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FRANK JOHNSON PTY. LTD.
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FAMOUS DETECTIVE STORIES

NEW SERIES No. 7

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RACHEL WAS UNNECESSARY

By C. K. THOMPSON

During the blitz in London it should have been an easy matter to dispose of a body. Mr. Dobkin, however, had been a bungler all his life and in this case it called for the extreme penalty.

THROUGHOUT the centuries numerous optimistic evildoers have planned the perfect crime but as police records show, very few have got away with it. Students of crime have given up remarking that the crook always makes one mistake—it is so patently stressing the obvious.

It was back in 1941, when London was taking it from the Luftwaffe, that Harry Dobkin, casting round for ways and means of ridding himself of a nuisance of a wife, hit on a scheme that, with the involuntary aid of Hitler's winged hordes, he had high hopes of bringing to a successful conclusion. And he nearly, but not quite, made it.

In his early days, Dobkin, who was a Russian Jew not greatly endowed with brains, was a steward on small coastal boats trading around the British Isles, and doing all right for himself. In 1920 he decided to get married, but not knowing any suitable girls he applied to a marriage broker who ran a thriving business among London's Jewish population. The broker had on his books a Jewish woman named Rachel Dubinski, and he assured Dobkin that she would suit him fine. She was amiable, had a few pounds of her own, was not bad-looking, and wanted a husband.

Glancing over these specifications, Dobkin considered that Rachel was just what the doctor ordered, so he instructed the broker to unleash her. A meeting was arranged and Dobkin was satisfied. So was Rachel, though there were certain ill-disposed creatures who told her that she would be marrying beneath her to

take on ship's steward Dobkin. Rachel told them to mind their own interference or words to that effect, and the Rabbi got busy with the prayer book, tying Rachel and Harry tightly and expeditiously.

It was not very long before Harry discovered that the knot was too darned tight. Rachel was all right during their brief courting days, but a brief experience of her as a spouse soon convinced him that the marriage broker was a liar and guilty of false pretences. The erstwhile Miss Dubinski was a bad-tempered harridan who gave Mr. Dobkin the rounds of the kitchen so much that after a bare six weeks of marital bliss, he dumped her. Mrs. Dobkin went home to mother and Dobkin pursued his rounds of the British coast on ships, alternating between being a steward and a cook. The Jewish community, being very clanny and stick-togetherish, deplored this parting of the ways and endeavoured to bring the pair together again. They succeeded partially—meetings were arranged between Rachel and Harry, but they did not live together again. Rachel would have pulled it on, but not Harry. He'd had married life.

Now although the marriage had lasted only six weeks, it had proved that Dobkin was a man—Rachel had a son by him. The lad does not come into this story, so after that introduction we can dismiss him.

The years rolled on and on. Dobkin continued his shipping duties and Rachel and he used to meet occasionally on street corners and in cheap restaurants for a cup of coffee and an acrimonious discussion. The subject mostly was about money. As soon as Harry dumped her six week after marriage, she had sued him in court and had obtained a maintenance order against him for £1 a week. Dobkin paid a few quid and then passed it up, piling up a beautiful sum in arrears. Crook times befell him in the shipping world and the court obligingly reduced the maintenance order to 10/- a week. The magistrate could have reduced it to 1/- a week without worrying Harry. He didn't pay in any case—or extremely rarely.

When the war broke out in 1939, Dobkin was living with his

parents and married sister in the far from salubrious London suburb of Kennington while Rachel was roosting in a flat at Bethnal Green—another unprepossessing suburb. Dobkin's main source of income now was derived from hawking—bootlaces, boxes of matches, aprons and so on, and acting as a kind of middle-man in the tailoring trade. His modus operandi was to buy odd articles such as trouser pockets from a backroom workshop and sell them at a small profit. It was tough going.

The war proved a bit of a godsend to Dobkin, however. He managed to land a job as a fire-watcher and nightwatchman from a firm of London solicitors who had a small building at 302 Kennington Lane, Kennington, in which they stored documents and legal records. Dobkin's job was to keep an eye on this store and if it got blown up in the blitz or set on fire, to take appropriate steps. For this job he received £4 a week and he thought that he was in heaven.

It was a dreary-enough neighbourhood. The store itself was intact when Dobkin took over, but its two adjacent buildings, a Baptist church and a school, had already been blitzed and were mere shells.

Dobkin, armed with his metal scoop and bucket of sand, took over a comfortable armchair in the store on April 3, 1941, and waited for the Luftwaffe to give him some work to do.

On Good Friday (April 11) a policeman on duty near the Baptist Church noticed smoke coming from the ruined chapel and decided to investigate. He ran into Dobkin.

"What goes on around here?" he asked. "There ain't been an air raid."

"I don't know," exclaimed Dobkin. "I didn't do it."

"Who said you did," snorted the policeman. "Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm a fire-watcher over there at that building," replied Henry. "It's a terrible blaze, isn't it? I saw flames coming out of the vestry and chucked a bucket of water over it. Then I called the brigade."

"Good work," said the bobby approvingly.

The over-worked fire brigade put out the flames without much

damage having been done. The Baptist parson came along and gave the place the once-over. He penetrated into the cellar beneath the vestry and was intrigued to see a straw mattress which had been ripped up. Strange thing to be there, he pondered, but no doubt somebody had used it as a safe sleeping place away from the blitz. Later on the clergyman returned to the cellar and had another gander. This time he saw a heap of earth on the floor with a garden fork stuck in it. Possibly somebody had used it to clear away the rubbish, he thought. Next morning he found Dobkin poking around the place and Harry told him a highly egotistical story of how he had seen the fire and tried to put it out; and when he had found it beyond him, had called the fire brigade. The parson congratulated Harry on his vigilance.

One thing the parson did note was this—the garden fork had done the vanishing trick.

On Easter Saturday—the day after the Baptist Church fire—the Kennington police received a visit from Miss Polly Dubinski, who informed them that her sister, Mrs. Rachel Dobkin, had disappeared. It was not a novel complaint. In war-torn London people were disappearing daily, some never to return, except in small pieces. But there had not been an air raid for a day or two, so the police listened to Miss Dubinski's tale of woe with more than usual attention.

It appeared that Mrs. Dobkin and her sister were on the most affectionate terms. They lived near each other and Mrs. Dobkin was an almost daily visitor to the Dubinski menage, where Polly lived with her mother. It had been arranged that Rachel should have lunch with them on Good Friday and stay the night. The lunch came off and then Polly had to return to work. She did not get back home until 5.30 p.m. and when she did her mother told her that Rachel had gone out but would certainly be back. She waited in for her sister, but she did not return. Polly, rather concerned, went round to Rachel's flat early next morning and found that the place was empty and the bed had not been slept in. That was enough for Polly. She saw the police.

Polly told the listening cops that Rachel was suffering from an internal complaint which, she thought, had been caused by her

husband giving her a belting. Rachel's life had been wrecked by her husband and it was possible that she had lost her memory or had committed suicide.

Now the police happened to know a bit about Dobkin, who they regarded as a rather inoffensive customer. Certainly he had been summonsed by his wife on a number of occasions for assault, but in every instance the magistrate had tossed the case out because of the weak evidence. In fact it had ben hinted more than once that if any punches had been thrown among the Dobkins, the recipient most likely would have been Harry, not Rachel.

The police told Polly not to worry about it. They would look up friend Dobkin and see if he knew anything. They would also make the usual inquiries in regard to missing persons.

They did so but their inquiries did not produce the missing Rachel; so on April 15 they dropped in to quiz Harry. No, he didn't know where Rachel was. He hadn't seen her for a few days.

"She lives in Bethnal Green in a flat," he said. "She gets it rent free, too, because the occupier is a friend of hers."

The police were not interested in any possible intrigues. They wanted to know when Harry last saw his wife and if she was in good order and condition at the time.

"It was on Good Friday," said Harry. "I was walking along Navarino Road, going to sell some aprons, and I saw my wife at the corner of Navarino Road and Graham Road."

"What time would this be?" asked the detective.

"It would be between 2 o'clock and 3 o'clock."

"Did you expect to see her there?"

"Well, no, but it was obvious that she was waiting for me."

"What did you do?"

"I told her not to hang around there and cause trouble as my mother was very ill. She then asked me where she could see me and I asked her to meet me in a couple of hours' time outside the Metropolitan Hospital in Kingsland Road. She said, 'All right. I'll bring the boy along. He is home for the Passover.' "

"What boy did she refer to?"

"Our son. He was born about nine months after our marriage."

"Where does he live?"

"Well, as far as I know, he has always lived with his mother."

"Did she turn up for the appointment?"

"Yes, and she did not have the boy with her."

"Well, what did you do in between leaving your wife on the corner and meeting her outside the hospital?"

"After I left my wife," said Dobkin, "I went to Chapel Street Markets and tried to sell some aprons. I also took nine single pockets from 95 Liverpool Street, Islington, and a dozen linings. The woman at that address is an outdoor worker and I gave her 1/6 for her work. I met my wife outside the Metropolitan Hospital and she told me that her brother Nathan was getting engaged to be married on April 13, which is the Sunday of the Passover. She said I could go to the invitation party if I made my peace with her. She also asked me to go back and live with her but I refused to do so."

"What did she say to that?"

"She told me that if I did not make peace with her, that she would make trouble for me."

"Where did this conversation take place? In the street?"

"No, we were sitting in a tea shop opposite the hospital. She spoke in low tones but was a bit hysterical. After she made her threat about making trouble for me, I told her to calm down and that I would consider peace if she would calm down and go home. She drank her cup of tea and we left the shop. On the way out she said she did not feel well and was going to her mother's house to listen to the wireless."

Dobkin added that as they walked up Kingsland Road, Mrs. Dobkin again complained of not feeling well and told him that if he wanted to, he could go to her flat any time he liked.

"As she was still upset, I promised to consider returning to her," he went on. "Then she got on a 22 bus going to Shoreditch and that was the last time I saw her. We parted on quite good terms."

"Were you serious about going back to her?"

"No, I was not," said Dobkin frankly. "I had no intention of making peace with her or going to her brother's engagement party. I have had too much trouble with my wife before. I only met her to try to stop her coming round to Navarino Road upsetting my parents. I know nothing about my wife's disappearance. I think she must have gone out of her mind. If I get any information about her I will notify you at once."

The police had no reason to suspect Dobkin and let him go. They checked up on his work and learned of the Baptist Church fire. It looked a bit suspicious, so they examined the cellar under the chapel. Beneath the floor they made an interesting discovery —a trench six feet long and two feet wide. But it was empty and there was nothing else in the place to suggest that a murder had been committed.

It must be admitted that the police were a bit unenthusiastic over the case. There was no evidence to suggest that Mrs. Dobkin had been violently done away with and in any case, Britain was at war and the police had a thousand other duties to perform without having to solve a seemingly mythical murder.

But before they finally pigeon-holed the case, they decided to tie up the loose ends by getting Dobkin to detail his movements from the time his wife boarded the bus to Shoreditch.

Dobkin was quite open about it. He said that after his wife left him he boarded a bus and went to the home of Mr. Shine in Artillery Lane where he sold a pocket with a zip fastener for 1/6 to Mrs. Shine. He had made this himself. About 6.30 p.m. he boarded a No. 665 bus in Commercial Street and went to Chrisp Street Market in Poplar to buy a coat and pair of trousers for his father. The market was closed, so he caught a bus to Aldgate and from there went by train to Victoria Station, where he boarded a tram to 302 Kennington Lane—the scene of his fire-spotting duties. He got there about 8.10 p.m. and stayed there all night. Next morning he went back to Chrisp Sreet Markets and duly bought his old man the coat and pants.

This second interview with the police took place on April 18

and dealt with Dobkin's movements on April 11. On April 12 a person picked up a handbag in the post office at Guildford in Surrey, not so far from London, and handed it to the police. It was identified from its contents as belonging to Mrs. Dobkin. Dobkin, without any visits from, or promptings by the police, wrote them a letter detailing his movements on April 12 and asserting that he had never left London on that date. The police had never asked him to tell them where he had been on April 12 but Dobkin got in first, without knowing that the bag had been found. It was an incident that helped a great deal in putting the rope round his neck.

Another attempt by Dobkin to close up all gaps told heavily against him when the case for the prosecution was being prepared later. Right through his married life he had been the world's worst payer of maintenance to his wife, but since she disappeared, he never missed a week, trotting along to the courthouse and kicking in his ten bob as regular as a clock. His aim was to show that he thought his wife was alive and would collect.

Nothing new was unearthed by the police so they tossed the matter aside. Mrs. Dobkin, like a lot of other people, had vanished. Maybe she would turn up again; maybe not. In the meantime, there was a war to be fought.

And so time passed. Dobkin's job as a fire-watcher finished in May, 1942, when the firm of solicitors made other arrangements for the storage of their records. Henry did in £4 a week and had to exist on what he could make from hawking. As against that, there was no Rachel always getting on his back and snootering him around the place.

During the war in London gangs of workers were continually employed in clearing away wreckage, filling in bomb craters and generally tidying up the place after Hitler's minions had been at work and in due course one of these gangs reached Kennington Lane, the scene of Dobkin's labors.

When they reached the battered Baptist Church they set to work on the cellar and soon had it in shape again. But they were intrigued to find a large paving stone in one corner. What the

heck was that doing there? The floor of the cellar was boarded. The gang decided to throw the stone out. The floor boarding had gone in this particular spot and the stone was resting on the earth. It was heavy going but they raised the thing and then nearly had a blue fit. Underneath the stone they found a partly-burned body, somewhat preserved in slaked lime. The gang was used to finding corpses in ruins, but this one did not bear the earmarks of an air raid victim.

The workmen dragged the bits of corpse and bones out on to the floor and let the police know. The police carted the remains away to the morgue and turned them over to a pathologist. He, in turn, turned in a report which the police found most interesting.

The body was that of a woman aged between forty and fifty, about five feet and half an inch in height, dark brown hair going grey, the top jaw somewhat malformed. The bottom jaw was missing. The head and arms had been clumsily removed and the deceased had suffered from a fibroid tumor. Death had occurred about twelve or eighteen months previously and the body had been partly burned. It had been packed in slaked lime which, unlike quick-lime which ate away flesh, had acted as a preservative.

Checking up on Mrs. Dobkin, the police learned that she was 48 years old, was about five feet in height and had hair similar to that found on the body. A dentist who had attended her proved from his written records that the malformed top jaw of the corpse undoubtedly belonged to Mrs. Dobkin.

A police officer called upon Dobkin and before he could get a word out, Dobkin said, "What, have you found my wife?"

"There is every reason to believe that her body has been discovered in the chapel next to the building where you were once watchman," replied the officer formally. "I must ask you to accompany me to the police station . . ."

Dobkin did so and while there wrote a statement which, to say the least of it, was a trifle incoherent and rambling. It ran, "Dear sir,—In respect to what you say that my wife has been found dead or murdered and that you say I know something that I'm holding back from the police, I am sorry to say that I cannot say

anything different to the statements at Commercial Road Police Station. These statements are not false. My statements are the same to anyone who is concerned. Also I do reckon I may have been stopped with a bundle of aprons at Kennington Lane by Sergeant Fry of Kennington Lane Police. That I reported to Mr. Bulcraig and Davis, including Mr. Farmer of Post No. 7 Dorris Street, that 302 Kennington Lane is in disorder."

The police took him along to Kennington Lane and questioned him about paving stones and mattresses. They reminded him that a mattress had been seen in the church cellar by the Baptist parson on the day of the fire and Dobkin admitted having seen two mattresses around 302 Kennington Lane. He denied, however, having ever seen any lime there. The police showed him two paving stones in the yard, similar to the one found over his wife's body and asked him to comment. Dobkin's comment was that he would never strangle a woman or hit one. Some men might, he said, but not him. The police noted silently that nobody had mentioned strangling to friend Dobkin.

Dobkin was arrested and charged with having murdered his wife. He was committed for trial and duly faced judge and jury at the Old Bailey. The Crown Prosecutor was the brilliant Mr. L. A. Byrne, K.C. Dobkin's friends and relatives offered to finance leading counsel for his defence, but Dobkin, tough as he might be in some respects, declined to permit them to make the sacrifice. The Home Office, therefore, provided him with free legal assistance, alloting a young barrister, Mr. F. H. Lawton, the brief.

Evidence for the defence rested almost entirely upon whether the body found in the Baptist chapel was, in fact, that of Mrs. Dobkin and in this connection, the famous case of Dr. Buck Ruxton was referred to freely and a book written by Professor John Glaister of Glasgow University and Professor Brash, noted Edinburgh anatomist, was often quoted from.

(Dr. Buck Ruxton murdered his wife and maid servant, cut up their bodies and threw them, in parcels, into a river in Scotland in 1935. The bones of the two bodies were pieced together by Professor Brash and he and Professor Glaister proved anatomically

that they belonged to Mrs. Ruxton and the maid Mary Rogerson. The experts achieved their greatest triumph when they photographed the two skulls and by superimposing a studio portrait of Mrs. Ruxton over each, identified one skull as that of Mrs. Ruxton. The full story of Dr. Ruxton's crime was published in "Famous Detective Stories" New Series No. 4 as "The Doctor Who Talked Too Much.")

Main witness for the prosecution was the experienced London pathologist, Dr. Cedric Simpson, who had examined the remains found in the Baptist chapel. Measurements, he said, showed that the body was that of a woman five feet and half an inch in height. The state of the skull and examination of the bones by x-ray, taking into consideration changes which would occur in bone formation over the years, placed the age of the deceased at between forty and fifty. The neck and the spine had been curved forward and as this had not been caused by any disease, it was apparent that the body had been doubled up or bent to make it fit into a confined space. There was an injury on the back of the head and this could have been caused in several ways—in a fall, by being struck or by being knocked against a wall or a floor. A fracture of the voice box could have been caused by strangulation—in fact, the doctor said, such an injury was invariably present in strangling cases.

Dr. Simpson added that the head and arms had been cut off by somebody ignorant of surgery.

"Instead of the head being cut off by somebody, could it not have been severed by, say, a workman's spade?" asked defence counsel.

"I cannot exclude that possibility, but I found nothing to suggest that that was so," replied the doctor.

"Now, regarding this curved neck and spine to which you have referred. Is there not a possibility that the condition was a congenital one existing in life?"

"No. It was possible to straighten the neck, whereas had it been a congenital condition, the neck would have shown bone abnormalities," said Dr. Simpson.

"Take rheumatoid arthritis," said Mr. Lawton. "This condition admittedly causes some flattening and thickening of bone tissue and therefore would result in curvature of the upper spine and neck. If you got somebody who is slightly neurotic, shall we say, and makes a lot of a slight condition of rheumatoid arthritis, would they not tend, more than a normal person, to carry their shoulders and neck in a bent position?"

"The curvature would be in the opposite direction to this," replied the doctor. "That is to say, the head would be bent back in order to keep the face up. In this case the curvature was forward."

"A person with that degree of curvature in life would be conspicuous?"

"Yes."

"Have a look at this photo of Mrs. Dobkin," said counsel, showing the doctor a print. "Anyone with a curved spine of the type you have described would certainly not be looking like Mrs. Dobkin?"

"That is so," agreed the doctor, "and that is why I have described it as occurring after death."

Counsel then asked, "Do you think that perhaps you may have come to the conclusion on the ground that it could not possibly be Mrs. Dobkin if she had got a curved neck like that in life?"

"No," said Dr. Simpson. "I examined the neck to establish whether or not it was present in life."

"If it was, it would amount to this: if it were present in life it could not have been Mrs. Dobkin?"

"But it was not present in life," exclaimed Dr. Simpson.

"That," said Mr. Lawton, "is not the question I asked you. If it was present in life it could not be Mrs. Dobkin?"

"But I am not prepared to consider the question whether it was present in life, because I found evidence to show that it was not," said the doctor.

"Could not the head have been stripped of flesh by rats?"

"I cannot exclude that possibility, of course."

Dr. Simpson told how, with the aid of a photograph of Mrs. Dobkin, which had been enlarged from a holiday snapshot, he had proved that the skull belonged to Mrs. Dobkin. The enlarged photo had been fitted over a photograph of the skull and had tallied exactly. He had used the method of Professor Glaister and Brash in the Ruxton case.

"In their medico-legal book on that case, the two scientists have stated that there was never any intention of attempting to prove identity," said counsel. "Two bodies were found in the Ruxton case and the photographic method was used only to make certain that the right skull was placed on each reconstructed skeleton. Yet you say that the photograph of Mrs. Dobkin, which was an enlargement of a holiday snapshot, and the photograph of the skull together helped you to make a decision as to identity?"

"Yes," said Dr. Simpson.

"And a positive decision?"

"Yes."

"Now, may I turn again to a passage of Professor Glaister's book and see what you have to say about that. It reads: 'Owing to the novelty of the method and the uncertainty of some parts of the technique, a positive identification of the skulls, no matter how close a correspondence of skulls and portraits were obtained, would have been open to very grave objection.' Do you agree with that, Dr. Simpson?"

"I think it has an element of truth. It is open to objection. It is being used in order to give assistance in identification, not to prove identification."

"It is just part of the circumstantial evidence?"

"It is not circumstantial."

"You say it is direct?" asked counsel.

"It is scientific evidence," answered Dr. Simpson.

Evidence of arrest and Dobkin's statements to the police was given and Mrs. Dobkin's sister Polly Dubinski related the story of her sister missing from the Good Friday celebrations.

Asked by defence counsel what the height of Mrs. Dobkin was, Miss Dubinski replied, "About five feet one inch."

"I suppose you had to use the word 'about' because you were not quite sure?" asked Mr. Lawton.

Miss Dubinski replied that she was not quite positive, but Rachel was about her own height.

"And your sister's hair had been very dark?"

"Yes."

"But not jet black?"

"No."

The dentist who had done work for Mrs. Dobkin was called and readily identified the condition of the jaws found in the cellar as corresponding to the dental work he had carried out.

Another link in the chain was supplied by the woman who ran the cafe opposite the hospital in which Dobkin had met his wife on the last occasion they had been seen together. This woman identified Dobkin, and his wife by description.

When Dobkin entered the witness box he did not make an impressive figure. His squat figure with its large bald head, black eyes, broad nose and big ears made him no entrant for a beauty competition. He told the court that the statements he had made to the police were true and that he did not know where his wife was. Also that he certainly had not murdered her.

But under the smashing attack of the Crown Prosecutor, he retracted part of his evidence. He said that his statement in which he alleged that he was walking along Navarino Road to sell aprons was inaccurate. He was not selling aprons.

"I do not accept those statements," he informed Mr. Byrne.

"Is the jury to accept these statements as containing the truth, or not?" demanded Mr. Byrne.

"These statements are a mistake," said Dobkin. "The police told me under threats that if I don't admit that I'd killed my wife, or I'd taken my wife, or what I've done, they will hang me."

"And you ask the jury to believe that, do you?" asked the Crown Prosecutor.

"I certainly do," said Dobkin.

Dobkin also admitted under pressing cross-examination that although he was paid as a fire-watcher, he had omitted to advise the nearest warden's post of the fire in the Baptist Church until after the fire brigade was actually on the scene.

Mr. Lawton asked that Miss Dubinski be recalled to the witness box and when this was done, he showed her an advertisement about Mrs. Dobkin which she had inserted in the "Missing Persons" column of a newspaper. This said, among other things, . . ."height, about 5ft. 3ins."

"Where did that come from?" he asked and Miss Dubinski said she didn't know.

In reply to a question by the Crown Prosecutor, she said that she was a very bad judge of height and must have given the newspaper description in error.

Defence counsel made much of the fact that in bygone years the site of the Baptist chapel had been used as a cemetery and it was possible that all of the bones found had not belonged to the one body. He also tried to cast doubt on the efficiency of the photo test as a means of identification, stressing the point that distortion was liable to take place in the photographic process. The photo of the skull had been taken by the head of the photographic department of a famous London hospital, whereas the snapshot of Mrs. Dobkin had been taken casually on the beach.

The Crown endeavored to rule out the possibility that the body found in the chapel was that of a stranger. Figures showed that nobody had been listed as missing for 18 months prior to the discovery of the remains.

The defence maintained that there was no positive evidence to show that the body was Mrs. Dobkin's and even if there was, there was no proof that her husband had murdered her.

The jury took only 25 minutes to find the man guilty of murder and the death sentence was passed. In due course it was carried out.

THERE'S NO ESCAPE

By D. McLENNAN

The author tells the story of the most sensational gun battle in the history of Australian crime. Only a miracle prevented wholesale slaughter on North Sydney's night of terror.

IF Antonio Martini's grim, bitter struggle for freedom had been against an enemy oppressor, he would have deserved the acclaim and respect of a patriot.

Had he been fighting an enemy of his country, he would have deserved military honors for the ruthless, clear-thinking ferocity with which he fought those who threatened his freedom.

Time and again he demonstrated that he was prepared to risk his life for his liberty or to ruthlessly destroy those who tried to take that liberty from him.

But Antonio Martini won no honors or tributes, for his fight was not against the enemies of democracy—it was against society and the forces of law and order.

And he had forfeited all rights to the liberty for which he fought so violently and viciously. But before he finally lost his liberty, one of the greatest gun battles in the history of Australian crime was to rage through the streets of North Sydney.

Up to February, 1946, Martini was just another cheap crook with a reputation for carrying a gun and a list of convictions including armed robbery, assaulting police and consorting with known criminals.

He had been born in Melbourne 28 years before; had led a life of crime since the age of 18, and had received jail sentences

totalling more than 12 years for offences committed in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Martini wasn't the big, tough bruiser type—just the opposite. He was small and deadly. He stood only 5ft. 3ins., was lightly built and darkly handsome with sleek, black hair and snapping brown eyes.

Two bullet scars in his right leg testified to his initiation into gangland gunfights. Tattoos of a hand clasping a dagger, a ship, a flag, a harp and a woman's face adorned his arms.

This then was the man who in February, 1946, hit the headlines with his brazen and astounding attempt to cut his way out of a cell at Darlinghurst Court, Sydney.

That this, his first attempt to escape, was unsuccessful was more a matter of good luck than good management on the part of the authorities.

Martini had been brought to the court from Long Bay jail to plead to a charge of burglary. He had been thoroughly searched before leaving the prison and had been searched on two more occasions before being placed in the cell at Darlinghurst Court.

He had been in the cell about an hour when a constable heard the harsh, muted grating of metal on metal.

Peering through a grill into the cell he saw Martini—the centre of attraction of a grinning half circle of fellow prisoners—busily sawing away at one of the cell bars.

The constable hurriedly called for reinforcements, but when the police entered the cell, Martini was in innocent conversation with the other prisoners.

A search of the cell, however, revealed that one of the bars had been almost cut through. Another five minutes' work would have severed it completely and enabled all the prisoners in the cell to escape.

The hacksaw blade was discovered behind a cistern in the cell.

No one ever discovered how Martini got hold of the blade.

He pleaded not guilty to the charge of burglary and was remanded.

Five months later he was again brought from Long Bay Jail and placed in a cell at Queen's Square Courts, Sydney, prior to appearing before the appeals court.

In May, 1945, Martini and another man, Arthur Gene Lovering, had been sentenced to two years jail on pistol charges. The Full Bench of the Criminal Court had upheld a contention that the sentence was not valid in law and Martini and Lovering were listed to appear at the appeals court on July 17, 1946, to hear the pronouncement upholding their appeal.

They were placed in a cell at the court with another man named Smith. But Martini did not bother to wait to hear the pronouncement.

When a constable came to the cell to take Smith before the court, there were only two men present instead of three—Martini was missing.

A mystified constable peered into the cell and asked: "Where's the third man?"

Lovering grinned broadly and, using the advertising slogan of a well-known retail store, replied: "He's gone to Gowings."

Then the police saw the severed bar in the cell window and one of the biggest manhunts in the history of Australian crime commenced.

Police, detectives and scientific experts swarmed into the area. A hacksaw blade was found in a cistern in the cell—and that was the end of the trail. There were absolutely no other clues to how Martini had organised his escape or where he had gone.

He had been searched thoroughly on two occasions before entering the cell and it was considered practically impossible for him to have smuggled the blade in from the Long Bay jail workshops.

Police also believed it was impossible for anyone to have passed the blade in to him through the cell window.

For hours the search continued and then, in the late afternoon, the first of the hundreds of "tips" began rolling in.

A police phone jangled and a voice said: "Don't ask who is speaking or try to trace from where this call is coming or I will

ring off. Martini is hiding in the presbytery of St. Mary's Cathedral."

Forty heavily armed police swept down on the cathedral. By the light of torches they examined every shrub and bush in the grounds. Armed detectives moved among the devout kneeling at prayer in the cathedral, scrutinising every worshipper and priest. They flashed their torches into the dark recesses of the organ loft and the high ceilings of the cathedral buildings. They peered into the choir gallery and challenged the occupants of every car moving out of the cathedral grounds.

For an hour, the police cordon cut off all exits from the buildings and grounds while the search went on, but they found no sign of the missing Martini.

Hardly had the search been abandoned when the police phone jangled again and a voice said: "Martini is hiding in a flat at Potts Point with a woman and another criminal."

Squad cars packed with detectives roared out of the police yards and armed men swooped on the flat. But it was another false lead—the flat was empty.

Message after message came in suggesting possible hideouts which Martini might be using, but all were false leads and Martini was still at large when morning dawned.

Police did discover a few details which made it appear that Martini had planned his escape well in advance. They discovered that an outfit of clothes had been kept in readiness for him in a house in East Sydney and a woman friend was holding a large sum of money for him to use. But a watch on the house and the woman was of no avail, for Martini claimed neither the clothes nor the money.

Members of Sydney's underworld stuck strictly to their code and refused to give the police any assistance in their search.

A day and night watch was placed on ships and main railway stations in case Martini attempted to leave the country or travel interstate, but that too was fruitless. Martini had vanished without trace.

But the police did not stop searching. A fortnight after Martini

had escaped they swooped on the steamer Waipori, lying in Sydney Harbour. Twenty armed detectives swarmed over the vessel, prying into every nook and cranny.

Their tip that Martini was hiding on the vessel appeared to be another false lead and then a shout went up as detectives hauled a slightly built young man out of his place of concealment 'tween decks. But it was just another of the endless false alarms. The young man had stowed away in an effort to reach New Zealand, but he was not Martini.

The next tip was that Martini was on the motor ship, Toulouse, bound from Australia to New Zealand. The New Zealand authorities were alerted to search the vessel when it arrived, but Martini was not discovered on board. And just in case the Australian detectives had overlooked any hiding places on the vessel Waipori, the New Zealanders searched that ship too, when it reached Wellington. Martini wasn't a passenger.

There were no further developments for the next few weeks, apart from an official and particularly inconclusive Public Service Board inquiry into how Martini obtained his hacksaw blade.

The Board found that no one was really to blame—they didn't even say any harsh words about Martini.

Among other things, the Board found that there had been no failure to search the prisoners properly at Long Bay Jail. The cell bar may have been cut from the outside, because the window opened on to a tennis court attached to Sydney Hospital.

The Board stated that its only doubt, in view of Martini's record, and the fact that the room for persons waiting hearing of their appeals was not a cell, was whether the officers in charge should have removed the handcuffs when prisoners were placed in the room.

The Board added that, in the light of events, it was unwise to do so, but at the worst it was an error of judgment only, and was not one calling for any action. And, finally, the Board did not propose to take any further action.

That seemed to tidy up all the loose ends nice and officially. The only outstanding thing was: What had happened to Antonio Martini?

Police believed, among other thing, that he had got through to Melbourne and was lying low down there.

And then in September, 1946, police were alerted to watch for a gang of safe-blowers who were concentrating on robbing suburban post offices. The net was beginning to tighten on Martini.

At 11 p.m. on September 21, Constable Waldock, patrolling in Surry Hills, Sydney, glanced through the window of the Crown Street post office and saw two men preparing to blow the safe.

Constable Waldock illuminated the inside of the post office by turning on an outside light switch. Two men, later identified as Martini and Edward Garland, ran to a window opening into a lane.

As the men climbed through the window Constable Waldock raced to a wooden gate which shut the lane off from the roadway. As he reached the gate the men opened fire on him.

One bullet whizzed between his legs; another smashed into the gate, a third shattered the plate glass window of a shop on the opposite side of the street. Constable Waldock drew his revolver and opened fire on the two gunmen. He jumped for cover as another hail of bullets whistled around him. The two men ran to a cream sedan which was waiting with its engine running and roared off into the night.

Later Martini and Garland were to be charged with having attempted to murder Constable Waldock. And when he was finally caught, Martini showed another facet of his strange character by expressing his apparent genuine pleasure at the fact that the constable had not been hit by any of the bullets.

But, he told the police, shooting had been their only means of getting away. And apart from that, he insisted the constable had fired on them first.

Martini steadfastly refused to break the code of the underworld and tell the police the name of the accomplice who had been waiting in the getaway car. He told them not to be greedy and

added that the man who had waited in the car had only been a "bunny" who had not known that he and Garland were armed.

But those confessions were still to come. At the time Martini and Garland escaped from the Surry Hills post office, they still had approximately 24 hours of freedom left—the last hours of freedom in their lifetime.

And it was some time during that 24 hours that the police received the information which brought their criminal careers to an end.

The information was that the two men were planning to rob the strong-room of Taronga Park Zoo, Sydney, the following night.

At that stage the police did not know whether this was just another false lead which would give them weary hours of watching and waiting and lead into another dead end. But they were prepared to spend many weary hours waiting and watching—they were prepared to follow up any possible lead that could bring Martini to justice.

At 7 p.m. on the evening of September 22, 1946, a grimly silent squad of detectives, bristling with weapons, moved into the eerie, nerve chilling atmosphere of the darkened zoo grounds.

The detectives, armed with revolvers, automatic pistols, automatic rifles and Thompson sub machine guns, were probably the most heavily armed squad of Australian police ever sent out after a criminal.

From the cages and animal enclosure came the spine-tingling snarls of savage animals. The wierd cries of night birds, the coughing roars of the big cats and the howls, grunts and snorts of unknown creatures blended in a strange symphony as the curtain rose for the first act of the greatest running gun fight in the history of crime in Sydney.

Moving to a pre-arranged plan, the detectives took up their positions around the administrative buildings of the zoo and settled down to wait for the most dangerous of all savage beasts—rogue humans.

The minutes ticked by and the tension grew. Detectives shifted silently to ease cramped muscles. An hour passed, but still there

was nothing except the uncanny sounds of the sleeping zoo. Another hour crept by on leaden feet and still the detectives waited.

Three hours passed; four hours; five hours and still the silent watchers waited, straining their eyes into the darkness for a sight of their quarry. From across the harbor came the slow measured chimes of a clock striking midnight. Antonio Martini had two hours of freedom left.

From the window of a small, darkened room in the administrative building, Detective-Sergeant William Allan Hargrave and Detective H. J. Crowley peered intently into the night trying to probe the black patches of shadow surrounding them.

They froze into complete immobility as two figures suddenly moved noiselessly out of the darkness towards the administrative building—Martini and Garland had walked into the trap.

The two gunmen moved slowly past the window behind which Det-Sgt. Hargrave and Det. Crowley were watching. The detectives made no move to stop them and the men disappeared in the direction of the office where the zoo safe was kept.

As soon as they had passed out of sight, Detective-Sergeant Hargrave noiselessly raised the bottom half of the window a couple of inches and eased the barrel of his Thompson sub machine gun on to the window sill. Then he and Detective Crowley waited in readiness to cut off the gunmen's retreat if they succeeded in breaking out of the cordon surrounding the other section of the building.

Some sixth sense must have warned Martini and Garland of impending danger, for they suddenly came gliding back, their eyes searching everywhere as they came.

It was Martini who spotted the slightly opened window. At first he thought watchmen were present in the building and then he spotted the wicked snout of the Tommy gun resting on the sill. For one startled moment he stared at the deadly weapon and then came the blinding realisation that they had walked into a police trap.

He only had time to yell a warning. "Look out, Ted!" to his

confederate and then the fierce white beam of Detective Crowley's torch flashed through the window, illuminating the scene.

As he switched on his torch, Crowley shouted: "Police here! Put up your hands!" Garland swung round, whipped up a revolver and fired point blank into the blinding light. The bullet shattered the window pane and ploughed a burning, agonising furrow across Detective-Sergeant Hargrave's right temple.

The sergeant reeled slightly under the glancing impact of the slug. His finger tightened on the trigger of his sub machine gun and a blast of bullets whined around Garland as he dived for cover around the side of the building. Bullets howled and whined through the night as Crowley joined in the shooting.

Martini pulled a heavy revolver from his pocket, but before he could fire, a slug hit him a sledgehammer blow high in the centre of the chest and he went down.

Martini must have born a charmed life that night, for the bullet pierced his heavy overcoat, suit and vest, but only bruised his chest.

He told police later: "It hit me so hard, it bowled me over. I thought it went right through me. It must have been a dud."

Dazed and shaken, Martini staggered to his feet and he and Garland raced for the cover of the surrounding darkness. Police and detectives broke from their hiding places, but could not locate the fugitives. They spread out, searching desperately for the two gunmen with pistols and sub machine guns ready.

Suddenly, from outside the walls of the zoo, a car engine roared into life and a powerful vehicle sped off through the night. Martini and Garland had escaped again.

To every patrol car, police station and policeman on beat duty went the general alarm to watch for the missing men. And shortly after 1 a.m. the information came in that they had been seen in the North Sydney district.

Car loads of police and detectives converged on the area. A cordon, armed with tommy guns, automatic rifles, pistols and tear gas apparatus, was thrown round premises in Little Arthur Street, North Sydney.

At 1.30 a.m. detectives crept up to a window of the house and saw Edward Garland and his brother, Royce, inside. When they called upon them to surrender the two men raced for the back door of the cottage.

As they ran down the stairs leading to the back yard, detectives hidden in a fowlhouse and behind the back fence shouted at them to surrender. Both the Garlands replied with a blast of revolver bullets fired into the darkness in the general direction of the detectives.

The detectives again shouted at them to surrender and promised that they would not be shot down if they did so. At that, the Garland brothers dropped their weapons and the police closed in on them and raced into the house.

But Martini had escaped again.

Only a few moments before the police trap snapped shut, some uncanny sense had warned him of danger and he had slipped out of the house into the darkness of the night.

Under the very noses of the detectives, he slipped across the street and into the backyard of a house facing on to Arthur Street.

He dropped a suitcase packed with gelignite in the yard and climbed a flight of 13 stairs to the back verandah.

He entered the dwelling through an open window and moved into the front bedroom of the house where Mrs. E. Roughley and her two children were sleeping.

Mrs. Roughley awoke and called out in sudden alarm: "Who is that?" when she saw Martini standing near her bed.

Martini, always a quick thinker, smooth talker, and quite a little gentleman in his way, whispered back. "I don't want to frighten you. There has been a sly grog raid at the back and I am just going through. I came in through a bathroom window."

He apologised for upsetting her and her children and then a Mr. Kelly, who boarded at the house, entered the room and turned on the light.

Although scores of police and detectives were combing the street outside, Martini calmly assured Mr. Kelly that there was nothing to worry about and told him the story of the sly grog raid.

He then asked for a drink and Kelly took him out to the kitchen. Martini had his drink and to the alarm of Mr. Kelly, casually produced two revolvers and placed them on the sink.

Taking bullets from one of his pockets he commenced to load the revolvers. He warned Kelly not to make a noise and told him he would be well paid for his help.

Martini was telling Kelly that he had not wished to frighten the lady, when he heard the sounds of police moving in the front of the house. The trap was closing in again.

Picking up his guns, he forced Kelly back into the front room of the house.

He asked Mrs. Roughley to look out the window to see who was outside. Mrs. Roughley, now thoroughly terrified at the situation, looked through the window and told him that there were police everywhere in the street.

Martini said: "I can't stay here," and ordered Kelly to open the front door for him.

Detective Crowley, whose bullet had knocked him down at Taronga Park Zoo earlier in the night, was standing outside, gun in hand.

As the door opened, Martini fired point blank at Detective Crowley. The bullet missed its mark and Crowley fired back, but by that time, Martini was a moving target as he raced through the door in his bid for liberty.

Mrs. Roughley, describing the escape said: "He rushed out into the street firing from a gun in each hand. I never saw anyone move so fast before."

Bullets smashed into the front of the house as two uniformed police in Arthur Street opened fire on Martini. But he seemed to bear a charmed life. Dodging and zig-zagging he raced through a hail of bullets towards a vacant allotment on the far side of Arthur Street.

Gunfire rolled and thundered down the street and the police fired at the twisting, darting figure. Detective Crowley's gun ran out of ammunition, but the uniformed police kept on firing at Martini as he sprinted for the cover of the vacant allotment.

Suddenly he came to an abrupt halt, wheeled about and firing with both hands blasted two more shots at the constables. Then, in a flash, he disappeared into the darkness of the allotment.

By now, the entire neighbourhood was in an uproar. Residents were running out of their homes in night attire and police were trying to warn them of the danger of the situation and shepherding them to safety. A heavy cordon of police prevented other people from entering the danger zone and searched all cars moving out.

That cordon probably saved the life of Harry Doyle, one of the residents of Arthur Street. If he had not been prevented from returning to his home, he would probably have been in his bed when one of the bullets fired during the gun battle smashed through his window, skimmed across his bed and embedded itself in the wall. And if he had been in bed, the bullet would have embedded itself in Harry Doyle instead of the wall.

But the North Sydney gun battle was far from over yet. Martini was still free, well armed and uninjured apart from a bruise on his chest.

When he gained the cover of the vacant allotment, he raced through into Little Walker Street, crossed that street and clambered lithely to the roof of a house fronting on to Walker Street, the next street up.

He was climbing across the rooftops when Mrs. P. Landers, of Walker Street, awakened by the sound of the gunfight, came to the window of her upstairs room.

At first she only saw the flashes of police torches as detectives and uniformed police moved across the vacant allotment, searching for the elusive gunman.

Then she saw Martini jump on to the roof of the wash house below her living room window. There was silence for a moment

and then a terrific crash of breaking glass as a downstairs window smashed inwards.

Mrs. Landers' husband, Mr. Paul Landers, was awakened by the crash of falling glass and hurried out of the bedroom to discover what was happening.

The combined house and shop below was pitch dark and silent. Mr. and Mrs. Landers crept down the stairs and switched on the light. Glass from a shattered window was lying all over the floor.

Without warning, Martini darted in from the shop at the front of the premises and raced towards the stairs with the speed of a cat.

He made no sound as he moved and, for some reason she has never been able to explain, Mrs. Landers grabbed him by the tail of the coat as he passed her.

Martini swung round on her. Mrs. Landers, for the first time, saw the gun in his hand and screamed as she let go her hold.

Detective-Sergeant Norman Mijch was moving cautiously up Walker Street with his sub machine gun at the ready when the door of the Landers' shop was flung open and Mrs. Landers rushed out screaming: "Police! Police!"

With Detective-Constable Raymond Paten in close support, Detective-Sergeant Mijch ran into the house. Martini was out of sight at the head of the stairs. Mijch shouted: "Come out, Martini, you're cornered."

From the top of the stairs, Martini shouted back: "Come up and get me, you ———"

Mijch gave him another chance to surrender. "We've got you covered, Martini," he called. "Come on down."

Martini, apparently trying to make the police believe that he was willing to surrender, shouted: "Give me a fair go." A heavy automatic pistol then came rolling down the stairs.

Mijch and Paten moved cautiously up the stairs. They were seasoned police officers who understood the warped mentality of ruthless gunmen like Antonio Martini. And they had good reason to be cautious.

As they mounted the stairs, they saw Martini peering around a door at the top with a heavy revolver in his hand. Next moment the revolver belched flame and a heavy slug whizzed past the two detectives.

Detective Constable Paten fired once in return and then his pistol jammed.

Almost at the same moment Detective-Sergeant Mijch's Thompson sub machine gun opened up with a shattering blast. The noise was deafening in the confined space of the stairs.

A deadly hail of bullets hammered into the door and wall at the top of the stairs.

Martini gave one dreadful scream. A revolver came tumbling end over end down the stairs and the detectives heard the dull thud of a body falling to the floor above them.

Antonio Martini's fight for freedom was over.

Detective Sergeant Mijch and Detective Constable Paten raced up the stairs and halted in amazement as they saw the motionless body lying in a collapsed heap on the floor.

Blood was pouring from a wound in the middle of the man's forehead covering his face with a wet, glistening mask of scarlet.

The features were almost completely obscured and unrecognisable, but the hair and complexion of the man on the floor were not those of Antonio Martini.

Instead of the jet black hair and eyebrows and dark features, this man's hair and eyebrows were practically platinum blonde and the features were fair.

A closer scrutiny, however, disclosed that it was Martini without a doubt and that he was still alive.

He had made himself almost unrecognisable by bleaching his hair and eyebrows and heavily powdering his face to hide his dark complexion.

A quick examination showed that he had had another almost miraculous escape from death. The sub machine gun bullet, which had brought his stand to an end, had only struck him a glancing blow on the forehead and stunned him.

Lifting the unconscious man, the detectives carried him down the stairs to the street where a police car was waiting. They hurried him to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital for medical treatment and he quickly recovered consciousness.

Martini, in his usual thorough manner, had armed himself well for his battle with the police.

Apart from the two weapons he had dropped down the stairs during the fight, police found a third which he had hidden beneath the mattress of the bed in the Landers' bedroom at the top of the stairs.

In the pockets of his blood-smeared coat they found 70 rounds of live ammunition. An American shoulder holster was strapped beneath his coat and a bandolier of bullets was strapped around his body.

A check on the serial numbers of Martini's weapons tied him in with the suburban post office robberies which had been reported during the previous week.

The revolver which Martini had hidden under the mattress in the Landers' bedroom had been stolen from the strongroom of the Eastwood Post Office. The revolver which had fallen from Martini's hand and rolled down the stairs after he had been hit, had been stolen from the Concord Post Office.

How no one was fatally hit during the various stages of the gunfight is one of the minor mysteries of the century. More than 100 pistol, rifle and sub-machine gun bullets had been fired in one of the most densely populated areas of Sydney and only two men had been very slightly injured.

The walls of the administration building at Taronga Park Zoo were pockmarked with bullets. Shattered windows and bullet-riddled walls of buildings in the area where Martini was finally brought to bay, testified to the intensity of the final stages of the battle.

Martini, who boasted that he had been handling a gun since he was 15, was almost apologetic over the fact that no policeman had been seriously injured. And he was quite unrepentant for his actions when he recovered consciousness.

"If I had not been on the run, my shooting would have been more accurate," he boasted to the police.

Asked why he had tried to shoot it out, he replied shortly: "Self preservation."

When Martini and the Garland brothers were brought before the court on charges of having attempted to murder various police officers, a sensational series of questions was asked, suggesting that a policeman had attempted to fire his pistol into Martini's body as he lay unconscious at the top of the stairs. The line of questioning was hotly attacked by the police and later an apology was tendered for any aspersions against the police.

The outcome of the trial of Martini and the Garlands was inevitable. Each was found guilty on charges of attempted murder and both Martini and Edward Garland were sentenced to death.

Royce Garland, a father of six children, who only came into the picture when he and his brother tried to escape from the house in Little Arthur St., was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

Later the death sentences on Martini and Edward Garland were commuted to life imprisonment and they were sent to Parramatta jail.

But Martini had not lost his burning desire for freedom and he waited, watched and planned for the opportunity of escaping once again.

He had been in jail for more than six years when the opportunity came in January, 1953. Martini planned the break with his usual efficiency and daring.

One of the members of the group who were to make the break with him was his old confederate, Edward Garland.

The others were Sidney Grant, a murderer serving a life sentence for the killing of a police detective; William Burnie, who was serving 14 years for attempted rape; and an habitual criminal serving a shorter sentence for assault and robbery.

The men were all employed in the prison's tailor shop. The first move in their plan to escape was secretly to make themselves white shirts which they hid by wearing under their blue prison

shirts. Object of the white shirts was to enable them to discard their tell-tale blue prison shirts as soon as they made their break.

On January 27, 1953, they were ready to put their plan into operation. Under Martini's guidance, it went like clockwork in the beginning. The would-be jail breakers simply walked out of the prison tailor shop and locked the overseer and another officer inside.

Then they proceeded to the prison engineer's office and locked him in too, to prevent him raising the alarm. Taking a long ladder from the engineer's shop, they made for a door leading to the outer wall of the jail.

The lock was quickly smashed off the door and the criminals hurried through and placed their ladder against the wall.

Martini led the rush for freedom.

The first indication the prison guards had that a jail break was in progress was the sight of Martini's slim figure balancing precariously on top of the prison wall and the other criminals climbing the ladder behind him.

In a fraction of a second, the prison was in an uproar.

Carbines and revolvers cracked as the guards opened fire on Martini. Other warders burst out of the prison buildings and raced towards the escaping criminals.

With bullets slashing the air around him and thudding into the wall beneath his feet, Martini stood poised for a moment and then jumped 35 feet to freedom.

He hit the ground heavily. Agonising pain shot through him as bones in his right foot snapped under the force of the impact. He rolled over, clutching at his leg.

But despite the pain, he struggled to his feet and hobbled desperately for cover through the grounds of the Parramatta Mental Hospital adjoining the prison.

Bullets whined around him and smacked into the ground at his feet, but again he seemed to bear a charmed life, and he hobbled out of sight and range of the prison warders.

Martini was the only member of the escape team to get over the prison wall. None of the others even reached the top.

Before any of them had time to climb the ladder after Martini, the warders were onto them. They tore the ladder away from the wall even as the men were trying to climb it, sending one of the would-be escapees crashing 20 feet to the prison yard below. The whole group surrendered without resistance.

But Martini was free and the general alarm for his recapture was on again.

As squad cars, loaded with detectives, converged onto the area, armed police and warders began a systematic search of the mental hospital grounds. They did not have far to search before finding the spot where he had collapsed, moaning in agony and clutching his broken foot.

Martini offered no resistance as the armed warders closed in on him.

They trundled him ignominiously back into the prison in a garden wheelbarrow.

Antonio Martini's hard won freedom had lasted exactly 20 minutes.

That escape earned Martini 56 days "solitary." The other criminals who were apprehended attempting to escape, were each sentenced to 28 days.

From there on, the prison authorities were not prepared to take any more risks with the slippery Antonio.

On January 31, 1953, with his right leg encased in plaster, he was carried through the grim portals of Grafton jail.

He has his whole life before him to think up new methods of escaping, but he will have to plan well, for Grafton jail is one of the toughest in the world—a prison from which, it is claimed, no man can ever escape.

QUEER CARGO

By J. H. M. ABBOTT

There was a nice touch of sentimentality in Sir Henry Browne Hayes action in importing Irish soil to surround his Australian home. However, there was more to it than met the eye.

"I TELL ye, Jim, 'tis gospel truth," said Mr. Thomas Hunt to his friend Mr. James Dooley as they drank together in the frowsy taproom of the Bunch o' Grapes in George-street. "Sam Breakwell told me himself, an' he's Sir Hinery's confidential mahn. 'Tis in th' brig Norah now, off of Benelong's Point. We'll meet down at the Cove at nine to-night and borry me brother-in-law's boat an' pull off to th' Norah, whin I'll prove iv'ry worrud I'm sayin'. Sure 'tis the grand Irish gintleman is Sir Hinery Browne Hayes, an' ye'll say th' same y'silf whin I've shown ye."

"Well, seeins belayvin, I suppose," replied Mr. Dooley doubtfully. "I'll be there, an' good luck to Sir Hinery, if 'tis true."

The subject of their conversation was one which caused some stir in Sydney about the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century. One of the most notable characters in the curious society that diversified the Sydney of Macquarie's first years as Governor was Sir Henry Browne Hayes, formerly a sheriff of Cork, and the wealthy scion of an old-established mercantile family.

The circumstances which led to his transportation—his abduction in 1797 of the heiress Mary Pike, his returning her unharmed after a mock marriage, his offering to stand his trial, having seen to it first that the reward was secured by the family hairdresser, and then, to his surprise, his conviction—are well known. His exploits after his arrival in Port Jackson in July, 1802, are not so often told. Sir Henry did not make the voyage under the ordinary conditions of a convict, for he paid the master of the

transport Atlas several hundred guineas to obtain exceptional favors, and greatly annoyed several officials of the colony who were his fellow-passengers by monopolising most of the available cabin space and nearly all the possible comforts.

During the first years of his exile he was constantly in hot water, mainly with Governor King, who could not be induced to see that Sir Henry's wealth entitled him to any extra privileges as a convict, and was not very fond of any sort of Irishman. In 1803 he was ordered to be sent to hard labor at the settlement then being formed in Van Diemen's Land, but somehow managed to get out of this trouble, and on the 22nd of August, 1803, bought two farms near South Head—the famous Vaucluse estate.

Sir Henry lived there for some years, although, as he was still a convict, he could not obtain a legal title to the property. Governor King firmly believed that he was concerned in the abortive rebellion of the Irish prisoners at Castle Hill in 1804, and in July, 1805, obtained from five magistrates an opinion that Sir Henry's exile would be of much advantage to the peace of the colony. The knight was then sent to Norfolk Island, but after a month there was brought back to Sydney for transportation to Van Diemen's Land. Bad weather delayed the departure of the ship in which he was to have sailed, and before he could be sent away Captain Bligh had succeeded King as Governor. And Bligh took rather a liking to Sir Henry.

Under Bligh he behaved with more discretion, and spent most of his time at Vaucluse, but, being regarded as a sympathiser with the deposed Governor, after the mutiny in 1808 he was sent by the rebel officers of the New South Wales Corps to Newcastle, where he had to remain in exile eight months before being permitted to return to Vaucluse. He was in hot water again in May, 1809, and was once more forced into retirement at the Coal River, where he fell foul of the Commandant, Lieutenant William Lawson. By some means or other he managed to get back to Vaucluse, and in March, 1810, was busily memorialising Governor Macquarie as to the iniquities of Commandant Lawson, as well as engaging himself in the memorable and extraordinary undertaking with which this story is concerned. Later his support

of Bligh stood him in good stead, for on his return to England the ex-Governor busied himself on Sir Henry's behalf, and in 1812 a free pardon allowed the knight to go back to Ireland.

The Norah lay in darkness in the mouth of Sydney Cove, with only a single riding light in her mizzen rigging, when Messrs. Dooley and Hunt pulled off to her a little before 10 o'clock that night. As they drew alongside her black hull they were gruffly hailed from the poop. "Boat ahoy! What's y'r business?"

"'Tis all right, Mick," replied Mr. Hunt. "We've but come to call on our friend th' bos'n, Jack Roarty. It's Tom Hunt an' Jim Dooley."

"Aw, well, if ye're come to see th' bos'n I s'pose 'tis all right. Me an' Jack Sims has been put here to look after Sir Henry's property, but we've naught else to do wid th' ship. I'll send for Roarty. Throw me a line an' I'll make y'r boat fast."

Mr. Hunt led the way up the Jacob's ladder hanging over the side, and he and Mr. Dooley presently stood on the quarter-deck of the Norah, confronting a giant of a man whom the light of a hurricane-lamp hanging at the break of the poop revealed as looking somewhat hostile and suspicious. However, when the boatswain arrived, accompanied by John Sims, another specimen of truculent and muscular humanity, he was able to vouch for the visitors to the ship.

"Jack Roarty," said Mr. Hunt, indicating his companion by a wave of the hand, "this is me frind Jim Dooley, who's afther disbelayvin' me whim I tell him th' gran' thing's bin done be Sir Hinery. Glory be—but 'tis wan o' th' foinest things has iver bin heard of, an' I'm wishful that iv'ry Irishman in th' colony could be knowing of it. Could ye not let him see for himsilf—take a look at th' bar'ls o' th' blessed sod?"

"Faith, thin," said the boatswain a little contemptuously, "an' that's nothin' but the truth. 'Twas a grand notion, an' Sir Hinery does truly desarve iv'ry good Irishman's thanks for what he's done. Here they are, thin—twinty-five o' thim—th' lasht o' five hunnerd what's bin a-coming to Sydney in diff'nt ships this six months past. We brought fifty of 'em, but Sir Hinery took away half this after-

noon. He's coming for these to-night—I expect him anny moment now. Step this way, Mr. Dooley, an' see for y'silf."

Holding the lantern above his head, he led the way forward along the deck, and presently revealed to them, standing in orderly rows on the starboard side of the ship, between the open hatches and the bulwarks, a couple of dozen barrels, each of which had painted on the side and top "H.B.H." over "Sydney."

"An' phwat's in 'em?' inquired Mr. Dooley. "Is it Dublin stout?"

"Stout be dâmned!" said the boatswain. "No! 'Tis nothin' more nor less than a shipment o' th' blissed sod of ould Ireland itself what Sir Hinery Browne Hayes is agoin' for to put all round his house for to kape th' shnakes out of it."

"Be th' powers, thin, 'tis thrue!" exclaimed Mr. Dooley in an awestricken whisper. "Bedad, though, Tom, this'll surely ha' cost Sir Hinery a pretty dollar or two?"

"What's money to him?" responded Mr. Hunt. "Sure, he's enough an' to shpare of it for to buy th' half of Ireland, so he has. I'm thinkin' "——

He was interrupted by a shout from the water close alongside. The boatswain hurried with the lantern to the gangway.

" 'Tis Sir Hinery himsilf!" he cried to them. "He's come for th' rist o' th' bar'ls. He'll tell ye all ye want to know, Mr. Dooley. Oh, good evenin' to ye, Sir Hinery," he addressed a dapper gentleman who was setting foot upon the deck. "Ye're afther th' lasht o' y'r cargo, no doubt?"

The Knight of Vaucluse, as his friends loved to speak of him, was a good-looking man of early middle-age, with well-cut features and a fringe of brown whisker below the chin. He was dressed in a blue swallowtail jacket with gold buttons and white buckskin breeches worn inside Hessian boots, whilst a beaver top-hat perched rakishly on one side of his head. He shook hands with the boatswain, and bowed to the ship's visitors. The two guardians of the treasure stood at strict "attention" beside the gangway, and knuckled their foreheads as he stepped on to the quarter-deck.

"Good evening, Roarty. Yes, I have the barge alongside, and

we'll get the barrels aboard as soon as possible. 'Tis a long pull, and 'twill be almost daylight before we reach Vaucluse. However, this is the last of it, and we'll be in good time for to-morrow's ceremony. Whom have we here, though? Ah, 'tis Mr. Hunt. A very good evening to you, sir."

Mr. Hunt seized Sir Henry's extended hand in both of his and wrung it fervently. "May Hiven reward ye, sorr, for th' good dade ye're afther doin'. This is me frind James Dooley, Sir Hinery. Permit me to presint him, soor. He's come aboard wid me for to see th' bar'ls of Irish soil for himsilf—hardly being able to credit annywan could be afther doin' th' gr't thing ye've done, sorr."

"'Tis a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Mr. Dooley, and I shall hope to see more of you, sir. Pray, Tom Hunt, my friend, is there anything that would prevent yourself and Mr. Dooley from giving me the pleasure of your company at Vaucluse for to-morrow's celebration? 'Twould delight me beyond measure. You have a boat alongside? Well, if you will accompany the barge down the harbor directly I shall be glad to offer you breakfast at Vaucluse, and then, later in the day, you will be able to witness the ceremony of placing the Irish soil around the house."

"'Tis true thin, sorr, what Tom Hunt's been a-tellin' me, that ye're surroundin' y'r risidence wid th' ould sod for to kape th' shnakes out of it? Glory be to God, but 'tis th' enterprisin' gintleman ye are, so ye are!" Mr. Dooley gazed at Sir Henry Browne Hayes in admiration.

"'Tis perfectly true, Mr. Dooley. The snakes at Vaucluse have been a plague and a curse ever since I've been there. Why, I've even found 'em in my bed. But this Irish soil. I've had a trench six-feet wide and two-feet deep dug right round the house, and to-morrow I'm going to have it filled in with the contents of the five hundred barrels of good Irish sod that have been arriving here during the last six months. I hope you two gentlemen will give me the pleasure of your company. And now, if you'll excuse me, I'll see to getting these barrels into the barge, which my boat's crew will tow down the harbor."

"Sure, we'd not miss it for all th' tay in Chiny, sorr," responded

Mr. Hunt gratefully and delightedly. "Come, let's get out of the way, Jim. We'll wait in th' boat."

The labor of transferring the heavy casks of soil from the deck of the Norah to Sir Henry's barge occupied a considerable time, and the process of towing the large and heavily-laden craft down the harbor against a flood tide was a slow one, so that the long rampart of South Head stood out against a red dawn by the time the three boats had reached the Bottle and Glass rocks at the entrance to Vaucluse Bay. As they were rounding the point a whaleboat came out to meet them, and with some alarm Messrs. Hunt and Dooley noted that a corporal's guard of red-coated soldiers occupied the sternsheets. The coxwain, standing at the long steer-oar, hailed Sir Henry Browne Hayes.

"Lie to there, sir," he shouted. "I wish to examine your cargo."

The whaleboat drew close alongside the barge, which Sir Henry was steering himself. The knight, with uplifted arm, signalled to the oarsmen in the towing boat to rest on their oars. He addressed the coxswain of the whaleboat.

"And, pray, who may you be, sir, to hinder me from landing my own goods on the shores of my own estate?"

"I'm Captain Piper's, the Naval Officer's, deputy, Sir Henry. Name o' Morrison, at y'r service. Cap'n Piper's away at th' Hawkesbury, sir, and I've been informed you've been landing barrels which might contain dutiable goods. So I've come to investigate 'em. My duty, sir. What do these casks contain, may I ask?"

"Dirt, Mr. Coxswain," responded Sir Henry with an affable smile. "Would you like to see for yourself? If so, come aboard the barge, and bring a hatchet. I'm quite at your service, Mr. Naval Officer's Deputy."

"Did you say dirt, sir?" asked the coxswain incredulously as the whaleboat drew alongside the barge. "We'll haul alongside you, sir."

The two boats lay presently together, members of the crews of the whaler grasping the opposite gunwale. It was a calm and still morning—the sun just rising over South Head—and the placid waters of Port Jackson stretched in glassy calm across to the

wooded shores of Bradley's and Middle Heads. Open-mouthed, and a little fearful, Messrs. Hunt and Dooley rested on their oars and watched these ominous proceedings.

The coxswain stepped from the Naval Officer's boat to the gunwale of the roomy craft in whose stern at the tiller sat Sir Henry Browne Hayes. The casks were stowed lengthways in the barge in two layers, and the Naval Officer's representative stared curiously down at them as he leaned above the cargo. Doubtfully he regarded the smiling Sir Henry.

"Are you serious, sir?" he asked.

"Never more so, Mr. Morrison. Perfectly serious, my friend. Pray knock in the head of any one of them and you'll find the contents of the casks to be what I say. 'Tis Irish soil which I've imported for my garden—and I've been assured by Captain Piper himself that such an importation is not dutiable. But see for yourself if you won't take my word for it."

"Well, then, so I will, Sir Henry. I've got to, for 'tis my duty to make sure. Though I hope ye'll not be thinkin' I'm casting doubt upon your Honor's good faith."

"Do your duty, Mr. Coxswain. But you mustn't mind our smiles. Sure, 'twould make a cat laugh!"

The coxswain took his hatchet and knocked in the end of a cask. A stream of brown loamy soil poured out into the bottom of the barge. He gasped with unsimulated astonishment, and stared at the smiling Sir Henry, who laughed aloud and nodded. "Well, me dear Mr. Morrison, so ye see it is dirt, as I said it was. D'ye want anything further by way of proof of me bona fides? Or will that much satisfy ye?"

"Good Lord, sir, you're right. I most humbly crave your pardon, Sir Henry. But it seemed to me incredible that anyone would want to import soil in barrels, considering what a lot of it there is in New Holland. I'd ha' sworn 'twas spirits or wine, or maybe porter, that you were landing. No offence, I hope, Sir Henry. Indeed, you've fooled me completely."

Sir Henry roared with laughter, and, standing up in the stern of the barge, stretched out his hand to the discomfited coxswain.

His smiling face seemed positively to shine with genial appreciation of the joke. Coxswain Morrison grasped his hand diffidently and shook it in a half-hearted fashion.

"Oh, well, sir," he repeated himself, "I can only hope there's no offence taken."

"None whatever, my friend. Won't you land and bring your men up to the house? It must have been dreary and tiring waiting all these hours to make your capture. Bring your crew and the soldiers to the house and let them and yourself partake of some refreshment."

The coxswain shook his head. "Thank ye kindly, Sir Henry, but I must get back to Sydney. I hope the soil will do your garden credit, sir."

"Credit! The blessed soil of Ould Ireland would do credit to any country on earth. Oh, well, if you won't"——

"Good morning to you, Sir Henry."

"Well, good morning to ye, then, Mr. Coxswain, and a pleasant pull up the harbor in the coolth of the morning."

When the boats had grounded upon the sands of the little bay at whose head was the beautiful garden of Vaucluse, Sir Henry waited by the shore with his guests until the top layer of barrels had been lifted out on to the beach. Then he directed four of the laborers who had been awaiting the boat's arrival to carry one of the casks from the lower tier up to the house.

Accompanied by Messrs. Hunt and Dooley, he walked behind the carriers, descanting on a variety of topics as they walked along the pathway, and apparently in high good humor with himself and the world. He ordered that the barrel should be carried into the kitchen at the back and placed upon a table. They were astonished to see him set three big china mugs alongside it—and still more so when he took down a mallet from a shelf and drove a spigot into a very obvious bunghole. He turned the tap and filled the mugs, one by one, with foaming brown stout.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a wink at Mr. Hunt, "we'll drink to the blessed memory of St. Patrick in the liquid form of the

soil of Ireland. 'Twas lucky Captain Piper's man didn't tap the lower tier. There's four hundred and ninety barrels of good Irish turf in the fire shipments—but ten of those by the Norah were what you see. The best Dublin stout, my friends. Sure I couldn't put Ould Ireland into the trench without wetting the precious soil—'twould never have done. Oh, not at all! Here's good luck to the Norah's cargo."

THE ANGELS OF ISLAM

By ALLAN BRENNAN

Tagh Mohammet was a good man, known and respected throughout the Western Australian goldfields. What was the strange madness that seized his employee and cast him in the role of killer?

BACK in the Australian 90's when, following gold-discovery, deserts arid and briny sprouted towns like Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, a vast and varied "caste" gathered to play their parts in the exciting drama of a new goldfield. Across Australia, indeed across the world, sounded the magic call of the "Golden West." Of that mighty Band of Hope thus called together the story which follows is concerned principally with two Afghans; and when one was hanged for murdering the other every man on the scattered fields of gold hoped that his soul had taken the right road—to Hell. For far and wide across the lonely Western expanses the name of Tagh Mohammet was known and respected. Men farther out, who perhaps never saw the man, yet honoured his name; and here let me remark that they would need to be very far out, for the camel-teams of Tagh Mahommet ranged widely; nor, as I shall show, was the load always a paying one.

Goulim Mahommet, who worked for Tagh, was of a grasping disposition, covetous and miserly. Field opinion of him was that he would rather part with a pint of blood than give a man a match.

In every respect, physical and mental, Goulim differed from his countryman. Tagh was of generous proportions, and a powerful man. His ample white turban, roomy white trousers, embroidered jacket and long gold chain with sequins, were a familiar sight in Coolgardie. He was a keen business man, but fair to a small fraction in all his dealings. Still, he never let his keenness get in the way of a friendly gamble over the "odd money." At that Tagh

did not worry about mere shillings. Let an account for carriage run to (say) £115, or even considerably more, then Tagh was always willing to toss on a double or quits basis for the odd money above the century. Oft the toss of a coin meant a continuance of the game, and on one occasion a gamble of this sort in Bayley Street caught such attention that soon the street was crowded with interested spectators. Tagh emerged from the game about £200 to the good, whereupon he invited the crowd across to Charley Sommers' hotel and shouted champagne at 25/- a bottle. He would have taken an equal loss just as lightly!

Goulim was of scanty physique, singularly knock-kneed and bony. Indeed his legs were more like turkey-supports, of approximately osteological formation; and he walked as if they needed a trifle more grease in the hinges.

Of course the scarcity of Goulim's legs was not a public inconvenience. People were more concerned with the fact that he was always accompanied by a well-defined smell—that adhesive brand which advertises bodily uncleanliness. There were business-people in the goldfields towns who would have been pleased to provide Goulim with a cedar coffin, also a marble tombstone plastered with compliments from lightning-arrester to ground level, in return for the pleasure of shoving him under it. As already hinted, the way of this story will be to show how the day came when instead they "shouted" him a rope. In the meantime there was general regret that his father hadn't died at least two years before his mother was born.

Tagh Mahomet was deeply religious. He didn't know—how could he?—that even the Angels of Islam have their limitations, and that in his greatest extremity they would fail him. This man whose skin was dark, but whose spirit was as white as a snowdrift, lived up to his surname. He was a good Mohammedan, possessed of great faith in Allah and the angels whose duty it was to listen to his prayers at sunrise. To be sure he had never seen those angels, but that did not matter. Was it not written in the Book? And who was he, Tagh Mahomet, that he should doubt that which was written?

As I considered the career of Tagh Mahomet, a scrap here,

another there, in Western journals, most of them retailing briefly some act of generosity, one a rescue in circumstances which demanded courage at its splendid top, also facts adduced at the trial of his murderer, I came greatly to admire the man. Such as Tagh Mahomet come not often!

There was the time when the Coolgardie fire of '95 converted Bayley Street into a mile-long avenue of flaming pine and hessian. Tagh called out his men and set all available teams at work carrying water. Suddenly a yell went up—a man trapped in a shanty! The shanty had more wood in its construction, also less hessian than common in hasty goldfield architecture, and hence hadn't burnt out with the murderous speed of the hessian structures. Without even a gleam of hesitation Tagh disappeared into the flaring heat, risking his life in courageous effort to save another's. Fifteen seconds dragged slowly by ere Tagh emerged, carrying a fellow-creature, mercifully unconscious, far advanced along a track where the traffic is strictly one way. Nor was Tagh himself in much better shape. But tanned from babyhood by the sun of Afghanistan, additionally toughened by the long marches with the camel teams across Westralia's thirsty wilds, he withstood the fiery ordeal, and held to consciousness. The heart matched the man.

I think that we can take is as a certainty that the angels employed in far-off Mecca to record the good deeds and bad of the faithful, marked Tagh's splendid action on the credit side, and allotted him a long rest upon Elysian cushions in shady gardens, where the music of murmuring waters mingles with the soft voices of the dark-eyed Houris who attend upon the disciples of Allah in the Heaven of Islam. Be that as it may, Coolgardie decided to reward Tagh's brave deed on the spot. Indeed, celebrations were immediate, and for three or four days continuous. That carried them over Sunday, but provided that nobody was killed in the rush the goldfields police cared but little whether a man took liquid refreshment on the first day of the week or the second. Sing hey for the police of the Western gold-rushes, for they knew well when the soft pedal was the best pedal!

The great carrying industry of Tagh and Faiz Mahomet, which

might truly be described as Cobb and Co. applied to camel-teams and freight, rather than passengers, carried water, tucker, tools of trade and indeed their every want, to prospectors far and wide, and it was also part of the firm's contract to carry a prospector's ore to the nearest battery. As Tagh employed only the kind of man who would get through even though the heavens should fall, his teams ran to timetable like an express. Regarded purely as a driver, a lot of abilities came to a focus in Goulim's skinny carcase.

Every driver of the hundreds employed by the firm had instructions that a digger in trouble was to be assisted in every way, even if it meant delaying a load, or in desperate emergency cutting their own water-ration.

One day a curious doubt cropped up in Tagh's mind. He saw that an error of mere inches at Coolgardie would at Mecca be measurable in miles, and the fact worried him. As Tagh looked at the matter the Great Arbiter of Mohammedan fortunes had been much too good to him to permit of a mere chance shot across the world with his salaams and thanks. In point of riches Allah had raised him so far above the average of his kind that he could not—would not!—tolerate the idea that his respectful thanks at sunrise should travel across the world fortuitously, a hit or miss thanksgiving as it were. His first reaction was to engage another Imam, or priest, thereby as he thought doubling the chance that his worshipful thanks should reach the God of Mohammedanism at Mecca, and for a time this satisfied him.

An average Mohammedan would have been satisfied that his intentions were right, indeed doubly right, and so have left the matter to Allah, the All-knowing, to adjust. But Tagh was no ordinary Mohammedan, as he also was no ordinary man, and again doubts overcame him. If one priest's prayers and thanks could miss the sacred city, then so might the other's, and in his deep sincerity the possibility tormented him.

Gazing at a map of the world one day it crossed his inquiring mind that the world was round, not flat; and then and there he decided that a flat map of a round world could at best be but a poor guide to direction. On that same day he enlisted the aid

of the Government Surveyor, stated his problem, and had the important matter of direction settled scientifically. At Tagh's request the surveyor marked the point on the compass which, extended across the world, would bisect Mecca. And at last certain that his prayers at day break, in the Mosque outside Coolgardie, were heard by Allah in Mecca, and borne witness to by the Angels of Islam, Tagh went his generous way in peace.

Tagh's devoutness did not in any way detract from his popularity. Rather it enhanced it, for as I have shown it was the man's nature to obey particularly the passages of the Koran which made for generosity to one's fellow-man. The goldfields population was not greatly concerned with causes. Widely derived, they also were widely tolerant, and contented themselves with effects. Not without excellent reason was Tagh Mahomet, his skin browned by the splendid Australian sun till he was nearly as dark as a Sydney surf-side sun-bather, known over the vast Westralian length and breadth as a "white man."

"If Tagh likes having two priests to help him pray, then that is Tagh's affair, and nobody else's concern at all," said a miner in Somer's Hotel one day, "and if he wants to be certain that his prayers are on the target, then that too is Tagh's business. If religion helped to make Tagh Mahomet the man he is, then Australia, Western Australia in particular, could do with a lot more of it. Let us drink to Tagh's prospects, both present and future." Whilst the "round" was being disposed of, Tagh walked in, and ere the "session" ended the initial round extended to scores. Happy-go-lucky days of gold!

After Tagh's departure Goulim Mahomet's name came up. "When I first saw Goulim I thought that a few drinks might improve him," said a man, "but when I saw him drunk I wanted to shoot him." Charged with having failed to carry out a public duty on the second occasion he was declared guilty and sentenced to shout for the crowd. It seems to me that Australia could do with another goldrush!

With the evidences, temporal and spiritual, of Tagh's excellent nature so strongly proved, it was no wonder that the angels went

right ahead with plans to reward him. Scarce a week without news of a new gold-strike; and into each of them, heavily laden, marched the camel-teams of the firm of Faiz and Tagh Mahomet. Faiz spent most of his time in Geraldton.

Tagh's teams were composed exclusively of Australian-bred camels, bigger and heavier than those originally imported, and much more powerful and enduring.

It is, I think, historically interesting that the fame of the Australian-bred camel spread to India, and interested the Army authorities there to such an extent that six were purchased for shipment. On arrival it was at once conceded that their appearance, size and obvious strength matched best specifications. "They are all I've heard about them," said a man of military authority, "and we'll have more of them." At that moment Australia was on the verge of an export trade in camels! But the rapid improvement of the petrol-driven vehicle strangled the idea.

Goulim Mahomet was a fellow-Afghan who worked for Tagh. He had a grouch, as ill-based in fact as a pyramid upside down. This grouch was twelve months old, and dated from the day when he quarrelled with Tagh, whom he accused of trying to get too prosperous to kill him! Read it over again, just in case you missed the full flavour of the lunatic statement, rendered by Goulim Mahomet in Western Australia somewhere along the hinderpart of the year 1895. It was indeed strange that such a queer thought should have had birth, but not at all strange that once born it should live; for Goulim's intellect barely matched missing-link level.

If he really sets his mind to it, a man can conjure up some odd ideas. Did you ever hear of a shiny burglar with blue-moulded eyes? Or a dog with two tails and a boiler-metal head? Or a typhoid-headed vampire with 200 teeth? Or of the murderer who disguised himself in a cough and stutter, and married his victim's wife? If the foregoing ideas sound odd, as they were meant to, I think Goulim's of assessment of Generous Tagh Mahomet's mind sounds odder by far.

Not only did Goulim Mahomet's weird idea live. It also deve-

loped, gaining strength as it grew, till at the end of 12 months it became an obsession. Tagh's increasing prosperity and wealth, as field after field beckoned with fingers of gold, annoyed Goulim, indeed tormented him. As he considered Tagh's ever-increasing bank account, gloomy Goulim's thoughts were possibly a mixture of venom, fire, blasphemy and cactus-spikes. His glad raiment, his easy acceptance in any company, his easy smile, his hearty laugh, probably the fact that he inhabited the same earth as he, Goulim Mahomet, obviously annoyed the man.

Came the morning of January 10th, 1896. The angels who attended to the prayers of Tagh Mahomet were not yawning, nor rubbing their eyes, nor grumbling about early rising in their usual manner. Instead, there was an alert expectancy about them. In spirit they reached the camel-camp at Coolgardie just as sunrise came over the rim of the plain. Tagh Mahomet was already kneeling between his two Imams.

Goulim also was at his prayers, and among other things he asked that Allah should prosper the morning's deed. Then, his last prayer over, he arose, walked across to where Tagh still salaamed, paused a moment or two behind his kneeling figure, pointed a revolver and fired.

Past all power of feeling ere he completed his collapse on the floor of the Mosque, Tagh Mahomet died in less than a minute. What shall we say of his spirit? What CAN we say? Whence? Whither? Possibly the dictionary holds no other words to which such an amount of concentrated thought has been applied; yet can we surely say that the problem which each subtends has been solved? For the balance of this story let the "ayes" have it!

Doubtless the Angels of Islam welcomed the spirit of Tagh Mahomet as such an unquestioning believer deserved that they should, though whether he liked them for having hurried him at the close must remain unknown.

Just here let me edge in the gentlest of doubts! I submit that it is distinctly possible that the spirit of Tagh Mahomet thought that on the 10th January, 1896, his prayers to be admitted to the Paradise of Mohammedanism had been taken a mite too literally.

As of course you have divined, Tagh Mahomet was a good employer. The wage-fixing Arbitration Courts of to-day date from far this side of 1896; and if all employers had patterned on Tagh Mahomet they need never have been created. From the fact of Tagh's goodness now followed another—that immediately following the fatal shot Goulim had urgent need to take every precaution against his vengeful countrymen. As he had profaned the sacred building by murder, so now he continued to profane it by threat of further murder. Facing with levelled revolver men prepared with their bare hands to beat the life out of him, he backed out of the temple and started at his best speed for the police camp. Several of his countrymen and a party of miners joined in the chase.

Constable Percy Brown saw this human coursing match coming his way, heard vengeful cries on the morning air, of course deduced trouble, recognised Goulim as the "hare," divined that if grassed he'd probably become a corpse in new record time, and ran to meet him. As he neared the badly scared Goulim that man collapsed and fell to the ground.

As the men came on Brown made it clear that if necessary he would at least attempt to defend the fallen man, but there was no trouble. Indeed no thought of it. For one thing, Brown was known far and wide as a good man.

"What's the trouble?" asked the Constable.

"Five minutes ago he shot Tagh Mahomet dead," said one Spruhan. "Shot him from behind at that."

Brown looked down at the cringing Goulim. "It's a —— pity they didn't catch you," he said.

And I just then said Brown was a good man!

Like fire through hessian the news of Tagh's violent passing out of life tore across the goldfields town. As a mark of respect miners downed tools for the day. The sad news drifted out across the desert, and men came in to know it it were true. Though the hotels had a good day there was little hilarity. Men drank, as one said, because Tagh Mahomet would have preferred it so; and they drank to Tagh's future prospects.

Finally a cloud of anger settled down on the fields. The miners became angry and excited that a "mangy brute like Goulim Mahomet had by his cowardly action deprived them of the society of the whitest man in the West."

"We want justice, and we want it now," said a speaker. "The police are all right and good men, but their way is too slow."

Armed with pick-handles and such-like weapons, also a stout rope, a party of miners bore down upon the police camp; and the further they travelled the larger became the "army." Fortunately Inspector McKenna saw them coming, and at once went to meet them.

Now this same McKenna was a picked man. He ruled the fields, not on his position of Inspector of Police, but on his sheer manly merits. "You put me in a bad position," said he, as he walked amongst the crowd of excited men. "If you determined to get the man and string him up—at that I'd not blame you—I'd have to fight the matter out, which would mean bloodshed, and that I'd detest. Give the damned wretch over to the law, and trial. Remember that a Judge states only the law of the matter, but that it is the jury which judges the facts and gives its verdict. Goulim Mahomet will come into your hands, twelve of you anyway, in the long run. In the meantime I'll engage that he neither gets away nor gets out by the suicide's track. No man more carefully watched! Now get back to the town, and when you think matters over I think that one or two of you might even drink to my continued good health!"

I said that McKenna was a picked man. He was sorted out by no less a man that John Forrest, and given what amounted to a blank cheque on the goldfields.

The men gave three cheers for Inspector McKenna, drank his health in every hotel and shanty on the fields, and generally agreed that Goulim Mahomet couldn't be in better hands. But there was little of hilarity on that day of mourning, for on every hand man literally FELT the presence of Tagh Mahomet—Tagh, of the ever-ready helping hand—Tagh, whose casual word was as a bond of steel—Tagh, whose genial laugh was now silenced

forever—Tagh, whose greatest pleasure was to "shout for the crowd"—Tagh, whom they would never see again. As this last fact settled ever heavier on their thoughts they thought of the foul author of their sadness; and it soon became clear that the miner's most scorching and scathing curse was the private property of Goulim Mahomet.

Within two hours of Tagh Mahomet's violent death, the electric telegraph conveyed the sad news to Faiz Mahomet, his brother, at Geraldton. The Koran! As Faiz Mahomet well knew, in its solemn pages it is laid down that the murder of a Mohammedan must be avenged by the dead man's heir, in this instance himself. And by special coaches and special trains, expense no matter, Faiz Mahomet travelled to the goldfields to carry out this sacred mission. But though he sympathised with Faiz and his mission, of course Inspector McKenna could not accede to his request that Goulim be handed over for immediate execution.

"The murder of your brother by Goulim Mahomet appears to have been premeditated and deliberate, and there is little doubt that he will be hanged for it," said the Inspector. "The best I can do for you, is to get you a permit to witness the hanging, should it take place."

And with that the disappointed brother of the dead man had to be satisfied.

Goldfields opinion was solidly behind Faiz and his request, which was generally regarded as a reasonable one! Plainly Goulim couldn't in his narrow cell be forever laid a day too soon for the miners. "Why waste time trying the ——?" asked every second miner. "Doesn't everybody know that he is as guilty as Hell?"

Actually the trial of Goulim Mahomet for murder matched popular opinion, for it cannot be described other than as a steady slide towards the grim and grey old gallows in Perth Jail. There have been trials which consisted largely of an alleged fact or two and an ocean of slippery theory, but this was not—definitely not—the case when Goulim faced his accusers. Never was murder more widely sworn to, for four Australian Provinces—Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia—supplied eye-witnesses.

As the trial advanced two facts became ever clearer, the first of which was that Goulim would bloom with his Joss in the Mohammedan paradise at an early date, and the second that he didn't like the idea. Indeed, from current account, it would seem that at any point in the trial Goulim would have swapped his present prospects for a sandy patch out Southern Cross way.

Unfortunate Goulim! His jealousy of Tagh's prospects, popularity and prosperity had tricked him towards disaster; and at 8 a.m. April 4, 1896, in Perth Jail, he caught up with it.

Dr. Belaney's Prussic Acid Remedy

By ARNOLD SCRIBE

In many cases Dr. Belaney's prescriptions had been most effective. Apparently, however, there was something wrong with the treatmen he had decided on for his wife with the result that he made his appearance in court as a widower.

HIGH excitement ruled in North Sunderland both during and after the hearing in London of the charge against Dr. James Belaney, one of the residents of North Sunderland, of murdering his wife with prussic acid. The inhabitants of that city seem to have been all on the side of the deceased woman and dead against her surviving husband, a view which was publicly and enthusiastically confirmed by their conduct after the hearing, as will be detailed later in this history.

The Belaney case heard at the Old Bailey featured a long series of unusually strong condemnatory circumstantial evidence; it was so strong indeed that it seemed overwhelming.

Dr. James Belaney had been carrying on the profession of a medical practitioner in Sunderland in the North of England for some time until November, 1843, when he married Miss Rachel Skelley, the daughter and only child of a well-to-do widow who, among other substantial assets, owned a lime-work business. After the marriage Dr. Belaney and his wife went to reside with Mrs. Skelley, his mother-in-law, and he then took over the sole management of the lime-works. Within a very few months Mrs. Skelley died, her only medical attendant during her previous illness being her son-in-law. Dr. Belaney certified the death of Mrs. Skelley as having been due to a "bilious fever," whatever that expression may mean. At any rate Dr. Belaney's certificate of death was accepted by the authorities and the old lady was duly buried. And notwithstanding the suspicion caused by the circumstances of the

subsequent death of her daughter shortly afterwards, no one seems to have thought of having the mother's body exhumed and examined after the tragic end of the daughter, Mrs. Rachel Belaney.

After Mrs. Skelley's death, her daughter came into possession of some £11,000 worth of property (including the lime-works), a very substantial inheritance in those days, as will be recognised. In June, 1844, Dr. Belaney decided to take his wife to London. He informed friends in Sunderland that he intended to obtain lodgings in London and to leave his wife there while he took a trip up the Rhine and then proceeded to Holland to view an exhibition of hawking which was to take place there, as he was deeply interested in the sport of falconry.

In the month of May, and before Dr. and Mrs. Belaney left Sunderland, each of them had made a will in the other's sole favour.

In London, Dr. Belaney took lodgings for himself and his wife in the house of a Mrs. Heppingstall in Stepney. They arrived at Mrs. Heppingstall's house on 4th June. At this time Mrs. Belaney was in her seventh month of pregnancy.

It is not to be wondered at that in view of her then condition and the somewhat strenuous journey from Sunderland, Mrs. Belaney was not well on the day of her arrival at the lodgings. But on the next day, 5th June, she was undoubtedly very much better.

On 7th June Dr. Belaney went to a London surgeon, Dr. Donoghue, and arranged for that doctor to procure for him a selection of drugs, including prussic acid, which Dr. Belaney was, according to him, in the habit of taking for some internal nervous or dyspeptic complaint from which he stated that he suffered and which was aimed at relieving it. The next day, June 8, the landlady, Mrs. Heppingstall, was suddenly summoned to the Belaneys' bedroom. Mrs. Belaney was gasping for breath and her husband was standing over her with a scalpel in his hand. A surgeon was immediately sent for; but before he could arrive, after one shriek (her last act of volition, as one medical witness put it) Rachel Belaney died.

While Mrs. Belaney was lying in the agonies of death Dr. Belaney told Mrs. Heppingstall that his wife had had fits before but that she would never get over that one. We will see in a moment how he knew that to be a certainty.

But Belaney told the surgeon called in to attend his wife, Dr. Garrett, that his wife had only been taking a little salts.

Before the arrival of Dr. Garrett, Belaney had allowed friction, cataplasm and such remedies to be applied on his wife, though, as it was deposed by experts at the trial of Dr. Belaney, they could have had no effect on her in view of the real cause of her desperate condition.

Dr. Garrett at once recognised the cause of Mrs. Belaney's death as the consumption of prussic acid, though at first he kept his conviction to himself.

An inquest on the death of Rachel Belaney was held on June 10 and a post-mortem of the body was of course ordered by the coroner. This disclosed the cause of death without any doubt. But before the result of the post-mortem became known to him, Belaney informed Dr. Garrett that he knew that the cause of his wife's death was in fact prussic acid. Belaney explained to Dr. Garrett that he had diluted some prussic acid in order to have it handy for his own use, and that, having accidentally broken the phial in which it was usually kept, he had carelessly left the liquid in a tumbler and that his wife had drunk it in mistake for a dose of salts.

When Dr. James Belaney came up for trial for the murder of his wife at the Old Bailey in London in September, 1844, though the Solicitor-General who led for the prosecution opened to the jury in quite a restrained address, a number of witnesses deposed to a series of circumstantial facts of such a nature as almost to complete conviction of the prisoner's guilt. The fact that prussic acid had been taken by the deceased and that that poison was the cause of her death was not denied; of course, it could not be denied by the defence. What was denied was all motive and any active participation by Belaney.

In addition to the number of facts already set out which told

so heavily against Belaney, there was an even more formidable array of inculpatory circumstances to be found in the tissue of falsehoods which came from his mouth and his pen, which made the case against him much more black and in some minds would undoubtedly have turned any mere suspicion into complete certainty.

Keeping in mind the few important dates given and the short series of incidents already detailed, we have the additional incriminating proof that on June 5 Belaney wrote to a friend of his in Sunderland that his wife was very unwell. The very next day Belaney wrote to the same friend that his wife was very ill indeed and that she had been attended by two doctors who expected that she would miscarry. All those statements were utterly false. In a third letter posted, if not actually written, on June 8 and after Rachel Belaney's death, Belaney wrote to his friend that his wife was worse and that her medical attendant as well as himself thought that she had disease of the heart. All these were equally false statements. On June 9 in a letter to his friend in Sunderland Belaney announced that his beloved Rachel was no more. That statement was completely true.

When Dr. Garrett received the "confession" of Belaney as to the tumbler of prussic acid left carelessly by him and the contents of which his wife had drunk to his knowledge, Dr. Garrett most naturally wanted to know why the man had not at once acknowledged that his wife had taken the poison prepared, according to his later story, for himself To that challenge Belaney replied with the surprising assertion that he was too much ashamed and enraged with himself to disclose the truth earlier. This same explanation of the almost incredible incident Belaney also made in private letters to acquaintances in Sunderland, adding that he did not really know what he was about at the time of the tragic happening.

Such was the evidence for the prosecution.

Mr. William Erle appeared as leading counsel for the accused Belaney. Erle was a most able and subtle advocate. Like some other quite famous men both inside and outside the law, Erle

suffered from an impediment in his speech which he had schooled himself largely to overcome. And though he did not possess the art of eloquence as then generally understood, the outstanding features of which were elaborate (if not over-elaborate) verbosity and vehemence. Erle had qualities which acquired for him a great and deserved reputation and took him at length to the important post of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

In the trial of Belaney Erle most certainly did wonders for his client in an enormously difficult case. In the defence Erle contended that his client had not the slightest motive for committing the imputed crime of the murder of his wife and that his story as to the happenings on June 8 was the true one. And a great number of witnesses were called for the defence. One of them was a man named Clarke who was a master mariner and a close friend of Belaney and who was sent for by Belaney on that fatal Saturday (June 8) and who, in addition, was himself actually present at the death of Mrs. Belaney. Captain Clarke deposed that he had heard Belaney exclaim that his wife would not recover, as well as declaring that it was entirely owing to his own gross negligence that she was in her then dreadful condition. On Monday, June 10, according to Clarke, Belaney told Clarke the whole story of his awful mistake and how he came to make it. Many witnesses, friends of both Belaney and his wife, came from Sunderland and elsewhere to describe Belaney as a thoroughly humane man and as having been more kind and attentive to his wife than husbands usually were. And these witnesses agreed that Mrs. Belaney was a woman of highly attractive appearance and the most engaging manners and that it had been apparent that she reciprocated her husband's affection in the most unequivocal fashion. They also deposed that there was no doubt that after his wife's death Belaney's aspect was marked by all the signs of profound and sincere grief.

Mr. Baron Gurney was the judge who presided at the trial of Belaney at the Old Bailey. In his summing-up that judge commented at length on the bad but perhaps erroneous impressions which the intricate falsehoods (inexplicable, too, many must have thought) of the prisoner were calculated to make. Naturally the

judge's attitude was by no means unhelpful to the accused's case. It must be remembered that in those days an accused person was not permitted to give evidence on his own behalf and that therefore Belaney had not the opportunity to make his explanations, if he had any, upon oath. Perhaps that fact redounded much to his advantage. For one may well imagine what havoc a skilful cross-examiner could have made of Belaney's story if told by himself in the witness-box as well as of his string of undeniable and calculated falsehoods.

After only a half an hour of consideration the jury returned a verdict of acquittal of the extraordinary fortunate Dr. James Belaney. Whatever the freed prisoner himself really thought of the verdict, upon hearing it he displayed not the slightest apparent emotion but merely bowed to the Court and retired from the dock.

But that was not by any means the end of the troubles of Dr. James Belaney. It may be that he considered that the world would accept the jury's decision as conclusive proof of his innocence. Other accused persons similarly charged have from time to time put on the airs of innocence after acquittal and have succeeded in inducing others to accept their attitude as justified and correct. But if that was Belaney's view it certainly was not that of a host of other people.

Belaney, immediately after his court triumph, returned to his old home in Sunderland. The acquittal had occasioned the most intense excitement of popular feeling in the neighbourhood of Sunderland. The general populace, hostile to Belaney almost to a man, collected in great numbers in the evening of his arrival at his home and paraded the streets and lanes in and near North Sunderland carrying three effigies, the first representing Belaney himself, the second what was called "the arch fiend," whose identity is easily understood, and the third a composite figure of Belaney's friends who resided mostly in Newcastle and who had taken so prominent a part in assisting Belaney at his trial for murder of the woman who had been held in the district in the highest regard and even affection. When about 9 o'clock at night the huge procession reached the gates of Belaney's house they began

to set fire to his effigy outside the gates. Belaney rushed out and fired off a pistol in the direction of the crowd but he was forced to make a hurried retreat, dropping his pistol as he ran. The crowd was so incensed at the conduct of Belaney that it then began a general advance and attack upon the house itself, battered down and demolished the glass frames. Having got inside the premises they destroyed everything that came in their way. In the confusion Belaney managed to make his escape and to elude his infuriated pursuers by secreting himself somewhere in a field. This ruse was a lucky one for him, otherwise there is little doubt that if he had been found he would have been instantly lynched by the mob. The mass of men then set fire to the gates and to the other two effigies, and finally they suspended the remains of the effigy of Belaney by the neck from a chimney pot on a house opposite Belaney's, where they left it swinging in the wind.

The next morning Belaney's house looked, we are told, as if it had been assaulted by a small army and had been battered by hundreds of cannon balls. But that was not the finish to the virulence of the populace. The next night they assembled again and deliberately set fire to the Belany's house with the result that the whole structure was burnt completely to the ground.

We are told that the situation of Belaney's house was very romantic. It had been erected at the end of the village, near the end of a cliff and directly overlooking the sea, the drawing-room windows being only a few inches from the summit of a fearsome precipice. It had been built according to a plan prepared by Belaney himself and its unusual features had long afforded food for local gossip among the rustic population of the district. The significance of the design of the house has never been explained and this certainly gave rise to many gruesome ideas in the minds of the Sunderland folks. These matters may even so affect the modern reader of this tragic story.

Over a hundred years after this unique case we are still left with

two questions which still leave us with grave doubts. The first is as to how in fact Dr. James Belaney's unfortunate wife came to her death (including, of course, that of her unborn child). The second is as to what testimony of what witnesses and what other factors, such as the effects of able advocacy and the judge's apparent partial summing-up, influenced the jury which tried him to acquit the husband of his wife's murder.

YVETTE LOST HER HEAD

By C. KAY

If M. Molinas had not been so vain it is likely that he might have got away with the murder of the lovely Yvette Boissieu. Fortunately for the authorities, however, his vanity was an emotion he could not control.

IT is a well-worn adage that every criminal makes one mistake that proves to be his last. This is a story of that fascinating city, Paris, which by and large, has produced over the century a greater crop of the most diabolical murderers than any other place in the world.

And it was the almost incredible vanity of a certain business man who, though on the run after committing a murder, could not refrain from giving himself airs, that landed his neck under the guillotine.

Early one morning in the early eighties, Gendarme Gustav Dubois was on the beat in the Rue Dauphin. It was still dark, the traffic was negligible and the pedestrians few.

Halting in a deserted doorway, he took out his pipe and began to fill it. At the same time, glancing across the street, he noticed a rather furtive figure carrying a sack, halt outside the doorway of a small cafe which bore the rather fanciful name of Le Loup Rouge. The figure commenced to rummage in a large box, but the gendarme did not trouble to investigate closer. The furtive, shambling figure was well known to him—it was old Pierre Mandel, a scavenger of garbage. Pierre, in modern parlance, was "not all there." A creature of the slums, kicked from pillar to post, he existed mainly on what he could scrounge from cafe waste. Quite a number of restauranteurs in the quarter often left tasty tit-bits wrapped up in paper for him.

It was said that old Papa Mandel was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and had been a prisoner of war. What the Germans had done to him was nobody's business and it had left him with a deficient mind.

As the gendarme watched, he saw the old man take a parcel from the bin and stow it inside his sack. He then moved off down the street. Negligently, Dubois began to walk in the same direction, but keeping on his own side of the street. Presently Mandel crossed over and the gendarme gave him a friendly hail.

"Good business this morning, Papa Mandel?" he asked with a smile.

"Ah, it is my friend the police officer," said Mandel. "Non, it is not so good this morning. I have but very little reward. Alas, they soon forget an old poilu who fought so bravely in the war. It was different when we marched so proudly in our new uniforms."

"But you got something good from the Cafe Loup Rouge, did you not?" asked Dubois. "Did I not see you lift a large parcel out of the bin? Something tasty, I warrant myself. Emil Lacroix is not a niggardly man."

"He is my best patron," assented Papa Mandel. "Never a night passes that he does not leave me something. As soon as he closes the Loup Rouge he leaves me a parcel. He knows that I like ham. I have not yet opened the parcel to see what it contains, but by its weight it is excellent. Come, we will look together, mon ami."

It was only with the slightest interest that Gendarme Dubois watched the scavenger dive a hand into the sack and lug out a newspaper parcel tied with string. Mandel placed it on the footpath and untied the knot with fumbling fingers. Carefully he rolled back the layers of paper and came to a piece of black calico. He pondered over this for a space and then unwrapped this too—to reveal what appeared to be a tubular length of raw meat.

Papa Mandel looked at it in disgust.

"Tiens!" he exclaimed. "Does Emil Lacroix make a joke of me that he should leave me a piece of raw meat? I am not a dog! Am I?" He looked appealing at Dubois. That officer had not

heard him. His whole attention was concentrated on the "piece of raw meat."

"Mon Dieu!" he exclaimed in horrified tones. "You see what it is, Papa Mandel? It is a piece of human leg. Sacre nom de Dieu!"

And Gendarme Dubois undoubtedly was correct. It WAS a piece of human leg—a length of shin.

"Bah!" snorted Papa Mandel. "This Lacroix is a villain and a fool. Does he think I am a cannibal? I will go to his cafe and ram it down his throat."

"Dolt and cretin!" stormed Dubois. "Here, gave me that parcel. Murder has been done!"

Hastily he rewrapped the "exhibit" in the black calico and newspaper and tied it with the string.

"Come, we will see this Emil Lacroix and discover what he is doing. Come with me, Papa."

The old scavenger readily agreed to be a witness of what might occur. He was hostile with the cafe owner. Apparently it had not penetrated into his foggy mind just what the gruesome parcel actually portended.

Monsieur Lacroix was not too pleased at being dragged out of bed at 4 a.m. and he said so. Gendarme Dubois pushed past him into the frowsy little eating house and told him to shut up and listen.

"When did you put this parcel into your garbage box?" he asked, thrusting the gruesome bundle under the cafe proprietor's nose. Lacroix replied that he did not put any parcels in any garbage tins. That was the work of his waiter, Paul Floret. What was it all about, anyway? Dubois unrolled the parcel. Lacroix was horrified. Loudly he protested his innocence and said that Floret must be responsible.

"Does this Floret put out the scraps of food for Papa Mandel?" asked Dubois. "If so, I shall talk to him about this. Where is he to be found?"

Lacroix replied that Floret also lived on the premises and would be produced immediately. He was. The waiter denied all knowledge of the parcel. He said that he had left out for Papa Mandel some fish wrapped in white paper. It was at the very bottom of the bin and, if Mandel had not collected it, should be still there. Dubois inspected the bin, watched by Papa Mandel himself, also Lacroix and the palpitating waiter. The gendarme dived deep into the rubbish and, sure enough, located a white paper parcel which on being opened contained half a fish. Dubois grunted and handed it over to old Papa Mandel.

"I shall now require all of you to accompany me to the Police Commissary," said Dubois and away they went.

To say that the discovery in a cafe garbage bin created a sensation is to put it mildly. The Police Commissary of the area, one Andre Jacquinot, a very experienced officer, knew that he had a case and a half on his hands. Of course, it need not necessarily mean that a murder had been committed: it might be a prank by a medical student. Such fellows were well known for their jokes. Jokes in bad taste, granted, but they did these things.

Jacquinot's preliminary grilling of the waiter Floret convinced him that the man had not placed the parcel in the garbage bin. The restauranteur Lacroix seemed equally innocent. Nevertheless, a spell in prison for a few days would do neither any harm. So Jacquinot charged them both with complicity in the crime and threw them into a cell. This was just another sidelight of the old French custom of presuming everyone guilty until they can prove their innocence.

The doctor to whom the grisly exhibit was turned over said he could not determine definitely whether it had belonged to a man or a woman, but he felt certain that it was that of an adult and possibly a woman. He would need more of the body before making a definite diagnosis.

And he got more—from the garbage bins of Paris. Before the day was out, Police Commissary Jacquinot had been presented with enough pieces of human body to make up two legs and two arms. These, nine pieces in all, had all been found in garbage

receptacles in the vicinity of the Rue Dauphin. Dr. Beaumarchais proclaimed that the limbs, after he had arranged them, were those of a woman, aged, he judged, between twenty and thirty.

Commissary Jacquinot was quite convinced now that a crime had been committed and energetically set about trying to identify the corpse—or what there was of it. The absence of the head made this most difficult. There were no scars or birthmarks on any of the remains found.

And then there commenced a wide search for the missing pieces of the human jigsaw puzzle. Garbage tins for miles around were combed over, wells were probed, the river was dragged, but nothing more was discovered. There was the usual crop of tales from scaremongers and those suffering from imaginitis about mysterious figures seen dropping equally mysterious parcels into garbage bins at dead of night, but this got the police nowhere.

Dr. Beaumarchais gave it as his opinion that the woman had died about 24 hours before the discovery was made by Gendarme Dubois. The actual dismemberment had probably been done with a chopper soon after death.

Turning his attention to the wrapping, Jacquinot had a tailor examine it. This man stated that it was material commonly used by tailors and dressmakers, but could be bought by the roll by the general public.

The Commissary had his assistants look up the list of women reported missing down the past two weeks. There were 23! He had each one of these investigated to the full. Quite a number, he found, had disappeared voluntarily for various reasons and were still alive. Two were found to be in gaol. This narrowed it down to seven. But each of this seven, he found to his dismay, had disappeared long before the 24-hour period set by Dr. Beaumarchais as the time lapsing after death and before discovery. Of course the doctor might be wrong, but, Jacquinot told himself ruefully, he would not be five or six days out.

So the body was of a woman who had not been reported missing or was not known to be missing.

Of the tailors around the Rue Dauphin neighbourhood, Jacquinot had nothing but good reports. They were all respectable people. But even so-called respectable people had skeletons in their cupboards. It was a puzzling affair and, being French, Jacquinot at length decided that it was a crime of passion. Very well then. He would have to wait until somebody provided him with a clue. Dr. Beaumarchais had told him that the victim had been a very beautiful woman, judging by her lower limbs, and no beautiful woman was without friends. One of them soon was sure to talk. Monsieur Jacquinot knew his Paris.

Into his office on May 11, three days after the discovery of the remains, came a young woman who gave her name as Claudette Boissieu. She said that she lived with her sister Yvette in an apartment on the Rue Princess. Her sister, who was 25 years of age, was employed in a dress shop on the Rue de la Paix as a sales lady. Although Yvette lived with her (they were orphans) her sister did not always sleep at the apartment. Sometimes she would be absent for a night or two. Now she was missing altogether.

"She has a friend, you understand, Monsieur le Commissary," said Claudette with a slight blush. Jacquinot understood all right.

"A lover, mademoiselle?" he inquired. Claudette admitted it. Yvette, she said, "had an understanding" with Monsieur Henri Molinas, the proprietor of the dress-shop. Molinas lived in a luxurious apartment over his dress shop.

"But, Mademoiselle, forgive my apparent stupidity, but I do not understand why it is that you have come to me," said Jacquinot. "You say your sister is missing altogether. How long is it since you have seen her?"

"Nearly a week," said Claudette Boissieu. "She has never been away from me for so long—never more than three days—and then I always knew from her that she was going."

"And you no doubt have made inquiries from this Monsieur Molinas of the dress-shop about your sister?"

"I went there this morning before taking the liberty of seeing

you, Monsieur le Commissary," responded Claudette. "Monsieur Molinas told me that my sister Yvette had gone on a visit to Nantes on business for the shop. But I do not think that is true."

"And why not?"

"My sister is a saleswoman. She knows nothing of buying and selling from manufacturers and the like. I know Molinas is lying."

Jacquinot thought that this was a rather illogical statement and did not place much reliance in it. Making allowances for Claudette's natural worry over a sister, he could not for the life of him read anything sinister into Yvette's absence. However, he told his visitor that he would look into the matter, and wished her a friendly farewell.

Jacquinot was inclined to be a little cynical over the affair.

He was about to dismiss the matter from his mind when a sudden thought struck him. Yvette Boissieu was reported missing. She worked in a dressmaker's shop. Remnants of a woman's body had been found wrapped up in material used in a dressmaker's shop. Was it a mere coincidence?

Jacquinot decided to have a word with Monsieur Henry Molinas of the Rue de la Paix.

Molinas was a tubby little man with a fierce-looking moustache and a wealth of black hair parted in the middle with arithmetical exactitude. He gave Jacquinot a cordial welcome. Yes, he said, it was true that Mademoiselle Boissieu had not been in the shop for some days. Possibly she was ill.

"I have been told that you sent her to Nantes on business for your shop," said Jacquinot. "Is that not so?"

"Mais non, monsieur! Nantes? I have no business connections in Nantes," said Molinas, exhibiting surprise. "Who told you that?"

"When did you last see Mlle. Boissieu?" asked Jacquinot, dodging Molinas' question.

"Two days ago," said Molinas. "That would be May 9."

"You are most precise," commented Jacquinot.

Molinas replied that Yvette was his best saleswoman and naturally he felt her absence keenly. He knew to an hour when she was last on the job.

Remembering that the bits of body had been found on May 8, a day before Molinas said he had last seen Yvette, Jacquinot realised that if what he said was correct, then he had a perfect alibi and in any case the remains could not possibly be those of Yvette Boissieu.

"You have not been to her apartment to learn if she is ill?" he asked.

"But why should I?" asked Molinas. "I am a busy man. I have no time."

"But you said that she is your best saleswoman and you miss her presence keenly," said Jacquinot, to whom things did not add up.

"That is so," assented Molinas.

"And you could not send anyone else to see Mle. Boissieu?"

"It is too bad of her to leave me like this!" said Molinas.

"Molinas, you are not being honest with me," said Jacquinot, taking direct action. "Do you deny that you told Claudette Boissieu, the sister of Yvette, that you sent Yvette to Nantes on business?"

"Tiens! Of course I deny it. It is not so," exclaimed Molinas.

"And do you deny that this Yvette Boissieu is something more to you than just a saleswoman in this shop. Is she not, in fact, your mistress?"

"What of that?" snorted Molinas. "Most gentlemen have their mistresses. I am not an exception. That is not a crime, Monsieur le Commissary. As to this story of Nantes, that is such lies. The little Claudette is dreaming. I told her no such thing."

"Yvette Boissieu is your mistress, but you make no attempt to inquire of her illness?" demanded Jacquinot.

"Monsieur le Commissary," said Molinas, getting wild, "what is

it that you want to know? Why are you here asking these questions? Has anything happened to Yvette?"

"Not as far as I know," said Jacquinot. "But she is definitely missing. She is not at her home and her sister has not seen her for a week. She has vanished completely."

"And no doubt will return. Her sister, the little Claudette, is not a great one to tell the truth, though. And she does not like me."

"Why not?"

"Because her sister is my very good friend she asks for dresses from me for nothing. I tell her that she must pay like any other customer. It is not good business to give away your stock."

Jacquinot asked him a few more questions but got nothing of interest, so he returned to his office. He could not understand why Claudette had told him about the alleged trip to Nantes, but passed it over. Obviously Molinas had nothing to do with the "remains" affair and, after all, that was the most important item on Jacquinot's agenda. He decided to dismiss the Boissieu episode as so much time wasted.

The person responsible for the killing must be insane, Jacquinot felt convinced.

Several days pased and then Jacquinot got a break. He deserved it. A fellow doing a spot of fishing in the Seine snagged his hook on something and when he at length got it free he was interested to find that it carried most mysterious "bait" in the shape of some human hair and a piece of scalp. He took his find to the local police station and in next to no time the gendarmes were dragging the spot. Up came a human head—a woman's head crowned with long dark hair.

Though the head had been in the river a week or so, it was in a fair state of preservation and had once belonged to a very handsome woman. When it came into the possession of M. Jacquinot, he at once turned Dr. Beaumarchais loose on it with the obvious question—did it belong to the same body as the legs and arms? Dr. Beaumarchais said he hadn't got the foggiest

notion. Mon Dieu, how could he fit a head on to bits of limbs? Give him the intervening trunk and then he might do a job. But without that! Well, he was not the magician. Non!

Jacquinot got a brainwave. He sent for Mademoiselle Claudette Boissieu and after warning her to prepare for a shock, let her loose on the head. Did she recognise it as belonging to anyone? Mlle. Claudette took one look at the grisly exhibit, let out one long shriek and threw a willy on the Commissary's carpet. Jacquinot looked grimly satisfied as he rallied round with the smelling salts. So! It looked as if the missing Yvette Boissieu had, in life, worn that head on her shapely shoulders.

And when the girl came round she confirmed the fact. Yes, without doubt, the head was that of her sister Yvette and, she added hysterically, she had been done to death by that monster Molinas. Ah, the villain! Why didn't M. Jacquinot go immediately and arrest him?

Jacquinot was a fast worker when he liked, but this was going a bit too fast even for him. He wanted a bit more to work on first.

"Why do you accuse M. Molinas of killing your sister?" he asked.

"I do not know, but I am sure he did it," moaned Claudette, a trifle illogically.

"A few questions, mademoiselle," said the Commissary. "I have spoken to M. Molinas about the disappearance of your sister. He says he knows nothing about it. He says, too, that he did not tell you that he had sent her to Nantes on business for his firm. He says that she just failed to arrive for work one day and he has not seen her since. Your comments, please?"

Claudette said that Molinas was a liar and the father of liars. She repeated that he had told her that Yvette had gone to Nantes. There was no question about that. If Molinas said differently, he was the greatest liar in France—in Europe, come to that. Mark her words, she said, that double-dyed villain had murdered Yvette.

"M. Molinas has told me that you dislike him because he refused to give you clothes for nothing," said Jacquinot. "That is incorrect?"

"Oh, the liar and rascal!" exclaimed the indignant Claudette. "Never have I asked him for free clothes. But the foul wretch has offered them to me."

"Why?" asked the interested police officer. Claudette blushed rosily.

"He desired me, too, to be his mistress, but I would have none of his unwelcome attentions," she said. "I am only a young girl, not yet 19, but I know these men. They would ruin a girl if they could. He has ruined my poor sister."

Jacquinot felt that he was getting somewhere. He plied the girl with questions as to Molinas' habits and friends. Did he have any other women in tow? Was he married? What did she know about him at all? Did her sister know of his advances towards Claudette?

Claudette replied that a man like Molinas probably had a dozen women on the string. No, he was not married as far as she knew. No, she had not told Yvette about Molinas' attentions because she did not want to cause any trouble. Oh, how she now wished that she had done so. Perhaps the great tragedy could have been thus averted!

Jacquinot thanked her for her assistance and got rid of her. He had work to do. He felt almost convinced that there was a tie-up between the corpse and Molinas. The remains found among the garbage had been wrapped in black and white calico. The head had been anchored with a flat-iron. These articles all could be found in a dressmaking establishment. Yvette had worked in such a place. It was more than possible that she had been done to death by Molinas. The fact that he had said that he had seen the woman the day after the remains had been found, did not mean a thing. Naturally he would have an alibi, possibly a dozen alibis, already lined up. Ah, but he must be a cunning one, this Monsieur Molinas!

But what could the motive be? Firstly, he may have grown tired of her and wanted somebody else; secondly, she may have found out something so much to his discredit that the only safe way was to eliminate her. Of course, there was the possibility that he had killed her in a fit of temper during a quarrel.

Before interviewing Molinas, Jacquinot decided to find out what he could about the man. By patient inquiry he established that Molinas was aged 40, a native of Toulon and moderately wealthy. He did not have a criminal past. As a young man he married, but his wife died two years later. He had the reputation of being a ladies' man, but no more or no less than any other French businessman of his standing. As far as he was able to ascertain, Yvette Boissieu was his only "heart-throb"; officially, anyway. Of course there may have been one or more in the background.

It was not much for Jacquinot to work on so he determined to take the bull by the horns and have it out with Molinas in person.

Jacquinot drew a blank when he visited the shop on the Rue de la Paix. Monsieur Molinas was away, he was told by an aristocratic looking madame. No, she did not know where he had gone or how long he would be absent. She was in charge of the shop, she said. Who was she? She was Madame Lamaison and she was employed by Monsieur Molinas. She created garments for monsieur, among other things. Yes, she knew Yvette Boissieu, Mlle. Boissieu was also away. Could madame do anything for monsieur?

Jacquinot told madame that he was a police officer and he wanted to know where Molinas was. Madame repeated that she did not know. Molinas lived on the premises and usually opened the establishment each morning. When she arrived this day she had been met by Molinas' housekeeper, an ancient dame who kept his rooms clean. This woman had given madame a note which merely stated that her employer would be absent for a time but that madame should keep the business going as well as she could. Jacquinot demanded the note and it was given to him. It read as madame had stated.

"Are you a personal friend of Monsier Molinas?" asked Jacquinot. Madame replied firmly that she was not—that she was just employed in the place.

"It is not yet known to the public," said the Commissary, "but Yvette Boissieu has been murdered and I desire to question M. Molinas on the matter."

Madame was genuinely horrified. La pauvre Yvette! Who had done such a deed? Did M. le Commissary suspect M. Molinas? Well, it was possible. Ah, the quarrels those two had had! M. Molinas had a vile temper and often struck her. It was a bad affair, undoubtedly.

Jacquinot, not unnaturally, pricked up his ears and plied Madame with questions. Yes, it was true. Mlle. Boissieu and M. Molinas often quarrelled. Mais certainment, they were lovers and even lovers quarrelled, but these, they fought like tigers, n'est pas?

Jacquinot felt that he was about to strike oil. Had madame actually seen any of these brawls? Yes, madame had seen Molinas strike Yvette in the shop, embarrassing her before customers. Yvette was often in tears at his treatment. No, madame did not know the reason for these differences. No, she had no idea where Molinas was at the moment. He might still be in Paris or he might not.

Deciding that a search of Molinas' private quarters was overdue, the detective mounted the stairs and had a good look around. The place appeared to be in good order. Did madame know where the housekeeper was to be found? Madame did. Would madame send a messenger for her at once? Madame would and did. It was half an hour before the ancient woman appeared. Jacquinot asked her to have a look at the place and tell him, if she could, what property of Molinas' was missing. The woman poked around in cupboards and drawers and other places and then announced that certain personal articles were gone. Yes, they were the type of things a man would take if he were going on a holiday. She had arrived that morning to clean up and had found the note for her on the dressing table. No, the bed had not been slept in. M. Molinas must have departed the previous night. No, she did not know where he had gone.

It seemed plain to the detective that the bird had flown. He doubted if M. Molinas would be seen around that flat or shop for a long time. He must have taken fright and bolted; yet why should he? He could not know that the murdered woman had been identified as Yvette Boissieu—or that he was suspected.

Jacquinot could not get any inspiration or clues from the shop or the apartment and at first, precious little information from the old housekeeper. The woman admitted that she knew the relationship between Mll. Boissieu and her employer, but thought nothing of it. Yes, they had often stayed the night together in the flat. She herself had seen them in bed together when she arrived to clean up the place.

"And they quarrelled at times, no doubt?" asked Jacquinot.

"Oh, yes, monsieur," said the old woman. "Sometimes they were violent. They did not seem to care that I was in the apartment. But it has only been these last few months that the quarrels have been, what do you call it, most tempestuous."

Invited to describe some of these set-tos, the woman said that she had seen Molinas strike Yvette over the head with a hair-brush and once he had knocked her to the floor and tried to drag her about by her long hair. Yvette was weeping and crying.

"There was another man, I am sure. I think M. Molinas was jealous," said the housekeeper. Jacquinot was doubly interested. He felt more than ever he was getting a motive against Molinas. But the old woman did not know who the other man was. And of course there had been that time when Yvette had reproached him for his attentions to her young sister, the little Claudette. M. Molinas was very angry over that and had chased Yvette round the room with a carving knife, threatening to kill her.

"I told him to stop his foul work and he turned on me, telling me to get out of the place or I should lose my situation," added the housekeeper. "I did not want to lose the situation, which is a well paid one."

"Do you think that M. Molinas would be capable of murdering Mlle. Boissieu?" asked the detective.

"Oh, but certainly, monsieur," replied the ancient dame. "When he was in his terrible temper he would be capable of any violence."

Jacquinot then told her about the finding of the remains, which she already knew, and of the discovery of the head which was undoubtedly Yvette's—which she did not know. She took it remarkably well; in fact, she nodded her own head vigorously.

"M. Molinas did it," she said decidedly. "He stabbed her. He did it with the carving knife as he often threatened he would do. Wait, I shall show you the very knife."

She went to a drawer and extracted a wicked-looking carving knife which she handed to Jacquinot, saying that it was the knife Molinas had once chased Mlle. Boissieu with. Jacquinot examined the thing narrowly. It was perfectly clean. He then asked the woman if Molinas possessed a meat chopper. She said he did—that it was in the cupboard. She looked for it but could not find it.

Returning to his office, the Commissary set about spreading the news all over France. Within a day or two the newspapers talked about nothing else but the identification of Yvette Boissieu. But they said nothing of M. Molinas, because the astute Jacquinot did not let it out that he was suspected. He did not want the man to go into the strictest hiding. But the police in all the large cities and towns were supplied with Molinas' description and habits and asked to keep a strict look out for him.

This bore fruit, but in an unexpected manner. A few days after Molinas's disappearance, the Paris police received a message from their opposite numbers at Nantes, that they were holding a man on suspicion of theft. He was a tubby little man with black hair parted in the middle, but was clean shaven. He had been arrested while selling dresses in a hotel. There had been an argument over the price of one of the garments. A customer had said that it was rubbish and not worth what the man had demanded. The man had retorted fiercely that the dress had been made by the finest artiste in Paris, the House of Molinas. More words had led to blows and a free fight had started. The local gendarmes had arrested both customer and dress seller for disturbing the peace and when taken to the police station, the hawker had given his name as Henri Gaston. Asked where he got the dresses from, he refused to answer, so he was charged with having stolen them.

But—and it was an enormous BUT—in the bag containing the dresses, the police had discovered a meat chopper, wrapped up in black calico. The man Gaston explained that he had bought it for protection against possible thugs.

Jacquinot lost no time in making for Nantes and when he met the so-called Henri Gaston, he knew him at once for Henri Molinas of the Rue de la Paix, minus his Kaiser Bill moustache.

Questioned closely about his movements, "Gaston" stated that he had just arrived from Toulon. He was not Molinas and he had never even been in Paris. As for the dresses, he had bought them from a shop in Toulon. As for the tag on them bearing the name of Henri Molinas, he had put that there himself to enhance the value of the garments.

"You regard Henri Molinas as the greatest dressmaker in Paris?" asked Jacquinot.

"In the whole of France, if not the whole of the world," said "Gaston" vaingloriously.

"But," said the sly Jacquinot, "I, too, am a judge of dress material and I say that these articles are but cheap rubbish, which no discerning lady would buy in mistake for Molinas dresses. They are rubbish, I repeat."

He was hardly prepared for the great gust of anger to which "Gaston" gave birth. He swore like a Montmartre gamin and declared that they were true Molinas dresses and no rubbish. How dare Jacquinot say that they were such? There were no better dresses in the whole world.

"Yet, Monsieur Gaston, you bought them from a shop in Toulon and put the tabs on them yourself to pass them off as Molinas dresses," said Jacquinot quietly.

Molinas saw that he was trapped and wisely kept his mouth shut.

"Why did you murder Yvette Boissieu?" demanded Jacquinot. "Do not trouble to deny it. You are Henry Molinas, not Henri Gaston. You ran away from Paris to elude your crime, but you cannot elude Jacquinot." M. le Commissary apparently liked himself as much as Henri Molinas liked HIMSELF.

"It is a dastardly lie!" exclaimed Molinas. "Yes, I am Molinas, but I did not kill Yvette Boissieu."

"Scoundrel and liar," said Jacquinot in good old French fashion. "You are her murderer and you shall go to the guillotine. You

shall lose your head even as Mlle. Boissieu lost hers. You are a doomed man."

"So you say," said Molinas more calmly. "But I am an innocent man, and even in France the innocent do not suffer."

Jacquinot did not venture an opinion on THAT optimistic statement. He knew better! Not that he had any doubts about the murderer of Yvette Boissieu.

Molinas was carted back to Paris and lodged in a cell. Jacquinot had the goods on him all right, but had no evidence of the actual dismemberment of the body. Molinas refused to make a statement about anything, maintaining his complete innocence. The Commissary went over the apartment above the Rue de la Paix shop inch by inch but could find no signs of the murder having been committed there. He was certain that it had not been. The first discovery had been made by Papa Mandel on May 8 and Dr. Beaumarchais said the body had been dead for about 24 hours. That would make the murder date May 7, probably that night. Questioned, the old housekeeper said that Molinas was at the apartment on the morning of May 8, but not Yvette Boissieu. Apparently she had not slept there. Neither had she stayed with her sister Claudette that night. The more he thought over it, the more Jacquinot was convinced that Yvette had been murdered on the night of May 7—and not at the Molinas apartment.

Jacquinot thought it more than likely that Molinas had lured the girl to some lonely spot and then killed her. Tiens! What a villain!

The Commissary decided to give Molinas another working over and did so. In this he was assisted by a most tenacious examining magistrate, one Jacques Charpentier. Between them they third-degreed the suspect until Molinas did not know whether he was coming or going.

They succeeded in breaking him down a little. He admitted that he and Yvette had often quarrelled and that on one occasion he had threatened her with a carving knife. But these were ordinary lovers' tiffs.

"Most gallant," observed Jacquinot.

"But I did not kill my little Yvette. Why, messieurs, I loved her!" said Molinas.

"Men have been known to kill those they loved," stated Jacquinot profoundly.

"As Molinas killed Mlle. Boissieu," nodded M. Charpentier.

"I did not kill her," said Molinas quite calmly. "You have no proof. This is a diabolical conspiracy which I refute."

"You killed her!"

"I accept the death of Yvette, but it was not I who killed her. It must have been her other lover, the man from Lyons."

"Ah, and who is this man?" asked Jacquinot.

"I have never met him, monsieur. Had I done so I undoubtedly would have killed him," said Molinas calmly.

"As you killed Yvette Boissieu," said Charpentier.

"I know nothing of that matter," retorted Molinas.

"Oh, undoubtedly you killed her," said Jacquinot, "but perhaps, who knows, it might have been an accident! Come on, mon ami, we waste our time here," he added to Charpentier and the two officers left Molinas to sweat in his little cell.

M. Jacquinot was a sly dog. He deliberately had planted an idea into the mind of M. Molinas. He hoped that Molinas' mind was receptive to the idea.

It was!

Molinas must have done a lot of thinking overnight because next morning he sent for Jacquinot. That astute officer took along the examining magistrate with him. Molinas was ready to talk. Yes, he said, the killing of Yvette Boissieu was, indeed, an accident, a most sad affair. He would tell the truth and the court would be most lenient with him.

It was an interesting little tale that he told and both Jacquinot and Charpentier accepted parts of it with more than one grain of salt.

The whole miserable affair, Molinas stated, arose out of the fact that Yvette Boissieu had taken unto herself a new lover who

resided in Lyons and who journeyed to Paris on occasions to see her. On the night of May 7, during an argument, Yvette had taunted him about the Lyons fellow and a bitter quarrel had developed. During the row, Yvette had seized a water carafe from the dressing table and had bashed him over the head with it. Helas, but it was a tremendous blow which, temporarily, deprived him of his senses.

Recovering his equilibrium, he had remonstrated with her upon her hard-heartedness, pointing out that he had practically taken her from the gutter, given her a good job and—supreme gift—had bestowed upon her his own favors.

"She laughed at me, mes amis, laughed at me!" he exclaimed. "She told me that I was getting old and fat and was no longer attractive to her, whereas her lover from Lyons was young, rich and handsome. Bitter words followed and I became enraged. I took the carving knife from the drawer. Then I remember nothing more until I see her lying on the floor. I had stabbed her to the heart in my blind rage."

Molinas took time off, we are told, to bury his face in his hands and indulge in a morsel of sobbing. Jacquinot and the juge d'instruction were not impressed.

Continuing his narrative, Molinas said that, terrified by what he had done, he was at a loss what to do next. What was he to do with the corpse of his beloved? It must be removed and disposed of. But how? In what way? Then he remembered that he owned a small house just across the back alley. Thank heavens, this house was unoccupied. He would remove the body there.

Going down to the shop workroom, he secured some lengths of black and of white calico and a couple of large pieces of sheeting. He took these back into the apartment, secured the meat chopper from the kitchen and wrapped it up in the calico. Then he swathed the body in the sheeting and carried it down the back stairs and into the deserted alley at the rear of the shop. Luck had been with him and he had succeeded in getting the body into the unoccupied cottage, or rather shack, across the way; and there he had hacked it up.

First of all, he parcelled up the pieces of legs and arms in the calico, with an outer wrapper of newspaper secured with string. Returning to the shop, he went to the storeroom again and there collected a smoothing iron. He took this back to the old house and fixed it to the head with lengths of string. He put the head and the parcels of pieces in a sack, and, sneaking from the house, reached his own apartment without being seen. It was then nearly dawn.

He had locked up the shack before leaving and could only hope that it would not be visited by anybody before the following night. He visited the place surreptitiously several times during the day to assure himself that all was well and that night, well after midnight, he went to the house, took the bag containing the parcelled-up legs and head and went along various streets dropping the former into garbage receptacles. The head he threw into the river. Once again luck was with him, for he was not observed. He buried the trunk in the small backyard of the deserted house, wrapped in the sheeting and, he presumed, it was still there.

"That is the truth, messieurs," he wound up. "It was, you will agree, a most regrettable accident."

"It was a brutal murder," said Jacquinot sternly.

"That is for a court and jury to decide," said Molinas with supreme confidence.

"Now you will tell us, please, why you went in haste to Nantes and in disguise, using a name that is not your own," said Jacquinot.

"I had business to transact in the town, that is all," said Molinas.

"You will tell us the truth, monsieur," said examining magistrate Charpentier, taking over. "You committed this foul crime and you ran away, hoping to elude the police. But your vanity betrayed you."

"You speak in riddles," said Molinas. "I am not a vain man. It is not vanity, but the truth, to say that I am the most famous and best dress designer in all Paris."

"Why did you go to Nantes under another name with your

moustache removed, if not to try to avoid the hand of justice? Why did you sell dresses in a common inn—these famous creations of yours of which there are no equals in France?" asked Monsieur Charpentier, probably with a cynical sneer.

"I needed money. I had left Paris insufficiently provided with funds," said Molinas.

"It does not matter, except that it shows your guilty behavior," said Charpentier. "You will go to the guillotine for this, Molinas."

"That we shall see. I rely upon French justice," retorted the dressmaker.

"And that you shall get," said the examining magistrate grimly.

A visit by the police to the deserted house in the back alley proved that at least portion of Molinas's statement was correct.

Jacquinot's only comment to Charpentier over the statement was that if Yvette had cracked Molinas over the skull with a heavy water bottle, nearly knocking him silly, it was strange that the man had shown no marks or other evidence of the blow a few days later when Jacquinot had first interviewed him.

That Molinas was an optimist in thinking that a jury would be kind to him was shown when the trial took place at the Paris Cour d'Assizes. He was found guilty in quick time and, in due course, per medium of the guillotine, joined Yvette Boissieu.

WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

The author gives a thrilling analysis of a murder carried out in a royal household. It is a true story with a plot that outrivals the best efforts of fiction writers, and reveals the amazing methods of the legal lights of more than a century ago.

THE middle of the night between the last day of May and the first day of June—one of those warm still nights when sound can carry a considerable distance. The scene—the ancient Palace of St. James and the apartments of Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland.

The Palace as a whole was wrapped in silence: only a night watchman here and there and the sentries at the gates were astir.

Suddenly there was a terrible outcry: a door was flung open somewhere in the upper storeys and the voice of His Royal Highness was heard crying out to his English valet, "Neale, I am murdered, I am murdered!"

Hurrying from the room adjoining the Duke's bedroom where he had been sleeping, Neale was about to enter when the Duke added,

"Don't go in. The murderers are in my bedroom and they will murder you as they have murdered me!"

Neale might have questioned the hysterical overstatement, but at that moment he trod on a sabre which the assassin or assassins had dropped. In obedience to the Duke's command not to enter the bedroom, he went to waken Sellis, a Corsican, who was another of the royal valets.

By this time, of course, other persons in the palace had been roused and a more or less general alarm had been given.

To his surprise, Neale found that the door of Sellis's room had been locked. He called out to him through the door crying "The Duke is murdered!" which again should have attracted some sort of reply. But there was not a sound from within. Rather alarmed, Neale fetched help and the door of the room was broken down.

Within, Sellis was found on his bed, with his throat cut from ear to ear.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! Who had been murdered by whom and who had been the protagonist in the struggle?

When it came to an inquest, all the blame was laid on the dead valet, who was supposed according to a contemporary report to have killed himself when he heard Neale banging on the door, because he knew that he would be taken into custody.

That was the official suggestion. Unfortunately, however, the doubtful character of the Duke of Cumberland was common knowledge and it was openly stated that he had murdered Sellis and had then tried to put the blame on to him as the assassin. The general inference was so strong that damaging charges to this effect were printed and sold quite openly.

Looking back from the dispassionate standpoint of more than a hundred years later—the episode in question took place in 1810—one may perhaps consider the mental aspect of the Duke's actions in various circumstances. It is no good assuming, even with the most charitable inclinations, that the Duke was a pleasant person. Not even the most syncophantic courtier has been able to adduce much suggestion of personal charm. He was Queen Victoria's "Wicked Uncle Cumberland," whom the English people and his own family disliked so heartily that there was great rejoicing when he was at last elevated to the throne of Hanover and left this country for ever. It was as well that he did so, for his misdemeanours and indiscretions were growing more than even a Royal Duke could carry. In a period when all the Royal Dukes—and the Prince Regent—were in the utmost disfavour with a nation which had paid their bills until it was thoroughly sick of the lot of them—the Duke of Cumberland held pride of place as the most hated of the whole lot.

He was born in 1771, the fifth son of George the Third; his second brother, Frederick, died young after a home life of peculiar unhappiness; the eldest brother was the Prince Regent and eventually George IV. Then came William, Duke of Clarence, familiarly known as "Puffing Billy" and "The Sailor King," according to the temper and temperament of his well-wishers, and then Edward, Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria.

In an unpopular family, the fifth son—the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge were his juniors—outstripped all the others in his attempts to secure the contempt and dislike of the nation. From early years he showed a disposition to violent fits of temper and to an ill-regulated mind and brain which to-day would no doubt be treated by a psychologist and either cured or alleviated or else so guarded as to render them incapable of hurting others. His father went out of his mind for long periods at a time, and was for several years unfit to govern the country of which he still remained titular head: it was perhaps not surprising that the sons should have inherited to some degree the parental disability.

Privately educated at Kew Palace, in 1786 the young Duke was sent with two of his brothers to the University at Gottingen and four years later he began his military service. Like his uncle, "Butcher" Cumberland of the '45, he showed himself to be no mean soldier and in another four years he was in command of a brigade of cavalry in the army of Marshal Walmoden. In a battle near Tournay he lost his left eye—over which he wore for ever after a large black patch which rendered his extremely plain features even more repulsive than nature had intended—and was so severely wounded in his arms that he was invalided home. However, as a keen soldier—which seems to have been almost his one redeeming feature—he hurried back to the army before his health was fully restored and performed a feat of remarkable

valour during a sortie from Minnegueux. His sword having been broken in combat, he parried a blow at his head with the hilt, seized his enemy round the waist, and carried him bodily into the English lines. This amazing feat of strength would bear out the supposition that his mental processes were far from normal, since such terrific bursts of power are well known to be one of the signs of madness.

Having had a sufficiency of active service for a time, the Duke was appointed to a command in England, but in 1807 he went off to the Continent again and fought in several engagements, his sword being usually offered to the Prussian Army, then actively opposed to the common enemy, Napoleon.

The Duke of Wellington loathed him openly and heartily and said of him on one occasion that "there never was a husband and wife, nor father and son, nor brother and sister, that he did not strive to set one against the other."

Royalty had been growing more and more unpopular. The old King, once familiarly known as "Farmer George," was liked and pitied, since his madness was growing on him; his Queen, born Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, was respected and to some extent loved, while the populace appreciated the devotion she showed to the unhappy King. Her daughters came in for their share of the public affection. But for the band of brothers there was nothing but hostility, more or less openly expressed in varying degrees. The nation was very tired of them: their debts had to be paid, they were entirely careless of their duties to the State which kept them, and they thought of nothing but their own pleasures. The appalling treatment which the Duke of Wales meted out to his unhappy consort, Caroline of Brunswick, was common knowledge in 1808 and 1809, while the Duke of York, Frederick, had

been actually impeached for peddling commissions in the Army and ecclesiastical preferments for bribes at the instigation of his mistress, Mary Ann Clark. The result of this was that he had to be removed from his command of the Army.

And it was on top of this succession of disgraceful episodes that in 1810 the affairs of the Duke of Cumberland became public property.

That evening the Duke—who had dined at Greenwich the day before—came back to town and went to a concert for the Benefit of the Royal Society of Musicians. About half-past twelve he returned to St. James's Palace and went to bed about one o'clock.

According to his own story, he was awakened about two o'clock in the morning by a heavy blow on the head with a sabre, which severed the padded night-cap he was luckily in the habit of wearing and inflicted a deep cut. He sprang out of bed and confronted the villain, who had his arm raised for a second blow: the Duke took this on his own arm, having tried to protect his head. Other blows followed, one of which practically severed his finger. Not till then was he able to get to the door of the room and call out for Neale.

It is usually difficult after a lapse of years to get at the real truth of such a story, especially when one of the chief actors is a Royal Duke and the general tendency has been to exculpate him, should he be blameworthy. But it so happens that in 1832 the Lady Anne Hamilton published privately a book entitled "Secret History of the Court of England from the Accession of George III to the Death of George IV." Although the book was published privately it was obtainable by the public, and, since it was not the work of a mere scurrilous mud-slinger, but was signed by the lady who was herself a Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Caroline, it attracted

a great deal of attention. Indeed so much scandal was evoked and so much rumour clung round the name of the Duke of Cumberland, that more than twenty years after the event he was obliged to call on the Courts of Law to suppress the publication.

At the inquest an attempt was made to prove that Sellis had had murderous intentions on his master and that the Duke had only saved himself from assassination by a piece of personal courage, coupled with the greatest good fortune. In her book Lady Anne quotes liberally from the actual reports of the inquest and then interpolates her own notes on the various events. Her logical and inquiring mind at once drops on the inconsistencies of the evidence. As she truly says, it is "contradictory."

Mr. Adams, a well-known coroner of the day, addressed the jury and informed them that there was little doubt but that the attack on the Duke had been committed by the deceased (Sellis). He stated that the matter had been fully investigated by the Privy Council on the Thursday and that the depositions of the numerous witnesses had been taken before Mr. Justice Read: after reading the depositions, the witnesses would be called and the depositions read over again to them: at this point they would be able to alter or enlarge the original statements and the jury would be able to put questions.

This procedure is interesting because it reveals some of the privileges of royalty. Because the murder had been committed in a Palace the Privy Council must examine the witnesses before they are allowed to meet the jury and their depositions taken by a judge under the influence of the suspected party. The coroner was able to tell the jury that there was very little doubt but that Sellis attempted his master's life and had then cut his own throat. As Lady Anne remarks: "Merciful heaven! can this be called an im-

partial administration of justice? Are such careful proceedings ever adopted in the case of a poor man? To be sure, the jury were told they might ask any question they thought fit: but is is to be supposed that, after the INQUIRIES they had undergone, the witnesses would let slip anything likely to criminate themselves or their royal master?"

Lady Anne evidently had no doubt as to the way the wind was blowing. There must have been some very nervous moments in St. James's Palace during those early days of June, 1810.

His Royal Highness was the first witness called to give evidence. He deposed that that he was wakened by two violent blows and cuts on the head and assumed that a bat had got into the room, but was soon undeceived by receiving a third blow. "He then jumped out of bed and received several more blows: from the glimmering light afforded from a dull lamp in the fireplace, and the motion of the instrument that inflicted the blows, they appeared like flashes of lightning before his eyes." He stated that he tried to get to a small room leading from his own, that he could not find his alarm-bell, which, it was suggested with charming ingenuousness, "no doubt the villain had concealed." Then he called out for Neale.

Lady Anne comments with dry humour on the violent blows that could be mistaken for the beating of a bat about a man's head. She also points out that Sellis was known to be a little man, one whom the gallant Duke could easily have overpowered. Moreover since Sellis had been in constant personal attendance on him for five years it was rather odd that he should not have been recognised.

Moreover, a further part of the Duke's deposition says that after he got out of bed the assassin followed him across the room

and cut him across the thighs. Yet the room was so dark that the assassin's face could not be seen! Lady Anne adds bitterly:

"The Duke of Cumberland is a field-marshal and a Braver man, it is said, never entered the Field: but **in a dark room,** with a man little more than half his weight, it would have been **cowardly to fight,** particularly as his royal highness might IF HE HAD SO WISHED have taken the weapon out of Sellis's hand and broken it about his head. No! No! The Duke of Cumberland knew what was due to his honour better than to take so **mean** an advantage of a **weak** adversary, and therefore coolly endeavoured to ring his bell, that a more suitable antagonist might be procured in his valet, Neale."

There is a fine flavour of sarcastic irony in those phrases.

Neale was next brought into the witness-box. He deposed to the Duke's calling to him and the words he had used, and added that he suggested following the assassin with a poker, with which he armed himself, but that the Duke told him to stay. Neale recounted how he had trodden on something in the dark and found it to be the Duke's own regimental sword. The household was then alarmed and Mrs. Neale was told to call Sellis. Neale returned with the Duke to his bedroom, the latter being faint from loss of blood. In the adjoining small room they found a pair of slippers with the name of Sellis on them and a small dark lantern. Neale further deposed that Sellis had taken out the Duke's regimentals recently and had left the sword on a sofa for two or three days, and it was on this sword that he had trodden. In reply to a question from the foreman of the jury, he said that Sellis had every reason to be grateful to the Duke, who had recently stood godfather to one of his children, Princess Augusta being godmother, and had given him apartments for his wife and family, together with coals and candles.

Further enquiries elicited a statement that two or three years earlier there had been a rearrangement of wage concerning an adjustment of board-wages and travelling allowances. Sellis had objected to this and had refused to sign his name to the paper expressing satisfaction, on which the steward had told him that if he did not sign he would have to give up the apartments allotted to his family as all the other servants had signed. But for that, he had never heard Sellis complain of anything and he had actually been the recipient of numerous small favours and considerations from the Duke.

As Lady Anne truly remarks, Neale's evidence should be taken with caution. He slept in a room next the Duke, offered to pursue the assassin with a poker and was prevented by his master's "fear of being left alone!"—not quite what one would have expected from so valiant a soldier. Neale thereupon trampled upon a sword which, in spite of the total darkness of the room, he knew was covered with blood! Apparently a good many people were surprised at his facility for seeing in the dark.

She also points out that it was strange that Sellis should have so conveniently left his slippers with his name on them and she says quite openly that in her opinion the affair "was a planned affair" though badly executed; apparently so careless was the attention to detail that the slippers were placed the wrong way round.

To add to the confusion of this extraordinary matter, it would appear that a few months before his death, Sellis had written a letter to Mr. Stephenson, who was in authority over the household of the Duke of Cumberland, to the effect that he knew Neale to be a rogue who could have been sentenced to transportation for seven years for falsifying the household accounts and peculating,

and that Neale was also entirely unreliable in his spoken and written word and was known to be not averse to the use of threats of exposure to those who had mistakenly given him their confidences. These were serious charges which Sellis was prepared to substantiate by the production of witnesses who were ready to give evidence on oath, and he furthermore implored Mr. Stephenson to allow him to resign after his twelve years of service, in spite of his affection for His Royal Highness, rather than condemn him to live in closer contact with Neale.

This letter was quoted in full in the newspaper reports of the inquiry and should, one might imagine, have caused people to look a little askance at Neale's evidence. It is not clear why the Duke retained Neale in his service, unless, perhaps, it was safer to keep him than to let him go: there were a number of secrets in the Cumberland household which would have been surprising to the public.

One of the extraordinary things about the whole business as reported in the journals was the amount of blood that was spilt in the Duke's bedroom. It was apparently impossible to discover even the material of his night-cap, so soaked was it: the padded ribbon which he wore round it and the tassel that hung down from the top had apparently saved him from what would otherwise have been a fatal cut. The bedclothes were covered in blood and blood sprinkled the walls of the room, the pictures and the door into the ante-room. Altogether the place resembled nothing more nor less than an obscene slaughter-house.

Lady Anne is again caustic in her comments on this pretty state of affairs, for she points out that it would have been impossible for Sellis to have rendered the place in such a condition given the time and the weapon which he was said to have employed, and

the relative positions of the two people most concerned.

"The duke was in a modern high bed, his head well protected with a 'padded ribbon bandage,' the only vital part of him that was above the bed-clothes and the curtains drawn around him. Sellis was not taller than the level of the bed-clothes and yet he chose a sword to attack his recumbent master! In a contest so unequal, the duke might have annihilated Sellis in a minute."

It certainly seems difficult for a little man, armed with a regimental sabre, to strike downwards from an angle which in itself must have taken a good deal of the power out of the blow in a way which should inflict such amazing damage.

Later on, the jury were invited to see Sellis' bloodstained corpse in his own room. The body, save for the head and feet, was, according to the newspaper account, covered in blood and the bloodstained razor was still in evidence. Sellis's neckcloth was cut through in several places and, in addition to this remarkably thorough way of committing suicide, the drawers, the wash-hand stand and the basin itself were also bloody. Surely a case for one of our detective novelists! How could a man who had cut his throat in the singularly effective manner employed by Sellis get up and wash his hands in the basin, and then compose himself on the bed, with his hands covered once more in blood? Yet, in spite of this peculiar evidence, it was asserted that Sellis attempted to murder the Duke and then took his own life.

Sergeant Creighton of the Coldstream Guards, who was on duty, went into the Palace with several men on the alarm being given and, since the men did not like to enter the valet's room, he went in himself with a candle. He deposed that he found Sellis with his throat cut and the razor about two yards from the bed. His hands were quite straight down at his sides and there was no

appearance of a struggle. When to this is added the evidence of the surgeon that on examining the body he found the windpipe completely divided, with the arteries on both sides severed and no other wounds on the body, it is still more difficult to believe in suicide. Lady Anne tells the world that one or two other professional men were allowed to examine the body but were not allowed to testify to what they had seen: one of them, a Dr. Carpue, apparently said frequently thereafter that "the head of Sellis was nearly severed from his body and even the joint was cut through," while he added that "no man could have the power to hold an instrument in his hand to cut one-eighth of the depth of the wound in the throat of Sellis!" But Dr. Carpue was not called as a witness at the inquest.

Various evidence was then presented as to the home life of the Sellis family, which appeared to be very happy. Sellis was contented, except for a slight anxiety as to the health of one of his children, and was on generally satisfactory terms, not only with the Duke but with the rest of the Royal Family. In addition to royalty standing as godparents at the christening of the last child, Princess Elizabeth had given Mrs. Sellis some pieces of muslin and Princess Augusta had given her several presents of some value. He and the family were in so much favour that every court day, when the Queen came to St. James to dress at the Duke's apartments for the Drawing-Room, Sellis' wife and children were sent for, so that the royal ladies might see them. Moreover, as an extra mark of favour, so that he might spend as much time as possible with his family, the Duke had permitted a bell to be installed from the royal apartments to Sellis's rooms. Sellis only slept in the Duke's quarters when he was in close personal attendance. The night of the murder he had eaten a hearty supper at home and taken an affectionate but usual farewell of his wife.

And so the story went on, contradictory evidence which was published by the Press without comment and was ignored by the jury: confusion as to times and events, as to who first entered Sellis's room, as to whether the candles were lit or whether it was broad daylight—all leading to the same conclusion to the impartial reader—that here were a number of concerted stories not sufficiently well rehearsed for the details to be in order. But did the jury pounce on these faulty connections in a story that already bristled with impossibilities? They lay low and said nothing, being no doubt well primed as to their duty in the case.

Thomas Creedy, one of the soldiers who accompanied Sergeant Creighton, produced a very odd bit of evidence when he informed the Court that he went into the room and did not see a coat there, but that there was a coat in the room (which was very small) belonging to Sellis, with blood on the left cuff and blood on the side. It seems odd that he should be able to describe so minutely a thing which he swore he had never seen. Moreover, it was hardly likely that he would know Sellis or his clothes sufficiently well to be able to state that the mythical coat did in fact belong to him! He also reported the suspicious nature of the washstand and added that Sellis's head was "against his watch at the head of the bed": to which Lady Anne adds:

> "Indeed, the poor man's head only hung by a small piece of skin and his murderers had therefore placed it in that position to keep it from falling off altogether! Is it not monstrous then that men could be found so lost to honor as to record a verdict of felso de se?"

It certainly does sound odd on the face of it when the bits of evidence are sorted and constructed to make some sort of pattern —a crazy quilt of facts, one might call it, since there can be no

satisfactory design to be contrived out of them.

Two of the privates who were on duty opposite the Duke's house in St. James's at the time of the alarm, deposed that no one had left the premises, thus narrowing down the inquiry to those who were in residence that night.

The housemaid produced evidence of no great value about the dark lantern, for although she had not seen it when she went to the small ante room or closet in which it was found, there is no reason why it should not have been placed there later. As Lady Anne points out, it was most thoughtful of the person who put it there to write Sellis's name on it, as was also done with the slippers—in case there might be any mistake as to the ownership.

James Paulet, another of the Duke's valets, produced a pleasing touch when he told the jury that as soon as Surgeon Home had dressed the Duke's wounds he was sent to attend to Sellis, for whom his Royal master had repeatedly asked. Mr. Home returned and said there was no doubt but that Sellis had killed himself. This valet also brought out the fact of the bad relations between Sellis and Neale, which would appear to be entirely due to Neale's untrustworthy habits.

It is Mr. Home's evidence that rouses Lady Anne to the greatest heights of sarcasm. Having commented on the Duke's thoughtfulness in sending his own surgeon to see to the servant she goes on:

"Mr. Home soon returned and said there was no doubt that the man had killed himsel. Oh, talented man, who could perceive at a glance that 'the man had killed himself'. Dr. Carpue must never more pretend to a knowledge of surgery when his opinion can be set aside by a single glance of a man of such eminence in his profession as Mr. Home! As to the

joint in his neck being cut through, Mr. Home easily accounted for. What! a man cut his own head off, and wash his hands afterwards!"

And one must confess that it all sounds rather odd!

Mrs. Sellis was called and her evidence showed that Sellis was entirely aware of the friendship with which the Royal family treated him and that he had had no more intention, so far as she could see, of doing anything out of the usual when he left her that night than of flying. He was normal, as thoughtful of her comfort before he left as usual, and chatting about the little domestic details, such as the dress and cap in which the child should be presented to the Queen on the occasion of the next Drawing-Room, when her Majesty came to St. James's.

The evidence of Mrs. Sellis should have done much to shake the confident opinion of the jury that her husband had taken his own life, but unfortunately they seem to have had their minds made up for them. However, apparently some of the powers that were felt that the woman might become dangerous if she were allowed to continue to talk about her husband. She and her mother were not in the least disposed to moderate their language or their opinions, and it was considered advisable not only to pension them both but to ship them out of England. Germany was believed to be their destination, but Lady Anne admits that she has been unable to trace their wanderings.

Although the jury brought in this amazing verdict, the public was by no means satisfied and there was a great deal of talk not only between persons but also in one or two of the newspapers.

The impropriety of the whole proceedings, the travesty of justice and the suspicions that must inevitably be attached to a chain of evidence which was both ludicrous and contradictory, gave rise

to the darkest suggestions in regard to the Duke.

The Royal Family and their supporters grew a good deal troubled by this and it became clear that something drastic must be done.

Sir Evarard Home, now made a Knight, at presumably the request of persons in authority, published a declaration in respect of the whole business which effectively confused the issue again and gave Lady Anne a chance to use her barbed wit once more.

The published statement was as follows:

"Much pains having been taken to involve in mystery the MURDER of Sellis, the late servant of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, I feel it a public duty to record the circumstances respecting it that came within my own observation, which I could not do while the propagators of such reports were before a public tribunal.

"I visited the Duke of Cumberland upon his being wounded and found my way from the great hall to his apartment by reason of the traces of blood which were left on the passages and staircase. I found him on the bed, still bleeding, his shirt deluged with blood, and the coloured drapery above the pillow sprinkled with blood from a wounded artery, which puts on an appearance that cannot be mistaken by those who have seen it. This could not have happened had not the head been lying on the pillow when it was wounded. The night ribbon, which was wadded, the cap, scalp and skull were obliquely divided, so that the pulsations of the arteries of the brain were distinguished. While dressing this and other wounds report was brought that Sellis was wounded, if not MURDERED. His royal highness desired me to go to him, as I had declared his royal highness to be out of immediate danger. A second report came, that

Sellis was dead. I went to his apartment, **found the body lying on his side on the bed,** without his coat and neckcloth, the throat cut so effectually that he could not have survived about a minute or two. The length and direction of the wound were such as left no doubt of its being given by his own hand. Any struggle would have made it irregular. He had not even changed his position: his hands lay as they do in a person who has fainted: they had no marks upon them of violence: his coat hung upon a chair, out of the reach of the blood from the bed: The sleeve from the shoulder to the wrist was sprinkled with blood, quite dry, evidently from a wounded artery; **and from such kind of sprinkling, the arm of the assassin of the Duke of Cumberland could not escape!**

"In returning to the duke, I found the doors of all the state apartments had marks of bloody fingers on them. The Duke of Cumberland after being wounded could not have gone anywhere but to the outer doors and back again, since the traces of blood were confined to the passages from the one to the other.

Everard Home."

So that was that! Lady Anne agrees that it is regrettable that so much trouble should have been taken to involve the death of Sellis in mystery, but adds pertinently that that trouble was taken by the palace and not by the public. But the published account of Sir Everard leaves confusion worse confounded, as she is quick to perceive. For example, he now reports that he found the body lying on its side, the throat cut so effectually that the man could not have lived more than a minute or two. It seems very difficult for a man to cut his throat when lying like this and according to the published report "He Had Not Even Changed His Position."

Yet Sir Everard says that the length and direction of the wound gave no doubt but that it was made by the man's own hand.

Now Mr. Place, the foreman of the jury at the inquest, had a conversation with Lady Anne Hamilton herself and in that he told her that "the man lived twenty minutes after his throat was cut!" Without wishing to compare the relative knowledge of the foreman and Sir Everard Home, Lady Anne stresses the point as one urged by Mr. Place as "confirmatory of Sellis having murdered himself." It seems therefore, she says, somewhat strange that Sir Everard did not set Mr. Place right upon this very important point of time which might have led to an entirely different verdict. She then proceeds to compare the report with other pieces of evidence which were given in the inquest, with attention drawn especially to the fact that "the hands having no marks of violence on them" is entirely contrary to the witnesses' reports, since the hands and wrists both bore every evidence of violence. The remark also in regard to the sleeve of Sellis's coat, which the doctor asserts to have had on it just the kind of sprinkling of blood which might be expected from the assassin of the Duke, is entirely at variance with the rest of the alleged facts. Sellis was supposed to have attacked the Duke with a sabre—a regimental sword—and the length of this, coupled with the position in which the Duke was lying when the attack is supposed to have taken place, would have rendered it impossible for any blood from the victim to have reached the assailant. Blood also was found all over the room where Sellis lay, including the curtains, several parts of the floor and the wash-basin, and yet the coat was hung on a chair "out of the reach of the blood from the bed." Why should blood not have been sprinkled on the coat also?

The description of the wounds incurred by the Duke hardly coincide with the Duke's own statement that he thought at first it was a bat beating about his head, which is hardly credible if he were as badly damaged as the surgeon suggests. The other discrepancies in respect of the household, the alarms given to the various persons concerned and so on are all, taken together, more than odd in the sum of the whole.

Every effort had now been made to throw the sins of attempted murder and suicide on to Sellis by those in authority, without the smallest regard for the probabilities or possibilities of the case. And it is interesting to notice that apparently no suggestion was ever made that the two privates on sentry duty had been mistaken and that an intruder had made his way into the palace, attacked the Duke and murdered his valet. From the very beginning no effort to shift the responsibility outside the inmates of the Duke of Cumberland's apartments seems to have been made—perhaps even the fertile brain of sycophantic authority jibbed at such an impossible task. Much easier to lay the blame at the door of the dead!

Lady Anne has then a bombshell to cast. She secured the deposition of a Mr. Jew, who was at the time of the attack in the household of the Duke and who then, twenty years later, was inclined to tell the truth, "alleging as his reason the very severe pangs of conscience he endured through the secrecy he had manifested upon this most serious affair."

Mr. Jew's deposition is of such interest that it is worth quoting in full, since it is reasonable to suppose that it is true. He had nothing whatever to gain by keeping silence any longer, and indeed he had nothing to lose. He must have known that Mrs. Sellis and her mother had been shipped abroad to keep their

tongues quiet, and he was aware that the Duke of Cumberland was still a power in the land. William IV was on the throne of England, and if anything happened to the only daughter of the late Duke of Kent, Princess Victoria, the next ruler would be Ernest Augustus himself. So to incriminate the heir-presumptive was a bold deed.

The Deposition runs as follows:

"I was in the Duke's household in May, 1810: and on the evening of the 31st, I attended His Royal Highness to the opera—this was the evening previous to Sellis's death. That night it was my turn to undress His Royal Highness. On our arriving at St. James's, I found Sellis had retired for the night, as he had to prepare his master's apparel, etc., and to accompany him on a journey early in the morning.

"I slept that night in my usual room: but Neale, another valet to the Duke, slept in an apartment very slightly divided from that occupied by His Royal Highness. A few days previous to this date, I was commanded by my master to lay a sword upon one of the sofas of his bed-chamber, and I did so. After undressing His Royal Highness, I retired to bed. I had not long been asleep, when I was disturbed by Neale, who told me to get up immediately, as my master, the Duke, was nearly murdered! I lost no time, and very soon entered His Royal Highness's bedroom. His Royal Highness was then standing nearly in the middle of the chamber, apparently quite cool and composed, his shirt was bloody, and he commanded me to fetch Sir Henry Halford, saying, 'I am severely wounded.' The sword, which a few days before I had laid upon the sofa, was then lying on the floor and was very bloody. I went with all possible haste for Sir Henry, and soon returned with him. I stood by when

the wounds were examined, none of which were of a serious nature or appearance. That in his hand was the most considerable.

"During this period, which was nearly two hours, neither Neale or Sellis had been in the Duke's room, which appeared to me to be a very unaccountable circumstance. At length, when all the bustle of dressing the wounds (which were very inconsiderable) was over, and the room arranged, the Duke said 'Call Sellis'. I went to Sellis's door and, upon opening it, the most horrific scene presented itself: Sellis was lying perfectly straight in the bed, his head raised up against the headboard, and nearly severed from the body: his hands were lying quite straight on each side of him, and upon examination I saw him weltering in blood, it having covered the under part of the body. He had on his shirt, his waistcoat and his stockings: the inside of his hands were perfectly clean, but on the outside were smears of blood. His watch was hanging up over his head, wound up. His coat was carefully folded inside out, and laid over the back of a chair. A razor, covered with blood, was lying at a distance from his body, but too far to have been used by himself, or to have been thrown there by him in such a mutilated condition as it was very apparent death must have been immediate after such an act.

"The wash-basin was in the stand, but was half full of bloody water! Upon examining Sellis's cravat, it was found to be cut. The padding which he usually wore was covered with silk and quilted: but, what was most remarkable, both the padding and the cravat were cut, as if some person had made an attempt to cut the throat with the cravat on: then, finding the woollen or cotton stuffing to impede the razor, took it off, in order more

readily to effect the purpose."

During the time the Duke's wounds were being dressed, the deponent believes Neale was absent, in obedience to arrangement, and was employed in laying Sellis's body in the form in which it was discovered, as it was an utter impossibility that a self-murderer could have so disposed of himself.

Deponent further observes that Lord Ellenborough undertook to manage this affair, by arranging the proceedings for the inquest: and also that every witness was previously examined by him: also that the FIRST JURY, being unanimously dissatisfied with the evidence adduced, as they were not permitted to see the body in an undressed state, positively refused to return a verdict, in consequence of which they were dismissed, and a SECOND JURY summoned and empanelled, to whom, severally, a special messenger had been sent, requesting their attendance, and each one of whom was directly or indirectly connected with the court, or the government. That, on both inquests, the deponent had been omitted, and had not been called for to give his evidence, though it must have been known, from his personal attendance and situation upon the occasion, that he must necessarily have been a most material witness. **The second jury returned a verdict against Sellis,** and the body was immediately put into a shell and conveyed away a certain distance for interment. The Duke was privately removed from St. James's Palace to Carlton House, where His Royal Highness manifested an impatience of manner, and a perturbed state of mind, evidently arising from a conscience ill at ease. But, in a short time, he appeared to recover his usual spirits, and being hurt in but a very trifling degree, he went out daily in a sedan chair to Lord Ellenborough's and Sir William Phipp's, although the daily journals were lamenting his very bad state of health, and

also enlarging, with a considerable expression of sorrow, upon the magnitude of his wounds, and the fears entertained for his recovery!

That Mr. Jew was fully aware of the consequences of any unruly tattling on the part of his tongue is evidenced by the further deposition which he made.

> "I was applied to by some noblemen shortly after this dreadful business and very strongly did they solicit me to make a full disclosure of all the improper transactions to which I might have been made a party upon this solemn subject. I declined many times, but at length conceded, under a binding engagement that I should not be left destitute of comforts or abridged of my liberty: and, under special engagements to preserve me from such results, I have given my deposition. (Signed) Jew."

And now what was the truth of the story? Did Sellis really attempt to murder the royal master for whom he always professed gratitude and a fair liking, who had evidently shown him a good deal of kindness and consideration—more than was shown to most servants in those days? Or, and this seems the more probable, taking the history of the case into account, did the Duke of Cumberland suddenly become afflicted with a mental clouding which caused him to attack his own servant, murder—or half-murder him and then realise the horrible position in which he had placed himself? The mental condition of the Duke and his past history must be taken into account in weighing up these amazing stories of the night of May 31st, 1810. History has it on

record that he was a valiant soldier and given to deeds of great bravery . . . the bravery one might think of a madman or a man subject to fits of mental aberration. One might incline to believe that on this dreadful night he suddenly became "possessed of a devil," in the biblical phrase, and that in that condition he attacked his valet. Whether he also attacked himself, whether Sellis defended himself and so injured his royal master, will never be known. And no one will ever know just what part Neale played in the whole proceedings. That he was stage-manager and producer of the tragic comedy that was enacted before the jury would seem to be fairly clear. The deposition of Jew is likely to be accurate, for he had nothing to gain by telling his story, especially at that period, and everything in the world to lose.

There is, of course, another side to the story which has not been suggested. Did Neale, who we know had every reason to dislike Sellis and to wish him out of the way, actually commit the murder? Was the Duke aware of this exposure of his favorite, which must lead him to take action to get rid of him from about his person, and did he acquiesce in the removal of the man who was not afraid to commit his knowledge of Neale to paper to a third party? And if so, how did he get his own superficial wounds —in attacking Sellis, in repulsing an attack? And was the matter premeditated since the sword was lying on the sofa for three days or more?

No one probably will ever really solve the Mystery of St. James's, but that the valet Neale and His Royal Highness, Ernest

Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, were in some way or other party to the killing of Sellis seems to be beyond dispute.

It was a very long time before the hubbub created by the affair died down, and the popularity of the Duke, never anything to weigh in the balance, died down to complete nullity. It was thought advisable to get such a storm centre out of the country: as a soldier he had virtues, as a domestic brother he had few. In 1813 he was again put in command of the Hanoverian Army, and remained on the Continent for another year.

Until 1819 it seemed more than possible that he would inherit the throne of England, since none of his brothers had legitimate issue save the Prince Regent, whose only daughter, Charlotte, was to marry Queen Victoria's "Uncle Leopold" and die with her baby in childbed in 1817. The Duke of Clarence had two daughters who both died in infancy, and there was no one else till the Duke of Kent, abandoning Mme. de St. Laurent, who had been his faithful "wife in the eyes of God" for many years, married the widowed Princess of Leinigen, herself a Princess of Coburg, and became the father of Queen Victoria.

Something had to be done for the ugly, ill-tempered Duke of Cumberland, always at variance with the rest of his family, with the Ministers and Court, and the bogey of the English children of the day.

Hanover still went with the Crown of England, but fortunately it was becoming realised that it was not advisable for the King of England to be also King of Hanover. When Queen Victoria

came to the throne the opportunity for a shelving of England's continental responsibilities arrived. She relinquished any claim to the throne and it passed to her eldest surviving uncle on her father's side—the Duke of Cumberland.

And so the Wicked Uncle vanished from the history of England to make himself as unpopular in Hanover as he had been here: a reactionary of the worst type, he opposed every reform with the utmost bitterness and died unmourned on November 18th, 1851, after a troubled reign of fourteen years.

OCEAN MYSTERY

By F. J. LYNCH

The mystery of the disappearance of the "Madagascar" with all hands off the Chilean Coast of South America has never been solved. In this story the author offers a particularly plausible and dramatic solution.

IN marine history for a century the fate of the full-rigged ship "Madagascar" has figured as an ocean mystery. Officially no word of her was ever received following the day in August of 1853 on which she left Port Melbourne for English ports. Eventually the vessel was written off as a total loss, cause unknown, whereupon Lloyds of London signed a cheque covering everything —except heartbreak! In this story it is my intention to reopen the inquiry sentence by sentence and tell the story of how it came about that the "Madagascar" vanished from human ken, scuttled and afire and fell to the ocean bottom some 20 miles off Isla Clarence, Chilean coast of South America. In that sizzling plunge

she took with her everybody who had sailed from Melbourne, less only the gang of murderous wretches who joined her for the express purpose of robbing and sinking her with all aboard.

It would be reasonable to ask how a mystery of a century's standing could at this late date be cleared up; and as such a question is entitled to an answer I shall attend to it—in about 4,000 words!

In 1947 whilst dredging a New Zealand newspaper file of the '70's for what I might find I noted a paragraph telling of the death in Wellington of a woman, name unknown, and some queer discoveries thereafter. Among her effects was found a paper on which was set forth in writing a brief account of mutiny at sea, of officers overpowered and knifed by some of the passengers and crew, and of the robbery of a great amount of gold and specie on board.

After locking the passengers in their cabins so that none might escape (the account went on) a boat was launched and the gold transferred to it, and the robbers pulled away. But Joe Grey saw a man on the deck and asked to be set on board.

"We don't want any witnesses," he said. "As soon as he stepped on the gangway the boat pulled away and left him on the scuttled and burning vessel. We never saw Joe again."

The account went on to tell of frightful privations after the boats reached the shore, also of the loss of a box of bullion which slipped over a ledge of rock into the sea. On occasion one of the party died.

Nothing in all this, it might be said. Any fanciful woman with a trifle of reading behind her could have written the foregoing. But the paper the woman had used in her diary exposed one clinching fact—a fact which powerfully suggested authenticity. It was a page torn from a ship's log. It was indeed a page torn from the "Madagascar's" log book! The paper yielded an even more definite scrap of evidence. On the back of it was written a date in 1854, accompanied by the vessel's position on the ocean, and that position was just where a navigator would have expected the "Madagascar" to be about that time and in the weather recorded by other vessels on the England-Australia run just then.

Mention of Grey's name assisted greatly to prove that the woman who died in New Zealand knew whereof she wrote. This same Grey was the man in charge of the attacking party when the McIvor Escort was robbed in '53. It extends hyperbole not in the slightest to state that Joseph Grey cared not the fifth part of an imprecation for human life—of course, other than his own—and his method of attack on the Escort party proved it. There was no time-honored "stand "about it. Grey's way was swift murder—without warning whatever a fusillade from behind a leafy screen dropped every man, some in death, others wounded and helpless. In contemptuous disregard for their agonies the gold boxes were removed, taken to a distance, burst open and the contents apportioned. Whereupon the men went their several ways.

Melville, Wilson and Aitkens were men of about Grey's calibre, and for some time the police were completely baffled. But one

Francis weakened under the strain and gave the show away. The three mentioned were taken where Francis said they would be found, but Grey was not on hand; nor was he ever picked up. The best place NOT to look for him was where allegedly he had slept the night before, for he never slept in the same place twice.

Information that might be described as the echo of a rumor reached the police that Grey was trying to get out of the country by the "Madagascar," shortly leaving for England. All shipping had been watched, but the "Madagascar" in particular was searched, indeed nearly taken to pieces, every cubic foot of her structure duly accounted for.

An unexplained skeleton of a man was found, eaten clean by rats months before, but never a sign of Joseph Grey.

"The "Madagascar" was an early example of the clipper type of vessel—lofty masts and sail by the acre—sail which could not be reduced at sea. To meet such strains as a full gale would inflict masts and bowsprit were very heavily "stepped" in large blocks of timber strongly bolted to the keel, or in the case of the bowsprit to the stem of the vessel.

Who would look for a man beneath a heavily-bolted tie-beam? Nobody! Yet, by the connivance of the ship's carpenter, one such beam hid Joseph Grey. Fortunately for himself, if venomous, he was also shrivelled!

Shortly after the "Madagascar's" departure a rumour went whispering about Melbourne that Grey, leader of the McIvor Escort robbery, along with several other desperadoes travelling as

passengers, had in fact got away with the vessel; and the same rumour also carried a hint that the "Madagascar" would never reach port.

In the nature of things nothing could have been done to warn the allegedly threatened vessel. To send anything to try to catch her was hopeless, for the heavily-driven sailing machine had a two days' start, and in any case she could have outsailed her pursuer! Even had there been available a vessel of the necessary speed it would have been found, as often since, that even the largest ship is but a very small needle in the vast haystack of the ocean. Helpless!

As I have written, the prophecy proved true. The "Madagascar" was never again sighted. Truly had she sailed into the void.

How comes it then, it might be asked, that I am engaged in writing a story about the vessel, a story in which I intend to relate in detail the manner of her foundering and of the truly frightful incidents which preceded that plunge to the ocean floor, two miles of water down!

Now I have grown grey-haired in the pursuit of a wide variety of criminal operations. So used have I become to handling newspaper files of ancient date, therefrom by turning the pages gleaning the whole story of some bloodstain of the past, from discovery of the body right through to the murderer's final appearance in a lofty position with a rope curled around his neck, that a current issue of a newspaper looks queer and incomplete!

Therein will be featured only one phase of a crime, whereon

the final curtain will not fall for four or five months. In the meantime, if I depended on current issues, how would I earn my daily bread and dripping?

In another newspaper excursion that dropped me into the bygone I noted an article in which a mining engineer recorded the ravings of an old recluse he had met on the Tiebaghi River in New Caledonia in the '90's. My attention was literally magnetised by the word "Madagascar."

Taken alone the old man's ravings might have amounted to mere feverish fantasy, but in the most definite sense they did not stand alone. Instead, with strange completeness they buttressed in greater detail the scrappy story left by the woman who died in New Zealand in the '70's. The mining man said that in his saner periods the old man said that his name was Conley, but that in his ravings he used often say that the man who tried to hoodwink Joe Grey stood in danger of his life.

It is my opinion that taking the old man's statements in conjunction with the New Zealand woman's post-mortem confession, adding known fact and a small amount of rumour, a true story of the "Madagascar's" last voyage and her final plunge into the depths can be set forth.

In the days before the "Madagascar's" departure from Melbourne, Joseph Grey experienced no difficulty in recruiting a sufficient number of men for the desperate enterprise he had in mind —the robbery with all necessary violence of the quarter-million in gold which the vessel carried, followed by sending her to the

bottom with her passengers and crew, including some of the latter whom he intended, if possible, to enlist in his service!

Incidentally, following gold discovery in Australia in 1851 the British jail authorities revived a practice common in Australia's lash, loop and leg-iron babyhood. Prisoners whose offence fell short of hanging quality were offered remission of their sentence if they would consent to work their passage to Melbourne. Naturally these outpourings of England's criminal population amounted to so much human slush, ready for any iniquity; and, as stated, Grey had no trouble in securing volunteers. That breeding tells is exemplified in innumerable ways and instances.

Naturally criminals come to know a good deal about each other. In particular Grey's stark indifference to the lives of others was perhaps his best known quality. Certainly every man enlisted for the attempt on the "Madagascar" knew of his record of violent death. "Dead men don't turn up in court, says Joe" quoted one of them one day. Yet it seems that not one member of the party developed a thought that the man who so carelessly planned the deaths of others might with equal callousness put a period to their own. As I look at it, it was particularly unlikely that such a fiend would leave alive those members of the "Madagascar's" crew who had been cajoled into joining in the attempt on the vessel's golden cargo. Reader, even before one of them had joined, the awful Grey had decided that they would never reach port. Nor did they!

If ever a man was born to die at a rope's slack end—the end

that blows in the wind till it is ballasted—that man was Joseph Grey! Of course we all are the heirs of our ancestors and if, as alleged, our every quality is inherited, then it seems to me that Grey's ancestors should have been strangled at birth. Plainly there are times when Providence misses the bus, or is off guard, or something.

Yet it seems that Grey's character was obvious enough. The mining engineer of New Caledonia knew nothing for certain, but had deep suspicions of the man. He recorded that Grey was of shady and suspicious aspect with lack-lustre eyes like a dead eel. "Even in death (we are told) Grey looked deadly."

Incidentally it is by way of the documents from New Caledonia that I am able to state that Grey's lieutenant in villainy was one Geary, also that two women participated in the attack on the doomed "Madagascar." Women pirates! Who would doubt that the woman who died in New Zealand was one of them?

Three others in the plot signed on in Melbourne as ordinary seamen, in order to "sound" the forecastle and try to enlist sufficient men of the crew for the success of the scheme. Four came in—the doomed four!

The manner of their deaths is uncertain. If Joe Grey didn't shoot them, then they later had a choice between burning with the "Madagascar" and drowning in the Pacific Ocean. As Joe seldom missed, particularly when the target was human, I lean to shooting. How ever they arrived at their latter end no sympathy lies.

If sweeping in its deadliness, Grey's plan of attack was simple. Its deadly nature is amply covered by the statement that the scheming wretch in charge intended the deaths, either by fire or drowning, of the passengers and crew to the last man and woman. Simultaneousness, without which the attack had no chance of success, was achieved by using a certain chime of the ship's bell as a starting signal.

Each man was allotted his part in the onslaught. Because their presence about the deck would excite no comment the renegade members of the crew were told off to deal with the ship's officers. On account of the comparative silence of a knife attack, as compared with firearms, knives were to be used. For a reason advanced later, two hours before the attack was timed to begin the vessel was to be scuttled.

In fact everything was arranged in nice sequence; and when success had smoothed the way the survivors—Grey and his party of criminals—were to pull their boat to the nearest point on the coast in one of the "Madagascar's" boats, tell some settlers a carefully rehearsed story of disaster at sea, and then proceed to live happily ever after. The presence of two women in the boat naturally would tend to allay suspicion. In fact the scheme lacked flaw—except as Grey was destined to see it. HE WASN'T IN THE BOAT!

With her unsuspected cargo of treachery all went well with the fast-sailing "Madagascar" till she was nearing the South American coast.

Captain Harris, a young man, never even dreamed of trouble. Piracy had long gone out of fashion, and though he was carrying a record consignment of gold he had seen nothing to indicate foul play. The vessel was now far to the southward, down where the westerlies work at their endless circlings of the globe; and before their long, strong, and changeless pull the "Madagascar" drove onward through the smother of wind and water. Well within a week the vessel would have been involved in a contest with foul-fanged Cape Horn. I hope you noticed that I wrote "would have been." The "Madagascar" had fought her way round Cape Horn for the last time.

Secretly and covertly Joseph Grey had gone into action; and by that awful man's decree the "Madagascar" was now bound for the Port of Sadness, the Port of Hopes that are Hopeless—the Port of Missing Ships! For his own dreadful ends Grey literally decreed that instead of rounding the Horn the vessel should proceed up the Chilean coast and make for the handiest port, which was Valparaiso, or at least so Captain Harris thought. Grey had scuttled the vessel, not so badly as to render her immediately dangerous, but seriously enough to render a Cape Horn tussle out of the question.

Just here "One-legged Nevin" stumps into the "Madagascar" picture. On the goldfields he had slept out with the starry "Cross" overhead; and by comparison with this open-air roominess the cabins of the "Madagascar" appeared to him as little better than butter boxes. As he had occasionally done before, so on this night he decided to sleep on deck.

The plans for the capture of the vessel by Grey and his party were so arranged that every man of the gang had a set victim. As previously stated, firearms were to be used only as a last resort, in case of a general fight.

It was said of Napoleon I (and only) that he always planned a battle two ways, one for victory and the other for defeat; and so with Napoleon Grey. The awful scheme worked with the smoothness of modern machinery. At the moment chosen, and indicated by the ship's bell, the skipper was standing near the wheel. Grey came up silently behind him. There was a flash, a grunt occasioned by the fierce energy put into the blow, a groan of agony, a crash to the deck and Captain Harris was duly accounted for. The man at the wheel looked around, said nothing, and kept at his business of steering the "Madagascar."

At the self-same moment on other parts of the ship knives went into deadly action and men fell, some dead, some wounded. In one or two instances there were struggles, but other attackers who in one ghastly stroke had settled their allotted victims hurried to the aid of those less successful. Anything resembling real resistance was impossible.

Within five minutes of the skipper's death the "Madagascar" was in the hands of the mutineers, and the man at the wheel brought the vessel's head straight for the land, plainly visible to starboard. It was the swift and deadly success of the McIvor Escort Robbery re-enacted in a wild ocean setting, to the shrieking of a swift westerly gale through the tangle of cordage overhead,

and the thunders of heavy seas as they heaved their vast bulk at the doomed vessel, now notably low in the water.

Some of the pirates immediately went to work getting up their boxes of gold, each box containing 1,000 oz. For a reason not at first clear others worked at removing the hatches. Meanwhile Grey and another were busy robbing and imprisoning the passengers in their cabins. A woman who objected was so spitefully treated that her screams were distinctly audible even over the vast tumult of the vessel.

At last all the treasure and some provisions were loaded into one of the boats, and it was swung outboard. Next a curious tragedy was enacted. The traitors who had joined the gang were smashed to the deck, and kicked into unconsciousness. This of course cut down the number of pirates left to share the gold—the inner circle, so to speak, of the attackers, who were now in complete control. Thus were the traitors paid.

Grey and the others stood by the boat while Geary returned below. The ship had begun to settle by the head. But the blood-dripping brutes wanted to be certain that nobody lived "to turn up in court." As you know, the vessel had been scuttled. Soon smoke rolling up from the open hatches showed that she had been set afire as well. Flames that soon followed reinforced the fact. The ship indeed was well ablaze, and the cabins aft in which living men and women were still imprisoned had become ovens of death. Grey—that shrivelled and venomous being!

Soon Geary emerged, rejoined the other desperadoes, whereupon

arrangements were set in motion to lower the boat. But there came a yell from the poop. It came from "One-legged Niven!" He stood in plain view, then with astonishing agility he made his way down the companionway to the main deck and there stood irresolute, as well he might. He gazed momentarily at the fire, down at a dead body, then at the water, now menacingly close.

Grey had no intention of allowing even one man alive who might escape with news of the piracy. Knife in hand and followed by his companions he advanced toward Niven. That man retreated till he was fetched up by the poop bulkhead. He then did a mad but Homeric thing. With a gesture of defiance he let his crutch go, grasped a length of timber from the poop, steadied himself on one leg and the woodwork behind him, faced unarmed his six attackers, cursed them for a lot of poltroons and invited them to come on. He did more. He walked into the opposition a perfect hurricane with his length of 3 x 2. For a few seconds there was a terrific melee. Two fell. Niven didn't. Grey sprang at him. Niven, a powerful man despite his terrific infirmity, grasped the wrist of his knife hand, and played a trick that threw his attacker heavily against a staunchion. Grey struck it with his head and lapsed into unconsciousness. But the force of his own effort sent the crippled man down—and five scarcely human devils dealt with him. Vale "One-legged Niven!" He went down colours nailed.

When Grey recovered consciousness he was still in the scuppers into which he had slipped—and alone. To get an extra share of

the spoil his followers had left him on the burning, scuttled, and rapidly sinking "Madagascar!"

You will remember that the four traitors also were aboard, but of their fate the weak-witted thing of New Caledonia never gave any definite hint.

Grey staggered to the side, whence he could see the men who had deserted him rowing for the shore, a somewhat darker shadow afar off, whereupon he shook his fist and filled the cloud-studded vault of Heaven with an assortment of yells and curses.

Euchred at last! The prop and pillar of the whole structure of villainy knocked from under him! Instead of his share, and if he could arrange it with a knife in the darkness or by any other method that might suggest itself, the shares of most of the others, he had beneath him a staggering vessel which he himself had scuttled and set ablaze. Which element would win the race for possession of the reeling "Madagascar" mattered not the feeble end of a curse to Joseph Grey.

Napoleon, who once had galloped all over Europe, finally confined to a rock, knew a historic fall; but at least the rock of St. Helena never caught fire or threatened to founder with all hands.

Flames were rapidly making their way forward. Also the vessel's heavy upper structure of masts and yards was pulling her into a steep list. Grey's thoughts!

Still dazed and uncertain of his movements the marooned man cut one of the smaller boats adrift, launched it as well as a land-

lubber might, and scrambled aboard. Nor had he more than mere seconds to spare, for he was only yards clear when two things happened—the "Madagascar" burst into flame like a volcano and the great Pacific claimed her for its own. She sank by the head.

It was then that Grey discovered that there were no oars in the boat!

The others made a landing at a low and swampy point. Had they moved off next day they had a good chance, but suspicion and quarrels delayed them. Fever looked in and commenced to cut them down.

The last man among them spent his last feverish days working hysterically at burying the dead and having completed his self-

imposed task he collapsed and died. Meanwhile the two women faced the same privations but held to life. One day one said that she was going to see if she could find somebody who would help them and never returned. A Chilean shepherd found the other, delirious and half insane and took her to his home, where she lived for about 12 months. Later (he related) she travelled northward by a fishing boat and reached Valparaiso.

It is reasonable to suppose that this is the woman who later drifted to New Zealand and confessed when dying the story she had not dared tell before and left a somewhat scrappy record.

Meanwhile Grey for five days drifted in the open boat, drenched, frozen, starving. Then he was picked up by a west-bound whaler. Somehow, never explained in his meanderings, he reached New Caledonia, a fever-stricken wreck, possessed of a twisted brain filled with horrors and strange stories of the terrific battle of "One-legged" Niven. Ever he babbled of burning ships, of sinking ships, of the McIvor Escort Robbery, and indeed of a series of outrages that all go to prove that the man was none other than Grey himself.

Then, it might be asked, why wasn't he apprehended. In this regard it should be remembered that in 1854 there was no trans-ocean cable, and of course no radio communication. In the United States of America there was but one telegraph line. It was experimental and measured a mile! News didn't circulate, but stayed where it happened. At that scrappy notes in a disrespectful old

woman's diary, 20 years after the "Madagascar's" disappearance, scarcely amounted to news. It was not till I fluked across the New Caledonian mining engineer's account of a demented old man's ravings that the New Zealand woman's diary assumed any importance. Meanwhile another 20 years had elapsed, or a total of 40 since the doomed vessel came to rest on the Pacific floor.

In the early '90's the world's news service was but little better organised than in the early '70's, when the New Zealand diary was brought to light. In any case 40 years is a goodish while. Only direct relatives of the missing ones would now be concerned, and how few they would be. Again, how small a proportion of that reduced number would ever hear of the revelations of the years mentioned.

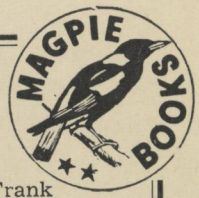
What a calamitous failure was the attempt on the "Madagascar." All concerned reaped but death and disaster, as they deserved.

Many a heavy tragedian of the past has had his history recounted in this magazine, but I think the "cast" has listed nobody worse than Joseph Grey. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I speak without bias, bile, or prejudice, but when I think of Joe Grey I become convinced that the hanging penalty is too kindly, and indeed full of faults. One trouble is that early in the ceremony the patient falls dead and is at once clear of all troubles. In a word or two, it is too swift.

Even in death was there forgiveness for Joseph Grey? Had he a friend in the entire world? Can't say for certain, but this I'll swear to—that I can think of nobody more difficult to imagine

under a violet strewn mound, 'neath the clustering foliage of a fashionable cemetery, where on occasion some kind friend went to sorrow a little for the man who had gone before, maybe leave a token of everlasting remembrance.

THE END.



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