I'll call you later. So long!"

He leaned back in his chair with a grim smile.

"They'll try to trace that call but can't, seeing I wasn't on that wire but a few seconds," he mused. "I'm taking a lot for granted, though. If I can't produce that murderer——"

But he interrupted himself with a laugh. Then, picking up a book, he started to read. He was reading diligently when the telephone rang. Curly's voice came clear and distinct.

"It's me. I've sold the junk at two dollars a share. Got the dough. What'll I do now?"

"Bring it in, you idiot. Bring it in and don't lose it!"

Again, Dazzy laughed—more heartily this time, however—and then he rang up the brokerage office of Sobermann & Co.

"Sobermann himself, please!" he requested. There was a wait. "Hello, Sobermann? This is Charley

Morris, a private detective. . . .
 Yes, a private detective. I've just had a tip that you've been bilked on thirty thousand shares of Pine Grove Oil Co. stock you bought. . . . Yes, quit hollering and listen to me, please. . . . Spurious certificates, I understand. . . . Faked—forged! . . . Yes, yes, I tell you! Now listen, Mr. Sobermann. I suggest you call the Morgantown headquarters of the company, check the numbers on the certificates you bought with their records. If you have been swindled, I think I can help you. . . . Yes, I think I can get the gang that did it—a New York gang of con men, I understand. . . . Yes, maybe get your money back without any publicity. Publicity in your business is bad, Mr. Sobermann. . . . You check up in Morgantown, and I'll call you back in an hour or so. Good-by!"

Again, Dazzy leaned back in his chair, satisfied.

"If he doesn't die of heart failure, he'll bite!" he exclaimed. "Sixty thousand smackers to the bad—ouch! Now if only some dip from the good homestead at Canon City doesn't take Curly for the dough before he gets here, we'll be on the moon—yes, on the moon!"

Curly arrived, breathless, flushed, scared to death, a few minutes later. His overcoat pockets yielded the cash—all in hundred-dollar bills, and not new ones, either, Dazzy noted with gratification. Dazzy put the money under the mattress.

"Now what—Europe?" asked Curly, wide-eyed.

"No, the next thing on the program, Curly, is to point you out to Mr. Sobermann of Sobermann & Co., and trail you to your lair," said Dazzy complacently. "I imagine it will be quite exciting and a lot of fun. And, by the way, don't let me

forget to call the chief of detectives with some dope on that Hawkins murder."

But words were beyond Curly. He just stood and gaped.

CHAPTER VI.

A SHADOWING JOB.

IT was a few minutes after one o'clock when Dazzling Dan Boyne stalked into the office of Sobermann & Co., stockbrokers, at 1989 Seventh Street. There was an air of tenseness about the place that amused Dazzy immensely, although he didn't show it. The stenographers seemed to be laboring under some great excitement. The clerks and lesser executives in the vast front office seemed to be going about in a daze. It was as if death had visited the establishment and taken away a beloved something—the safe, perhaps.

"I want to see Mr. Sobermann, please," Dazzy told the girl at the front desk. She shook her head immediately, most emphatically.

"Oh, but you can't. He isn't seeing any one," she said.

"Tell him Mr. Charles Morris is here," said Dazzy airily.

"Oh, Mr. Morris, excuse me. He's waiting for you. He sent out word an hour ago that you were to be taken right in."

"Thank you," said Dazzy, suppressing a grin as he followed the trim blond girl back into the darker recesses of the big office. She opened a massive door, without knocking, and poked her head in swiftly.

"Mr. Morris is here," she cried excitedly.

"Well, where is he? Where is he? Show him in! Show him in!" came a deep, anguished voice. "I want

him now. I tell you show him in! What are you waiting for you dumb cluck? Show him in! Oh, I beg pardon, Mr. Morris?"

"Mr. Morris!" said Dazzy, bowing low.

Mr. Sobermann wrung Dazzy's hand warmly.

"Ah, Mr. Morris, I thought I should die before you came. Yes, I almost collapsed. I am ruined! I am gone! I am swindled! It is as I told you when you called back the second time. What you hinted to me is right—absolutely right—tragically right! The stock certificates are rank forgeries—rank forgeries, Mr. Morris. Ah, tell me, tell me. You think you know the scoundrels?"

Dazzy leaned back in his chair. He felt in a pocket, then in another, then in a third.

"I'm sorry. May I trouble you for a cigarette, Mr. Sobermann?"

"Gladly, gladly. Take two, if you wish! But tell me quickly!"

Dazzy took one cigarette. It was the brand of fancy imported stuff he had so recently sampled, he noticed. He lighted it, drew a long "drag" on it, then he laid a hand on Mr. Sobermann's trembling knee.

"I am sure I know the scoundrels, sir!"

"Good! Good! Lead me to them, Mr. Morris!" cried Sobermann wildly. "I'll take my gun and I kill them all. Yes, I would do that. I am of a violent temper, Mr. Morris. I would fight a nestful of robbers for sixty thousand dollars, Mr. Morris—a nestful. Where are they? Who are they? Tell me quick! Ah, my poor heart!"

Mr. Sobermann placed a pudgy, bejeweled hand over the upper part of his stomach, but Mr. Boyne, alias Mr. Morris, made no comment.

"Why do you wait? Every mo-

ment is precious. Every second, they get farther away, perhaps, with my sixty thousand in cash."

Dazzy blew a smoke ring.

"My retaining fee in this case is two hundred and fifty dollars, Mr. Sobermann," he said quietly. "And I guarantee to lead you to one of the ringleaders in the gang. I think we can follow him to his den. I won't promise. I won't even half promise, but there is a chance—maybe only one chance in a million—but a chance—that the sixty thousand dollars will be where he leads us. How does that strike you?"

Mr. Sobermann pressed a buzzer grimly, energetically. A girl and two men came running.

"Cash! Two hundred and fifty dollars cash! Quick!" he ordered. "It is life or death."

The employees vanished instantly. Mr. Sobermann turned to Dazzy.

"I was advised by one of my head men, Bernstein, to call the police," said Mr. Sobermann, blubbing. "Bernstein has a second cousin in the detective bureau."

Dazzy felt a queer numbness creeping over him.

"But I told Bernstein he was a jackass!" went on Mr. Sobermann. "Call the police! Yes, and what do they do? They call in the newspapermen, the photographers—and boom—boom—the flash lights go off everywhere. In the papers, the pictures come out of my stenographers, sitting on desks, with their skirts to their knees, like a fashion show and not a swindle, and the crooks read it and laugh, and go on with my cash. Ah, my poor heart!"

A clerk came in with the two hundred and fifty dollars. Dazzy pocketed it.

"Ready?" he asked, arising. Mr. Sobermann jammed his hat on.

"Are you carrying a gun?" asked Dazzy suddenly.

"Yes, to be most certain!"

"These are dangerous men. Let me see your gun, please!"

Mr. Sobermann produced his gun. Dazzy examined it while Mr. Sobermann was struggling into his top coat. In the outer office, Mr. Sobermann stopped to address the assemblage.

"I will come back dead, maybe. But I go for vengeance!" he announced. It seemed to Dazzy as if some one should applaud, but there was no applause. The pair passed out onto Seventh Street.

"One of the gang," said Dazzy in a whisper, "is hanging out in front of a cigar store not two blocks from here. We will shadow him, Mr. Sobermann, to his den."

"I shall kill him, Mr. Morris!"

"No, no, Mr. Sobermann! You mustn't be foolish. It would do no good to kill him—only attract the police—and no one would know where to find the rest of the gang. We'll trail him quietly."

It was Mr. Sobermann who "spotted" Curly first. He let out an agonized grunt and seized Dazzy by the arm.

"There he is. There is the man who sold me the stock and took my good money!" cried Mr. Sobermann tremblingly, as he pointed to Curly across the street. At that moment, Curly, seeing Mr. Sobermann and his companion, started off briskly, as per arrangement.

"Ssshh, Mr. Sobermann. We'll follow him," cried Dazzy.

Curly headed straight for a second-rate rooming house on Fifth Street, where he had rented a room not twenty minutes before. Dazzy, having been with him at the time, knew the number. Curly reached the room one jump ahead of his

shadows. A minute after he had closed the door, it was flung open again. In burst the irate Mr. Sobermann, a pistol in his hand, a wild light in his flaming eyes.

Curly, seeing the gun, collapsed against the far wall.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONFESSION.

BUT Curly's fright was nothing in comparison to the shock Mr. Sobermann himself received a second later. Even as Curly, convinced that Dazzy had actually gone mad and had betrayed him, was looking down the barrel of Mr. Sobermann's leveled gun, Dazzy stepped nimbly into the room, closed the door quickly, and jabbed a gun against the small of Mr. Sobermann's back with no gentle force.

"Drop that gun, Sobermann!" came Dazzy's curt order.

Sobermann dropped his gun.

"It wasn't loaded, anyway," said Dazzy. "I unloaded it in your office. Sit down in that chair, Sobermann, and don't move!"

But Sobermann's tongue moved.

"You're arresting the wrong man," he cried. "There is the crook—that crook Cummings—who took my sixty thousand."

Curly, recovering his poise, advanced on Mr. Sobermann as if he meant to strike him, but it was Dazzy who struck Mr. Sobermann—a resounding smack on the cheek.

"I'm arresting the right man, Sobermann!" exclaimed Dazzy, an angry glow on his face. "And it wasn't your sixty thousand dollars, anyway! Forty of that sixty you took from old man Hawkins—swindled him out of it on fake min-

ing stock. Don't you dare deny it, Sobermann, for I might lose my temper and shoot you, you filthy rat!"

The broker cringed in the chair, a snarl on his lips.

"Prove what you say!" he challenged hoarsely.

"Prove it?" cried Dazzy hotly. "I don't have to prove it to you, Sobermann. You know it's the truth—the stark, naked truth. You practically robbed Hawkins outright. That mining stock wasn't worth a whoop, and you knew it. You handled that issue of Chipmonk Gold Mines, Inc., and you sold to other suckers like Hawkins, bleeding widows and old men of their life savings, getting them to invest in a mine that existed only in your dirty brain."

Curly blinked. He was learning something, too.

"So that sixty thousand dollars wasn't yours, Sobermann. It was mostly Hawkins's. And whatever is over and above goes for our expenses in the matter, seeing we don't know the other victims and can't return the loot to them," went on Dazzy heatedly. "But that isn't all, Sobermann. You said in your office that you have a hot temper. How well I know it! When poor old Hawkins—waking up after he had sent you his last check for three hundred dollars for another block of that fake Chipmonk paper—stopped payment on the check, you called him up and threatened him. Then you went out to his house, spied on him, went in through a window, and killed him with his own gun. That's what you did, and you know I know it!"

Sobermann started up out of the chair, his face ghastly, but Curly pushed him back down again. Dazzy, his fiery eyes close to the

broker's eyes, pushed the gun closer, too.

"You wore gloves and left no prints on the gun," went on Dazzy, "but you forgot something. You fooled the police, sure enough. But you didn't fool me. I've been to college. I just got out of college, as a matter of fact—a good college, too, in which to learn the ways of crooks! You left a cloud of cigarette smoke behind you and a smoldering long butt when you jumped out of that window in the Hawkins house. We were in the room a second later. I caught the aroma of that peculiar tobacco and I found the cigarette butt. You smoke those cigarettes, Sobermann, and they're a rare brand.

"It was easy to put two and two together. A college chum, who knows something about you, found out for me who handled the Chipmonk stock. The Hawkins girl thought it was old stuff. I figured different and I was right. When my college chum told me you handled it, I called you up, pretending to be an advertising man, and, on a flimsy excuse, offered you a dozen free cartons of your favorite cigarette, and you called for the particular kind the Hawkins slayer had used.

"Then I found out from a man in a bank—a man I befriended once with great personal sacrifice—that you were furious when Hawkins stopped a check on you three days before his death. You killed him for that three hundred dollars, you dirty rat—killed him with the gun he probably had on his desk, seeing he was expecting you. Deny that!"

But Mr. Sobermann's jaw had dropped. He was speechless.

"Yes, you took all his cash and all his good bonds, cashing the bond coupons through the bank, and leav-

ing a trail for me to pick up, seeing my banker friend knew the coupons were from bonds originally owned by Hawkins. Deny that, you thief!"

But Sobermann didn't try to deny it.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked chokingly.

Dazzy's cool answer stunned even Curly.

"I'm going to kill you, Sobermann!"

"Please, do not do that! Anything but that! I can't die. I am not ready to die. I admit everything. I swear——"

Dazzy handed his gun to Curly.

"Watch him for a minute! If he moves, kill him!" he ordered, making for the door. He left the room. There was a telephone booth in the hall. He stepped into it. First, he called Valerie and talked to her for a moment. Then he called the chief of detectives.

"Hello, chief, this is the party called you earlier about the Hawkins murder," he said. "I've got your man. I'm mailing you some other data. But, in a moment, I will call you back and the man will tell you something himself. It's a strange proceeding, chief, but it's on the level. You can have the credit for the arrest, too!"

He hung up and went back into the room.

"Sobermann, I am going to call the police on the phone in the room here. You will tell them you killed Hawkins, or I will kill you right here and now. You can believe me or not, as you choose."

There was a terrified look in Sobermann's inflamed eyes.

"I'll talk," he said, "to the police!"

Again, Dazzy called the chief of detectives. When he had him on the wire, he turned the phone over

to Sobermann, who took it with shaking hands. "Tell him your name first and then tell him how and why you killed Hawkins. And make it snappy!"

Dazzy's gun was almost touching Sobermann's cheek now.

"Hello, police!" mumbled Sobermann. "This is J. J. Sobermann. I killed old Hawkins. Yes, I shot him. I was mad at him. I shot him with his own gun and went out the window."

Sobermann hesitated, but Dazzy's gun touched his head now.

"I am confessing!" screamed Sobermann in desperation. "I killed him over a check matter. I guess I am to be killed, too."

Dazzy seized the telephone from Sobermann's numb fingers.

"Hello, chief," cried Dazzy. "You heard that confession, didn't you? Well, Sobermann is in Room 5, at 1762 Fifth Street. He'll be here when you get here, but make it snappy!"

Dazzy put down the phone. Out of his pocket, he whisked a pair of handcuffs.

"These just cost me five dollars," he remarked, "but they're worth it. Into the bathroom here, quick, Sobermann. You can be thankful you're alive. You repudiate that confession you made, and I'll come to the jail and kill you myself. You hear that?"

"Yes!" answered the staggering Sobermann.

Hastily, Dazzy handcuffed Sobermann to the plumbing in the bathroom. It made a good jail. Dazzy motioned to Curly.

"We'll be blowing," he said quietly. "The cops will be here in a minute. It might be embarrassing if they found us here. They ought to be satisfied finding Sobermann. Come on, kid. Pick up those

big feet of yours and lay them down. Speed's the slogan!"

But Curly needed no great urging. He was through the door and out on the street as quickly as Dazzy. There they mingled in the crowd of passing pedestrians.

"I feel kind of weak!" said Curly.

CHAPTER VIII.

"ALL'S WELL THAT——"

VALERIE was waiting at the apartment when Dazzy and Curly arrived. The latter, it seemed, was visibly annoyed at finding her there. He knew she meant a delay—and a delay, he figured, was dangerous.

"I came over as soon as you called me, Mr. Boyne," said the girl. "I am so anxious to hear the news. Tell me!"

"First," said Dazzy, as he made for the bed and lifted the mattress, "our little oil deal went through fine, Valerie. You've made a little sum of around forty thousand dollars—by a coincidence the exact sum your father lost in a stock deal recently."

The girl's face paled.

"Recently?" she exclaimed. "Then do you suppose that, after all, he may have—have——"

"Nonsense," said Dazzy, bundling up a number of packages of currency for her. "Your father was murdered, Valerie. We've just given the police some information on the slayer. I think they'll arrest him. I am quite sure of it. Meantime I——"

Dazzy reached under the cloth on the table. He pulled out an envelope. He handed it to Valerie.

"I wish you'd mail that, when you

go out," he suggested. "It's addressed to the police. It gives them the name of a respectable bank employee who will be of material aid to them in proving the case against Mr. Sobermann. He is the man I think will be arrested. And, by another coincidence, Valerie, the bank employee who helped me so much in clearing up this case—at my earnest suggestion—was a man I did a great favor for some time back. He took some money in a foolish moment, but he had a wife and kids so I took the blame—and went away—to college—where I learned all about crooks!"

"Dan!" cried the girl impulsively.

"Everything will be fine, Valerie," said Dazzy, smiling down at her. "Curly and I have to go see some friends now—some old pals that helped us in our little oil deal. They had expenses and they must be reimbursed. I'm sure they'll be as surprised and as delighted as we are at the profits."

Dazzy cocked his head sidewise suddenly.

"Isn't that boy shouting 'extra,' Curly?" he asked.

"Sounds like it," said Curly.

"Go fetch one!"

"I don't know how I can ever thank you for all this money!" exclaimed the girl, as Curly departed. "I really shouldn't take it. I made no investment. I can't see how I come in for a share."

"Forget it," said Dazzy, patting her on the shoulder. "It was your father's money once, child."

"And thanks for what you've done for father," faltered the girl. "You have saved his name and reputation—if you have helped the police to catch the murderer. Father must have been ashamed of losing all that money. It must have been all he had; that is why he didn't

want the police called that night. The publicity and everything!"

Curly came bounding back with a paper.

The headlines screamed:

SOBERMANN CONFESSES HAWKINS
MURDER

"Here, Valerie, take the paper and hurry along now," said Dazzy, smiling. "We must be on our way. We're going to pack up and take a trip—Curly and I—and so——"

The girl extended her hand.

"Good-by, Mr. Boyne!" she said. "When you come back, you must call me. And you, too, Mr. Curly. And thank you both so much—so much. Oh, dear, I'm afraid I'm going to cry!"

Then she was gone.

"Gather up our stuff," said Dazzy in a husky voice, his eyes still on the door that had closed after the girl. "We're going away, Curly, after the parole is served. To Europe, I guess—thanks to Mr. Sobermann. And, by the way, is there any place over in Europe you'd particularly like to visit, Curly? I think we've made our traveling expenses legitimately, so, if you have a wish, out with it, and we take the next boat!"

"Yes," said Curly, wiping his face with a handkerchief. "I've heard there is a famous rest joint over there somewhere. Me for it. I'm—I'm just about on the verge of a nervous collapse!"

ICE CREAM OR THE THIRD DEGREE?

WHETHER the third degree is a good thing or a bad thing has been discussed probably more than anything else which has to do with crime. Some one asked: "What are we supposed to do? Give baby killers ice cream?" On the other hand, according to a recent report of the New York City police methods:

"Third-degree methods authoritatively reported to us as recently employed include: punching in the face, especially a hard slap on the jaw; hitting with a billy; whipping with a rubber hose; kicking in the abdomen; tightening the necktie almost to the choking point.

"Arrested persons come to station houses or headquarters in good shape, and are seen, shortly afterward, in the Tombs with swollen faces, all sorts of bruises and cuts, and often with blood spots scattered over them.

"A distinguished magistrate reported to us that, when several Italians were brought before him for alleged violence, he looked at their backs, and there was hardly a spot which was not raw."

Police officials maintain that this is untrue; but, on the other hand, it is admitted by some that "the law must be interpreted liberally to meet criminals." New York City, however, is not the only one to go under the fire of criticism. Those who are against this method of getting a confession out of a prisoner are against it on the grounds that it only stirs up resentment in the prisoner's mind and brings out his worst side, rather than his best; and that only the person who is afraid of physical violence will confess to a crime, and that person, because he is afraid of physical torture, will often confess to something which he has not done, in order to be left alone.



SCARED STIFF

By DONALD VAN RIPER

They were baffled by his alibi, but they wouldn't give up.

BEN DUANE of the homicide squad kneeled back of the stooping figure of the dying man's brother. Now, if ever, those death-drained lips of the man on the bed would move in what the romancers of the world would consider a violation of the code of the underworld. Grim joke, that was—the code of the underworld. It simply meant that no one talked because there was often a chance of recovery. Crazy jest of fate, too, in the way so many of these men died—all cleaned up, surrounded in death by an immaculate

cleanliness they had never known in life!

There was a nurse there, too, her hand a final, gentle touch upon a life of utter hardness. Every resource of the hospital had been his; the doctors had fought to save this dying man. A queerly inconsistent finish, this, for a creature like "Pepper" Wallace! Just one more illustration of the fact that death was the greatest leveler of all! Just another cheap crook this Pepper Wallace was, and yet the fact that life still lingered in him made him important.

Departmental routine placed Ben Duane on duty to catch whatever whispering information might cross those pallid lips. The very words which Pepper Wallace might speak in answer to his brother's pleading were important.

Pepper Wallace's lips stayed compressed. All the weakness of will which had dragged him to the depths of life vanished now as he faced death. He would not speak.

"You see," whispered Ben Duane, pressing nearer the man beside the bed, "you have to make him know that he hasn't even the shadow of a chance to live. Tell him he is going to die, and pretty quick, too."

"Listen, kid," murmured the brother. "You're—you're dying. You can't live. There isn't a chance. You've got to talk, kid. You needn't be scared. There's nothing more can touch you now, kid. The game's over. Can't you believe me? I wouldn't lie to you. Can't you trust me, kid? It's lights out for keeps. But if you'll talk—if you'll only talk! Just tell us what happened! Tell who plugged you!"

The lips remained tense; the eyes were agleam with stubborn resistance. The brother half turned his head and muttered to Duane.

"It's no use. He won't talk, anyway. Guess he doesn't see the use spilling any information."

Very softly, Duane answered him: "Tell him if he'll talk that I'll square accounts for him."

"Listen, kid. You know Ben Duane. He says that he'll square accounts for you if only you'll talk."

The faintest shadow of a smile showed on the hard mouth. Clearer than words, it said that Pepper Wallace had no faith in coppers.

"Tell him," prompted Duane almost voicelessly, "tell him you'll square things."

"Listen, Pepper, old kid. I'll square things. You know me. Your own brother, kid. I wouldn't lie to you. I tell you you're dying quick. And I'll square this for you. I'll get whoever did it. Can't you believe me, Pepper, old kid?"

Pepper spoke. "It was Trinale himself that did it. Told me to meet him there in the alley alongside of Butch's place. I didn't suspect nothing. Thought him and me had parted friends. And then he pulls a gat and lets me have it. The dirty, yellow rat! You said you'd get him, Jack. You said if I talked you'd get him. You gotta do it for me. You see, Jack——"

The words had come speeding from his lips, racing against the sudden pinching finality of death. He had talked, and his words had been unbelievably clear and steady. Then, upon the most casual sort of phrase, his voice had faded. The lips so tight, then so swiftly loosened, were slack now and agape. Gently Duane touched the hunched figure of the brother on the shoulder. "I guess that's all, Wallace. He's gone, and that's all there is to it."

In the corridor a few minutes later as Ben Duane waited for the elevator, Jack Wallace stepped up and seized his arm. His voice was a harshly challenging whisper as he spoke.

"Maybe this time you coppers will get Trinale!"

"More likely," said Duane with a regretful shaking of his head, "we won't."

"But you had me tell the kid that——"

Ben Duane shrugged his shoulders. "That's business," he answered. "Anything to get them to talk. You heard the man he named, didn't you?"

"Yes, I heard. And I'm not forgetting you had me tell the kid that you would square it for him, now that you had me say that if no one else tended to it, I would. He wasn't giving me any fairy tale. I feel sure that Trinale bumped him off."

"A thousand to one that Trinale has an alibi. Not a faked one, either," said Duane. "He always has an alibi—Trinale does."

"But the kid, Pepper, said Trinale did it."

"He's not the first that did just that when the jig was up. Fact is to my knowledge that this is the fourth man to name Trinale as a killer. And it's a cinch that Trinale has an unbeatable alibi this time like he did before."

"Alibi," sneered Jack Wallace. "Wise guys always have them ready-made. Only the saps in this world come out with weak alibis or none at all."

The elevator came then. Into it stepped Ben Duane, while Jack Wallace went back up the corridor to where his kid brother's bullet-riddled body lay.

It was, as Ben Duane had predicted, the old story. Frank "Blade" Trinale had an alibi that could not be broken. Indeed, this time it was an alibi that could not even be questioned. At nine o'clock sharp that evening, when the fatal shots had been heard outside of "Butch" Sterneman's place, the big gangster had been in the office of Inspector Quinn, at police headquarters.

It was disconcerting to Ben Duane, hurrying back from the hospital, to find that it was none other than Trinale who was closeted with Duane's superior.

As Duane entered the little office,

the inspector flashed him a quick look of inquiry.

"Blind alley, chief," announced Ben Duane. "That is, if the boys outside had the right dope on the bird that just gave me the silent horse laugh going out."

"Who? Trinale? What do you mean?" asked Inspector Quinn.

"I mean that Pepper Wallace said it was Trinale who croaked him."

"So he talked before he died, eh?"

"Yes. And said it was Trinale who shot him. But the boys tell me Trinale has been in here since half past eight to-night."

Inspector Quinn's flashing smile accompanied his nod. "And unless you want to figure me as his accomplice, it's an alibi that can't be beat."

There was no answering smile from Ben Duane. Once before, Duane himself had figured in quite similar fashion as the star witness to Blade Trinale's alibi.

"Wallace probably lied," observed Quinn. "Probably figured that for once he could pull a fast one on Trinale without getting paid for it. Even the big fellow can't get revenge on a dead man."

"I don't think so," commented Duane slowly. "When a man's dying, he isn't very apt to lie. That is, if he's sure he's going to die. And Wallace was sure he was through. No, it doesn't make sense, inspector. Men don't lie when they're dying."

"I don't get what you're driving at," said Quinn. His deep-set, dark eyes stared steadily, questioningly, at Duane.

"What I'm getting at is this," answered Duane. "Once I was the man who held Trinale's alibi in hand in an almost similar case. Remember when Snitch Melford said Trinale got him? That was the time

when I was sitting right back of Trinale at the prize fight at the very minute when Snitch got his clear on the other side of town. And before that was the Western mug who got drilled. We dug up a witness or two that said they had seen Trinale run from that job, and up comes Blade with the foolproof alibi that he had been at a testimonial dinner on the south side that night. And we check up and discover that he was actually making a speech at the very minute that the out-of-town chiseler was rubbed out. And any number of reliable reporters there to prove the story for him."

"Well?"

"They're too good. Those alibis are too perfect. Just as if he'd planned them to fit the minute," Duane said.

"Still I don't get you."

"In the three cases I mentioned, including to-night's, the shooting has been done at close range and from in front. Wallace and Snitch were not the kind to be caught napping. They both happened to linger and talk, and they both accused Trinale. So this time makes it one too many for coincidence. I believe that some one who looked like Trinale did those tricks, some one who looked enough like him to fool and completely throw off their guard men who should have known better."

"A double, you mean?"

"Something like that."

"Some one tending some private grudges, and at the same time trying to frame a murder charge on Frank Blade Trinale?"

"One question before I answer that. Did you or Trinale make this date for a confab to-night?" Duane asked.

"I asked him to stop around.

That was a few days ago. Just wanted to talk to him as a general check-up. And he set the time and the place himself. First he made it last night at eight thirty, but phoned yesterday afternoon and asked me to make it to-night at the same hour instead."

"He set the time. Hm-m-m! Then maybe this double business is his own doing," said Duane.

"That doesn't make sense," protested Quinn. "Whoever heard of a man doing that?"

Duane had long since had a theory about Trinale, but until this moment he had hesitated to voice it. Now, however, with the memory of that last fragment of Pepper Wallace's life fresh in mind, he no longer felt the old restraining sense of apologetic reluctance. Pepper Wallace had told the truth as he had seen it. That Duane did believe. Therefore Pepper had been shot down by some one startlingly like Trinale. Far-fetched or not, Duane's explanation was as sound as any other. No man could be in two places at once. A seemingly impossible fact required a seemingly fantastic explanation.

"Sense or not, inspector, this is the way I dope it out. Trinale has needed an indisputable alibi several times. He's always had it. The most vital occasions were when the out-of-towner got his. Again when Snitch Melford got it. And now when Pepper Wallace goes. All of them tough babies, wise in the tricks of the trade. All on good terms with Trinale. All drilled at close range by some one they must have trusted. And Snitch and Pepper accuse Trinale as they are dying. And witnesses see Trinale running from the other job. Now——" Ben Duane shifted himself in the chair he had taken opposite Inspec-

tor Quinn's desk. "Just suppose Trinale had a gunman who could make up to look like himself. If a double working doesn't leave a blind trail for the police, what does?"

"One flaw," declared Quinn. "A vital one. Impersonation is the bunk. Something to be done on the stage or in the movies, but nothing that would work in real life."

"Ordinarily, that's my notion," agreed Duane. "But here there's a secret meeting, outside at night, poor light at best, no more than a few words spoken, perhaps none at all, and then a shooting. Just how good an impersonation needed?"

Quinn nodded. Thoughtfully, then, for a moment or so his hand rumpled slowly through the heavy thatch of his gray hair. "You make your points well, Ben Duane. And you have a record in the department that no one can laugh off. But even though your theory was right, just how could you prove it? And how could you pin a thing on Trinale? After all, he's the bird we can't really get. And yet, if we could get him and a couple more like him, we'd have this city's crime wave down to a little ripple. If a theory like yours could be proved!"

Ben Duane nodded in turn. "The trouble is, we want proof and logic all the time, inspector. And so we go on watching and waiting and holding polite little conferences with racketeers and gangsters. We catch the little fellows and the big ones go free. Sure, we want to get Trinale. Half the people in this town think the coppers are on his pay roll." He stopped short, and a smile of amusement at his own tenseness came to his face. "This time it's Pepper Wallace, and it's my case. So if there's anything to my idea, the first thing for me to

do is to get back and interview Pepper's brother."

"Jack Wallace? The big gambler, you mean? Just what can he do to help you?"

"I figure he would know if there was any motive Trinale could have for bumping off Pepper Wallace."

"If so, what then?"

Ben Duane's square shoulders shrugged expressively. "Who knows? When you haven't got a sensible thing to go on, the turn of an investigation waits on luck and circumstance. When a fellow starts out to prove a seemingly impossible theory, he just does one thing at a time."

"So you are going to prove it?" challenged Quinn with a friendly, approving smile.

"I'm going to try," Duane promised him. "And I'm going to try pretty hard. And if I get the breaks, Frank Blade Trinale may laugh on the wrong side of his face. You say, and I know, he was here to-night. Pepper Wallace said and believed that he was in that alley by Butch's place. So I'm starting from scratch that Trinale was in two places at once. If it happened once, it could be laid to mistake or coincidence, but it has happened too often for that."

"You know, Ben," drawled Inspector Quinn, "you've half sold me on your theory. If you need extra help, let me know. And say, I'd like to know just where you start from—just where is scratch in this case?"

"I guess," answered Ben Duane, "it's wherever Jack Wallace is. Maybe he can shed a little light on just why any one should have bumped off his brother."

Jack Wallace was at home. The Wallaces lived on Spruce Street, one

of the very oldest residential streets in the city; so old, in fact, that trade and industry had crowded out all save one or two of the little old-fashioned single-family houses. A small frame dwelling it was, comfortably low-roofed, well-cared for, even to the easy-swinging gate of the ornamental iron fence that guarded the narrow little garden strip in front. Quaint symbol of other days, solidly respectable, remarkably clean, there in the midst of the encroachment of space-hungry business into Spruce Street!

Mrs. Wallace, the gentle lines of her mouth set in strange hardness, showed him into the little back parlor where Jack Wallace sat, staring straight ahead. Jack Wallace's eyes were hard upon the closed folding doors which separated this room from the one in front. Ill-hidden fire glowed in that brooding glance, and when he looked toward Ben Duane the fire had broken through to sparkle and glint in the dark eyes.

"I want you to talk," began Duane without preliminary. "About your brother. I want to know who might have had a motive for killing him."

"No one more than the man who did it. It was Trinale, of course—just like he said."

"Trinale's got an alibi," asserted Duane. He raised a checking hand as Wallace leaned angrily forward in his chair. "And not a fake one. I guess you know Inspector Quinn's on the level. Well, Trinale was with him in his office in headquarters to-night. Unbreakable alibi."

Jack Wallace slumped back into the chair again. "That," he murmured, "is a sure-enough alibi. And yet that's what Pepper said. The kid never lied to me. He wouldn't begin when he was dying. Maybe

you don't know it, Duane, but I finally had talked him out of most of his fool notions. You see, it's like this. I'm a gambler. Every one knows it. I know just about all a fellow ever needs to know about the cards, the dice, the ponies, and gambling, plus a lot of good, old-style luck. There's this house and a big fat trust fund to keep it up, and my mother living comfortably. Me—a gambler—but not a crook. And if I do say it myself, I've been a good son to her. She deserved it. There was just one little thing that was eating her heart out."

"Pepper, your brother?"

"Just so," confirmed Wallace. "And less than a month ago I finally talked him out of his fool notions."

"I did hear he'd quit the racket," said Duane.

"I was keeping it back as a surprise to mother," continued Wallace. "I had my plans almost set. A couple of weeks from now I was going to take her out to eat some night, and—— You know the place there that's being fixed up so swell for a restaurant on Schuyler Avenue?"

"You mean that was yours?"

"Not exactly. It was going to be the kid's. All paid for, and him paying me off as he went along. The kid had a way with him. He was well-known and liked. It would have gone, and mother would have had one son in a respectable line of business. I was going to take her there some night, and there would be the kid, all slicked up, running the front of the place—in a Tux and——and——"

Ben Duane felt a constriction in his own throat. Amazing revelation this—Jack Wallace, hard-boiled gambler with a heart as soft as a woman's, planning, spending to

make his mother happy! No wonder the poor devil had choked over his own words!

"And now that's out. And for all mother knows, he didn't mean a word of his promised reform. He's in there with bullets all through him, bumped off in a dark alley like a rat."

"Tough," sighed Duane. "Sure is tough."

"Trinale didn't like him quitting," said Wallace with swift, renewed briskness. "But even so, everything would have been all right only"—he lowered his voice to a whisper—"a couple of nights ago he got to drinking—just a little more than he ought, and he got talking. I heard about it after. He said some things that he shouldn't have. One of Trinale's buzzards was there. First thing you know, Trinale breezed in himself. He gave the kid a call. But they tell me the kid didn't bluff for sour apples. He told Trinale to shut up. Trinale and Pepper had a row."

"That hooks in, too," commented Duane.

"Yes," added Wallace, "and I had it straight since that Trinale was good and sore. You know, the kid had worked pretty close with him, and he was smart and knew a lot. It didn't sit too well with Blade to think that Pepper might get drinking again and talk even more. There's your motive, Ben Duane. Of course, Pepper forgot all about the row. He would, but Trinale didn't."

"And yet," countered Duane, "Frank Blade has that unbeatable alibi. It must be Pepper was mistaken about who got him."

"Then your hands are tied," sneered Wallace. "Well, mine aren't. You fellows find the alibi and quit. Me—I hear the kid talk,

and I won't quit. I'm out to get Trinale. He smashed up what I'd set my heart on. And I'm going to smash back."

"Not so fast," reminded Duane. "You're forgetting who I am."

"Oh, no, I'm not." Again Wallace sneered. "You're a copper. You're one of the lot that would like to get Trinale but don't know how to do it. Well, neither do I—yet. But I'm going to make it my business to find out."

Inspiration came to Ben Duane at that moment. "Say, Wallace, I want to catch the bird that killed your brother. I want to get Trinale. Both of us have a hunch that Trinale was responsible. We want the same thing. Wouldn't it be good common sense for us to get together?"

"Your way doesn't work at all," retorted Wallace. "For years Trinale and Sammy Lombard have split up the underworld loot in this town and given you coppers the laugh. And Trinale has bumped off his share of men, and always the good old unbeatable alibi has saved him. Why should I work with you?"

"If you work alone," said Duane, "if anything goes wrong, I'd be a better friend than an enemy. Can't you see, Jack Wallace, that I'm on the level about this? I've seen this house. I've seen that mother of yours. I've heard what you've had to say, and I'm right over on your side of the fence. And it happens that ever since I heard your brother name Trinale I've been thinking about some way to beat this alibi stunt of Blade's."

"It's a cinch that Trinale was at headquarters with Quinn. And by the same token, there must have been some one looking astonishingly like Trinale that bumped your brother off." He took a piece of

paper from his pocket and wrote down a name. "That means there's a chance that Trinale's hired killer decks himself up like his boss just to throw all inquiry into a hopeless blind alley. There's one man in Trinale's outfit that might double for him. Height and weight about the same. Swarthy, oily skin, brown eyes almost black. Doesn't wear a mustache like Blade. Doesn't wear the same snappy clothes either, or walk with that little limp of Trinale's. But made up for the part he——"

"I got a hunch I know who you mean. It's——"

"I wrote it on this paper," broke in Duane. "Just to see whether it hit you the same way. Now let's hear the man you're thinking of."

"Rafe Vigorino," said Wallace. "I never thought of that before, but it just couldn't be any one else."

Duane held the paper up. It was the same name he had written. "And he'll have an alibi, too, Wallace. And that's just the hitch. There's always an alibi."

"And how do you figure I could help?" demanded Wallace.

"Just this," answered Ben Duane. "That stunt I have in mind wouldn't go with the department. And even if some one like Inspector Quinn was willing, he wouldn't have the money needed."

"Go on," urged Wallace.

"It's going to take quite a little money, time, cleverness and patience. Just how game are you, Wallace? It may cost lots of money."

"You heard me tell the kid I'd square accounts," said Wallace. "And trouble and time and money wouldn't make a bit of difference, just so's I can keep that promise. If you have a plan, let's hear it."

Thus the strange partnership was

struck between them, Duane, on-the-level dick of the homicide squad, and Wallace, square-shooting gambler. In the hushed and solemn silence of the old-fashioned back parlor of the house on Spruce Street they made their whispered plans. Both were intent, both moved by widely divergent impulses and emotions, in the accomplishment of the same end.

It was a week later when Inspector Quinn accosted Frank Trinale as the latter strutted along Schuyler Avenue.

"How'd you make out at the races yesterday, Blade?"

"Who? Me?" asked Trinale with a swift little frown darkening his swarthy face. "I wasn't at the track at all."

"Oh, I thought you were," answered Quinn with an easy smile. "Saw you riding along not half a mile from the track in that black sedan of yours. Just you and some other fellow. He was driving. I was heading back to town. Gave you the salute with the horn, but you didn't see me."

"Good reason," retorted Trinale. "I wasn't out that way at all. I wasn't away from the avenue all afternoon or evening."

"Huh. Sure did look like you and your car. Not often I get fooled like that."

Laughing, each went his respective way. After a few steps, however, the hint of mirth faded from Trinale's face. He suddenly decided he wanted to talk to a certain Rafe Vigorino.

He headed toward Butch Sterne-man's place. There, shooting pool or playing cards or simply loafing, he would find Rafe Vigorino. Sure enough, in a back room was Rafe, talking quietly with three other

henchmen of Trinale's. At sight of Trinale in the doorway they all were silent.

"You birds," said Trinale, "clear out. I want to talk to Rafe."

"Now what's wrong, chief?" Rafe asked as the rest went and the door snapped shut.

"Where were you yesterday?"

Rafe nodded slowly, as if the question had reaffirmed a conclusion already formed. "I knew you were going to ask that. One thing, I wasn't riding out on the boulevard to the race track."

"That answer," snapped Trinale, "sounds like a guilty conscience. Sure you didn't trick yourself out like me—the old double stuff—and take a ride that way?"

"Dead sure," answered Rafe. His beady little eyes watched Trinale's every move. "But there sure is something queer. If one guy thought he saw you out by the track yesterday, there was half a dozen. And maybe more. And you weren't there, I knew. Be a hot one if there was a real double for you in town, instead of a fake one like me."

"Where were you, anyway?" demanded Trinale. "Yesterday, I mean."

"Right here all day. Any number of guys can prove it."

"I guess it was some bloke just riding through," observed Trinale. "You know, Rafe, you never want to try any funny stunt like doubling for me out of turn. It wouldn't be healthy."

That was the beginning. Never again, in quite so conspicuous a time and place, did the unknown double of Trinale's appear. However, every now and then some one did see the black sedan, the familiar figure of "Slugger" Caffrey at the wheel, and the far better known Blade Trinale at his side. When

any one mentioned such a fact to Trinale he either was silent or made an evasive answer.

He could never check definitely on Rafe Vigorino's whereabouts on these occasions. Rafe would say he had been at Butch's, and in a general way, people there would bear him out. The germ of a maddening doubt was planted in Blade Trinale's mind.

Was Rafe Vigorino double-crossing him some way? Who was the other man who doubled for Slugger Caffrey? What kind of a game was this, anyway?

The answer to all these questions lay in the partnership of Ben Duane and Jack Wallace. The latter had staked the cost of the car and the make-up. He had paid for the services of an actor who showed them how to use the make-up to perfect advantage. Their method, the occasional appearance in a closed sedan, lent itself perfectly to the dual impersonation.

But as days passed into weeks, Jack Wallace became impatient. It seemed that luck was against them. Never had they been abroad at a time and place which would cause a confusion in an alibi of Frank Trinale's.

"We'll get him yet," counseled Duane. "He'll get in a jam and pull his alibi, and some one else will come forward with a conflicting story. We'll give him too many alibis at once. For years he's been at two places at once. Soon he'll be at three, and he won't be able to explain it away."

At last Jack Wallace decided to play his hand alone. If Rafe Vigorino doubled for Trinale, why couldn't he, Jack Wallace, turn the same trick against Trinale?

The story was that no one could

ever get to Trinale. Too many guarding killers by night, and he was in the open by day. And yet a man who looked like Trinale could get close, and if he figured things right, could make a quick get-away easy enough.

His plan, as he evolved it, was simple. There was a side door to Butch Sterneman's place. He would enter that after he was sure that Trinale was inside. He knew every nook and corner, every secret get-away from the gambling dump. He would locate Trinale. The big shot was forever sneaking into some back room by himself.

Then he would step in and surprise him. A gun with a silencer would do the trick nicely. He would run away, march boldly out front, walk to the corner, and hop into the car in which he and Duane had been working.

There would be a mystery for underworld and minions of the law alike. Ben Duane alone might guess at the truth, but even that was a remote possibility. It looked like a "cinch," a perfect scheme for actually getting away with murder. He didn't think of it as murder, however. It would be justice. Trinale would be dead, and Pepper Wallace would be avenged.

Ben Duane of the homicide squad had a new case. Rafe Vigorino was dead, done in with the assassin's knife, his body found on an abandoned wharf at the water front. Duane sought out Frank Trinale. Just a formality! Vigorino had been dead some twenty-four hours before his body was found, and, of course, Trinale would have an alibi.

It was Duane who discovered that Frank Trinale was also dead. There he slumped, down in the chair in the back room in Butch Sterne-

man's place. On his face was a look of utmost terror. And not a mark on him! What mad horror had brought that fearsome look to Trinale's face? Perhaps he had been poisoned. At any rate, death had closed many unsettled cases for the men of the homicide squad. The man with the unbeatable alibis was dead.

It wasn't poison. "Death from natural causes" was written on the record for Frank Trinale. The medical examiner told Duane it was a weak heart which had failed under some sort of shock. "Nothing for you homicide operators, Duane. He just died, and that's all there is to it."

That, as far as any one was to know, was all there was to it. Later that night Duane and Jack Wallace stumbled on the answer. Duane had sought out Wallace. He told his story all the way through, from the finding of Rafe Vigorino's body right down to the medical examiner's report.

Jack Wallace spoke then. He had carefully closed the doors of the little back parlor. "Might interest you to know that I was the shock that killed him. I went there to Butch's in make-up. I figured I could get to him easy that way. I got a nod from Slugger Caffrey both coming and going. When I opened the door of that back room I had the drop on him with a silencer-rigged gun. He looked up, saw me, and croaked out a name. 'Rafe!' he groaned, and it was like he saw a ghost. And then he passed out, just as if I had shot him. I didn't need more than a couple of seconds to make sure that he was dead."

Duane spoke. "He thought it was Rafe. He thought it was the man he knifed or had some one else kill yesterday. He must have fig-

ured it was Rafe who was being seen here, there, and everywhere round town. He must have decided to bump Rafe Vigorino off, thinking that Rafe was playing that double stuff out of turn. And when you stood there ready to kill him, he really got the shock of seeing a ghost. Queer way to get your vengeance, Jack Wallace. Queer way for his double stunt to turn on Trin-

ale. Funny for justice to work out like that!"

"Must have been that way," agreed Wallace. "All squared for the kid. And from now on you fellows won't need to worry about Trinale and his alibis."

"No," sighed Duane. "He's through being two places at once. Too bad more like him haven't got the same address he's got now."

TOO MANY PLAYTHINGS

ACCORDING to a writer in a Topeka magazine, the reason that boys who come from well-to-do families commit crimes is because they have had too much given to them.

Two boys—one fifteen years old and one sixteen—living in different cities, recently murdered. One for robbery; the other for just pure vengeance. The second murder was that of a policeman who had stopped the boy from swimming in a restricted pool.

The families of both these boys had provided them with every material advantage. One of them had a special library in his home. No doubt, the parents of this boy had his interest at heart; but they did not realize that giving him so much inflated his ego. If he had had to work for one book, or do something to gain it, he would doubtless have appreciated it more.

It is said that the Mayo brothers of Rochester, Minnesota, who are known over all the world for their skill as surgeons, never use more than half of their incomes on themselves and families, and usually less than half.

Doctor William Mayo is quoted in a Philadelphia paper as saying: "My brother and I have both put ourselves on salaries. We live within them. The roof of my house goes out of the possession of my family when I die. It is already turned over to the foundation. I would not want my children deprived of the fun and the benefit of wanting something and going out and fighting to get it. And I think, from the rich men with whom I have talked, that this idea has penetrated far more deeply into American life than many imagine."

It is conceded by the majority of people who look into the cause of crime that to bring up a child and allow him to be selfish is committing the first crime in his career.



Black light—and the uses it is put to in solving crimes.

BLACK LIGHT IN CRIME

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL

LIEUTENANT, U. S. MARINE CORPS

CAN you see any connection between a snail crawling along a street in the ancient Phœnician city of Tyre and the dead body of a Negro floating on the surface of the Chicago drainage canal? That question may sound like a riddle, but a scientist named Pacini in Chicago spanned the centuries when he adapted the black light of filtered ultra-violet rays to the uses of crime detection.

It all started several centuries ago when some inquisitive person in the city of Tyre discovered that a white

fluid secreted by snails turned its color to a rich violet when exposed to the rays of the sun. With that as a start, the Phœnicians founded the original dye business and produced the first "royal purple." They did not care what caused the change in the color of the snail's secretion; they were only interested in its commercial possibilities.

To-day we understand that the transposition was actually caused by violet rays, and we call the condition fluorescence. When an unidentified body was found floating in a Chicago canal recently, a tooth

was extracted and powdered. When exposed to the filtered ultra-violet rays, it gave a red color reaction, which is characteristic of the Negro race. Had it been a member of the Caucasian race, the color would have been green; for an Asiatic, yellow would have given the clew to the identity of the body.

If you studied physics or general science in school, you may remember that a prism placed on a window sill broke up ordinary sunlight into its component colors of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet; that they appeared as a rainbow with definite lines marking its ends. You were told that beyond the red end lay the infra-red zone, that at the opposite end of the spectrum was another band called the ultra-violet.

To produce this ultra-violet light, we may generate a beam with a mercury arc, actuated by electricity; but we are confronted with the problem of eliminating all visible light in order to observe the reaction of fluorescence. This was the stumblingblock until filters were invented; but to-day we gather the ultra-violet beam into a condenser made of quartz, send it through cells containing solutions which filter all visible light, and pass only the invisible ultra-violet rays, which are then reflected into a microscope equipped entirely with quartz lenses. Through the lenses we are able to examine minute amounts of various substances and identify them by their individual fluorescence.

Pacini, who received considerable attention as a result of the powdered-tooth case, has also encountered other interesting problems. The only clew in a murder case was a strand of hair found near the body. It in no way matched that of the deceased, but it tallied closely

with specimens from the heads of three suspects. To gain a conviction, the detectives had to know from which head the hair came.

Cross-sections under the microscope revealed nothing but close similarity between the hair of the dead man and that of the three persons in custody; but, when exposed to the ultra-violet light, all but one of the three men were released. Hair from the third showed a purple fluorescence, typical of aspirin addicts, which matched exactly the same condition in the hair found at the scene of the crime. Morphine would have given a bright bluish color; cocaine gives a white fluorescence; heroin appears as yellowish green.

To appreciate the value of ultra-violet rays in poison cases, we must know something of how the chemist attacks the problem. Take mercury for an example. Where that metal is thought to be the cause of death, fluids are collected from the body, and, if mercury is present, it deposits itself electrolytically on copper foil, where it is identified by its silver color. If the chemist is not satisfied that he recognizes mercury by the color, he can warm the mercurial stain on the copper foil until it vaporizes and collects in drops which can be examined microscopically. If he has guessed wrong and finds that mercury was not present, the chemist may find that he has used all of the toxic material and has nothing left for further examination.

With the ultra-violet method, we do not need to run a separate test for every possible poison. In addition to the fluorescence reactions, we have recourse to another application of these rays in what is called the spectrum test. Every element has its own private spectrum or rain-

bow; each can be identified by its color and the arrangement of lines. Sodium has its yellow color; barium shows green; calcium appears orange, and potassium gives violet.

When Pacini had only a tiny drop of material supposed to contain poison, he placed it on a graphite carbon used in generating the beam of light; lines appeared in the spectrum which agreed with previously tabulated results for arsenic. If the usual chemical test for arsenic had been tried, it is possible that there might not have been enough present to give a satisfactory reaction, and, if that condition didn't prevail, there was still the chance of not having enough toxic substance remaining for subsequent tests.

One of the many uses for black light—as filtered ultra-violet rays are called—is the examination of questioned documents, counterfeit money, and art forgeries. Alterations and erasures on checks, account books, and wills are easily discovered, because different portions of the document do not give the same degree and color of fluorescence. Even paper of the same make will exhibit differences due to age and use, so that it avails the forger nothing to substitute an entire new sheet in the hope that the uniform fluorescence on that one page will discourage further investigation. The careful examiner will compare not only different portions of the same sheet, but will also compare sheets with one another. Counterfeit money will betray itself because the paper upon which it is printed can never compare favorably with the genuine bills.

Forgery of art objects is easily detected with the black light. Genuine pearls can be distinguished from the imitation; old marble and ivory can be differentiated from the

new material used in duplicating old pieces; genuine diamonds differ strikingly from paste. In this connection, a story is told of a salesman for violet-ray filters who knew his "line" but didn't know how to operate his own filters.

In trying to sell his filters to a police commissioner, the tyro salesman stressed the ability to distinguish between real and false gems. The police official, who was very proud of his jewels, put his hand under the light; for some reason, one diamond fluoresced blue while another gave a yellow reaction. Immediately, the salesman insisted that one was an imitation, not knowing that all diamonds do not give the same color, even when genuine. The tale ends with the commissioner kicking the salesman down the stairs and throwing his sample case after him. Whether this yarn is true or not, it does illustrate the harm which can result from placing scientific apparatus in the hands of half-trained operators.

The health racket is one of the most lucrative fields for the modern criminal. Playing upon the instinct of self-preservation, the clever manufacturer of so-called violet-ray machines calls the attention of the public to the fact that ultra-violet rays in sunlight do not pass through ordinary window glass. Because of a deficiency of the vital beams, children are supposed to acquire rickets, and chickens are expected to suffer a loss in egg production. Naturally, the mother and the poultry fan rush to buy the life-giving machines. At this point scientists step forward to test the claims of the racketeers.

Doctor Herman Goodman, of New York City, tells a story about lamps and machines advertised to produce ultra-violet rays. It seems

that an enthusiastic demonstrator tried to sell the doctor an "ultra-violet-ray lamp" without success, and then endeavored to sell him a pair of goggles which, he maintained, would not permit the black light to pass through their lenses. The doctor simply placed the goggles between the ultra-violet rays and an apparatus which indicates the presence of black light. The rays were apparently genuine, according to the testing device, but the goggles were shown to be worthless. The demonstration was immediately stopped, and the exhibitor packed his wares.

In another instance, the manufacturer of a health light was prosecuted for selling under false pretenses; the testimony of an expert established the fact that ultra-violet rays set up fluorescence in salicylic acid, but the apparatus made by the defendant to the court action failed to excite any such reaction. The court then issued an order to "cease and desist" the manufacture, sale, and advertisement of the health glass under its existing description and name. With the "health" feature prohibited by court order, there was nothing for the defendant to do but look for new and greener pastures.

The adulteration or substitution of drugs and cosmetics is a fruitful field for deception. Recently, small bottles containing imitations of high-priced perfumes were retailed at cut rates by stores all over the United States. Jobbers told the retailers, who in turn told the customers, that these miniature bottles had been filled from large containers bought at bargain prices. This suited the consumers, but the manufacturers of the genuine articles figured that there were more gallons of perfume sold in small bottles than they had produced in their

own plants; something was wrong in the world of smell.

Special chemists were hurriedly hired by the manufacturers, but their report was that the cheap perfumes were every bit as good as the genuine scents, and that there was no perceptible difference, according to all known chemical tests. A lawsuit was instituted by the injured parties, in spite of the advice of their own chemists. At the trial there were ten chemists on the side of the infringers to one on the side of the plaintiffs; but that one must have known something about ultra-violet rays and fluorescence tests, because the defendants lost and were compelled to stop their "re-fill" business.

Ardent prohibitionists recommend that the government put fluorescing dyes into industrial alcohol so that it can be identified if it is diverted into illegal channels for conversion into "bathtub gin" or "wild-cat whisky." The amount of dye need not be large, since many substances fluoresce even when diluted more than one million times, and its nature can be such that no harmful effects result from its use. This idea will probably never receive consideration, but already fluorescence tests have been applied to bootleg booze to determine what adulterants have been added.

In wartime, the black light will perform its most sensational service. Letters, maps, and newspapers taken from prisoners, spies, and couriers can be rapidly and adequately examined under the mystic beams for any secret writing which would otherwise escape the censor's eye. Under the old system, every particle of correspondence had to be subjected to heat, acid, and water tests in an effort to develop hidden messages. In the case of intercepted

dispatches which were forwarded to their destination after examination, there was the likelihood that the recipients would know that some treatment had been applied to the papers, since acids and warming ovens invariably leave telltale clews. With the black light, there is no mark of any kind to show that an inspector has been at work.

The same considerations apply to jails and prisons in peace time, which are confronted with the problem of letting the inmates conduct normal correspondence with their friends and relatives, without allowing them to formulate plots to escape. Under the present plan, the staffs of penal institutions are too small to provide for rapid and certain examination of mail, with the result that jail breaks are as common in this country as holidays in Latin America.

Authorities on police reform find that bribery is one of the greatest foes to justice. In an effort to gain convictions against crooked cops, investigators have often used marked money. The currency was usually paper, with pinholes through the center or with a corner torn off in a peculiar manner. These crude attempts seldom succeed for the simple reason that every bribe taker knows more about traps of that kind than the people who are "after his job." Doctor Goodman suggests that any one of the many available secret inks be used to write: "Bribe for Officer John Doe" on the bank notes, and then develop this writing at the trial with the ultra-violet rays.

We have seen that teeth are a clew to race; but, further than that, they possess identifying attributes which are not to be neglected. Natural teeth normally fluoresce glossy white, while artificial teeth

fluoresce according to the material of which they are made. When a person has met death by an explosion or fire which has scattered the various parts of the body, it is possible to reconstruct the skeleton in many instances; but, if several persons have met death in the same place, a problem arises. Here, again, our black light comes to the rescue, for it can quickly tell which teeth belong together and which bones are parts of the same skeleton.

Recently, a wealthy, middle-aged business man was being sued by a charming young manicurist for breach of promise of marriage. She stated that the proposal had been made in the barber shop where she was employed, and that she distinctly remembered the date, hour, and surrounding circumstances. The defendant produced witnesses who established a fairly good alibi for their Romeo friend; but, in spite of their evidence, the jury appeared to take a great deal of interest in the physical charms of the plaintiff.

Everything seemed to go against the man until his lawyer secured the services of a black-light expert. That individual demonstrated conclusively that, when a person has been manicured, it is possible to estimate how long it has been since his nails were polished, since polish fluoresces, and nails grow about one thirtieth to one thirty-second part of an inch in one week. The tired business man put his hands under the light, the expert talked, the jury listened, and finally the plaintiff's lawyer announced that his client was willing to drop the case, as it now appeared that there had been considerable misunderstanding as to the time of the proposal.

The few uses for the black light which we have considered here are suggestive rather than compre-

hensive; the wide-awake man of science will find countless tasks for the filtered ultra-violet rays. Coming as they do from the great, life-giving sun, we can expect them to penetrate the recesses of sin and ignorance, to convict the guilty, save the innocent, and establish justice. That is as much as we can ask of any form of crime detection.

A NEW-TYPE PRISON NEEDED

A RECENT report from an investigation commission says: "We are convinced that a new type of penal institution must be developed, one that is new in spirit, in method, and in objective. The present prison system is antiquated and inefficient.

"We consider it both unwise and unnecessary for the States to spend large sums of money in the construction of maximum-security, congregate prisons of the Auburn, New York, type.

"Experience has amply demonstrated that only a small proportion of the prison population requires fortresslike buildings.

"With proper classification of the prison population, the present overcrowded conditions can be relieved by housing a large number of the inmates in simple and inexpensive buildings of the minimum and medium-security type."

The commission has submitted these recommendations for "the humanization" of American penal systems:

1. Careful classification of prisoners upon their entrance, separating the psychological criminal from the much larger population of casual offenders, the latter to be housed in buildings which would allow greater freedom of action and living.

2. Strict segregation of the insane, diseased, drug addicts, sex perverts, and feeble-minded in hospitals best adapted to their particular needs.

3. Reorganization of prison discipline, under which brutal disciplinary measures would be forbidden by law.

4. Abolition of the contract system for penal labor and the substitution in its place of the "State-use" system and the employment of prisoners on State public works. Some wages should be paid the prisoner to help him maintain his dependents and retain his self-respect.

5. The establishment of an efficient educational system in all prisons.

6. Greater use of indeterminate sentences and broadening of parole systems, with, however, an organization for supervision of the prisoner who is out on parole.

7. Broadening of probation methods, so that no man may be sent to a penal institution until it is definitely determined that he is not a fit subject for probation.

One paper says: "America's prisons are America's shame." Another points out:

"If the commission's recommendations are carried into effect, we shall ultimately be rid of one of the most barbarous and futile products of human perversity, and shall be on the highroad to curing a few criminals and protecting human society from their depredations."



GUNMAN'S END

By DAVID REDSTONE

He took a fool young kid in the mob for luck.

ANYBODY at all wandering alone in a dark neighborhood after midnight may be the mark of an adventurous man with a rod. That it should be Saul Carey, of all people, who was forced to reach for the telegraph wires on this occasion, was almost funny—because he was himself a criminal.

He had in his pocket something over two thousand dollars. He meant to keep it. The money was the remainder of his share in a post-office job accomplished recently with four companions under his leadership. Now here was this hoarse-voiced kid stopping him with

a meaningful gesture of a trembling hand; a hand that gripped desperately—and, more dangerous still, nervously—a shiny, menacing object.

Carey had a gun of his own. It was ingeniously attached onto his arm, somewhere between elbow and wrist, and a good jerk would loosen it and send it sliding down to the cuff, to cause death in less time than the flap of a sparrow's tail.

He considered a moment.

Something oddly familiar was in that face, whitened suddenly in a pivoting beam as an auto swung around somewhere near by. A ghostly hand clutched the heart of

Saul Carey. The name of one dead came to his drained lips, but remained unuttered. He gazed into the pallor that was the boy's face as he would have gazed into the fleshless face of a wraith. And quite suddenly the apparition, illusion, omen—whatever it was—vanished, and the wavering beam of light betrayed something else.

A snort and a laugh burst from Carey.

"I'll plug you," gasped the young gunman.

"Yeah? Not when you do your hoistin' with"—Carey made a quick lunge, caught the skinny wrist and twisted it until the shining object loosened and shattered to bits on the sidewalk—"a glass gat!" he finished.

Carey was a powerful man. He lugged his slender captive toward a street lamp. For a long moment, he peered into the terrified face, now revealed in light. He smiled a little, wondering that his senses should have played him false. There wasn't much resemblance, he decided, except in the contour of the chin.

"Is this your regular game?" he asked at length.

"Honest, mister," pleaded the agonized young robber, "this is the first time. Let me go. Don't take me to the cops. Please——"

"Stow that! I hate to see a guy crawl. Why didn't you use a real gat? 'Might as well get hung for a sheep as for a lamb.'"

"I was hungry. I was desperate."

"Shut up, or I'll brain you."

"Wha—what you gonna do with me?"

"I ain't decided. Take a chance and tell me the truth. How long you been stealing?"

"I—I done lots of jobs," the boy admitted finally. "It—looked like a cinch."

Carey chuckled. He thought a

while. What omen, he wondered, was in this strange meeting?

"Suppose I let you go?"

"I'll never do it again," the boy put in eagerly. "Oh, have a heart, mister!"

"You lie, you little punk," said Carey. "You'd steal as long as you could get away with it. Am I right?" This was said with such ferocity that it startled an affirmative from the youth's dry lips.

"Yeah! I thought so. What's your name, eh?"

"Prince—James Prince."

"How old are you, Prince?"

"Twenty-two."

"You don't look it," was Carey's comment. "And you don't act it. At twenty-two, a guy is a man—if he's ever gonna be one. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yeah. Now, look here. I been thinkin'." He released his hold on Prince's arm, found a stub of pencil, and wrote an address on a piece of notebook paper. "Come around in the afternoon, kid. Maybe we can straighten things out, eh?"

"Gee, mister!"

"And let me show you something," Carey went on. He straightened his right arm with a jerk and a snap. Miraculously, to Prince, a small-caliber pistol appeared in the big man's hand. "I could have got you—just like that," said Carey.

Prince gazed in wonderment.

"And I almost did."

Prince shivered.

"The only thing stopped me——" But Carey left his explanation unfinished. "Run along home," he muttered. "And don't come looking so scared and whitelike or you'll give me the willies. So long."

Ordinarily, when Saul Carey had something to say to the members of

his gang, he said it concisely, with clear reasoning in his words. But as he spoke of his encounter with Prince, he found he had to grope for an explanation for his impulsive act. He looked around at the men. There were four—criminals all, hard, cold-eyed, little given to fancy.

"Sandy" Teague, a stone-jawed man with a mouth as firm as a clamp, sat morosely toying with a pair of amber dice. He was a wanted man—wanted for a cop-killing in a distant State.

Burns was a gray-faced locksmith, who used his considerable talents to criminal purpose.

The third man, Wilkins, a thief with alert brown eyes, could drive any car he stole, and he stole the best of them.

Of all, Jones, the last, seemed least what he was—a peterman of unusual skill. Pink-cheeked, kindly, he seemed to have just finished digging weeds in a suburban garden. To those who did not know his craft, he might be taken for a peaceably inclined squire disposed to felt slippers and the evening paper by a calm hearth fire. Jones was attached to Carey by a bond of loyalty, trust, and affection that is often met with in the most hardened criminals.

All listened as Carey made effort to explain. "Honest, guys," he said at last, "I thought it was—it was Benny. You know? Benny come back to——" To what? He couldn't say.

Jones nodded. He remembered Benny Carey. All of them did, for that matter. And Jones knew that Saul Carey would never forget, never cease to be bewildered by the fate of that brother.

Three years ago, when Carey brought Benny into the mob, the men had advised against it. They

had said the youngster wasn't cut out for a crook. Adventuresome, that's all Benny was, they had said.

The first job with the boy had been a bank robbery. A guard had shot him down at first sight of the weapon which Carey had given the boy to use.

Benny had hardly begun, hardly had realized this was a game for keeps, that it was crime—murderous, brutal—before that bullet ended for him the "easy life" Saul Carey, his brother, had promised.

"If this Prince is anything like Benny," said the hard-jawed Sandy Teague, "keep him out of this mob."

"Benny was O. K.," Carey said. "I'd've made a man out of him, only——"

"Only he didn't belong. He was honest," Teague said, and a sneer edged his tone.

Jones, however, arose in defense of Benny. "He had a tough break, that's all."

"Yeah," said Carey. "It could easily 'a' been one of us. Betcha, if he could come back he'd make good."

"Huh. And if he come back, maybe he'd be askin' his big brother where all the easy life was you promised him."

Carey went on dreamily: "I figure he'd be lucky, this Prince kid. You know, I almost pulled a slug on him when he hoisted me there in the dark. Then, I don't know what came over me, I just looked into his face and said nothin', and didn't do nothin' either. His face was like a patch of gray in the black dark, with no eyes, nose, or mouth to it—you understand? Then out of the street, a light come pouring down in a dim stream and lit onto that empty face and filled it with a face I remember. The light showed the phony glass gat, besides, and that stopped me.

You know, guys, what saved this kid's life? I'll tell you. It was the ghost of Benny Carey."

The men listened gravely, and frowned, and for a while no one spoke, till Carey himself broke the silence.

"I figure he'll be lucky for us, see?" he said. "We need luck. Nothin's broke right for us since that post-office job."

"Suppose," offered Teague, "he's a jinx instead. My hunch is as good as yours."

Before Carey could answer, there came a faint tap at the outer door. "That's him. Let him in."

In the late afternoon light, Prince's pallor was even more marked, Carey observed, than when they first had met. The youth came forward timidly, cast a scared look about his surroundings and at the hard-eyed men, and stood speechless in their unsmiling scrutiny.

Not only was his face without color of health, but his eyes also were lusterless, having faint green irises that lent their somber tone to the thin cheeks and suggested in these a touch of moldiness, a pale, fungoid green.

"Meet the Prince," said Carey loudly.

Prince grinned shyly for the first time, and shook hands around. Teague poured liquor. All drank, including Prince.

"He don't look nothin' like Benny," growled Teague.

"No. But he did."

"Who's Benny?" Prince asked. His voice was husky, of a sort that is chronically so, and was rather deep-pitched for the meager chest.

"Benny," Carey replied, "was my kid brother. He's dead. But never mind about that. We want to ask you some questions."

Prince submitted readily. He

had been stealing for three years, he told the men; such business as walking off with overcoats in restaurants and disposing of them in secondhand shops; sneaking packages out of department-store trucks. Like that! He wasn't bragging, nor was he ashamed. Recently, he had bought that gun. That had lasted until—well, last night.

"The only thing regular that I done was working an elevator once. That's about all, I guess," he concluded.

"Worked an elevator, hey?" said Carey, straightening suddenly.

"Yeah. The pay they give you, though——"

"Think you could still run one?" Carey asked.

"Well, sure. I guess so. But what's the percentage?"

"Answer my question."

"Sure. I can run an elevator. It's easy."

Carey became lost in thought, and the men watched him keenly, knowing that his brain was working upon some plan.

Teague spoke to Prince. "Say, kid, take this and see if you can scare up some sandwiches. Ham—anything. And some pickles."

"O. K.," said Prince. He went willingly.

Carey aroused himself a moment after Prince had left. "What do you guys think of him?" he asked.

"He'll do," said the tolerant Jones.

Wilkins and Burns merely grunted; this did not commit them to any opinion.

Teague said: "He's a cheap little sneak thief."

"I dunno," said Carey. "He's got the makin's. Plenty times we might need a kid when we're rooting. Teague, you was lush rolling down in Chatham Square when you was twenty-two."

A laugh rose up at this sally, for Teague, as the men knew, had cut his teeth on gun metal. Nevertheless, the cop slayer took it sourly. "To my lights, he don't amount to a black deuce in a diamond flush. He'll gum somethin'."

"How come?"

"My hunch."

"He ain't honest, like you would put it."

"I ain't sayin' he's *altogether* N. G.," stormed Teague. "Myself, I could do without him."

"My hunch is different, Teague. The kid stays."

"You," growled Teague, and sarcasm tinged every syllable of his speech, "are the boss."

"Ain't you satisfied?" inquired Carey, his eyes narrowing at the other's inflection.

"Aw, yes!" Teague burst out. "Go ahead. It's O. K. by me."

"Sure?"

Teague arose. "Listen, Carey. I ain't sayin' you ain't got no brains. But, I dunno, you're soft about this Prince fella. I don't see what good he's gonna do us."

"Because that's where the brains comes in."

Jones volunteered in a conciliatory manner. "You see, Benny and this——"

"Shut up!" Carey's voice cracked out.

After a minute of silence, Carey spoke again, this time in a subdued tone. "You guys remember the lay-out over at the Inter-Urban Building?" He looked in turn at each man in the room.

"That's ancient," Burns, the locksmith said. "You been figgering it for a year."

"Year. Listen. With Prince, we can do it."

"We're listenin'."

"Let Prince land a job in there,

and I'll show you guys how to beat that pay roll," said Carey.

"And at the same time," put in Teague, "how to beat an armored car and three guns that chaperons the pay roll into the joint. Or," he suggested slyly, "maybe they'll just hand it to Prince while they're hand-in' him the job."

"None of that. Prince can get that job. I've got *that* all worked out. All I need is lots of time. Now, suppose we plant him there, running the freight elevator that takes them guys up to the cashier's office? How's that?"

"If we could—well?"

"Prince," Carey went on, "is supposed to take 'em up. But he doesn't, see? He brings 'em down instead."

"Prince does that?" demanded Teague incredulously.

"Am I tellin' you, or you tellin' me?" snarled Carey. "I said Prince takes 'em down, right down to the basement. And when those elevator doors open up, there's the reception committee waitin' for 'em. You, Teague, Burns, Jones, me. We're layin' for 'em with our gats and we got the drop. Wilkins'll be outside in his car. We grab the money and we make the lam by the basement door, the way we come in."

"Murder, mayhem and suicide!" wailed Jones. "I'm sick!"

Carey motioned him to silence.

"Me, I ain't a gambling man," Teague demurred. "They hire them armored truck guys on account of they can shoot. They're hard-boiled, I'm tellin' you, even if they are all dolled up. They ain't afraid of nothin'. Not that I'm leery. But is it worth the risk?"

"They pay off," Carey informed him, "two thousand bus drivers, mechanics, office workers and such like every Friday. Figure it out."

"Enough, just about, to cover funeral expenses for three or four of us."

Carey grinned. He glanced at each of the others.

"How about you, Jones?"

"Well," said Jones, "them boys sling a mean gun—.45-caliber Colts. I'd rather get hit by a train."

"You won't be handling a fly swatter yourself, you know."

"Just the same, Carey," Teague put in, "I'd call it a twenty-to-one shot. Unless—you got a hole card."

"I have," Carey announced. "We'll do it," said he, "with a bomb."

"What!"

"Yep. A tear-gas bomb."

"Great!"

"Why didn't you say so?"

"With one tear bomb," Carey went on, aroused by the immediate enthusiasm, "I don't care if it's an army of cannons. Prince blows it off as soon as they're shut in the elevator, see? He delivers 'em right down, blind and choking—the three of 'em. Teague grabs the pay roll. I figger the kid'll be chokin', too. But I can pull him out, see? Jones and Burns cover 'em with rods, back out, and make the car after me, Teague and Prince. There it is. If I've left anything out——"

The first difficulty that presented itself was getting Prince placed as an employee in the Inter-Urban Building. Two months passed before that was accomplished, and then only as porter, which was remote from the key position required in the plan.

The boy who formerly held that job had been induced, in a round-about manner through Carey's efforts, to take a job in a garage at better wages.

But the man who operated the freight elevator was a problem. He

was the type of employee who stays with his job for years, never comes late, never is sick, never misses a day, and who thereby acquires the distinct privilege of joshing with the boss.

After a while, Prince was allowed occasional turns at the freight elevator when the operator busied himself with other duties. But there was not yet the certainty that Prince would substitute in the event of a lapse in the other man's record.

If Carey could be sure, then the matter was simple. Wilkins, the car thief, had knocked down other pedestrians by pure accident. He could do the same again, if he tried, when the time was ripe to act.

And in the meantime——

Prince became enraptured over a sprite known at large by clerks and certain bus drivers as "Dimples"—a name adopted and publicized by the young lady in honor of a slight declivity in one cheek when she smiled.

Dimples was in the clerical department, registered under the less romantic name of Henrietta Postenak. She was a flashy package in royal purple, her hair brightly hennaed, her face a round child's face which she had outgrown. Her mouth was a glowing blob of cerise.

Dimples was aware of Prince's ardent glances, but she aspired to bus inspectors, and disdained to give her smile to less than a driver.

Prince was at first despondent, for he admired Dimples. But his hopes soared when, some days later, he rose in the social scale to freight elevator man, owing to the unfortunate accident that befell the regular operator who was struck by a hit-and-run driver on his way home from work.

Carey had been generous to him, had even given him a brand-new pistol which he was cautioned not to

carry until *the day*—Friday coming. With real money in his pocket, and a pistol to bolster his sense of importance, Prince's manhood urged him to besiege the lady's heart.

On Tuesday, after work, he waylaid her outside the building.

"Hello, Dimples," he said. Miss Postenak snorted delicately, and, with irreproachable dignity, glared through him. "How about a little trip to Coney, huh?" Prince persisted.

"Aw, go on," she said.

"No kiddin', Dimples. Wrap your big blue eyes around this." He flashed a startling wad of bills. "Eh, kid? Couldn't we have a swell time on some of this jack?"

Dimples swallowed her gum. "Is that yours?" she gasped.

"Nobody else's, sister. Let's go to-morrow after work. We can eat at the chink's."

The temptress was tempted.

"Gee, Dimples, we'll have a great time. You—you're a swell-lookin' kid. You know that, don't you?"

"You must be cockeyed," she answered, greatly pleased.

"Not me. Well, what do you say? Is it gonna be to-morrow?"

"Let's see," said she, screwing up her great china eyes. "To-morrow? Um! Well, I was dated up with—Oh, all right, if you insist."

Dimples was agreeably impressed when they met the next evening, for Prince was dressed in a manner that in her eyes was the acme of style. He wore a new panama hat, cream flannel pants, blue jacket in which a yellow silk handkerchief flared, and black-and-white sport shoes.

Who would know that he was—Well, what was he, anyway? Elevator men don't afford such clothes. He couldn't have bought them out of his wages. Riding all the way out to Coney in a taxi—tie that!

She had been taken to Coney by other men. This fellow was sort of skinny-looking, and pale. Well, he wasn't a piker, and the handsome kind were so darn conceited.

They rode on the scenic railway—*wheel!*—down those breath-taking descents, up those dizzy peaks. She let him put his arm around her.

And in the cavern darkness of the Witching Waterways, she did not resist his kiss, only—she was glad when they were out in the light again.

She carried away two boudoir dolls that Prince had won for her at a shooting gallery. Whatever she saw she wanted, and he spent his money like a sport. A fellow like this—she ought to try to keep him a while. So she proceeded to tell him of all the boys that clamored for dates with her. That was one way.

They were having steamed clams in a boardwalk restaurant when she noticed a group of boys, good-looking fellows, at a table near by, looking at her. She smiled back at them to tantalize Prince. Sometimes, that made a boy go strong for a girl.

Prince saw and smoldered, but said nothing. He got up presently to buy cigarettes at the cashier's counter, and so disappeared for a moment beyond the columns. And two of the young men came over to her table.

"Hello, baby," one of them, a tall, sunburned youth, began. "Why don't you chuck that bozo and join our party, eh?"

"What for?" Dimples inquired.

"Meet some *he*-guys," the second offered.

Prince was coming back. She waited before speaking again until he should come near enough to observe how men were attracted to her. And then she said: "Thanks, but I'm with some one."

"What of it? Come on."

Prince strode up, and his pale eyes were cold. "Got company?" he inquired.

"Sorry," the sunburned fellow said. "Thought the lady was alone."

"Yeah? Well, scram."

The two hesitated at the meaningful tone in Prince's voice. They didn't like it. "I said scram," repeated Prince icily. "Hard of hearing, you birds?" His hand lowered and then crept to his hip.

That looked bad. The sunburned one laughed nervously. "Come on, Pete," he said. "We made a mistake."

Dimples sighed her profound relief when they were left to themselves again. "Gee! I thought they was going to start trouble," she said.

"They know better," said Prince, his lips thinned and bloodless.

Dimples laughed. "You give 'em a scare, I'll hand you that much. Reaching to your pocket. Not bad, boy friend, not bad." She was thinking: "Good they didn't call his bluff." A derisive little smile crept to her mouth and betrayed her thought.

Prince drew his chair up closer to the table, the muscles of his face working. "Look here, baby. Don't think you're so hot, flirting that way. Guys have been hurt on account of dames monkeyin'."

"Aw, I was just seein' if you're jealous, that's all."

"You seen enough. You behave yourself when you're out with me," he warned huskily.

"Think you're married to me?" Dimples flared up. "Ain't you going too fast, boy friend?"

"Not fast enough," he replied, and he met her startled look boldly.

"Say!" She got up, planted her hands on her hips, and shifting her weight from one high-heeled foot to

the other, demanded: "What d'you take me for? Do you think because you spent a nickel on me I'm——"

"Hey, sit down. Everybody's starin'," he said. "We don't wanta fight."

They finished their refreshment in silence.

"I'm tired," she said at length. "Let's go home."

"Gee, the night's young yet."

"I wanta go home," she repeated.

"Oh, if you like." He was disappointed and bitter.

"And I mean home." She'd teach him, bossing her around that way. But in the taxi, she relented and let him put his arm around her.

"Give us a hug?" he begged.

She responded to his embrace, placing both her arms about him, and then she remembered something. She allowed one hand to slip gently down his side to the pocket at his hip. She gave a start. Her heart began to pound. For beneath her hand, the contour of a gun butt became plain. He hadn't been bluffing after all!

Dimples was now thoroughly afraid. Her lips were senseless to his beseeching, hungry kisses.

"You're a honey," he whispered.

"Take me home," she said. "Please! Please!"

By noon of the next day, many pairs of eyes lingered upon the thin figure of Prince whenever he appeared in the hallways of the building. No wonder! Dimples kept no secrets from her friends, and she had many friends among the girls in the clerical department.

To these she had related her adventure, exhibiting herself in the glamorous rôle of heroine who had narrowly escaped grievous harm. As she retold her story, it began to take on vivid embellishments; and re-

layed at third and fourth hand, it spread mercurially until the gun multiplied into an arsenal and the roll of bills grew to the size of a mint.

What followed was a natural consequence, for, in the superintendent's office, this account, colored appropriately, added meaning to the accident that had befallen the veteran elevator man.

It was toward closing time when the report was communicated to the captain of the police precinct, who commissioned two men to look into the matter of the desperado. They arrived too late to catch him. And the home address was fictitious.

Early Friday morning, after a brief interview with the now dismayed Dimples, the two headquarters men made for the freight elevator.

"That it?" they said contemptuously, when Prince was indicated.

Without another word, they took hold of him, each by an arm, and urged him ungently into the waiting squad car.

Prince had opportunity to see the official "P. D." emblem on the car, and he turned at once wholly green with apprehension.

The men, seeing that Prince was scared, nodded at each other grimly. They realized the advantage in letting fright take firm hold before they began to grill him.

Even before they brought him into the back room of the station house, Prince was whimpering. From his pockets, pistol, bomb, and money had already been removed.

"A lot of money—and a lot of hardware for a kid like you," said one eventually, pushing him into a chair. Closing the door of the station room, he snapped: "Spill it!"

Prince was gibbering. This was the morning of the big job, and his

nerves were already under the strain of anticipation. He wondered how the plan had leaked out. "I didn't do nothin'," he groaned.

"Come on, come on!" The officer made show of reaching for something in a desk drawer.

"You can't do nothin' to me!" Prince screamed. "It's Carey. He's the one——"

"Carey, eh?" They hadn't the slightest notion who Carey was. "Carey and who else?"

"Teague."

"Teague!"

"Shut up. Let him talk, Mac."

"Yeah. Sandy Teague, and Burns, and Wilkins and Jones."

"And you."

"Not me! I've always been straight. I had to do what they said. If I didn't, they'd kill me. You know they would. Don't let 'em get me!"

"Poor fella," said the one whose name was Mac, and he threw a slow wink at his companion. "We'll take care of you, don't worry."

"I'm giving you guys a break," Prince reminded them. "The bunch is as good as tied up. You wouldn't put me in jail after that, would you?"

"The idea!" exclaimed Mac. "But you better say enough so's they don't slide out of this rap and get you later. Teague, especially. If he's *the* Teague, there's people back in Denver who are pretty sore on account of a cop he killed."

Prince began to sob. "It's the pay roll they're after," he said. "Carey give me the bomb to blow off in the freight elevator. I'm supposed to bring the guys with the pay roll down to the basement."

"When?"

"Ten thirty, soon as the armored truck comes up."

"What! This mornin'?"

"Y-yes."

"Hey, captain! Say, we've got just an hour. Let them birds play it through. That's what I think."

"What'll we do with this kid?"

"Put him right back in his elevator, that's what—before his gang gets wise. Get the chief! Let's go!"

It was ten thirty by Carey's watch. Down in the basement of the Inter-Urban Building he waited, his hand gripped on the gun butt in the pocket of his coat. With him were Burns, Jones, and Teague similarly posed. They had entered singly, unobtrusively. Outside, the armored truck had already squealed up before the main entrance. Outside, also, Wilkins was waiting.

The men's nerves were steel, but the passing moments abraided them like files. They were grouped in the semidark of the corridor by the elevator shaftway. Any minute they would hear it descend.

Teague cursed. "What's the matter?" he wondered.

"Don't start sputtering," said Carey. "This thing's sure."

"They're late. They oughtn't to be late."

"Draw your guns," said Carey.

Jones, Burns, and Teague obeyed. All held their hands hip-high, and in them black weapons were leveled at the doors.

At last, they heard the upper doors slam shut. That meant the pay roll was in the car. Then a slight explosion sounded in the shaftway.

"What'd I tell you?" Carey exulted. "The kid's makin' good!"

The elevator started. Presently, a white vapor began to seep around the edges of the doors. A hissing noise issued from within and became louder as the elevator approached the nether level. It was like steam

escaping. The car came to a halt. The men stiffened, each ready for his separate scheme of action. But the door did not slide open.

Meanwhile, the hissing grew somewhat louder, the vapor more intense, and it soon enveloped them in a thick white cloud.

"Somethin's wrong," growled Teague. "This ain't tear gas. It's—it's a smoke screen!"

"You're crazy!"

"We're trapped, I say."

"Hold yourself together!" Carey commanded. "The kid's in this. The gas has got him! He can't open the doors."

"Bull!" snarled Teague. "Your punk has double-crossed us!" He stretched out groping hands, for in the dense smoke even the walls could not be seen.

And directly upon his last word, a voice cracked out from the end of the corridor. "Drop your guns! You're covered, all of you!"

The men stood frozen.

"Slide your hardware along the floor—this way," the voice went on. "Don't move."

Carey crouched, fired blindly in the direction of the voice.

A loud laugh was the response. "That's it"—tauntingly—"now *try* and run out by the basement door. You'll find a squad waiting to pick you off. Now, will you toss the guns over?"

"No!" Teague shouted. To the others, he whispered: "Let's rush 'em! Our only chance!"

However, before they had a second to consider, the voice, grim now, spoke again: "Well, boys, we'll write you a letter on the typewriter. Ready!"

"Flatten out, guys," warned Carey. "It's——"

But the machine gun had burst into speech. *Br-r-r-r-rac-tac-taca-*

tac-tac-tac. For ten seconds, it chattered with teeth of steel, then ceased. And the echoes hushed, waiting for another sign that life remained.

"Anybody left?" came the voice again.

No one replied. For Burns, the locksmith, death had come instantly. The others were crawling about on the cement floor, crawling like blind maggots in dense earth.

Carey was choking. Something in his chest impeded his breathing.

"Teague," he groaned. "The kid—we got to pull him out. I—I got him into this hole. I——"

"Yeah," said Teague. "Wait! Who's this—Jones? You all right, Jones?"

"I'm spiked," was the painful response. "My legs——"

"Burns is croaked," said Teague. "Carey's about through. We'd better sign off. I can't do much by myself." Aloud, he shouted. "You win!"

"Throw us the guns, then."

"Here goes." Teague scraped the floor with both hands, searching for his comrades' guns. He found the one belonging to Burns. "One!" he hurled it down the corridor. Jones's next. "Two!"

"Two! Right."

"Come on, Carey. Let's have it."

Carey cursed him savagely. "Not mine. I've got to——"

Teague bent close, paused a moment at the sound of muttered voices in the elevator, then wrested the gun from Carey's hand. The other was too weak to resist.

"Three!" he called as he tossed it. "One more."

A minute of silence. The vapor was thinning now. "I can't find it," Teague gasped out. "Think I can see anything in all this smoke? My pals is done for, anyway. Find it yourself."

He crouched near the elevator doors, listening to the muttering voices within. His pistol was in his hand. He was determined not to part with it—for the time.

"Haven't you found it?"

"No." Teague put as much discouragement as he could in the reply.

"Well, then. O. K., men," the signal rang out. "Open up. We got 'em all."

The elevator door slid back with a clang, and four uniformed officers appeared. Within the car remained two plain-clothes men with the handcuffed Prince.

Teague flattened back against the wall as the policemen came out of the car. The vapor was transparent now. He dropped to a kneeling position and raised his gun.

"Stop that man!" some one wildly shouted.

Crack! Teague's gun spoke nevertheless.

And—*crack!*—came the penalty. Teague fell with a bullet between his eyes.

Prince, gagging a while in terror at the strange pain that sapped his heart, toppled slowly, then lay quite still.

Under a tarpaulin, three bodies awaited the morgue wagon. They had been Burns, Teague, and Prince. Wilkins alone of the robbers survived without a wound, having been trapped in the stolen car outside.

Carey and Jones had been carried into an anteroom on the second floor, to lie there until the police ambulance arrived.

Jones gazed into his gang chief's face. Carey was sinking fast. Death already filmed his eyes.

"Couldn't get out," Carey muttered confusedly. "Prince ain't to blame. Gas got him."

"Yeah?" Jones said to himself. "That dirty little rat! Teague got him!" But what was the use! Carey was dying.

Carey's brain hung upon its last, near-lucid thread of thought. When the brain is thus fogged, and death is near, all sorts of illusions may impinge upon it. It is at such moments that the ghosts of dead men draw near to welcome or denounce the new invader of their demesne.

And it seemed to Saul Carey, for the second time, that he saw the wraith of Benny Carey, his brother. The pallid, translucent lips were a-snarl with wrath, and calumny

scorched the words that fell from them.

"That squares us, Saul! Leading me into the 'easy life.' You killed me. Now I kill you. You started me on a gunman's path. I bring you now to a gunman's end."

Saul Carey's lips opened wide to scream: "But I meant it for the best." The scream died, and his last words were whispered strangely, hoarsely, as one enlightened at last: "Was I all wrong?"

Jones, who heard this, was quick with loyalty and a challenge.

"Who says so? Teague? Why, Teague's crazy!" he said vehemently.

A SAFE PLACE

APPARENTLY, the safest place to live is Keensburg, Illinois. It is said that their jail has had no occupants for the past six years. This seems proof enough that there are no bad people in Keensburg. The residents of this village are evidently of this opinion, also, for their jail was recently torn down, on the grounds that there was no use for it in the community.

In Next Week's Issue of

Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine

THE STILLED HEART

By Paul Ellsworth Triem

He had built up his fortune unjustly, without paying for it, and now a beautiful, seductive creature was bringing him to book.

SPUD GIVES A LIFT

By Charlotte Dockstader

They sensed a grim mystery behind the door, and were about to charge in, when a kneeling woman suddenly stopped them in their tracks.

Also Features by

Christopher B. Booth

Arthur Mallory

And Others

15c A COPY

AT ALL NEWS STANDS



*Working the old headpiece beat
all the highfalutin ways.*

FOUR SASSY BIRDS

By WARREN KIMSEY

AFTER all, when it comes to catching crooks, it's pretty hard to beat this head cheese that every dick is supposed to carry around under his hat. Put it to work, is my slogan. Yeah, work your dogs, too. Keep your ears and eyes open and your mouth shut. That kind of a receipt will make noodle soup when a lot of other newfangled stuff fails. And "Sneak" Riley will back me up in that statement. Well, Sneak and me could admit as much and not be bragging about it at that.

You see, we get all modern and put in a short-wave broadcasting outfit at headquarters and equip the police cars with receiving sets. Yeah, it's hot stuff.

"I sure am sorry to have to leave you boys out of it for a while," is the way Lieutenant "Tubby" Pressley feeds it to Sneak and me. "But we've used up all the receiving sets we ordered. Maybe if you go out and make a record, the chief will order one special for your car."

"Don't let that worry you none," I tell him. "If we had one on our

car, Sneak would be fiddling around with it all the time, hoping he could pick up a baseball game by mistake, instead of listening for police tips. So, we'll make out some way."

That's how we come to know we're left out of this modern stuff of catching crooks by radio. As a result of our car not being in on the modern trimmings, Sneak and me are assigned down on Ninth Street to take care of the crap shooters and lamp-post drunks. And mostly a car is out of place in that racket, since the art of working Ninth Street is not to see too much unless dicks want to work themselves to death and fill up the jail so there won't be any room left for the bootleggers. About all the department expects of us is to turn in enough pinches to make our salaries and expenses in fines. After that, it's see no evil and hear no evil that may lead to a new crap game.

It's knocking around one thirty when a report comes in that sets headquarters on fire. I'm giving you the story, now, that Sneak and me managed to piece together from odds and ends, later. The cashier of the Fair Store, with his police escort, Pat Mooney, is ambling along toward the bank with thirty thousand dollars' worth of smackers in his leather bag for deposit. Then, right on the corner of Seventh and Broad, a couple of fellows step up behind the cashier and Pat, and give them a slam on the bean. They snatch that money bag, and a car with two other fellows eases to the curb and takes them on board, and they're off.

It's the slickest piece of money grabbing that has been pulled in our town for a long time. Yeah, it has all the earmarks of being plotted out for days ahead and timed right to the second.

But these bandit boys are up against our modern radio equipment. The cashier and the flatfoot don't more than hit the pavement until a description of the car is flashed to headquarters. A few seconds later, cars with the receiving sets are speeding for the city limits to sew up all outgoing highways. They get their instructions and further information as they go about over the city. One car distributes information to all the traffic cops on duty, so they will know what has happened and keep their eyes peeled for the bandits.

Yeah, it's hot stuff all right. These four babies have got about as much chance of getting through that net as a whale has of getting through a minnow net in three feet of water.

Well, you see, Sneak and me don't know anything about all this going on at the time. So, right when things are the hottest, we're parked on the shady side of a building to keep from finding any trouble, since we've sent in two wagon loads of crap shooters that morning which is considered a fair quota for the day. And nobody over at headquarters thinks it's important to run out and put us in on the know since we've just got a common auto without any modern trimmings.

It's right close to two o'clock when a big car with four men in it comes rolling down the street and stops in the shade ahead of us. The fellows don't get out but sit there like they own the town.

"All right, I'll make you a bet," I say to Sneak when I get tired looking at them. "If those fellows get out of the car and go off together, I'll bet you a dirty dollar to a plugged nickel we can find either a crap game or a poker game if we follow them."

"I'll take you," said Sneak. "Anything to stir up some action suits me. I'm tired of sitting here. But, suppose they sit in the car thirty minutes, then what?" he wants to know.

"Well, in the first place, the bet will be off," I tell him. "And, in the second place, if four men sit in a car on a quiet street like this for thirty minutes, it will be time for dicks with the right training to investigate. Always look into anything you can't understand."

"Yeah, but it won't be so hot to walk up to four fellows like that and stick your nose into their business," Sneak protests. "They got as much right to sit here and enjoy the shade as we have."

"Not when they park within five feet of a fire plug," I immediately point out.

"Well, I didn't happen to notice that," admits Sneak.

"That's our excuse for butting in," I go on. "Then they don't look right to me. I've got a feeling that everything is not well in Denmark. Come on."

We ease up to the big car from the rear, and sure enough the bullies are so close to a fire plug they must've overlooked it. But one good look at the four makes me think they're a bunch of college boys.

"You fellows figuring on building here, or was you just waiting for a fire truck to push you out of the way?" I open by way of introduction.

"Who wants to know and what's it to you?" the one at the wheel sings out real sassy.

"Nobody—much," I say and flash my badge.

This boy goes for his gun, but I've got him and his buddy covered before he can unwind. And Sneak has covered the two in the back seat.

It's nice quick work, the way we cover the quartet.

"Well, I guess you've got us," the boy at the wheel says and passes over his gun.

"You're dog-gone tooting we've got you," said Sneak, and frisks two guns off the boys that are on the back seat.

Yeah, each one of them is packing a gat. But that don't mean so much in our part of the country.

"Was you fellows heading for some foreign country to start a revolution?" I say as I look over the artillery.

"I wish we was," one of them sings out. "I told the rest of these nuts we was heading for trouble. But you can't tell them anything. You see, two of them are mechanical wizards," he sneers.

We can see there must be some kind of trouble between them the way this guy rags the others.

"Oh, maybe it won't be so bad," I tell him. "Let's see. Parking in front of a fire plug. Resisting arrest. Carrying concealed weapons. Maybe you'll get off with six months," I say and wink at Sneak.

"Aw, can the jokes," yelps one of the fellows. "Now that you've got us cold, what do you want to keep rubbing it in for? Come on and get it over with."

We take him at his word, and I start climbing in the back seat while Sneak climbs in up in front. But before I can get set, my feet tangle up in an old suitcase that's laying on the floor.

"Looks like you fellows would keep your baggage where a man could see it without breaking his neck," I growl. "I've a good notion to throw the durn thing out in the street. Maybe a street cleaner would come along and pile it on the dump where it belongs."

"Go on and throw it out," invites one of the guys. "Throw it out and see if we care."

I'm on the point of doing this because he seems to think I won't and I'm mad enough to do it, but something causes me to change my mind. So I kick the blooming thing to one side, and we're off for headquarters.

"Well, it's quieter around there than a deaf-and-dumb graveyard when we blow in. A desk sergeant is on duty, carefully manicuring his finger nails.

"All right, say your piece," he growls.

I reel off the three charges.

"Say, what the——" one of the prisoners starts to yelp.

"Aw, shut up," a companion cuts him off and punches him in the ribs.

Then the jailer comes in and puts them on ice.

"Why, ain't you two in on the big man hunt?" the sarge wants to know as soon as the fellows are out of hearing. "You been hiding so you won't get hurt?"

He tells us about the big money grab and how the entire force is out combing the town for the bandits. Of course, that's the first news we've had and we're mighty glad for the break that brought us to headquarters.

"Now that I've told you, you're notified," goes on the sarge. "And you better get out and get in the big chase or the chief will bite off your heads when he finds out you're dragging in ten-cent sports with these killers loose in the city."

Well, that's good advice even from a desk sarge, and we get ready to go into action.

"Here's a suitcase we found in the car with those bullies," I tell him. "Look it over while you're idle and then throw it on the dump pile," and I kick the thing over in a corner.

"And, say, you better get three or four cells swept out so they'll be ready when we bring the bandits in," I tell him by way of answering the dirty sneer on his map.

Sneak and me vanish through the door as he reaches for an ink bottle. And we don't loose any time getting back to our car that we left parked down close to Ninth Street. We start cruising around in our part of the town. In a little while, we start running into other police cars, and the fellows yell tips at us that are coming from the operator at headquarters. Yeah, they're going to catch the bandits. Not a chance for them to get out of town!

Well, the afternoon passes, and we don't have even a tire puncture to stir things up. And, finally, it's time to go in. But we're not too keen on that because a flatfoot has tipped us off that the bandits are still at large. We know the chief will be on fire, and we hate to go back to the madhouse. We know he won't have anything on us, but we just naturally hate to go in at a time like this.

"Where have you two been for the last hour?" Lieutenant Tubby Pressley bawls when we stick our noses through the doorway. "The chief sure is on fire and he wants both of you, so you better get to his office."

Well, we stampede for the carpet.

"Now, what *have* we done?" growls Sneak. "Ain't we had a better day than usual?"

"Search me," I say and examine our past with an eagle eye to see where we have slipped. But I'm still in the dark when we crash in on the carpet.

"Well, you are a couple of pretty birds," sneers the chief just like a groom sneers at his new bride.

Yeah, he's smiling and bubbling over with good humor.

"Why didn't you look in the suitcase the first thing?" he wants to know, and pulls out from behind his desk the old battered one we found with the four bullies. "You know, it might pay you to be more observing in the future. This suitcase only had thirty thousand dollars in it."

"What!" That's all I can manage. Sneak has gone plumb dumb.

"Yeah, that's all," goes on the chief. "Thirty thousand dollars. You fellows bring in four bandits while the entire force is combing the town with radio cars. Then you throw thirty thousand smackers in the corner like it was a sack of meal and walk out. Say, Joe, what are you and Riley trying to do—high-hat all of us?"

"And to think I nearly threw the blooming thing out of the car," I mumble, too dazed to know what I'm saying.

"What's that?" says the chief.

"Oh, nothing," I come back right quick. "I was just thinking of a little bet I had with Sneak."

Well, you can knock Sneak and me down with the straw that broke the camel's back. Here we've caught the bandits and don't know it. I think right fast, and start giving the chief a line about how our training as officers made us investigate the suspicious action of the four in the car after they stopped by the fire plug. I sure do spread it on fancy and thick.

"And here's the funny part," says the chief, after I've fed him the whole story. "The car the fellows were using was equipped with a ra-

dio-receiving set. It was concealed so well I'm not surprised at you and Riley not finding it. Those birds were sitting there in the shade listening to all the information our operator was broadcasting as their set was in perfect tune with our short wave. They knew our every move. If we got close, all they had to do was to move quietly to another place. Then, when everything quieted down, they most surely would have made a get-away. So it was the resourcefulness of you and Riley that turned the trick. My hat is off to both of you."

Now, ain't that hot stuff the chief is throwing at us?

"And now, Joe, you and Riley sure have earned a right to the best we can put out," he warbles on. "I'm going to order a receiving set at once for your car, if you want it, so you boys can have it modern and be right up on the front row."

We're supposed to be grateful for this offer, but I don't rush at it, and I can see a doubtful look on Sneak's map. It's our golden opportunity.

"Thanks, chief," I say, speaking for both of us, "but if it's all the same to you, Riley and me would just as soon keep on like we are and let the other boys use the modern stuff. You see, having a radio on the car might cramp our style."

And we let it stand that way. Yeah, Sneak and me have got enough ammunition out of the capture of the bandits to keep the bunch around our madhouse quiet for months to come. And we don't have to brag on ourselves, either.

Coming Next Week, "GIANT'S WEAKNESS,"

by ARTHUR MALLORY.

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.

R. D. M., California: Railroad and telegraph clerks always write a certain uniform script that is easily recognized. Here is a very good example of the railroader's script.

Miss Spencer:

H/W Co
of that you kindly
swriting
Very Truly

not mean artistic ability. When this circle is part of a system of writing, it loses its significance.

There is another peculiar characteristic found in this type of script—the downward slanting *t*-bar. It is always a light bar, too. Naturally, the Graphologist does not get a complete picture of the real person that is hidden under a system of penmanship. Your signature then is more revealing than the body of your letter.

Notice the circle *i*-dot. It is the one occasion when the circle *i*-dot does

The tall capitals show pride and independence. The upward slant

and underscore reveal confidence, poise, optimism, and progressiveness. The involved letters, especially the o, indicates a person who is close-mouthed and secretive.

P. S., New York City: It isn't very often that I have a young girl tell me her ambition is to be a police woman! We used to think that it was only young boys who wanted to be wielders of justice. Times have changed!

The odd part of it is that I really think you would make a very good police woman and that you would find that active and even dangerous life very much to your taste. My reason for this belief is based on what I see in your writing.

*But my ambition
once I have
er to be a police
in some way
to with the
you think I
make good*

In the first place, those extra long lower loops are an indication of your desire for physical action, and the great sprawling script which you use indicates a mind that simply could never concentrate on mental work. You must have action all the time. You are also reckless, impulsive, and have a decided belief in your ability to meet a physical situation. I can imagine you enjoying a real scrap. That is one reason you feel the need of connecting with the

law. As you aren't the mental type at all, I think you would be wise to stick to enforcing the law rather than to try to solve the intricacies of technical law and logic.

You are extremely emotional, but I think that is due to your youth and lack of discipline more than to a really emotional or ardent nature. You will probably develop more poise with training and learn to control your feelings. A quick mind and sense of humor are going to be a great help to you, and these traits are portrayed in those dashing i-dots.

I have no doubt but that I will hear of your being a fine police woman one of these days.

J. M., Indiana: I find that still many people confuse Graphology with Astrology, and they give me their birth date. I read your character from your handwriting entirely. I know that there are some Graphologists who ask for birth date, full name and family names, and this has probably confused the public. Such advertisers are not scientific Graphologists, practicing pure, unadulterated Graphology. There is nothing psychic, mysterious or pseudoscientific about Graphology.

*used in these times
y. I have lost my
a financial concern
ent conditions and
opportunity to go in
advertising concern, bill
ing, do you think it*

The sooner we can change the false ideas the public has about this science, the sooner we will be able to raise it to a professional recogni-

tion that it enjoys in France, Germany, and other countries abroad. So bear with me if I seem to stress these points often. I have cause to resent unscientific mixtures and false impressions. I don't blame the public at all, but I do find it unethical of those supposedly practicing Graphology to create these impressions.

I don't think that it will make a great deal of difference in your progress to have to change your business. It happens that you have business ability and can very well use it either in real estate or billboard advertising, as your interest will be principally in the financial end. Naturally, you may prefer the work you were in before the depression, but I think you will find this new opportunity interesting and congenial, also within your capacity.

Your writing is the forward, flowing, compact type that shows executive ability with financial ability. It runs downhill a little—probably due to the fact that you have been without work and you succumbed to the general sense of depression. I'm glad you have had a break. You are the type that will recover quickly from any reverses.

T. L., Washington, D. C.: Thank you for your friendly letter. I'm glad you liked your analysis. Don't be impatient! Remember my mails are very heavy, and there are always some that are at the bottom of the pile. Since you are so interested in the department and read it eagerly each week, I thought you might get an added thrill to see your writing reproduced, so here it is.

You ask me if you are fickle or just haven't found the right people or environment. Just take a look at that waving *t*-bar. That undeniably reflects a fickle nature. It also

shows humor for which you may be thankful. I'm afraid that you will always be seeking new faces and new places, hoping to catch something different that might satisfy you. If you don't worry about it and accept the fact that you are like that, you will be happier. There isn't any special reason why your fickleness should worry you because you have some very fine characteristics that more than balance your changing interests.

*you returned - Of
you must be a very
that - I almost envy
Such extremely inter-
am sure I would of
learning and knowing
different things about
nature -*

Yes, I can see how dancing might be one of your talents. There is a decided sense of rhythm shown. Sometimes, I tell people they ought to enjoy dancing, and they say they never have danced or never do. However, when questioned, they admit a love of graceful movement and a strong musical sense of rhythm.

You are a gay and optimistic person. Those flying *t*-bars, and tails on your Greek *ds*, and the hooked beginning strokes on your *ns*, *ms*, and *fs* tell me that.

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.

DANGER! That's another word for this crypt composed by Frank Calafiore, 917 North Rose Street, Baltimore, Maryland. It's his first effort to please you. We hope he succeeded.

1. QLOL QTP FBOSBF
SD BC DCVLO FSD-
DWZ QTRNMPL. RT-
OLWLFFWZ NTPY-
WLF YLTBN-YLTW-
MPH DTOBF. LWL-
RBOMRMBZ DWTZ-
ISWWZ NTPYWLF
QTP. RCODEFL KSO-
MLY ICWWCVMPH
Y TZ.

A few long words to make you thumb your dictionaries. August Kehr, Jr., of 2205 Lynch Street, St. Louis, Missouri, is responsible.

2. NOTHARD TEPTDD-
TWAMD-YHOBUYA-
IOBIUTMS JALUCO-
MARDHS FTBKHOW
QUIZ XBTJUDZ UM-
TBUTB ITVUWOM-
EUDI.

Boob McNut, of Ohio, the author of this crypt, says that he has noticed that our contributions often assume a facetious, not to say flip-pant, attitude and he thinks that one of a pathetic or mournful tone would be a welcome change. So here goes:

3. AXIX UXXUK KXOX
XL XIXV. IXXM XL
CXOX CXLB CXXA-
CXXAK KXOX. CX-
FVK AXIX XL SXSX

Z P U A I X O X . A X I X
D X P L K J X J X . C X L B
N X V K O X S X .

Once more Leonard P. Bossard, 54 Partition Street, Rensselaer, New York, tries to stump you. The answer to this long-division is two words. Use the 12345678970-letter arrangement.

4. D N O) R O K G A S (K I K

R K G N

K G B A

K R K I

R N G S

R K G N

B O K

Answers to Last Week's Puzzles:

Contributed by D. C. Walker, Elkhorn, Montana, who is famous for his stickers.

1. Just fancy Charon, upon his underworld punt, ferrying our age-

old friend, Gippy Sphinx, over yon dark Styx.

Well, Primrose, did Leonard P. Bossard, 54 Partition Street, Rensselaer, New York, stick you? He hoped that he would.

2. Zealous Mexican zany, arms akimbo, met albino amigo, also gaucho banjo player. Bought friends spumoni. Hired taxi home.

William Duval, 326 Ontario Street, Cohoes, New York, sends us words of praise. Thanks, Bill.

3. Congratulations and thanks may yet be in order for size of type used lately in printing these crypts.

The answer to this long-division problem by Irene Laun, Washington, D. C., may be a bit of prophecy.

4. LATE SPRING.

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.

COUPON

How to Solve Cryptograms and Long-division Problems.

If you would like to have the above information, please fill in coupon and mail it to Gerard Holmes, care of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York, and full instructions will be sent to you free of charge.

Name Address

City State

Headquarters Chat



A GALAXY of old, tried, and true, favorite authors in next week's issue. Paul Ellsworth Triem leads the number with a complete novelette, entitled, "The Stilled Heart"; next comes Charlotte Dockstader's short story, "Spud Gives A Lift"; Arthur Mallory then contributes "Giant's Weakness"; which will be followed by Donald G. McDonald's "Seeing Crooked." Of course, there is the third installment of that baffling and thrilling serial of Chistopher B. Booth, "The Unloved Bridegroom." Yes, there will be a true crime story. Cyrus Chapin has named it "Keyhole Detectives." There will also be other unusual stories to entertain you.

Looks as if you are going to find that next issue of Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine is just about as good a one as you've ever read. Many will say that it is the best one they've ever read.

Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine printed a remarkably fine story recently. It has been greatly appreciated. This is what Mr. and Mrs. H. Telmons, 32 South Evanston Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio, have to say of it:

"DEAR EDITOR: May I compliment W. W. Hatfield on that most pathetic, but true story, 'Hunger,' that was printed recently in Detective Story Magazine.

"It sure contains a lot of truth, and, although I have not experienced the sheer desperation of that

family, I have gazed with loathing and contempt on the numerous slogans in various bank windows where I have a few dollars deposited for our old age.

"Mr. Hatfield sure understands the feelings and despair of numerous people who have striven to save for the rainy day. May we thank him for his most excellent story and trust times may improve so he can write us another story—well, just the opposite from that which we have enjoyed so much? I assure him our enjoyment will be just as keen when times warrant such a story, and we know he is the man to write it."

Dated at Canton, China, Ralph C. Watson, Jr., of the U. S. S. *Mindanao*, care of Postmaster, Seattle, Washington, sends us the following high tribute:

"DEAR EDITOR: With the exception of writing to subscribe for Detective Story last year, I have never written to you, although I have read Detective Story Magazine for about the last ten years. At first, it was just off and on—when I could get them. When I was on duty in the United States, I could get them at any news stand, provided I wasn't too late. They sure sell like hot cakes. But, when I went to China, I lost track of them for a while in the smaller towns. When we were in Manila, it was easy enough to get them. Well, you know the old story about a habit growing on you. It finally got me and I subscribed.

Under separate cover I am renewing my subscription and can faithfully vow that, as long as I have the money, I shall continue to do so.

"This will no doubt be a rather long letter, as I am going to attempt to tell you just how Detective Story Magazine goes over on a small navy gunboat of about seventy men. I always hand them when finished to a friend who is as enthusiastic over them as I am, and, when he is through with them, he also passes them on. I can truthfully say that, before they have entirely disintegrated from usage, about ten to twenty men have read them. It isn't necessary for more than one of us to subscribe.

"As to criticisms, I have a few, but mostly complimentary. I am getting rather tired of the *Pogglesnup* stories, but Asia Kagowan's other stories are very good, and I wish you would continue them. Johnston McCulley is one of the best, but, as far as that goes, they are all good. As so many of your readers have said, I simply can't see how you manage to maintain such a high standard of stories consistently.

"I particularly like Bryan Irvine, Booth, M. I. H. Rogers, Mel Watt, Perry J. Carter, Miss Dockstader, Hallock's poems and prose, Coates, Poate, Apple and Appel. 'Murder Morn' is a very good story, and you would do well to keep him on your list. The last installment hasn't reached me yet, but it is very good so far. I also like the true detective stories and articles. As for serials, I usually keep them all together and then read them as one complete story, but sometimes a copy is missing due to the demand on the ship.

"I've raved too long as it is, so I'll close for this time.

"Keep up the good work."

Miss Rose Conti, New Orleans, Louisiana, has nothing but kind words for us:

"DEAR EDITOR: I have been a reader of Detective Story Magazine for several years and I like it very much. My favorite authors are Charles Tyler and Paul Ellsworth Triem. I also enjoy the writing of Mr. Booth. However, my favorite stories by Mr. Tyler were those about *Big-nose Charley*. And who didn't like that lovable old rascal? My favorite stories by Mr. Triem were those about *John Doe*. So, naturally, you can realize how puzzled I am over their disappearance from the pages of the 'book of books.'

"There are very few things I care to kick about, for I realize how perfect your magazine is. However, I cannot realize how any one can read the silly *Pogglesnup* stories with any degree of satisfaction, because, having read one, they are all the same. Fortunately, however, Mr. Kagowan is rather versatile and has proved on several occasions that he can write real stories with real sense to them. I always enjoy his other stories immensely, but deliver us from any more childish impossible *Pogglesnup* doings.

"I guess I've said my little piece, and, even though mine may have been only the opinion of such small minority that it is so unworthy of consideration, still it does one good to blow off steam once in a while, even should it go in one ear and out of the other.

"So, I sign off with all very best wishes to you and your workers, Mr. Editor, and hope sincerely for the continued success and many happy landings for good old Detective Story Magazine."

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" 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 proved that these 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 these 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.

PACKER, LUCY.—Lived in Brandon, Colorado, in 1924. If she, or any one knowing her, sees this, please write to her old pal, Amelia Clark, now Mrs. S. C. Brown, Box 52, California, California.

HOLDEN, ORVILLE.—Born in Dunkirk, Ohio, in 1886, and lived for a time in Findlay, Ohio. Missing since he was twelve years old. His brother and sister would be grateful for any news of him. Kindly address Lowell and Renia Holden, 616 Grant Street, Fremont, Ohio.

HAGGERTY, JOE.—Was in New York City in 1921. Had a brother named Harry. Word as to his present whereabouts would be appreciated by his friend William, care of this magazine.

MORLAND, FRANKLIN.—Of York County, Virginia. Last heard of in Ironton, Ohio, about twenty-seven years ago. Would be between seventy-five and eighty years old if still living. His nephew would very much like to hear from him, or from persons having information about him. Kindly write to P. P. Trail, Hampton, Virginia.

ROUSE, GUY.—Last heard of in Fort Worth, Texas, where his Post Office Box number was 925. Please write to Florence, care of this magazine.

DAVIS, LAMONT.—Was in Palmer, Texas, when last heard from. Word from or about him will be appreciated by Florence, care of this magazine.

ELSWICK, PARK.—Please write me at this address: D. Mitchell, 307 West Fifteenth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

KENNEDY, GEORGE.—About fifty years old. Heavily built. Fair complexion. Last heard from about twenty years ago, when he was in Steubenville, Ohio. Mother died in 1928, and grandfather Kennedy in 1929. Please communicate with your son, George W. Kennedy, Jefferson Road, Monaca, Pennsylvania.

GOVE, GEORGE.—Born in Woodruff Avenue, Toledo, Ohio. Last seen in Toledo in 1893. Am anxious to locate him. Kindly forward any information to William S. Gove, 1917 Elm Street, Toledo, Ohio.

MILLS, CHARLES R. (PADDY).—Was in Roseland, California, in 1915. Please write to G. A. R., 4501 Washington Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois.

DAWSON, EARL H.—Member of the United States Air Service in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1927-29. Was last heard from in November, 1929, when he was sailing for San Francisco, California. Any information would be appreciated by his sister, Mrs. Paul G. Williams, 508 Rice Street, Springfield, Ohio.

HOLDER, NEILEY, DELBERT, and TRAVIS; and GARRETT, MRS. LONA.—My mother's brothers and sister. Last heard of in Georgia. My mother was, Abbie Holder Agerton. She died when I was four months old. I am nearly thirteen now. Any news of my uncles and my aunt will be thankfully received by Durward Agerton, 523 East De Leon Street, Pensacola, Florida.

TUCKER, ELIAS A.—Born in Smyrna, Tennessee, in 1876. He is colored, his hair is streaked with gray, and he has a large mole on right cheek. Missing since November, 1929. Last heard of in Lexington, Kentucky, where he took care of a two-year-old race horse. Information welcomed by Kentucky, care of this magazine.

HARDENBROOK, RALPH SHEEKS.—Twenty-seven years old; five feet eleven inches tall; weighs one hundred and sixty-four pounds. Last heard of in Newton Lower Falls, Massachusetts, in February, 1928. Will any one knowing his address please communicate with his wife, Mrs. Ruth Hardenbrook, 616 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

MORRIS, GEORGE B.—Has relatives in Ohio. He is twenty-three years old, five feet eight inches tall, and has light hair. Was in Boston, Massachusetts, in September, 1930. Any word at to his present whereabouts will be welcomed by Ruth Hathaway, 616 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

WARD, WARREN.—About twenty-seven years old. His mother's people are located in or near St. Joseph, Missouri. He may be in California at present. Kindly send any information regarding him to his father, Calvin J. Ward, R. F. D. 1, Lucerne Road, Springfield, Massachusetts.

PRICE, JOHN W.—Knitter by trade. Last heard from in El Paso, Texas, September 17, 1931, when he wrote that he would join his wife and children in Watseka, Illinois, that month. He is five feet six inches tall, has gray eyes, dark wavy hair, and dark complexion. Birthmark between shoulder blades. His wife is greatly in need of his help, and asks that any one having any knowledge of his whereabouts communicate with her, addressing Mrs. John W. Price, care of L. R. Sapp, Route 2, Box 3, Watseka, Illinois.

NOTICE.—I was born in St. Vincent's Hospital, Toledo, Ohio, November 21, 1900. Later I was taken to a place on Cherry Street in the same city, and was adopted. My mother came from Fort Wayne, Indiana, and her father was a minister. Will any one able to give me any information concerning my parents kindly write to Mrs. Myrtle Blankenhorn, 1426 Champlain Street, Toledo, Ohio.

SCOTT, ROY.—Last heard from in January, 1927, when his address was the Goodnaugh Building, Portland, Oregon. Please write to your pal, Ben R. Taylor, Company M, Thirty-third Infantry, Fort Clayton, Canal Zone.

LYNAS, THOMAS.—My father, whom I am anxious to locate. He is a native of Belfast, Ireland, a gardener by trade, and would now be about seventy-eight years old. He had a sister, Annie, and a brother, Jim. Was last heard from in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1906. Would greatly appreciate any information concerning him, his brother or sister. Please address Mrs. Florence E. Seffers, Box 331, St. James, Long Island, New York.

NOTICE.—Would like to hear from some of the girls I met at the dance in Elgin, Illinois, in June, 1929. Address Jim Curley, care of this magazine.

ROSE.—Of Lynn, Massachusetts. Please write to Montana Jack, care of this magazine.

HOWE, ANN.—Please let me know where you are. Jean, care of this magazine.

PAT.—Kindly write to Bob L., care of this magazine.

REDHEAD.—Would like to hear from the red-headed girl who waited on table in the Grill Cafe in Missoula, Montana, in September, 1929. Will she or any one knowing her, please write to Gambler's Breakfast, care of this magazine.

ETHEL and RUTH.—Won't you please write to Slim of Montana, care of this magazine?

VERNE.—My father, Thomas Verne, was born near Lexington, Kentucky. He has a sister, Anne, and a brother, Jim. There were also other brothers whose names I do not know. Will persons of the surname Verne, or any one able to give helpful information regarding such persons, kindly communicate with Hubert T. Verne, 232 South Windomere, Dallas, Texas.

CLIFTON, CARROLL.—About thirty-five years old. Formerly of Little Rock, Arkansas. When last heard of, he was married and lived in Los Angeles, California. His wife's name is not known, but they had a daughter named Dorothy Louise, who would be nine or ten years old. Any information will be gratefully received by Mr. Carroll's sister, Mrs. Ethel Edwards, General Delivery, Longview, Texas.

COOPER, HENRY.—Missing since 1911. Would now be thirty-six years old. He has gray eyes, brown hair, and medium complexion. Has a small round scar on one cheek, close to nose. His sister would be ever so thankful for any word from or about him. Kindly address Mrs. George Ciletti, 109 North Grant Avenue, Chanute, Kansas.

HERMAN, HENRY.—Any one knowing his whereabouts will be doing me a great favor by communicating with Florabel Murray, 817 West Green Street, Hastings, Michigan.

R. L. L. or J. A. M.—I was in Seattle at the appointed time, but must have missed you. I still love you. Won't you please communicate with me? No one need ever know where you are. Write to me at grandfather's place, 817 West Green Street, Hastings, Michigan, Florabel.

ALLAIN, LEO.—Will any one knowing his whereabouts kindly communicate with F. Bennett, 239 Fifth Street, Seal Beach, California.

ZAENGLE, JOSEPH.—A former saloon keeper at 321 Sunner Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. Last heard of in Brooklyn five years ago. Information greatly appreciated by his son, Joseph Zaengle, Jr., care of this magazine.

BAKER, OWEN E.—Of Pueblo, Colorado. Twenty-seven years old. Average height. Light-brown hair and eyes. Last heard of in California in August, 1930. We have news for him. His present address will be thankfully received by his sister, Alma Inez Jones, 1112 Topaz, Pueblo, Colorado.

BARNES, JOHN C.—A mason by trade. Was in Virginia in 1922. Any word as to his present whereabouts will be welcomed by Jimmie, care of this magazine.

FEARS.—Mrs. Mary Fears and her children, Monroe, Jack, Florence, and Minnie, were last heard from about twenty-five years ago, when they left Farmersville, Texas, for Oklahoma. Mrs. Fears is believed to be dead, but any word from persons who knew her or her children will be deeply appreciated by her sister, Mrs. Annie Yarbrough, Route 3, Rule, Texas.

HONI or SMITH, DANIEL COLUMBUS.—Missing for nine years. Last known address was 28 Long Beach Road, Long Island, New York. He is thirty-five years old, six feet two inches tall, has dark-brown hair, blue eyes, and scars on right cheek and throat. Was married and had two children when last heard from. During the World War he served in the Engineers Corps for four years. Information as to his present whereabouts will be welcomed by his mother, Mrs. L. J. Smith, 1759 Phoenix Avenue, Jacksonville, Florida.

WILLIAM, LEONARD.—A sailor on the U. S. S. "Lexington." Was in San Pedro, California, July 14, 1931. I still love you. Please let me know where you are. Address B. L. L., care of this magazine.

MURRAY, JAKE.—Please write at once to F. Laura Chiek, 5230 Phillips Street, Dallas, Texas.

DOOLEY, SAMUEL RAYMOND.—Left his home in Jasonville, Indiana, in the spring of 1923, and has not been heard from since. News awaits him if he will write to his brother, Erschell Dooley, 11641 Hemlock Avenue, Dearborn, Michigan.

DALESY, MATTIE.—Last heard from twenty or twenty-five years ago, when his address was Lawton, North Dakota. He left there to go to Canada. His present address, or any information about him will be thankfully received by his nephew, Fred Dalesy, Route 3, Hixton, Wisconsin.

THOMPSON, HENRY C.—About twenty-five years old. Medium build. Brown hair. Was formerly employed by the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, at Sawtelle, California. Last heard of in Kansas City, Missouri. He planned to go from there to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Word as to his whereabouts will be gratefully received by Wesley V. Hill, care of this magazine.

CORNING, ELIZABETH and AMANDA.—Last heard of in St. Joseph, Missouri. Any news of them will be deeply appreciated by their sister, Mrs. Belle Terrill, Perkins, Oklahoma.

THOMPSON, EVELYN.—Moved with her parents from St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1923 or 1924. Last heard of in San Diego, California. About twenty years old. Fair complexion. Please write to your old school chum, Mrs. Clayton Young, Douglass, Kansas.

DOUCETT, F. A.—A carpenter, who left San Francisco, California, September 15, 1926, for Los Angeles. He is thirty-nine years old, five feet six inches tall, weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, has light-brown hair, blue eyes, and ruddy complexion. His anxious mother would be very grateful for news of any kind regarding him. Kindly address Mrs. Agnes M. Doucett, 811 South Broadway, Yakima, Washington.

MARTIN, JOHN and CHARLES.—Last heard of in Popular Bluff, Missouri. Your sister Maud is still living and would like to hear from you. Please write to your nephew, Alonzo Tinsley, 9035 Exchange Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

GOODWIN, JOEL H.—The family is well, but worried about your leaving. Mother is grieving. I expect word from you very soon. Lila O'Neill, 2926 Columbia Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina.

MILLER, PEARL.—The half sister of my mother, Mrs. Eva Miller Colburn. Her father owned a jewelry store in Pittsburgh, California. She was last heard from eight or nine years ago. If she, or any one knowing her, should see this, please write to Mrs. L. V. Atkins, Smithflat, California.

NOTICE.—Will the lady in Charleston, South Carolina, who wrote to Mrs. Allen, proprietress of "Arlington House," in 1937, in regard to the death of my mother, kindly communicate with the undersigned? L. M. Hood, Box 736, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

BARNETT, CHARLES.—Born in Johnson County, Arkansas, thirty-five or forty years ago. Son of William and Rosa Barnett. Last heard of in Oklahoma in 1924. Any word regarding him will be greatly appreciated by his aunt, Mrs. Bertie Gardner, Route 2, Box 28, Braggs, Oklahoma.

FOSTER, LEO or L. H.—Was in Nevada six years ago. He is six feet two inches tall, weighs about one hundred and eighty pounds, has brown hair and eyes, and is twenty-five years old. His mother would be very glad to hear from him or any one knowing anything about him. Please address Mrs. Sarah Foster, Route 6, Box 50, Lakeview, Oregon.

GRAY, JOHN ALBERT.—My father, John Albert Gray, died in 1922. He was five feet eight inches tall, and weighed about one hundred and eighty-five pounds. As far as I know he was partly Delaware Indian. He had worked for various railroad companies, and had traveled widely. His lower teeth were all gold. He left four children, John, Charles, Frances, and Jesse. I should very much like to hear from persons who were acquainted with him. Kindly write to his daughter, Frances Gray, care of J. E. Prescott, Dill City, Oklahoma.

WARREN, CALEB.—Would be about fifty years old. Left England, Arkansas, many years ago. His son would be grateful for any assistance in locating him. Please write to E. A. Warren, care of this magazine.

ATTENTION.—Would like to hear from some of the boys who were stationed at Fort Assiniboine, Montana, in 1909 and 1910. Please address George F. Wilks, Route 2, Lewistown, Idaho.

TWITHELL, EARL F.—Discharged from the navy in 1930. Any one knowing him or his whereabouts will be doing his aunt a great favor by sending news to Kate Ebert, Box 120, Forrest, Illinois.

O'MALLEY, LARRIE.—Left Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in June, 1930, and was in Denver, Colorado, in October, 1931. May be in Los Angeles, California, at present. Any information appreciated by Madge Galloway, care of McNeil's Beauty Shop, 442½ Main Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

SMITH, CHARLES AMOS.—Last heard from in Chico, California, about sixteen years ago. He is six feet tall. Has a dent about one and one half inch long above left eye. Would be seventy-six years old. Any word regarding him will be appreciated by his sister, who is in poor health. Kindly address Mrs. Louisa Griffith, care of Lee Griffith, Route 1, Deep Creek, Washington.

JACKS or JACKSON, EMILE.—Seen in New York City about thirty years ago. Any information, past or present, would be welcomed by Mrs. Emily Larro, 49 William Street, Malone, New York.

OWENS, GERALD R.—Was with me in the Tripler General Hospital in Hawaii, in 1923. Please write to C. A. Tilley, 315½ Taylor Street, Amarillo, Texas.

SCHOENBECK, FRANK.—Missing since July 4, 1931. He is sixteen years old, and of fair complexion. Any one knowing his whereabouts, please write to his brother, Larry Schoenbeck, 5600 Forty-first Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

KIRK, CLYDE A.—Five feet eight inches tall. Black curly hair. Brown eyes. Dark complexion. Stoops forward when walking. Last seen in Chicago, Illinois, July 13, 1931. Every ten days I mail you a letter to General Delivery, Chicago. Please claim it, or write to Verna, care of this magazine.

FRIEND, I. J.—I received your letter from Albuquerque, New Mexico, a whole month after it was written. I answered right away, but you were gone. Wrote twice to Phoenix, but letters came back. I can explain all, if you will only give me a chance. Please write to O., at Route 3, Box 92, Watsonville, California.

SHEPPERD, ARLIE.—About thirty-five years old. Blond hair and blue eyes. Do you remember Lorene at Camp Stanley? Would like to hear from you. Address Lorene, 2416 Wyoming Street, San Antonio, Texas.

HUNT, JOHN.—Lived in Bath Beach, 1911-12. Last heard of in St. Paul, Minnesota. Kindly forward any information concerning him to E. N., care of this magazine.

BULLOCK, ROBERT L.—Believed to be in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Important news awaits him. Will any one knowing his address please get in touch with Bigshot, care of this magazine.

MORRISON, B. F.—World War veteran, and has scar on one hand. Thirty-five years old. Black wavy hair and blue eyes. Weighs about one hundred and forty-five pounds. Good dancer. Last heard of from Detroit, Michigan, two years ago. His present address will be gratefully received by Miss Evelyn Shanklin, 720 West Chestnut Street, Louisville, Kentucky.

HARDY, T. J.—I have been very ill. Please write at once to mother, 1433 Filbert Street, Oakland, California.

VAN HORN, CHARLES.—Last heard from in San Pedro, California, in 1926. About five feet nine inches tall, of light complexion, and is forty years old. Has brown hair and hazel eyes. Thumb and two fingers missing from left hand. Black scar on forehead. Any information about him will be appreciated by his sister, Mrs. William Hodges, 222 South Broadway, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Million Dollar Can Opening Machine

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Here's Something Brand New! An Amazingly Simple Invention—Yet, Absolutely Revolutionary! For Now, At One Sweep, Millions of Old Style Can Openers Are Doomed to the Scrap Heap! Think Of It, Men! A Tremendous New Opportunity For Quick Profits in Every Home in America! No Wonder Agents Have Made Astonishing, Almost Incredible Sums—Up to \$100 in a Week. So Mail The Coupon For All The Facts And Full Details Of My Remarkable FREE TEST OFFER!

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More Than a Can Opener

This queer new device doesn't just cut a ragged hole around the edge of the can. It lifts the entire top completely out, clean as a whistle! The machine holds the can—opens it—flips up the lid so you can grab it—and gives you back the can without a drop spilled, without any jagged edges! To back your fingers—all in a couple of seconds! You just put the can in the machine—turn the handle—and almost instantly the job is done! Built to do the job better than anything ever devised! Will last a lifetime! It's far more than just a can opener, it's a real can-opening machine!

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Women hate the old style can opener—and with good reason, too. It's the last relic of barbarism in the modern kitchen. Yet every day millions of women have to open cans the dangerous, laborious old-fashioned way. Food is spilled and wasted. Fingers are cut and torn—often followed by infections and blood poisoning that result in expensive doctor bills. Opening cans the old way is a job nasty enough to make most any man swear—this amazing new way—it's so easy a ten year old child can do it with perfect safety! No wonder women—and men, too—simply go wild over it!



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—June 20, 84 Speedos;
—June 30, 192 Speedos;
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Speedo brought me \$265 in a week!"

M. Orloff, Va.

SPARE TIME

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Good Books

Hearts of the Big Top

By ELLEN HOGUE

HE could ride, this Tom Jenison, this rather pallid, hollow-eyed nonentity in circus business, canvas slapper, man of mystery. That lean, long body was fluid as the liquid lightning it bestrode, reared and leaped with the lightning, thought with the brain of it and always one split second ahead of the murderous brute mind.

The story of how Jenison rode the wicked stallion Killer Boy, while the girl he loved looked on with agony in her beautiful eyes, is the smashing climax of a novel of circus life which keeps you as much on edge as that great riding kept its spectators breathless.

Under the Big Top of the circus, a fantastic world—"world of the ballyhoo, the shillabier; of hot dogs and popcorn and water-thin lemonade; of horseflesh and grease paint, of glitter and pomp; elephants that served a king in India; a mangy lion born in the Bronx zoo; stray dogs, stray boys, wives, sweethearts, bad men, good men, weak men, brave men, beggar men, thieves."

Such is the world which Milly, the daughter of the circus and the heroine of this colorful novel, adorned and reigned over. Ellen Hogue knows it so intimately and loves it so well that she makes it come to vibrant life before your eyes. Read "Hearts of the Big Top" if you want thrills in your fiction, thrills mingled with a most touching love story.

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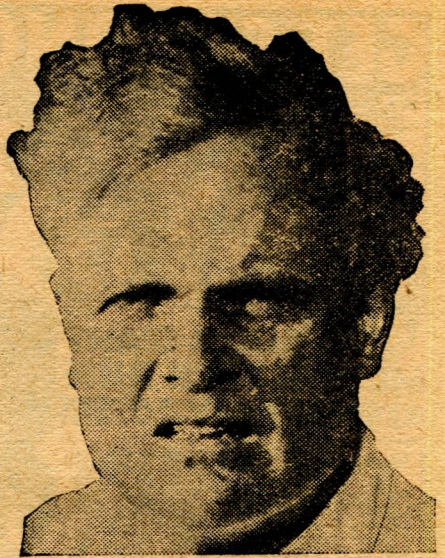
79-89 SEVENTH AVE.
NEW YORK CITY

Kidney

Inactivity

Makes Many

Feel Old



**If Poorly Functioning Kidneys Make You Feel Old,
Run-down, Nervous, or Disturb Sleep, Make
Guaranteed Cystex Test**

While we must all grow old in time, thousands of men and women feel older than they are, all run-down and lacking in energy because of poorly functioning Kidneys and functional bladder irritation. Other pains such as Backache, Leg Pains, Smarting, Burning, and troubles such as Getting Up Nights, Extreme Acidity, Nervousness, Lumbago, Stiffness, Frequent Colds, Headaches, Dizziness, Circles Under the Eyes and Poor Complexion may often be due to sluggish functioning of the Kidneys.

Younger people sometimes are affected, but there is no doubt that as we get older our kidneys more frequently slow down in their function of filtering acid and poison-making wastes from the body. This waste material, if retained, tends to decompose and ferment, creating more and more acid and painful irritation of the bladder and passages.

Weather Affects Kidneys

If your kidneys have a tendency to be sluggish in function, you may have noticed that you are troubled more in the fall, winter and spring. This is because the weather is more changeable and severe and because of different foods and being more shut in. Another aggravating factor is the common cold, which tends to increase acidity. If your Kidneys function poorly you should be particularly on guard during and after colds.

Right Way to Aid Kidneys

When your vitality and energy are sapped, your sleep frequently disturbed, or you suffer from other depressing conditions, caused by functional Kidney inactivity, accompanied by extreme acidity, you should have two medicines in order

to get really satisfactory results. First: you need a medicine to act as a stimulant diuretic to the Kidneys, helping them in their function of filtering and purifying the blood, thus reducing acidity. Second: a medicine that soothes and allays sore, irritated membranes. Then nature really has a chance to restore normal function.

Every Druggist Has Guaranteed Medicine

Fortunately for sufferers nearly every drug store now has a medicine so successful in such functional Kidney conditions that it is guaranteed to be completely satisfactory or cost nothing. This combination treatment called Cystex (pronounced Sis-tex) is two different kinds of tasteless tablets in one package. It has a record of years of almost world-wide success and possesses the necessary double action to get really satisfactory results.

Cystex Praised by Druggists

Druggists are high in their praise of Cystex, because it is proving a blessing to so many of their customers. For instance, E. H. Tum, widely known druggist of Bucyrus, Ohio, recently said: "I consider the Cystex formula very good. One of my customers, who is 75 years old, told me that for 15 years he was bothered with Getting Up Nights but after taking Cystex he is in wonderful condition and sleeps well."

Druggists everywhere express opinions similar to that of Mr. A. R. Otis, Kendalville, Ind., 40 years a druggist, who says: "I have been selling Cystex for a number of years with very gratifying results. A great many customers tell us of the extreme benefit they receive. Being familiar with the ingredients of Cystex, I would say there is no question but what it will do 9 people out of 10 good."

Thousands of druggists have had the same experience as J. C. Shutz, a successful druggist in Madison, S. Dak., who says: "I have handled Cystex for three years and have guaranteed satisfaction or money returned with every sale. In all this time no one has yet asked for any money returned, which proves that Cystex works satisfactorily."

Ask your druggist—the man who knows medicines. He can tell you that Cystex does not contain any dopes or habit-forming drugs, but only the purest of highly beneficial ingredients.

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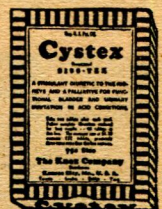
Another fine thing about Cystex that should please you is that it works so fast it starts circulating through the system in from 11 to 15 minutes. Because of this fast action sufferers report that there is no long waiting for results, and that great benefit often begins within 24 to 48 hours or so.

Guaranteed 8 Day Test

You don't have to risk a penny to see for yourself the great good that Cystex can do. Just ask your druggist for a package. Put it to the test for 8 days. See for yourself how fast and positively it works. If it makes you feel younger, stronger, sleep well and really able to enjoy life by combating these functional Bladder and Kidney conditions, the small cost will be a wonderful investment, but if not completely satisfied for any reason, merely return the empty package and get your 75c back under the written, legal guarantee. There is no reason to hesitate or waste time. The guarantee protects you. Ask your druggist for Cystex (say Sis-tex) today. If you can't go to your drug store, telephone and ask him to deliver Cystex—you are bound to be glad if it or it won't cost you a penny.

Guaranteed Trial Coupon

This coupon is your Guarantee on a full-sized, Eight-Day Treatment of Cystex. It is specifically understood and agreed that you are to be the sole judge and must be completely satisfied, or you merely return empty package and get your money back. The manufacturer protects the druggist. Clip this coupon now as a reminder to get Cystex today.



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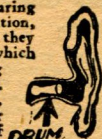
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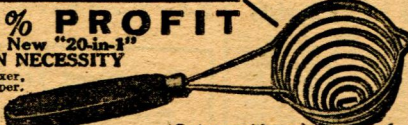
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Vitality

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Tells how to make chemical toys, electrical toys, mechanical toys, and other toys. It is a very useful and valuable article. It is used in the manufacture of watches, clocks, and other articles. It is also used in the manufacture of signs, and for other purposes. It is a very useful and valuable article.



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In simple language, tells how to make electrical toys, dynamo, motor, radio, and other electrical toys. It is a very useful and valuable article. It is used in the manufacture of watches, clocks, and other articles. It is also used in the manufacture of signs, and for other purposes. It is a very useful and valuable article.

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MAGIC TRICKS

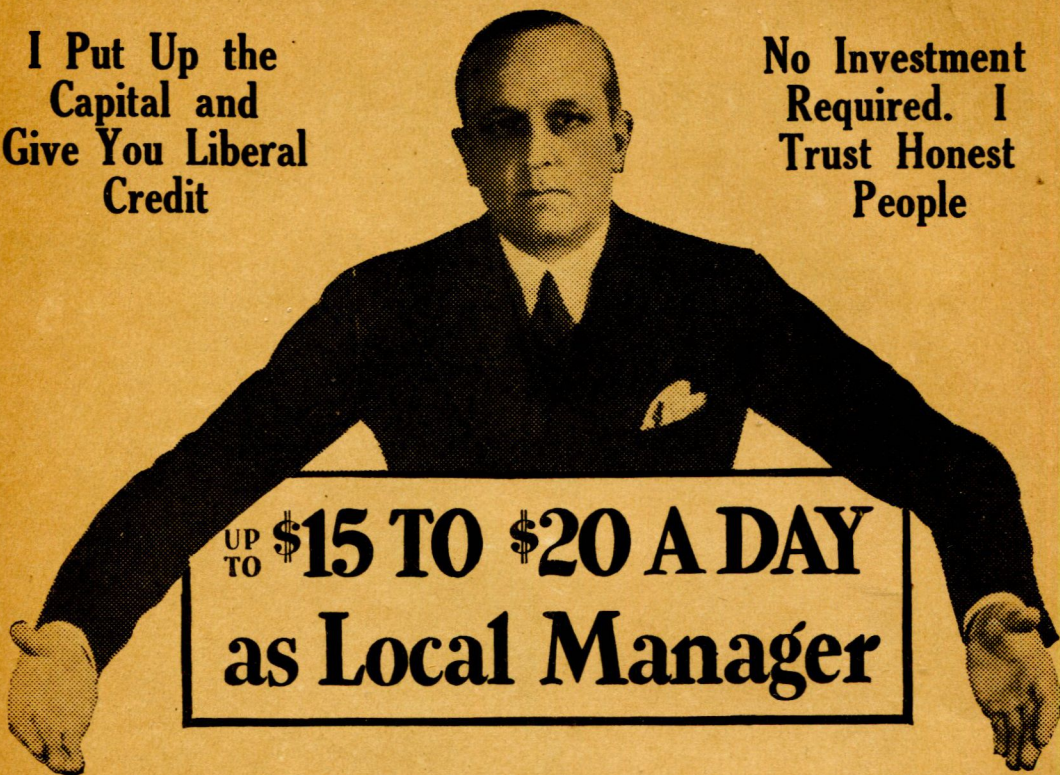
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