FLYNN'S

ISSUED WEEKLY

WILLIAM J. FLYNN, EDITOR
Twenty-Five Years in the U.S. Secret Service

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THE BORROWED SHIELD

Another Novel of the New York Police

By

Police Commissioner Enright

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ISSUED WEEKLY

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Twenty Five Years in the Secret Service of the United States

VOLUME IX SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1925 NUMBER 4

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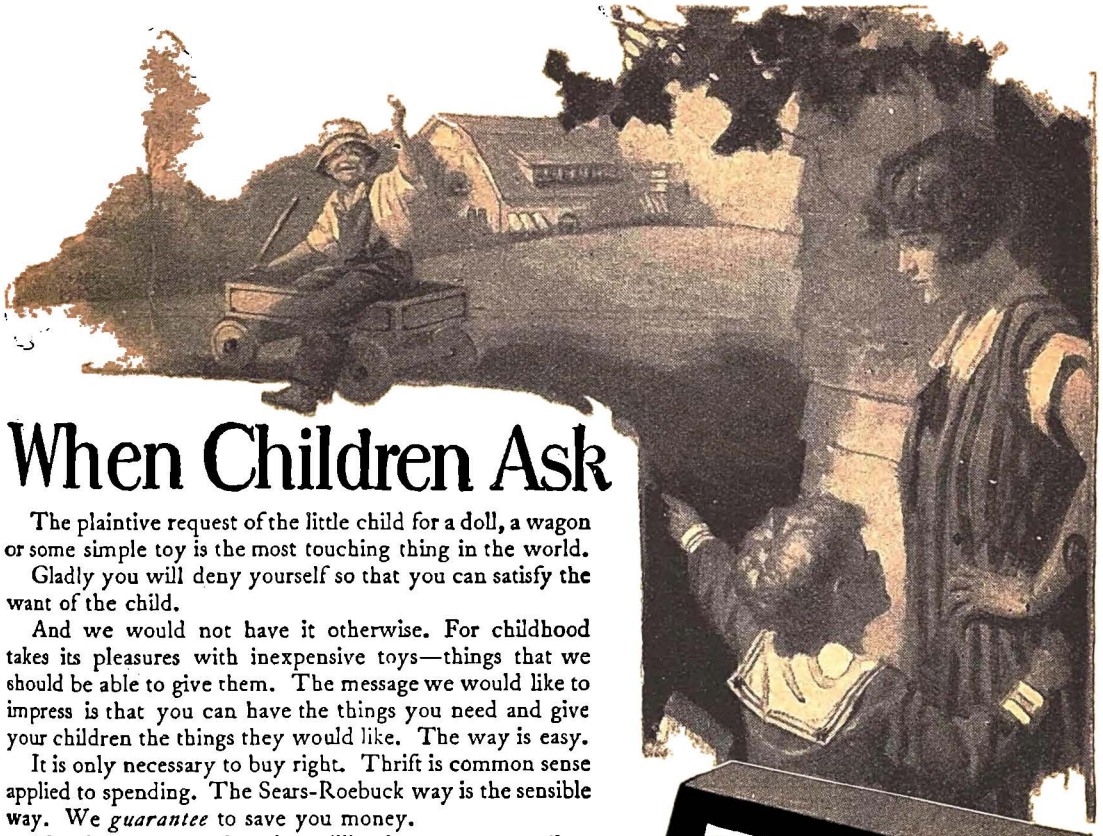

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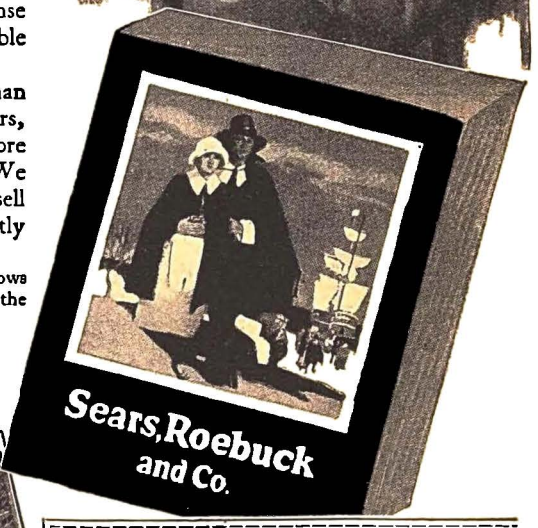

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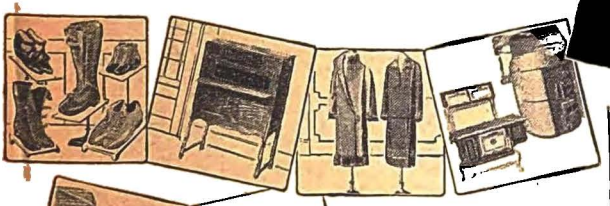

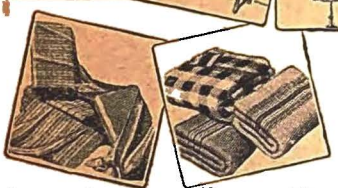

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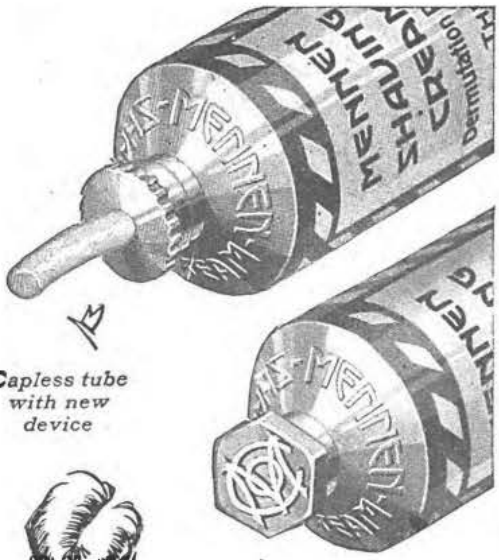

Capless tube with new device

Original tube with threaded cap

Tu-be *or* *not* Tu-be?

Way back in 42 B. C., Publius Syrus said: "Powerful indeed is the empire of *habit.*"

Sixteen centuries later Shakespeare wrote: "How use doth breed a *habit* in a man!"

Since the copyrights of both these authors have expired, I'll use their niftles to illustrate a point.

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Jim Henry
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THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY
280 Broadway **New York City**

GREATER Stories Campaign in ARGOSY-ALLSTORY WEEKLY will hold you all agog with interest not only in the stories themselves, but in features connected with their presentation. The director in charge of *Argosy* aims to give the reader unapproachable stories combined with novelties and surprises that will make the season of 1925-26 the most notable in the magazine's history. Further details in two weeks.

The winsome guardian of your hair cries:

"Simple care is safest!"

MAYBE you don't believe in elves any more, but a lovely real one watches over your hair and she trembles with fear every time you say, "Well, what should I try next?"

"Don't experiment," she pleads. "Just get your hair clean and soft and beautiful, and that is so easy."

Elves don't ordinarily bother much with scientific matters, but they have been investigating the writings of scientific gentlemen who really know.

This is what they found:

"You can keep your hair beautiful and fluffy and glossy by cheerfully shampooing it two or three times a month with pure soap and soft water, and by gaily brushing it every day with a clean brush to give it the glorious sheen that every woman wants."

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FLYNN'S
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VOLUME IX SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1925 NUMBER 4

He passed his hand under the detective's coat, found the shield, and removed it

THE BORROWED SHIELD

By Richard E. Enright

Police Commissioner of New York City

ONLY BYRNE MACARTY WOULD HAVE DARED THE MOB FURY OF THESE DESPERATE BLACKMAILERS AND BATTLED IT THROUGH

POLICE COMMISSIONER RICHARD E. ENRIGHT'S new story is here. With the old-time punch, speed, fire! And more—

"The Borrowed Shield" whirls you into a den of treacherous thugs quick enough to make your tongue do a somersault. And it doesn't get any peace until the story smashes through to its last big battle atop a towering skyscraper.

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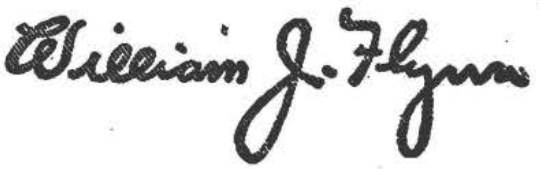
For nothing can stop Byrne Macarty when he gets his head down. And nothing can get by the gang which he is after. The result when they hit is—well, you don't have to guess what happens. And when you read the story you won't have to guess either.

Police Commissioner Enright has put some real New York speed into his tale and then spilled red pepper all over it. You may have to close your eyes when the fighting gets too thick, but that won't keep you from knowing what's going on.

For "The Borrowed Shield" makes no stops. It carries you through at record speed. And it furnishes everything the reader can want: Fun—Action—Romance—Mystery! You will be eager for every one of its four terse installments.



CHAPTER I

THE INJURED SLEUTH

"CAB, sir?"

Hazard glanced carelessly at the driver of the hansom, who leaned down from his lofty perch and repeated the husky voiced invitation: "Cab, sir? Drive you round the park, sir?"

The cabby's face, seen in the rays of the electric light, was the shape and color of an unsalable beet. His mustache was bristly and of a white that ran through shades of dirty gray to nicotine amber. His plug hat was old-fashioned and, like his coat, it was of an indeterminate greenish color. His clothes were like something that had been left out all night; and his voice sounded that way.

Rick Hazard contemplated this relic of an earlier day with mild amusement as the cabby urged: "Nice little spin around the lake?" Then a silent voice within him said: "Why not?"

It was still early. One thirty of a summer morning was early, according to Hazard's reckoning. But the young man was fed up with fox-trotting and the other ingredients of a little party, so he had slipped away from the sound of cocktail shakers and hectic laughter, glad to be alone. Fed up!

Rick glanced back at the door of the hotel he had just left, saw a flutter of white silk skirts pausing on the steps, as if the wearer were looking for some one; and that decided him. He was *not* going to be dragged back!

There was a special reason why it would not do.

Swiftly he slipped into the dark, cozy recess of the hansom, and directed in his cool, well modulated voice:

"Through the park. Round and round till I say stop."

As the old nag jerked into motion, a girl's light voice called from the hotel doorway:

"Ricky! Oh, Ricky-boy! Come along back to mamma!"

But she had not seen him. For once he had escaped from Gladys. He was safe.

Rick Hazard drew the full topcoat over his shirt front, took the glossy cylinder of silk from his overheated head, and leaned back luxuriously, listening to the *clop, clop, clop* of the hoofbeats on the asphalt.

It was a night of full moon, fit for romance, dalliance, or swordplay. But from the former, the *Romeo* stuff, Rick was escaping by stratagem and ruse. While as for the swordplay—well, for that he had come into the world a couple of centuries too late.

A quiet, leisurely drive round the park, and then home to his orderly bachelor quarters and to bed. To-morrow he would see about a reservation for the West, say the Canadian Rockies—any primitive place far from New York. That was his program.

He felt that his placid jogtrot through the shadowed drives had let him slide back through the years to a more peaceful age. The epoch before syncopated melodies and synthetic gin had corroded the nerves of the nation.

Motor cars flitted past him. Sometimes

they rushed past with a burst of song and hysterical laughter. Sometimes they darted by with a sinister snarl of the engines, as if they were bound on an errand of murder.

How far away all this senseless racketing seemed when one was jogging in a hansom! How delightful was this quiet stretch beside the brook and over an old stone bridge!

So ran Hazard's thoughts, and just at that moment he saw the horse suddenly go crazy and try to stand on its hind legs, while the cab swayed and lurched and shimmied beneath him.

The glare of an auto headlight was in Hazard's eyes; the roar of the engine mingled with the clatter of the frantic horseshoes beating the pavement, and the rumble of the cabby's curses.

Then, with a smashing, splintering impact, the auto crashed into a granite pillar at the bridge approach. No car could keep its wheels to the ground with such a jolt. Hazard could hear it rolling and splashing down the brushy bank and into the creek. By the time he leaped from the hansom the car had completely vanished. Only a groan from the darkness of the ravine assured him that it was a smash, a real smash, and not a lurid dream.

The cabby produced a pocket flash light from his shabby livery. Snatching it, Rick scrambled down the incline and threw its white glare upon the crumpled, yellow sides of the wreck.

A ghastly object was wedged between the car and a bowlder.

One more wild taxi driver had got his. The life had been crushed out of him as surely and savagely as a bootheel kills when it comes down upon a beetle. A single glance showed that the driver was dead.

But inside the crumpled auto was a living victim, and judging by his profanity, more furious than frightened.

Hazard wrenched and tugged at the door, forced it open by exerting every ounce of his young vigor, and half carried, half led the injured passenger part way up the slope. At the first rock that made a resting place the victim collapsed with a sound between a curse and a groan.

Hazard could not carry the man, two hundred pounds of bone and muscle, and had to let him down, half sitting, half reclining on a flat stone.

The flash light showed his features, resolute, square cut, smooth-shaven but for a black cropped mustache. The face was contorted—whether with pain or rage it was hard to say. A trickle of blood ran from temple to jaw.

Rick was feeling the man's arms and chest to see whether any bones were broken, when he felt a strong hand grip his elbow.

"Cut out all that," snarled the victim. "It's my side that's hurt. A slat or two cracked—but that's my affair."

"I'll get an ambulance—"

"To heck with an ambulance! Wait!"

The injured man seized the flash light and turned it on Rick Hazard's face. The young man took the sudden glare and the scrutiny without flinching, as the victim sized up the narrow eyes, set jaw, and bony features of the rescuer.

"You'll do," he said curtly. "You've got a fighting face; and you're straight. You've been a soldier—I can see that." He dropped the flash light and reached into his breast pocket. "Here's the warrant," he blurted out. "Drive like hell to West Seventy-Second Street. Pick up the first cop you see. Tell him I got a hot tip that Cadmire—get that?—Laurence Cadmire—the slickest crook at large—is in Apartment 213 A." He mentioned an address in the West Seventies. "Tell the cop to get Cadmire. If anybody's with him, hold the gang. Don't let anybody get away."

"Say, who the—" began Hazard; but the stranger interrupted savagely.

"Byrne Macarty, that's who I am."

"Byrne Macarty!"

Rick's voice showed that Byrne Macarty was a name that meant something. No use going to the Canadian Rockies for big game if Macarty was going to let him play in *his* game.

"What are you waiting for? Here's the warrant," barked the officer. Macarty groaned and his sharp, commanding voice trailed off weakly as Rick held him in his arms. "I'm mussed up considerable—in-

side," he gasped. " But don't think of me; think of Cadmire. Nail that bird!"

Rick thrilled at the phrase. It was classic in the annals of crime. " Nailbird Macarty " was the name that yeggs and gunmen coupled with weird oaths and threats of reprisal.

More than one bullet had grazed his skin, shot from ambush in the underworld. Knives and bombs had been tried by the gangsters to get rid of their enemy. But Macarty's luck had saved him somehow.

Many a crook would have been willing to do a long stretch to be in Rick Hazard's place at that moment. For Byrne Macarty's frame suddenly relaxed in the young man's arms. The torture of his injuries abruptly conquered him. The detective was unconscious; he was helpless as a baby.

Like a flash Rick Hazard's mind jumped to a daring project—why not take a hand in this game? He was keen for adventure. Here was his chance to get the biggest thrill in the world. Why call on a cop? Why be an innocent bystander?

Rick suddenly decided to make that arrest himself.

With a gentle movement he allowed Macarty's body to sink upon the ground, and very softly he felt for the gun and handcuffs, slipping them into his own pockets.

Then he passed his hands lightly under the detective's coat, found the shield and removed it, then sprang to his feet. " What do I want with a cop?" he muttered. I'll pinch that crook with a borrowed shield."

Carried away by the thrill of the game, it did not occur to Rick that he had committed a serious crime. Perhaps he would have taken a chance even if he had thought of that detail.

This encounter had been so swiftly moving that the cabby had only had time to quiet his trembling nag and bring the hansom around to that side of the road. He was peering through the bushes at the glimmering flash light when Hazard leaped out of the brush, shouted the address, and flashed Macarty's badge before his eyes.

" Burn up the road!" he cried. " Traffic rules are all off!"

The driver laid his whip to the horse's flanks with a chortle of delight.

" It's a dick I've got for a fare!" he muttered. " It's like the good old days! Glory be! I'm not a dead one, after all!"

The hansom tore through the park like a runaway.

CHAPTER II

APARTMENT 213 A

THE hansom, clattering furiously as if the devil himself held the whip, swung out into a main roadway of the park.

Rick, clinging to the seat to keep from bouncing to the pavement, noticed the difference in the traffic at once. The road where the accident had occurred was an obscure byway, off the through route of taxis.

He reflected that it might be some time before any car would pass within hailing distance of the injured detective. It would be an act of common humanity to call up an ambulance and send it to the rescue.

But Macarty's iron will dominated the young man even at that distance. " Nail that bird! Don't think about me!" It was a command.

Rick Hazard felt as if he were going into No Man's Land once more. Obedience! That was the first duty in action. He decided to let Macarty shift for himself and shove on.

The hansom was tearing along like a drunken sailor. It was never built for such speed, and the course it made was a perilous zigzag. But the cabby cracked his whip and sat on his high seat with the joyful recklessness of a broncho buster.

" Giddap, you Dan Patch! Shake a fetlock!" he shouted.

To himself he chuckled happily: " Och, Larry Boyle, me lad! This is the day I've been praying the saints to send me! It's the old days on the track all over agin. Me in the sulky, with me feet on the shafts an' a black seegar in me teeth. An' before me a trotter that split the wind till it sang in me whiskers. Giddap, you Maude S!"

Taxicabs gave them the road. Even the hardened, blue-jawed drivers were astonished at this apparition.

" Hi!" they bellowed. " Hi, there!"

thinking that was the proper way to check a runaway horse.

Others let out cries of derision or bawled some hoarse witticism, but Larry Boyle on his perch and Rick Hazard in the shadowy body of the cab did not even bother to reply.

Like the driver with his cracking whip, Rick was seized by the sudden call of adventure.

He was living! The chase was on! The biggest of all big game—a man—was to be bagged. The rest of the world could go to the devil.

Not until the foam-flecked horse darted out of the park entrance and across the path of a clanging trolley on Central Park West was there any serious interference. The motorman threw on the brakes with a bull-roaring expletive; the wheels of his trolley let out an agonized squeal, and the passengers were thrown into a huddled confusion.

But the hansom escaped the side-swipe by the thickness of one coat of paint and plunged wildly and erratically down Seventy-Second Street. The brisk, fog-laden wind from the river blew flecks of foam from the horse's bit into Rick Hazard's face and seemed to lend fresh spirit to the nag. It must have been a good horse in its day, for it showed wonderful endurance.

But a very undersized flivver, carrying two policemen, had passed the scene of that narrow escape, and the officer at the wheel turned a wide circle and took up the pursuit.

The cops must have thought it was a runaway, not a reckless driver, that was making the disturbance, for they made no effort to stop the hansom with a shot or two. They plugged along behind with all the power that Henry Ford had given them.

Where Seventy-Second Street crosses Broadway they had almost caught up with the hansom, but there was just enough traffic to interfere; not to stop the officers, but to slow them down.

Taxis were speeding uptown, carrying the after-theater supper people, men in white shirt fronts, women in silks and jewels, who looked on as if it were a show. Through this maze of cars and pedestrians the two-wheeled hansom wriggled like a scared lizard, and it was halfway down the block before the police department Ford overtook it and began to crowd it toward the curb.

One officer was on the running board with a heavy red hand outstretched to seize the lines of the supposed runaway, when Rick acted decisively. Swinging toward the cop, he extended his gloved hand that still clutched the borrowed shield. As the policeman started at the sight, an immaculately dressed clubman flashing a badge in his face, Rick spoke sharply: "Lay off! I'm working with Macarty!"

Instantly the cop grinned with comprehension.

"Nail that bird!" he retorted, as if it had been a password, and over his shoulder he spoke a word to the man at the wheel.

"Need some help?" asked the latter, as the cab drew away from the Ford.

"Not needed. I'm working on the q.t."

Rick instinctively stuck to his resolution and turned down this offer of assistance, which he might need desperately in the next few minutes.

When he had time to think about it, he realized that it was because Macarty was invariably a lone wolf. He did not hunt with the pack. Macarty was therefore the type who could handle a case that demanded special skill and daring.

It must have been that reason in some corner of his brain that made Hazard wave with an air of dismissal to the pair of zealous officers in the police department Ford.

The man at the wheel sheered off and began to turn in a wide circle, while his companion stared reflectively at the hansom clattering toward the river.

As the cab was swallowed up in the fog, the cop at the wheel remarked: "A close-mouthed son of a gun!"

"Who is?"

"Byrne Macarty. That was him."

"You're wrong, Malachy, me lad. This bird said he was *working* with Macarty."

"It was him, Dennis. I seen Macarty once at headquarters. I know."

"Aw, you're nuts!"

" Mebbe so. Just the same, if that ain't Macarty—Nailbird Macarty—I'll make a stew of me belt an' eat it."

" Let's stick around awhile," suggested Malachy. " It's just a long shot we may be needed. It can't do no harm—that's sure. In case we hear a whistle, we'll be ready to jump in an' help."

" You said something! When Macarty's after a guy something big is likely to break."

So the Ford swung around the corners near the river in the Seventies, and through the fog the dispute was continued obstinately.

At the same time that the officers were arguing about Macarty's identity the man who carried his shield was entering the apartment house.

It was a palatial apartment and well guarded by a doorman in livery. Only the uniformed giant happened to be asleep when Hazard pushed open the glass door.

Like a ghost in evening clothes, Rick slid silently past him in search of Apartment 213 A.

He stepped into the elevator, shook the colored boy who was dozing on the leather seat, and said:

" Wake up! Apartment 213 A. And make it snappy!"

The boy jumped like a rabbit and started the elevator before he could think of an answer; then he sulkily rolled his eyes at the stranger and asked:

" Is you expected, suh? Did you send up your name?"

Rick wheeled on him with a furious growl that made the boy shrivel up. He had expected that question and was prepared for it.

He opened his coat and flashed the borrowed shield in the eyes of the elevator boy.

" Do you see that?" barked Rick.

" Yassah, boss. I sees it puffickly."

" Stop the car! Stop it right here between floors. I want to talk to you."

" It's stopped, boss. Oh, *please,* Mr. Cop, I ain't done nothin'!"

" Do you know what the penalty is for obstructing an officer of the law in the performance of his duty?"

" 'Deed I don't, boss. Is it plenty?"

" It's twenty years at hard labor. Get that? A twenty-year stretch. What do you think of that?"

Rick thrust out his jaw and the negro shook and turned gray.

" De law is too easygoin'. It ought to be a life sentence—an' from that up, if you axes me."

Rick smiled grimly. " I see that we understand each other," he remarked. " Now listen to me, boy. Obstructing an officer means refusing to help in making an arrest—or giving an alarm. That makes you an accomplice before the law, and you draw the same sentence as the criminal."

" Oh, golly, boss—I ain't refusin' nothin'."

" Lucky for you. The man in 213 A is wanted for murder."

Rick wanted to impress the negro, regardless of facts, and he succeeded.

" My lawdy. That means hangin'."

" The penalty is electrocution."

" Dat's even more deadly. Elocution! I don't want to pass out that way. What you want me to do, cunnel?"

" Get me into 213 A without any noise; that's all. I'll attend to the rest."

" Thank you kindly, sah. Yassah. I can fix you up. I got a pass key."

" Come across with it."

As Rick took the key from the trembling fingers of the negro, he remarked: " Now go ahead. Let me off at the right floor, and mind, if you let out a peep the judge will send you to the chair as sure as God made little apples."

A moment later the wearer of the borrowed shield stood before the steel door of 213 A in the silent corridor.

CHAPTER III

DEALING FOR A DAUGHTER

WHILE Rick Hazard stood in the corridor he did not guess that he was preparing to intervene in something far more important than the arrest of a crook. Yet so it was. A tense drama of man's boundless greed and woman's unselfish love was playing behind the door marked 213 A

that night. And fate had cast Rick for a leading rôle in that drama.

When the much wanted Cadmire stole into the apartment house that looms above the Hudson in the Seventies a tip had been phoned to Macarty by an underworld spy who for months had been hoping for such a bit of luck.

Though the master crook did not know about this tip, he had a hunch, the mysterious sixth sense of wild animals and human fugitives alike, that things were about to break wrong.

But he shrugged and lit a cigarette. He was a fatalist. A shadow crossed his fine, aristocratic features, but with the first puff of smoke his normal impassive expression returned.

Laurence Cadmire might have been a British officer, to judge by his well-bred voice and manner, his level glance from greenish-gray eyes, his trim mustache, and his soldierly bearing.

He was tall, athletic, well groomed, and keen witted; an opponent worthy of the best efforts of the detectives who trailed him. If it had not been for a warped moral sense, Cadmire might have become a great figure in the world, instead of being what he was—a marked man in the underworld.

In fact, it was his great personal charm and his many gifts of mind and body that had made it possible for him to pose as an English "younger son," and win the hand of Ruth, a daughter of the wealthy Reinards of Washington Square North.

The marriage, eight years before, had meant only wretchedness and terror of disgrace for the poor girl. She had died after giving birth to a daughter, a beautiful, black-eyed little creature named Amy, and it was for the possession of this child that a struggle had been carried on ever since by the Reinard family and the unworthy father.

Old Colonel Reinard had tried by every means to make a decent man out of the husband of his daughter. Cadmire laughed at his sermons, but took his money. He came back for more gold and more, until finally the attempt to buy off the scapegrace had been abandoned.

Then Isabel, the younger sister of Ruth, tried her powers of persuasion. She prided herself on being something of an actress and tried to get into the good graces of Cadmire by associating with him and meeting his friends.

But the result had been disastrous. Isabel had been made an unwitting tool of the polished crook in one of his most daring robberies. One of her own friends was robbed of her jewels, and the information had been skillfully secured from Isabel herself.

With horror she realized that this man would hesitate at nothing, not even at using his own kin to commit a crime. She understood too well the fate that was in store for little Amy if the ingratiating scoundrel were allowed to keep the child, and she made one last offer. All the money she could raise by selling her pearls and borrowing on her inheritance was the price she offered for her sister's child.

And that night, at Anne Hayley's apartment, the deal was to be closed.

When Cadmire entered the apartment Anne was waiting for him. He nodded to the white-haired, frail-looking old woman, and remarked: "The kid's to go with Isabel to-night. I've made a good bargain."

Anne Hayley looked at him with bright, black eyes that showed astonishing vitality for so old a face.

"O. K., Larry," she replied. "I'll blow. You'll want to talk things over."

"Sure. Be at the Acropolis Club in case anything goes wrong. Better hurry. Isabel will be here any moment."

"I'll be on my way, then." She hesitated as she threw on her coat. "Will I be seeing the kiddie again?" she asked, and there was a wistful tone in her voice. "I never knew I could love anything until I took care of your Amy. I thought my heart was all through with that kind of foolishness."

"Maybe you'll see her again," replied Cadmire. "It's a small world. Even if Isabel makes a lady of her, you may run up against her some day."

The old woman made as if to enter the bedroom for a farewell glance at the child, but Cadmire irritably dismissed her.

"Be on your way," he said. "I've got to get this over with and beat it."

The old woman cast one longing glance at the bedroom door, threw a kiss to the sleeping child, and departed.

Anne had been gone for only a few minutes when Isabel gave the three rings, the agreed signal, and was admitted.

"Have you got the money?" was Cadmire's greeting. He wasted no ceremony on the beautiful girl who despised him.

"Yes. That is, not all. I could only bring ten thousand cash to-night." She was gasping with the fear of what he would say. Her eyes sought for a sign of the child.

"Only ten thousand! Say, don't try to gyp me!" Then his manner changed. He assumed a smiling mask. "My dear Miss Reinard, how truly unfortunate that our little deal is off!"

"Don't say that. I'll get the rest to-morrow. I couldn't get more to-night. Father refused."

"The old sanctimonious hypocrite!" snarled Cadmire. "Thinks more of his dirty money than his darling Amy! All right! I was letting her go too cheap, anyhow."

Isabel laid a hand on his arm, but he shook it off with a curse. Then with mock deference he raised the fingers to his lips and bowed.

"A hand so lovely, such tapering fingers, such tender white skin! What a pity that such a dainty hand should come to me—empty!" He dropped it with an evil grin. "All right—the deal's off! I keep the child!"

CHAPTER IV

A DEATH THREAT

"LET me have her," pleaded Isabel. "I tell you I will get you the rest of the money in a few days. You know I wouldn't deceive you."

"No woman will ever deceive me, dear lady. I expect from them nothing but lies."

His tone was so venomous that Isabel recoiled as from the hiss of a snake. "That is strange language from you, Laurence!" she exclaimed indignantly. "You who have deceived so many women—women who trusted you as my sister did!"

Cadmire laughed harshly. "She threw herself at my head," he sneered. "They all do, the poor fools. Hoping they can use me if I once fall for their charms. What they call love is just a game of skill—only I happen to be the better player."

"Everything you say makes me realize that you are no fit person to take care of that innocent child," cried Isabel with tears of indignation in her eyes. "Let me take her, Laurence. You don't love her. Why, you couldn't possibly love her and speak as you do about her mother."

"Nevertheless, she is my child. It would be against nature to separate father and daughter." His tone was mocking as he watched her anguished face. "What is more, it would break her little heart to part from her father."

"I don't believe it. I don't see how the child could possibly love anything so cynical and cold-hearted as you are."

"Oh, you don't! Well, it is bad form to contradict a lady, so I'll not say that you're mistaken. But just to amuse myself with a little test I will demonstrate how much she cares for me."

He went into the bedroom, picked up the little girl with amazing tenderness of touch, and brought her into the living room and placed her, still sleeping, on the davenport.

Amy was an exquisite picture of childish beauty as she lay thus, the dark curls tumbled about her flushed face. She had gone to sleep in her clothes. It had been expected that Isabel would take her away that night. It was an elaborate dress of white chiffon with coral ribbons, so dainty and fluffy that she looked like a little sleeping fairy.

"Oh, the angel!" gasped Isabel, bending over her. "How she reminds me of Ruth! I *must* have her!"

But Cadmire held her back by force.

"Stand there," he said. "I will stand here by the piano. Now, when she awakens, we will both call her. We will see whom she goes to. I am so confident of the result that if she goes to you, Isabel, you can take her, and I will call the ten thousand dollars payment enough."

While Isabel stood breathlessly gazing

at the child, Cadmire struck several chords on the piano, glancing first at his daughter then at Isabel with a sardonic smile. Suddenly the man struck a loud discord, and the child awoke with a start. She sat up rubbing her eyes and blinking about the room. Her gaze rested for a moment on Isabel, who smiled and opened her arms invitingly, then shifted to her father's face.

With astonishment Isabel saw that his cynical mask had been transformed into a tender and winning smile. She realized how that consummate actor had been able to play with the hearts of women, and at the same moment little Amy sprang from the couch and ran toward her father with open arms.

"Oh, papa, papa," she cried. "I'm so glad you've come!"

"There you see," remarked Cadmire, sinking into a chair and taking the little girl on his knee. He felt in his pocket and brought out a bit of chocolate wrapped in shiny tinfoil.

"If you really love her—and I almost think you do—you should let me give her a chance to grow up a decent woman," blurted Isabel.

"You don't trust me with my own daughter?"

"I think you would bring her up to become a thief like yourself," retorted the girl, white to the lips. "When I think of how you broke my sister's heart I could kill you! When I think of how you made use of me—worming out of me the whereabouts of Mrs. Stronfeld's jewelry—robbing my friend!—no, I don't trust you. I believe you would bring up that child to become a decoy for your robberies."

"Cut it out!" snapped Cadmire, springing up angrily. "I don't care to hear your opinion of me—you and your snobbish family mean nothing to me. But I'm going to hang on to Amy, because I know that I can use her against your whole tribe. If I ever get in a tight fix I know I can count on old Papa Reinard's millions to get me clear.

"He would do anything to keep me from going to the pen. A convict for a son-in-law! That would be more than his pride could stand, hey? And as long as I'm in control of his daughter's child I have one sure method of squeezing out some of his money now and then."

"Oh, you unspeakable brute!" The girl was queenly in her rage.

"Gad! You're a wonderful actress, Isabel. I'd like to see you doing *Lady Macbeth*. Now, listen, I'm clearing out tonight. I've just pulled off a nice little job and I've got fifty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds in my clothes. I'm leaving the country and maybe I'll retire. Yes, I think I'll buy some nice little business and keep inside the law from now on."

"Do you mean it, Laurence? Will you really go straight if you get away?"

"I mean it!" Cadmire moved toward the bedroom. "I'm going to change to traveling clothes right now. I'm leaving inside of an hour. And I'm taking Amy with me."

He picked up the little girl, whose eyes were again heavy with sleep, and placed her tenderly on the davenport. Then as he moved toward the bedroom door he jumped as if a shot had struck him.

It was the gentle click of the key being inserted in the lock of the door.

Like a flash, Cadmire was inside the bedroom and had pulled Isabel after him.

"It's a dick," he whispered. "I had a hunch I was trailed. Now listen, get that dick out of here. If you don't I'll shoot him without warning. Think up a sob story, make him go with you somewhere, or I'll croak him and you, too."

Isabel stared at him with dilated eyes. She knew too well that he was in a deadly mood and would keep his promise to kill.

She nodded yes, and at the same moment stepped outside the bedroom door.

The door of the apartment was thrust open as she stood there and Isabel confronted Rick Hazard.

CHAPTER V

FEMININE POWERS

RICK HAZARD, his hand on the gun concealed in his pocket, was standing face to face with the loveliest woman he had ever seen, either in his waking hours or in his dreams.

She was a little above medium height, but

she carried herself like a queen. She appeared stately. Her figure seemed to have at once the slenderness of the wood nymph and the ripe fulness of the Greek ideal.

Apparently it was from her that the little girl on the davenport had inherited her crown of dark curls, and the woman's face was of a wonderfully pure pallor, the ivory pallor that needs no heightened color to make it alluring.

But more impressive than the woman's beauty was her poise, the regal quality that did not allow her to be disturbed by the most unexpected encounter.

As she stood before this strange intruder she looked at the young man with undisturbed gaze from her deep brown eyes. If she had been a queen receiving an ambassador from a friendly power she could not have been more completely master of the situation.

Isabel waited for him to speak. With one hand she gave the child a gentle caress to quiet her, and the little girl, who had started up, sank back into slumber.

Any other woman, Rick thought, would have demanded in an agitated falsetto what he meant by walking into a strange apartment.

But she only looked at him questioningly, and the slender hand which lay lightly upon her breast did not tremble.

Even in that fleeting glance Rick noted how slender and tapering were the fingers, how carefully tended were her rosy polished nails, and how the single emerald, flat and square in its platinum setting, added to her queenliness.

The young man felt himself grow red and confused. His silk hat was in his hand. He heard his own voice saying, with a strange humility: "I beg your pardon! I'm —I'm afraid I've made a mistake."

There was a gleam of amusement in those large dark brown eyes that searched his own. A sparkle of gentle mockery as she replied in a voice that was all music, yet somehow had no hint of weakness. "A mistake, evidently!"

She looked at him with a half smile, waiting for him to explain how he had made this mistake.

Rick Hazard watched her lips curl in amusement and was fascinated by their brilliant color. They were scarlet and curved, as if a flaming petal had been dropped upon a cool surface of ivory.

"Yes, I must have come to the wrong place," he said. "I've not been here before. The address was given to me."

"Perhaps I can help you." In spite of her poise this strange divinity was far from hostile. She was even willing to help him out of his embarrassing plight. She was a woman of the world; he was quite obviously a gentleman who had made an innocent blunder; it was a tactful thing to avoid making him feel absurd. That was the part she played.

"Possibly I can direct you," she suggested.

"The man I'm looking for is Mr. Cadmire, Laurence Cadmire."

Rick looked at her square in the eyes as he spoke that name, but she gave no sign that she had ever heard it before.

"Cadmire!" she echoed. "Laurence Cadmire! No, I'm afraid that I can't help you after all. I've never heard of the gentleman."

She looked at the young man with an air of friendly dismissal, and as he hesitated, embarrassed, she continued in her gently even accents.

"This is General Carteret's apartment. He's my father, you know. I'm Isabel Carteret."

"I hope you will pardon me."

"Of course!"

Somehow, he knew not how, Rick found himself once more in the corridor regarding the closed door of 213 A.

Hazard stared at the closed door. His expression was blank.

His mind was not blank, however. It was like a speeding film of incredibly beautiful features and expressions that shifted from one enticement to another, in bewildering succession.

Pretty girls he had known aplenty.

Beautiful women were nothing new in his life.

But this girl, "the daughter of General Carteret," had suddenly effaced all other women from his memory.

Gladys, that charming bit of femininity, who had tried to call him back to the party an hour ago, was non-existent now. So were the Maries and Dorothys, the Kittys, and all the rest of his past.

Equally forgotten was the warrant in his pocket and the duty that had been imposed upon him by the iron-jawed Macarty.

Hazard lingered outside her door, wondering what excuse could serve him to speak to her once more. Could he call the next day to offer formal apologies for his intrusion? Would she receive him on such a transparent pretext?

Another question gnawed at his mind: Was she married? Was the little girl her daughter? It seemed likely, but for all that she might be free. Perhaps she was a widow.

Rick Hazard was tortured by the most persistent question that had ever racked his mind, yet it was impossible to press the bell and ask for a reply.

He could not say, "Pardon me, but are you free to marry?" Yet at that moment he would have given a thousand dollars to know.

While he hesitated there the seconds slipped by and grew to minutes. The corridor was still and deserted. He moved slowly away.

Could he have looked within the room at that moment he would have suffered a severe shock.

Isabel had tiptoed to the bedroom door and opened it a crack.

"He's gone," she said.

"Who was it?"

"An officer. It must have been. He asked for you."

"A dick!" Cadmire swore violently under his breath. "Listen girl, where is he now?"

"I don't know. I told him he had the wrong number. He apologized and left."

"You damned idiot! Don't you know he's laying for me outside? Why didn't you take him clear away from here?"

"How could I?"

"What did he look like?"

Isabel described him in general terms.

"That would be Macarty, Byrne Macarty," whispered Cadmire angrily. "Now, if he sticks around here I'm done for. You've got to get rid of him."

"What shall I do?"

"I've got it. Go out in the corridor and look for him. Act frightened—as if you'd got bad news. If he is in sight run to him and tell him you've got a phone message—your father's had a stroke. That's the stuff. Beg him to take you to the Acropolis Club—work on his sympathy."

As Isabel hesitated Cadmire added: "You can take Amy with you. If I make my get-away you can keep her."

At this promise Isabel yielded without hesitation.

A moment later Rick saw her door open and Isabel was running toward him, the radiant creature of his dreams.

Her face was strangely drawn by excitement and terror, yet even so it was beautiful; the ivory cheeks had taken on a tinge of feverish color; her eyes were no longer cool, but alight with tragic fire.

"Oh, come back, please come back," she gasped as he turned toward her with a smile.

"What is wrong? What has happened?"

"Oh, it's terrible. My father! Just as you left there was a phone from his club. He's had a stroke. He may be dying."

"My God! How awful!"

"He wants me to come to him at once. Can you take me there. It's so late and I'm afraid. Oh, my poor father! He may be dead before I can get there."

"Of course I'll take you. I'm only too willing to serve you. Where is the club?"

"Not far. Just a few blocks, on West Eighty-Third Street. I'll be with you directly. Wait just a second." She returned to the apartment and came back wrapped in her cloak and carrying the child. "Father would want to see her if he's still conscious."

Rick took the warm burden from her arms and they hastened down the corridor.

"We won't wait for the elevator," she said. "It's so slow."

Rick ran with her downstairs, and the feeling of her light hand on his arm was as intoxicating as the faint perfume from her hair and the appealing cadence of her voice.

They flitted through the lobby with only

a sleepy salute from the doorman, who was awake this time, or at least half awake.

Outside the apartment house the river fog seemed to strike a chill into her delicate flesh. Isabel drew the cloak about her slender shoulders, glancing about for the expected car.

CHAPTER VI

RICK MAKES A PROMISE

RICK had hastily directed the cabby to wait near by, not in front of the apartment where the hansom might be observed, but a few doors away.

Larry Boyle had brought the nag to a halt under a street light and painfully climbed down to inspect his steed. That noble animal stood with its legs braced far apart, blowing and panting, head down and ears drooping. But the owner regarded it with pride.

"I'd never 'a' thought you had it in ye, Zev, me boy! I'll tell the world, there's life in the old plug yet."

He rubbed its trembling legs and patted the soft nose.

"That's what breedin' does," he murmured. "Man or beast, it's all the same. When we get into a tight hole—into a race for life, or a scrap with a tough bird, where would we be without our ancestors? I'm askin' you!"

Larry went back to the cab and brought out a thin blanket, with more holes than fabric, which he laid over the animal's back.

"Gotta watch out for your health. No use takin' chances with a A 1 piece of hoss flesh like this is," he muttered.

Meanwhile the old man kept his ears alert for a hasty summons from the apartment house. He had no idea of how long his fare might be gone. There might be pistol shots, a woman's scream, before that mysterious business was done.

Then, without warning, Rick appeared at the door of the apartment, carrying a child in his arms and accompanied by a woman whose costume and manner showed her to be a lady.

"Will that be a pinch? That swell skirt!—I wonder now!" thought Larry Boyle, hurriedly preparing to receive his passengers.

At the sight of the waiting hansom Rick blurted out an apologetic expletive. "That blasted cab! It's not good enough for you! I'll ring for a taxi!" He drew her back toward the lobby.

"No, no no! Don't go back! The hansom will do." Isabel laughed in spite of her anxiety as she saw the cabby strip the blanket from his horse and scramble up to his perch.

"How quaint!" she exclaimed. "I never rode in a hansom cab. Can it go fast?"

Rick helped her in and sprang into the seat beside her, pausing just long enough to hand the cabby a twenty.

"Acropolis Club, West Eighty-Third Street, near the Drive," he directed. "Show speed!"

"Speed it is, sir!"

Larry Boyle was puzzled. His fare was a dick, and he had gone to make an arrest. Could this be a "pinch"?

But the respect with which Rick had assisted his companion into the cab seemed to make that idea impossible. No lady crook ever received such deference from an officer.

And the address was not the nearest police station, but an "exclusive" club on West Eighty-Third Street, so exclusive that the cabby had never heard of it.

"The Acropolis Club! Sure, that's a new one to me! Must be one of them swell gamblin' joints for trimmin' millionaires," he commented as he swung the whip over the horse's bony flanks.

As the cab clattered up Riverside Drive Rick might have sent a thought after Byrne Macarty, lying injured in the park, only at that moment the young man's attention was entirely taken up with a more engrossing subject.

He was trying to comfort Isabel Carteret, who had taken little Amy in her lap, and was now sobbing and stroking the hair of the sleeping child.

The strain had been too much for her. Now that she was out of Cadmire's presence she could not control herself.

"Please, please don't cry!" Rick repeated again and again, giving her shoulder

a comforting little pat. "Please, Miss Carteret—Isabel!"

There, it was out.

He had called her by her first name, and she had not rebuked him. He longed to slip his arm about her waist and to give her the caresses that would express his sympathy and love, but he did not dare.

It was hard for Rick to be downhearted over the fate of General Carteret, as he should have been. After all, he had never seen the general.

But he was sincerely moved by the girl's distress. He drew closer to her and said, "You must promise me one thing, Isabel."

"Yes. What is it?"

"Promise me that you will let me be your friend. I want you always to call on me when you need help. No matter what happens, remember that I am your friend."

"Do you mean that?" She looked at him with eyes brimming with tears.

"I do mean it!" His voice was trembling with emotion. "When I saw you first I did not dare hope that I might serve you. It all seems like the working of fate. Doesn't it?"

"Does it?" she mused.

In her contemplation of the mysteries of fate her mind was taken off the tragedy of her father for a few moments, and for this Rick was glad.

CHAPTER VII

DR. PASCAL'S COURTESIES

"WAS it fate that brought us together?" she asked. "Or was it something else, something that has a more commonplace name? How did you happen to open my door?"

"I—I can hardly explain."

"But, of course, you can explain! Who told you to go to apartment 213 A and ask for a Mr. ——. I forget his ridiculous name?"

Her eyes sought his in the dimness of the cab, and she remarked suddenly, "By the way, I don't even know your name."

"Richard Hazard! Usually called Rick by people who like me—I hope you will call me Rick."

"Agreed! On one condition! Tell me frankly why you opened my door to-night. Why, you didn't even ring. And the key! How did you get a key?"

"It's a strange story. You'll hardly believe it."

"Oh, yes I will. You're too honest to lie, Rick." His name sounded very tender on her lips.

"All right, then, here goes. I walked into 213 A with a warrant for Laurence Cadmire."

"A warrant!" She drew away from him as if he had been a snake. Once more she was acting a part, for she had guessed his errand. "Are you a detective? A plain clothes man?"

"Nothing so useful, I assure you, Isabel. Society could not hold together for an hour without policemen and detectives, but it could get along very nicely without chaps like me, who have more money than sense in spending it."

"I don't understand what you are talking about? You hint that you are a rich young man about town, yet you go around with a warrant in your pocket. Is it a lark?—a smoking room bet?"

"No, it's not a bet, it's an adventure. It was a dare—and ever since I was a kid I couldn't turn down a dare."

Briefly he told her of the encounter with "Nailbird Macarty," and how the warrant and the officer's shield had come into his hands.

In her excitement Isabel seemed to have forgotten the grief that had overtaken her.

"Is this all true?" she exclaimed, leaning toward him. "You're not just telling me this?"

"Here's the answer." Rick drew the warrant from his breast pocket, then passed her the shield, which he let her take in her hands and examine.

"By some rotten bad luck Macarty was given a false address—or maybe he was so startled by the accident that he got the numbers twisted."

"That must be it," agreed Isabel, returning the shield.

As Rick slipped the shield and warrant into his topcoat pocket he remarked with a profound air: "Just think, dear—" He

paused, but she did not show any displeasure at the endearment. "Just think if I had been given the right number I might have been leading a criminal in handcuffs this minute instead of riding in a handsom with you."

"Or, again, you might have encountered a man with a gun and be flying about with the angels at this very minute!" she reminded him.

"That's so! There's always a chance!"

"Well, it's wonderful! Fate must have had something to do with it. Here, driver, stop! You're going past the corner!" For they were passing Eighty-Third Street.

Larry Boyle swung his nag about sharply, following the girl's directions, and stopped before a totally unimpressive house that might have been a home of some millionaire.

"This is it. Stop here!" cried the girl, throwing open the apron of the cab.

"Is this the Acropolis Club?" began Rick. "Are you sure this is the place?"

"Certainly! Of course! They are expecting me. Don't you see?"

Already a light showed through the crack of the slowly opening door, though the rest of the house was shrouded and silent.

Isabel, with the child in her arms, was halfway up the stairs before Rick overtook her.

"Don't try to come with me, *please*." She said it in a low voice, but her tones rang with determination.

Rick hesitated. "Are you sure it is all right? I may be needed. Can't I wait at the door?"

"No, no, no! If you are really my friend go! Go now!"

"I'll wait for you in the cab, then?"

"No, don't do that either. There's nothing you can do. I'm with friends here, father's friends and mine."

"At least let me call to-morrow and inquire how your father is? Let me call to-morrow morning, Isabel." He longed to add "darling."

"Yes, do that! But not here. At the apartment. And now, good-by—Rick." There was a wealth of tenderness in her voice at that moment of parting. She thrust him gently from her.

But as the door opened to admit the girl, a suave individual in formal evening clothes passed her swiftly inside and then laid a detaining hand on Rick's arm.

The young man was staring into a pair of masterful black eyes under dark bushy brows. He got the swift impression of a welcoming smile that showed strong white teeth under a sweeping black mustache.

"Come in, my dear sir," exclaimed the stranger. "I cannot let you go without telling you how grateful I am for bringing Isabel here. Pascal is my name, Doctor Pascal."

The man's tones were honeyed. He had grasped Rick's hand and pressed it firmly, and Rick found himself in a luxuriously furnished hall with the closed door behind him. Isabel and little Amy had disappeared upstairs.

A touch on his shoulder caused Rick to turn, and at the same instant the man with the black mustache had sprung upon him, twisting his arms violently behind his back, and two other men who had sprung from nowhere bound him and forced a gag into his mouth with the swiftness of experts.

Rick Hazard let fly with his feet, caught one of his assailants in the pit of the stomach and had a swift vision of the ruffian doubled up and gasping with pain.

The next instant Rick had the sensation of a chimney toppling over on his head. The constellations were dancing before his eyes, and then everything went black.

CHAPTER VIII

TOASTING A DETECTIVE

"PICK him up, boys," cried the man who had called himself Dr. Pascal, and with the toe of his boot he shoved the unconscious form of the young man to one side.

His two assistants, thick-muscled, low-browed ruffians, who looked like thugs, took hold of Rick Hazard, one at the shoulders and one at the heels, and prepared to carry him upstairs.

The door of the drawing-room was thrust open and a number of men, young, old, and middle-aged, ran into the hall, some in evening dress and some in smart and well-

tailored tweeds. They all had the strained nervous expression of men who play for large stakes and take long chances. They were all sober, yet it was plain that the hip pocket flasks had been circulating.

"Good stuff! Fine work!" they cried and slapped the "doctor" on the shoulder. "He's the first dick to get into this joint, and, believe me, he's booked for a warm welcome!"

The unconscious man had been hustled upstairs after the doctor had deftly gone through his clothes.

"What's all this row about?" A white-haired man with startlingly youthful complexion stood at the head of the stairs and called down. He was in a purple dressing gown, and his hair was tumbled as if he had been sleeping.

There was a chorus of boisterous laughter and exclamations from the crooks in the hall.

"It's a pinch, Harry! The joint is raided. That guy is a dick. You missed all the fun."

But "Dr. Pascal" silenced their kidding with one upraised hand and explained what had happened.

"We've bagged a prize, Harry. Cadmire gave us a hot tip over the phone. He said he was sending us his kid and his sister-in-law in care of Detective Byrne Macarty."

"Byrne Macarty!" cried the white-haired man. "Was *that* Byrne Macarty?"

"That's what Cadmire said. He told us to look after the girl and turn his kid over to Green Goods Annie, and as for Byrne Macarty, we could do as we liked with that bird. He's makin' us a present of the dick."

"Well, what we are goin' to do to him will be plenty!" exclaimed Harry. "I hope you didn't croak him, for I want to have the pleasure of putting him on the grill before he passes out."

"Don't worry. Mike just dusted him off with the blackjack. When he wakes up, we'll all be on hand to give him a little party."

"Cadmire was certainly slick to get rid of the cop like that," chuckled the doctor. "Macarty was right there in the apartment with him, with a warrant in his pocket, and now look what's happened. I've got the warrant and the shield." Dr. Pascal threw back his coat and showed the shield pinned to his evening vest. "The dick is locked away in a room upstairs and Cadmire is getting ready to blow."

"Yeah! I know. He said when he got a little stake, he was goin' to make his get-away and take a vacation. I guess he's on his way to Canada by this time."

"The bulls will be watching every station and motor road, but I guess Cadmire will fool 'em all right. That boy's never so happy as when he's making a monkey out of the police force."

"That's right! Where did you put his kid and the girl?"

"Green Goods Annie has the kid. She's goin' to take it with her now. We're to hang on to the girl for a day or two and then turn her loose. She's locked in a room on the top floor and the dick is in the next room."

"Well, I guess we'd better open a few bottles to celebrate," remarked Harry, and he descended the stairs to join his fellow criminals. "Just one thing — you don't think that cursed dick has planted anybody outside, do you?"

"Not a chance! Macarty was alone. That's the way he always works."

"Just the same, we all want to be able to blow at any moment. There might be a raid in case Macarty had left word where he was going. Is there a car in the next street?"

"Sure thing! We've got a car there for a quick get-away as usual."

"All set! Let's open up some fizz water and we'll all drink a toast to our guest, Nailbird Macarty!"

The gang gathered about a long table in the back parlor of the old-fashioned house. Bottles of a variety to suit all tastes were produced, ranging from the white mule of the moonshiners to the finest champagnes ever brought from France.

Part of this was the loot from hi-jacking operations, for the gang plied all kinds of criminal trade. Some of it was booty from a millionaire's mansion on Fifth Avenue, pre-war stuff of the highest quality.

Tumblers and wine glasses were filled and Dr. Pascal stood at the head of the table acting as toastmaster.

"Gentlemen, are your glasses charged?" he began with a sardonic smile. "I rise to propose a toast to our honored guest, the flower of the Force! Here's to Detective Byrne Macarty! May he get a good dose of what he wished for us!

"May he be pinched by Satan, carried to hell in a hurry-up wagon, given the third degree by imps with hot pitchforks, and tried by the devil and given a ten million-year stretch at hard labor, stoking the fires in hell! To Nailbird Macarty! Bless his soul!"

There was a loud chorus of guffaws as the toast was drunk.

CHAPTER IX

TOWARD EAST RIVER

WHILE Rick Hazard was the victim of the criminal gang, Isabel was a prisoner upstairs, ignorant of what had befallen her companion.

The girl, with little Amy in her arms, had entered the hall of the so-called Acropolis Club, and immediately she was passed on by Pascal to the white-haired, frail-looking woman who came to meet her with a smile. It was Anne Hayley, known at the club and to the police as Green Goods Annie. She took Isabel by the arm and led her hastily upstairs.

"Come with me, deary," exclaimed Anne Hayley. "There's a bed all ready for you and that darling child. Mr. Cadmire phoned you were coming—an' to take good care of you."

"But I was not planning to stay," Isabel hesitated on the upper landing. "I wanted to go right home."

"Not at this hour of the night! It is so late. She might catch her death of cold. It's not safe. And besides this poor child must have her rest—isn't she the sweetest creature!"

At these words, spoken with real tenderness, Isabel felt a friendly feeling toward the old woman that somewhat stilled her fears.

Anne tried to relieve her of her precious burden, but without success. She did gain her main point, however, and led Isabel up a second flight of stairs, showing her into a small bedroom on the top floor.

"I'm sorry it's not a front room, deary," whispered the woman, as Isabel took a seat on the bed. "There's only one window that looks on the airshaft? But there will be no noise to disturb you. The house next door is empty."

There was a hard note in her voice that gave the last words a certain menacing quality.

Isabel stared at Anne with a vague presentiment. "I think I'd better not stay after all. No, I'll go now." She rose, still carrying little Amy, and as she did so, a murmur of voices from below made her still more uneasy.

"What is that noise?" she gasped. "Oh, what is it? It sounds like a fight. Let me get out of here!" She made for the door.

But the old woman interposed decisively. "Not now. Some of Cadmire's friends are rough-mannered. Stay right here. Keep quite. They might hurt you—or the child."

Again Isabel seated herself on the bed, nervously stroking little Amy's sleeping face, and listening with beating heart to the sounds approaching up the stairs. It was uncanny.

The heavy footfalls were muffled by the hall carpet, yet she could hear an occasional stumble and a gruff word that might have been an oath. She shivered and made no sound.

Anne Hayley sat on a straight chair near the door, twisting her bony fingers together and staring at the child like a greedy cat.

Now the men were outside in the corridor. Isabel nervously clutched the child tighter.

Suddenly the door of the adjoining trunk room was opened, a heavy object was heard to drop on the floor, and the door was shut and bolted. In the corridor somebody laughed hoarsely. "He got what was comin' to him!"

Anne sprang up, threw open the door

of the bedroom and cried: "Is that dick attended to?"

"Sure is, Annie!" answered a croaking voice. "In dreamland!"

"Good! Now come here, Mike, and you, too, Bimbo. Tie up this girl—but mind you, treat her gentle. No rough stuff!"

Isabel shrieked in horror as two ruffians slipped into the room with the slinking crouch of beasts of prey. One was burly, red-faced and muscular. The other was olive-skinned.

The two strong-arm workers closed in on the girl without any more emotion than a butcher would display before a dumb victim in the slaughter pen.

In a wild panic the girl backed to the wall, holding her own body as a shield before the child. Her face was white as death, her eyes staring with horror. Were they going to murder her?

"Don't hurt the child," cried Annie, her voice cracking in excitement, and as Mike and Bimbo seized Isabel by the arms, the old woman snatched the child to herself. She exhibited astonishing strength for one so old and frail. Her eyes were alight with passion.

At the same instant Isabel's screams were stifled by the broad red hand of Mike. In another second she was tied, a towel was bound about her mouth and she was flung face down on the bed.

No one paid any attention to her feeble struggles and her heartbroken moans. It was the first time in her life that Isabel had been physically rough-handled, and she was dazed, humiliated and, for the moment, crushed by the terror of it.

The cries of the startled child rang in her ears, but Green Goods Annie was holding little Amy in an embrace that was fiercely tender.

"Don't cry, my lambkin, my pet!" she soothed. "It's just Annie. Don't you know your dear old Annie? There, there, go to sleep."

As Amy recognized her former nurse, the child extended a soft hand, patted the withered face, and drifted off to sleep once more, with a smile.

Annie carried her out of the room, followed by the two thugs. She directed them with a voice of authority.

"Lock the door on that girl, Mike. And keep away from her. Mind, she is not to be hurt. Doc will tell you when to turn her loose."

Mike turned the key on Isabel, who lay stunned by terror where she had fallen. She seemed to be dead.

"I'll make my get-away with the kid now," said Green Goods Annie, and to the child she crooned: "Oh, my little lamb, how it warms the heart of me to have you again! My pet! My little beauty!"

As she hesitated on the upper landing, the sound of ribald laughter came floating up from the parlor.

"Here's to Byrne Macarty. May the dirty dick get a million-year stretch in hell!"

Green Goods Annie caught the drift of the toast and her thin lips parted in a malicious smile. "Amen," she breathed fervidly. "And may all the Force follow him to hell!"

Then she ran lightly down the back staircase, carrying the child in her arms with unusual strength for a woman who appeared so aged.

Unchallenged, she reached the basement and made her way out to the street by the area door.

The street was deserted, except for a rickety looking hansom cab a few doors away. The driver appeared to be dozing on his perch. He woke up with a jerk as the woman flung herself inside the cab and shouted an address, a slummy neighborhood uptown near the East River.

Larry Boyle had just caught a glimpse of the child's light skirts, so he jumped to the conclusion that it was the same woman who had accompanied the detective.

With a husky, "Giddap, you Maud S," he flicked his whip over the animal's back and the cab rattled away at a brisk pace through the park and proceeded to a disreputable looking tenement overlooking the East River.

Inside the cab the woman was alternately crooning "Hushabye my little lambkin! Annie's looking after you now!" and muttering in a cracked whisper, "May he

do a stretch of a million years in hell! That rotten Byrne Macarty!"

CHAPTER X

ANOTHER EVENING CALLER

WHILE the high-class crooks at the Acropolis Club were drinking to the health of Detective Byrne Macarty, that officer was being plied with restoratives at a drug store near the park.

For some time, he knew not how long, the detective had lain unconscious by the roadside, and when he came to, he struggled painfully up the bank, only to sink into unconsciousness once more, but this time he had fallen within plain sight of the roadway, and a passing taxi driver picked him up and helped him into the car.

"Can you beat it!" exclaimed the chauffeur. "Looks like Central Park is nothin' but a dump for the stick-ups nowadays! They frisk a guy, bump him on the coco and then drop him in the bushes."

Inside the taxi, Macarty was helplessly sagging in the seat and gradually regaining consciousness. If it had not been for the man's fighting instinct, a tenacious will power that triumphed over his physical weakness, he would have sunk back to a stupor, but the fighting spirit was too strong. He refused to give up. When the fog seemed to be settling over his brain and relaxing his muscles, he would pull himself together, grit his teeth and struggle back to consciousness.

At the first drug store, he was helped out of the cab and led reeling to a chair, while the taxi driver shouted to the clerk: "For God's sake, give me something to pull this guy together! He's been beat up! I think he's passing out!"

In a few moments, the mixture that was poured down Macarty's throat dispelled the haze that benumbed his brain. He felt feebly at his chest, where the pain was greatest, and then for the first time noticed that his shield was missing.

That fact brought him up with a jerk. It was as if he had received an electric shock.

Pale as a ghost, but with the fevered light of vengeance burning in his eyes, Macarty shook off the detaining hands. "I'm all right!" he gasped. "Leave go, or I'll hand you one!" He pulled himself to his feet and took a step or two. The strength seemed to return, as his fury sent the blood pumping through his veins.

"I'll teach that guy to make a monkey of me!" he raged. "Lifted my shield when I was unconscious. What a dirty deal!"

Suddenly Macarty grabbed the taxi driver by the wrist. "Come on, you!" he shouted. "I'm going to nail that bird!" And a moment later he was inside the car and tearing through the empty streets, taking the corners on two wheels and not slowing down for anything, until they jammed down the brakes before Cadmire's apartment house.

Like a shot the detective was out of the taxi and into the elevator, before the doorman could halt him. The elevator boy cringed in terror as Macarty barked at him, "213 A. Get a move on!"

"Oh, my Lawdy Gawd!" gasped the negro. "Annudder cop!" and he jerked the lever in his haste to obey the law.

"Another?" the detective glared at him.

"Yessah, yessah. They was a pow'ful big detective heah befoh you. A swell-lookin' gen'leman with a open face shirt. He done got mah pass key already."

"Did he arrest a man?"

"No indeedy. He went away with a lady and a little girl. They drove off in a fancy cab."

"A what?"

"The handsome kind. What the chauffeur wears a plug hat."

The car had stopped at the floor. "Show me the apartment, boy!" And without another word Macarty dashed down the corridor after the darky and noiselessly laid a firm hand on the knob of 213 A.

It was locked, of course, but Macarty had foreseen that. "Look here, boy," he said. "It's a lucky thing for you that this is an old-style house with transoms over the doors."

"Is dat lucky? I never knowed it was so lucky. Why so?"

"Because instead of smashing the door you can go through the transom."

"Me go through the transom? Is dat what you calls good luck? Say, boss, what's your idea of *bad* luck?"

"Don't stop to palaver. Up you go. I'll give you a lift."

"But mebbe that guy inside will take a shot at me."

Macarty's jaw was hard. "He'll be likely to miss. But I *never* miss." The detective tapped his coat pocket meaningly.

In a jiffy, the boy followed instructions. He slipped off his low shoes, stood on Macarty's hands and peered in through the glass.

"Anybody there?" whispered Macarty.

"No, boss—nobody in sight. But I bet he's layin' for me with a gun."

"Get in, or I'll fix you up for the undertaker myself."

Held by Macarty, the boy gave the transom a violent push. It yielded, the old and infirm catch gave and the glass swung open. In another moment the boy was over the door like a monkey.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE ROPE'S END

INSTANTLY Macarty was inside, glaring about the brightly lighted room. There was no sign of life. It was as he feared, Cadmire had been warned. But in the bedroom there was no stirring, no sound. A litter of men's apparel, evening clothes scattered pell-mell on the floor, showed that some one had changed hastily.

Macarty saw the sign of a hurried flight and instinctively his eyes sought the window. What he saw made him run toward it with an oath.

It was a rope end, slender but strongly woven.

The rope was tied to a leg of the brass bed beside the window, and thence it extended over the sill and out into darkness.

It was still moving with a little jerking action that told Macarty all he needed to know.

The fugitive was half way down the wall, descending by that knotted rope.

The detective leaned out of the window and saw that it opened directly upon the Hudson. Far below were the New York Central tracks, a maze of steel rails, where freight trains were standing or being shunted about. A long train was roaring past, bound northward, and the light reflected from the tops of box cars or was dimmed as a coal car swallowed up the rays.

As Macarty strained his eyes to see his man dangling on the rope, his hand sought instinctively for his gun.

It was missing.

The service revolver and bracelets had gone with the borrowed shield.

Macarty reached for his knife to cut the rope and send the fugitive plunging down that cliff, but he was a second too late.

Before he could open it, the dark figure at the end of the rope had touched the wall above the tracks, then with a light step he had poised himself for a jump to the moving freight train.

Without a second's hesitation Macarty had one leg over the window sill and was going down the knotted rope with the speed of an athlete who had often done that stunt for sport.

His side hurt him and all the bruises incurred in the auto smash throbbed protestingly at this new strain, but the officer was too excited to worry about such trifles.

He had seen his man.

He knew that Cadmire, for it could be no one else, was on that train.

True to his own slogan, he was going to "nail that bird!"

Steadying himself on the projection of the wall, Macarty went down hand over hand, gripping the knots in fingers that were used to holding on with an iron grip.

The train rumbled below him. It was long, yet he had the fear that it might not be long enough. The last car might pass before he could swing aboard.

With a gasp of relief, he felt his foot touch the wall, then he balanced for a moment as Cadmire had done, warily sized up the distance and speed of the moving train and leaped to the top of a box car.

He had made it.

The first shock of landing heavily on the speeding freight car made him drop to his knees and clutch at the plank that ran along the top. He held on until he had regained his breath, then found his balance and started carefully toward the engine.

He had to make haste slowly.

It was necessary to keep a watch out ahead for the running figure of Cadmire, who might appear any moment.

He had to stop at each coupling to make sure that his man had not slipped down the ladder and taken refuge between the two box cars.

It was possible, too, that Cadmire would swing off the train. If he guessed that his pursuer had followed him, he would be almost certain to drop off at some dark spot.

So Macarty's pursuit along the north bound freight was not a swift dash, but a painful search for a desperate criminal who had all the advantages at that moment.

For Cadmire was hidden, while Macarty was exposed. The crook had a gun, while the detective was unarmed. Cadmire was fleeing for his liberty, even his life, but there the odds were evened, for when Macarty was close on the trail of a crook, he was keen and reckless of his safety. No man would fight harder for his life than would Byrne Macarty to get his man.

The train sped along under Riverside Drive, past the looming cliffs of apartment houses, black with only an occasional lighted window.

It roared through the cut at Fort Washington and under the tree covered slopes beyond.

Cadmire was still hidden, though Macarty had searched nearly the full length of the train, which sped past the ferry at Dyckman Street and beside the rugged Inwood Hill that rises like a bit of forgotten forest at the northern tip of Manhattan.

Then as the detective peered between two cars a shot whizzed past his head and the wind of it swept his face.

The report was so close that his ears rang, but Macarty moved like a panther. Dropping flat, he reached a strong arm between the lurching cars where Cadmire clung by a hand-hold With one hand he struck the pistol a blow that sent the weapon flying. With the other hand he reached past the staring, contorted face that glared up into his own, until with a viselike grip he had fastened his fingers upon Cadmire's collar.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE DRAWBRIDGE

MACARTY'S jaw set and his eyes narrowed with determination as his fingers closed about his prisoner. Cadmire's pallid face was contorted with a spasm of baffled hatred, as he realized that he was at last in the grasp of the law.

He tried vainly to wrench himself free from that terrible hand and to wriggle away from Macarty's other hand, which was descending upon him like the relentless power of justice.

But there was no help for it. Clever as he was, strong and agile as he was, Laurence Cadmire had met a man who was even stronger, equally resourceful and who was backed by all the power of society. And when it came to the matter of physical courage, it would be hard to say who was the better man.

Implacably the detective's grip tightened and tightened upon Cadmire's collar. The crook began to show distress at the pressure. The veins in his forehead swelled, his eyes protruded and his curses turned into frantic unintelligible oaths.

His hands, which had been clinging for dear life to prevent himself from dropping between the cars and under the wheels, now began feebly to beat the air. His resistance had weakened.

At that, Macarty heaved his broad shoulders and the muscles of his back grew tense as he tugged and strained at Cadmire's weight. There was a powerful wrench, a heave that began with a grunt and ended with a growl of satisfaction, and Cadmire had been lifted bodily to the top of the box car and was pinioned beneath the detective's heavy knee.

"Better be good," growled the detective.

"I've been trailing you a long time. I'm Byrne Macarty!"

"Macarty!" Cadmire's sobbing exclamation betrayed both fury and bewilderment. If this was Macarty, who was the detective he had sent with Isabel?

If he had only had his bracelets or his gun, Macarty would have won the decision right there, but he was unarmed, and while he had the upper hand, the exertion had left him gasping. Both men were still for a moment, seeking to recover their breath, just as the pilot wheels of the engine entered the drawbridge at Spuyten Duyvil.

Cadmire lay so still and relaxed under the detective's weight that Macarty half believed that the crook had given up. His grasp lightened ever so little, but as if the hollow sounds of the wheels on the bridge had been a signal, Cadmire suddenly came to life with a catlike swiftness and a maniacal fury.

In that instant the odds were once more evened, for the two men were rolling over and over upon that lurching, swaying car, and with no weapons but their fists. Each did his best to kill the other.

But they fought at such close range that their blows did not have the necessary dynamite for a knockout. They clawed at each other's throats madly. Their gasping breaths were choked with fury that was too deep for curses. But each felt the other's hot breath in his face like a stinging insult.

Macarty had the advantage of weight and bigness of muscle. Cadmire had the advantage of youth and greater agility. Macarty was a bulldog, Cadmire was the fox. And like the fox, who will fight when he is cornered, Cadmire's instinct was to run when that seemed the safest way out.

And like the fox, Cadmire's mind always was cool and resourceful, quick to see what was happening and to take advantage of it.

Just as their car rolled upon the drawbridge, Cadmire saw a chance to deliver an uppercut that left his opponent dizzy for an instant.

That momentary advantage was all that Cadmire needed. In the same moment, he had wrenched himself loose, poised for a brief instant of preparation, then made a flying leap through the wide space between the bridge girders and into the dark waters below.

He entered the water as neatly as if he had taken the dive from a spring board, and as soon as he rose to the surface, struck out with no hesitation for the rocky slope of Inwood Hill.

The chill of the water had refreshened him. It was like a good shower after a violent exercise and the crook felt inclined to chuckle with satisfaction at the outcome of this desperate struggle.

Even while he was swimming with long, powerful strokes toward the wooded shore. he thought to himself: "Well, this is one on you, Byrne Macarty! You had me in your hands, you fought with me man to man, and you had to let me go."

It did not occur to him that Macarty would have the nerve to play to the end this foolhardy game of "Follow the Leader," but before he had reached the bank a heavy splash under the bridge made him change his mind.

"Good Lord," thought Cadmire. "Has that dick rolled off the box car? Or was he just enough of a fighting fool to jump in after me?"

There was the sound of a man shouting, then a number of voices raised in frantic excitement. Mingled with the noise of the train, the put-put-put of a little motor boat made itself heard, and the reflected brilliance of its searchlight danced among the branches overhead.

Cadmire had still to go a dozen strokes, and as his feet touched bottom and he dragged himself to shore by an overhanging branch, the rays of the motor boat searchlight surrounded him with dazzling brilliance.

Half way across the narrow waterway of Spuyten Duyvil the motor boat was heading straight toward him, and as Cadmire dashed up the hillside, the voice of Byrne Macarty came booming across the water.

"There he goes, boys! Nail that bird!"

There was a popping of revolver shots, but Cadmire laughed as he heard the bullets going wide of their mark. Those men

in the boat must be rank amateurs, campers perhaps. No policeman would have shot at random like that.

But as his feet found a trail well toward the top of the rugged hill, Cadmire could hear the motor boat grating against the rock and the impact of Byrne Macarty's boots as the detective jumped ashore and took up the pursuit through the underbrush.

Cadmire knew then that the fight was not over. Only the first round was finished. The scrap had just begun.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHASE UP THE DRIVE

HOUGH he was an all-around athlete, Byrne Macarty would be the first to admit that he was better at a rough and tumble fight than a sprinting contest, especially uphill.

Scrapping was more in his line than running.

So Cadmire's head start over the trail that winds about the stumps and bowlders of Inwood Hill was too much of a handicap for Macarty. In spite of that, the detective plugged along doggedly. When his man was that near, the officer would have kept running, even if he had had a sprained ankle and a wooden leg.

He was forced to stop once in a while to listen for crackling sounds in the brush, or a light footstep on the path, for it was pitch dark on the promontory, more like the woods of Westchester County than a bit of Manhattan.

At the base of the hill, on the side away from the Hudson was a colony of houseboats, moored to the bank, but though a broad path ran beside this little settlement, Macarty felt sure that Cadmire would keep clear of it on account of a possible watchman or dogs.

He scrambled up the trail to the top of the ridge and presently managed to force his way through a hedge that surrounded an old, dilapidated mansion. The driveway of this former estate led to a dirt road, running south past a couple of gloomy institutions toward Dyckman Street.

As Macarty entered the road, he believed that he caught sight of a swiftly moving black shadow against the pale reflection of the Hudson.

It vanished as soon as it appeared. Macarty was not even sure that he had seen that distant speck that looked like a man, but just the same, he sprang forward with renewed energy. The road was down hill now, a gentle grade with sand and gravel underfoot, and the detective let himself go.

Dripping from his leap into Spuyten Duyvil Creek, he felt none the worse for his plunge; better, in fact, and it seemed to him that he had never made such good time on a half mile sprint.

Suddenly after a steep down grade between old-fashioned houses that resembled a New England village, he was in the metropolis once more.

The lane entered Dyckman Street, a broad, well-paved, and lighted thoroughfare, and just as Macarty's foot struck the city sidewalks, he had a glimpse of a figure leaping into a red taxi under a street light a few rods away. The man was hatless and his clothes were clinging wet. It was Cadmire.

With a roar like a bull the detective called the driver to halt. Bitterly he regretted that he had not commandeered one of the cheap revolvers from the motor boat camping party. They were no more than toy guns, but one of them would have at least served to stop that taxi.

The driver hesitated at his command, then at a hasty word from Cadmire, he stepped on the gas and hit it up for the approach to Riverside Drive. What the crook had said was: "Eighty-Third Street near the Drive! A hundred bucks if you get me away from that dick!"

Furiously Macarty plunged after the taillight of the car, saw it turn south, and as he cursed his luck, a big limousine approached from the opposite direction. The chauffeur thought he was being held up as the big man stood in the path of the headlights with upraised palm.

But Macarty's manner was that of a traffic cop, full of assured authority, and the driver did not dare to question him in spite of his disheveled appearance.

Macarty jumped on the running board and shouted: "Help me arrest that crook! That man in the red taxi!" He flung back his coat to display the shield that was not there. Macarty had forgotten that it was missing, while, as for the chauffeur, he was so excited that he would have sworn that he had caught a glimpse of a shield in that moment.

The big car, which had no passengers, was swung right about, and as the driver gave it the gas its high-powered, smooth-running engine purred like a contented cat.

Macarty felt better already. In spite of Cadmire's start, it seemed pretty certain that a taxi would have no chance against this superb car.

The officer stood on the running board watching for the tail-light of the taxi and thanking his stars that at this hour there was so little traffic. The chances were that no other car was anywhere in the neighborhood. They would have the road to themselves.

He strained his eyes for the dancing red light and growled to the chauffeur: "Hit her up, boy!"

At the upper end of Riverside Drive the splendid roadway runs alongside stretches of unbuilt, brush-covered hills, and even further south where the huge apartment houses loom majestically above the broad river, there are wild spots, tracts of parkway that resemble a forest more than a city pleasure ground.

With a road all to themselves, Macarty and his willing chauffeur whirled through the night at a furious express train speed.

But Cadmire's bribe was effective. Perhaps he had raised his bid when he caught a glimpse of the powerful headlight through the trees far behind. At any rate, the lightweight red taxi showed wonderful speed and the driver did not hesitate to take a chance. If any traffic cop was on the Drive at that hour, he must have blinked and gasped at the sight of that red comet.

It was not until the brilliantly lighted viaduct was reached that the taxi driver remembered that there is such a thing as a speed law, and then he forgot it immediately, for the glare of the pursuing limousine was reflected in the mirror beside him.

Frantically he jammed his foot on the accelerator for a final burst of speed, but Maccarty already was bellowing "Halt!" and the fugitive felt that the game was almost up.

The driver of the red tax had a sickening feeling in the pit of his stomach. He saw himself standing uncovered before a stern judge, who was passing out a sentence that would keep him behind the bars for years.

Speeding was the least of his offenses. He was helping a criminal escape from justice—possibly a murderer! How much could they give him for that?

Such doubts and fears are not conducive to careful driving. A few blocks south of Grant's Tomb the taxi driver felt with horror that the limousine was creeping alongside and gradually crowding him off the road. He swerved to avoid being run down, brought up with a resounding smash against a shade tree, and the next thing he knew he was lying on his back and staring up into the grim face of Byrne Macarty.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HANSOM AGAIN

THE officer was livid with rage. "Where in hell did you drop your fare, you rat?" he stormed. "Wake up! Tell me what became of that crook you drove?"

The taxi driver, feeling like a lost soul whirling through space, could only blink up stupidly into that furious visage. For the time being he was simply unable to remember what had happened to him. He had no idea what it was all about.

His lips opened feebly, but not a word came from him. His tongue seemed paralyzed and his brain was numb. Giving it up as a bad job, he closed his eyes wearily and was instantly shaken until his teeth rattled.

"Speak up, blast you! Do you want me to paste you one that will put you in the hospital?" shouted Macarty. "Snap out of it now! Tell me where you dropped that crook or I'll see to it that you get a ten-year stretch for helping him to make his get-away."

Instantly the taxi man remembered. But his returning memory brought him no comfort. "So help me God, I don't know what become of him. Ain't he in the cab?"

"Don't you try to put one over on me, you rat-faced hophead! You slowed down to let that guy step off the car. Where was it? If you lie to me, I'll smash you one in the jaw!"

"Honest, boss, I don't know nothing about it. If he's gone, I'm out a hundred iron men. That's what he promised me."

Macarty was convinced that the taxi man was telling the truth. Cadmire had caught a glimpse of the pursuing headlights and, the detective knew that the quick-witted and daring crook would be capable of leaping from a flying taxi, also that he was sufficiently clever on his feet to get away with it. Was it not a matter of criminal history that he had made a sensational escape through a train window when he was being conveyed to prison? Yes, Laurence Cadmire was equal to it.

Macarty rose to his feet thoroughly disgusted at the bad luck that had pursued him throughout this trailing of Cadmire. That fellow was tricky as a fox, and luck seemed to be with him right along.

Abruptly he stooped over the taxi driver once more, as the latter was struggling to a sitting posture, and barked: "Now, look here, young fellow, you're in bad! That guy you were driving is wanted for a dozen robberies—big ones, too. I'm not sure but what there's a murder can be proved against him. Get me?"

"I didn't know who he was! How should I know he was making a get-away from a cop?"

"Aw, can that! Nobody offers you a hundred bucks to tear loose like you was going—not unless he was making a get-away. Now come clean, what was the address that guy gave you? Where were you taking him?"

Painfully the taxi driver rubbed his forehead as if to brush away the haze from his mind.

"He didn't give me no address, boss. All he said was: 'Drive like hell to Eighty-Third Street on the Drive!' He didn't give me no number or anything."

The detective bored the pallid face of the speaker with his shrewd calculating eyes, and in the blaze of the headlights he could detect no sign of lying. The fellow had a shifty face and it twitched with terror and excitement, but apparently he was scared into telling the truth.

"Well, let it go at that," said Macarty, and he added not unkindly: "I'll speak a good word for you in case any of this gets into court." Macarty was a little ashamed of his own outburst of temper and he asked in a gentle tone: "Are you badly hurt, buddy? Will you be needin' an ambulance?"

The driver felt his limbs gingerly and drew a deep breath. "Naw, I guess I'm all right," he said. "Just shook up a little, that's all!"

Macarty jumped to his feet, looked about for a police signal box and directed the chauffeur of the commandeered car to drive him to it.

A few minutes later the alarm had been spread that the much wanted Laurence Cadmire was somewhere at large on the upper West Side.

Macarty knew that the district would be thoroughly combed by patrolmen and plain-clothes men within a very short time and that all over the city detectives and uniformed men would be on the alert for a fugitive answering his description.

Instead of driving back the way he had come, Macarty judged that he would be more usefully engaged in covering the neighborhood for which Cadmire was heading.

There had been rumors of a high-class crook's rendezvous near the Drive in the Eighties. So far it had not been discovered. The detective had a hunch that if he looked around in that vicinity he might pick up his man after all, and he directed the chauffeur of the commandeered limousine to cruise about and see what they could find.

In calling up from the signal box, Byrne Macarty had been careful to omit one detail of the night's adventures, the loss of his shield. He justified himself by the hope that he would recover it before the night was over. Just how he was going to do it he could not say. But the recollection of how he had been tricked, deprived of his

shield when he was unconscious, made his blood boil and his fists clench with rage.

He knew very well that the loss of the shield should have been reported immediately, but hard-boiled though he was, Byrne Macarty was very sensitive to ridicule. The idea of being kidded by his brother officers or written up in the papers as "The Detective Who Had His Shield Pinched," was more than he could stand.

He could see in his mind's eye how the cartoonists and the press humorists would seize upon that idea with chortles of delight. They would picture him as a cop fast asleep against a lamp-post, while some knowing crook unpinned his shield. He would be the laughing stock of New York and he would never hear the last of it as long as he lived.

Therefore it was natural enough that he should decide to get back his own shield without any help. All he wanted was just one sight of the young swell that had lifted it so treacherously. He would wring his neck, blast him!

These thoughts seethed in his mind as Macarty cruised about in the Eighties near the Drive, looking out for a belated taxi that might contain Cadmire.

Suddenly he touched the chauffeur's arm and whispered: "Stop!" For approaching the Drive from the east was an ancient hansom behind a jogging old horse.

A hansom cab! In Byrne Macarty's mind a hansom suggested only one thing at that moment, a perfidious young scoundrel in evening clothes who had pretended to assist him and had betrayed him shamefully.

Macarty had a blurred impression of seeing a hansom just before that unlucky smash at the park bridge.

In another moment he was out of the limousine and had brought the astonished Larry Boyle to a stop. The cabby looked down from his perch and remarked:

"This cab's engaged, sir! Sorry I can't take you!"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Who engaged it? I don't see any fare inside."

"I've got a fare waitin' for me. A detective! I took a lady across town for him and now I'm on my way back to where I left him. I can't take on private business when I'm workin' for the police department."

"Ah, ha! I bet I know that detective. Is he a young swell with a dress suit? Looks like a cigarette ad?"

"Sure! How did you know?"

"I'm a detective myself," said Macarty very grimly. "This guy is a friend of mine—one of my dearest pals. You say he's waiting for you somewhere? That's fine! I'll just get in and you take me to him. Just take me to him, that's all!"

Forgotten for the time being was the pursuit of Laurence Cadmire. As Macarty settled back in the hansom, he licked his lips like a cat looking at a cream jug. He had a picture of himself battering that fine looking young man's face with his two fists. His knuckles itched to be at it.

He was going to get back the borrowed shield.

CHAPTER XV

MACARTY'S VISIT

HEN Laurence Cadmire realized that the red taxi was being followed, he began to plan his get-away with his usual resourcefulness. It was hardly possible to outrun Macarty's automobile for any great length of time. The further they went into Manhattan the greater became the chance of his taxi being overhauled by a traffic cop. Any delay would be fatal with Macarty so close behind.

Cadmire was familiar with the road they were taking, knew the curves where his machine would have to slow down and remembered the locations where trees and bushes grew close to the road.

As he had no desire to take the taxi driver into his confidence, he said not a word about slowing down, but awaiting his chance he held the door unlatched and when the machine slackened speed at a sharp curve the crook swung from the running board with the agility of a brakeman taking a leap from a moving train.

Instantly he had dodged into the bushes, while his car fled down the drive and disappeared.

Cadmire crouched there and a satisfied grin twisted his thin features as he saw the limousine roar past, with Macarty on the running board keeping a lookout on the road ahead.

Then with a chuckle, Cadmire ran to the nearest street that led to Broadway and found an all night garage, where he could rent a car. The close-mouthed garage man looked at his dripping garments curiously, but at the sight of Cadmire's roll he made no inquisitive remarks. It was not the first time he had dealt with the gentry who were most active in the small hours. He accepted a couple of twenties with mumbled thanks and even went so far as to throw a cap and a shabby raincoat into the bargain.

"Take 'em along, boss. I ain't got no use for them and they'll keep you from catching cold, maybe."

"Thanks!" Cadmire slipped into the well-worn garments and felt satisfied that his appearance was thoroughly changed. He sprang into the car and directed the chauffeur to take him down Broadway to Eighty-Fourth Street.

So it happened that while Macarty was sending the alarm to comb the upper West Side for a water-soaked crook named Cadmire, that shifty individual had already left his hired auto and was slipping noiselessly through the deserted street a block or two from the Acropolis Club.

Before the patrolmen had been notified the man they were looking for had dodged through a passage in the next street, pausing only a second to wave at the chauffeur of a private car that was parked there, and had entered the crook's hangout by the back door.

Cadmire made his way upstairs to the room where the happy revelers were partaking of strong liquors and discussing the most appropriate rough stuff to administer to the captured detective.

When Cadmire flung open the door, there was a general chorus of welcome and surprise.

"Look who's here, fellows! Shifty Larry himself! Say, what's the big idea? I thought you was headin' for Canada. Get on to the classy clothes, boys!"

But Cadmire silenced them with a fierce gesture and a black look. "Shut up!" he said. "Everything's gone fluey. I planned a good get-away, but Macarty spoiled it."

"Macarty? That poor sap! Why, Larry, we've got that dick upstairs tied to a chair!"

"Like hell you have! You've got Macarty's double. Where's my kid? And Isabel?"

"Your kid's gone with Green Goods Annie, like you said. The lady is upstairs enjoying a little nap," remarked the white-haired man known as Harry.

"I've got to see that girl right away," exclaimed Cadmire. He addressed Dr. Pascal, and in swift, decisive phrases explained what had happened. Then he led Pascal into another room, where they could talk privately, and continued: "Macarty ruined my get-away. I'll fix him for that! I ditched the son-of-a-gun, but by this time he must have got word to headquarters. All the dicks in town will be looking for me."

"All right, let 'em," replied Pascal. "You're safe here."

"I'm not so sure. You can't tell when this place may be raided. What I've got to do now is to get rid of a lot of diamonds." He touched his waist line meaningly. "I've got enough rocks in here to set me up for life."

"I get you! A belt full of loot, Eh?"

"That's it! But in case I am pinched with all this stuff on me, there is enough evidence to send me up for life—maybe to the chair."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to turn it into money, quick. I want Isabel to help me."

"How can she help you?"

"She's got to. Listen, that girl is the only person in the house who is not known to the police. I've got a hunch that it wouldn't be safe for any of our crowd to leave here to-night. It's a cinch that I wouldn't trust any of them with all that swag. They'd be almost certain to be nabbed. So it's up to Isabel to take the ice to Greek Nicky or some other fence and bring back the money."

"Can you make her do it? That girl!"

" Can I? Just watch me. I know how to put pressure on that kid. She's *got* to do it. What's more, she's smart enough to get away with it. What I want you to let me do is to use the get-away car that is parked in the next street."

" That's all right. Of course you don't expect to get it for nothing."

" Oh, hell! You'll get a piece of change. I never was a piker, was I?"

" Certainly not. The way things are shaping up, Larry, you're getting me into this job, using this house and my car and everything. I may as well tell you that I expect a good sized rake-off."

" Oh, lay off, you'll get a slice. Let's get this stuff out of the house, then we can talk business."

Dr. Pascal grunted doubtfully.

As they ascended the doctor asked: " What about that dick you sent over with Isabel? You're sure it's not Macarty?"

" No, I tell you I don't know who it is. I thought it was Macarty, but I just got through telling you that I had a fight and a footrace with that bird—"

" Well, who do you think we've got locked up here?"

" How should I know?"

" I've got his shield and the warrant," chuckled the doctor. " I guess it was some dick that was working with Macarty. We'll fix him good and plenty, whoever he is."

They were standing on the top floor landing just outside Isabel's door. The doctor turned the key and shoved it open. There was no sign of life from within.

" Go on in and talk to her," he said to Cadmire. " I'm going to take a look at that dick in the next room and see if he's come to yet."

But just as he started to turn the key of Rick's prison, there was a sharp, imperative ring at the doorbell that echoed through the house.

Both men jumped as if they were shot.

" Would that be a raid?" whispered the doctor. " No, it couldn't be. A raiding squad would be right there with the axes. I'll go down and see who it is."

" Is the trapdoor to the roof unlocked?" whispered Cadmire.

" Sure! As usual. But stay right here until I open the door. If there is any disturbance, you'll hear the noise and have plenty of time."

Cadmire, listening at the head of the stairs, heard the doctor run lightly down the two flights, unlock the door, and open it cautiously.

He did not need to be told that the visitor had first been inspected through a peephole and that Mike and Bimbo, the doctor's bodyguards, were lurking in the hall, as was their custom.

Cadmire listened for the visitor's voice and the familiar rumbling bass thrilled him with an impulse to flight.

But the voice of Dr. Pascal reassured him. It was suave and melancholy. Pascal was an excellent actor and what he said was this: " Yes, your man's here, Macarty. Come on upstairs and get him. I guess you've got us where you want us."

TO BE CONTINUED

THE LIVING SKULL

FACTS long buried will sometimes creep out to point an accusing finger upon a culprit whose innocence has never been questioned. Threads of evidence may sometimes seep through the years finally to ensnare one who has seemed infernally successful in concealing his dastardly crime.

Nearly two hundred years ago the people of London felt assured that Providence had willfully taken its just revenge; that Fate had waited, plotted and at last smiled at the uncanny victory.

It was on a quiet afternoon when one Dr. Airy took his daily stroll past St. Sepulchre's churchyard. Near some time-worn headstones, an old gravedigger paused from his task to mop the sweat from his brow, presently he picked up his spade and continued his work.

Dr. Airy strode up to exchange amiable greetings with the man and to watch him as he fashioned a new grave.

"Who is to lie here anon, good man?" he asked.

"Ah, 'tis old Master Cudgle, who died peacefully in his bed, having been carried thither by the years."

Both sighed and became silent for a time. The gravedigger went on with his work. Often fragments of bone came up with the spade, sometimes a broken thigh bone, sometimes an old skull. These were usual occurrences, so neither remarked on them.

Suddenly the doctor cried out sharply as if he had seen a spectral thing.

The Nail Imbedded

"Gad—it's alive!"

The skull that had been tossed up was alive. It seemed as though this dead thing cast up an evil eye at them, in dread wonder at being disturbed. Relief came, however, when they saw a slimy toad hop out from one of the cavernous sockets.

Amused at his fright, the doctor picked up the skull and began curiously to examine it. He looked carefully at the jawbones, remarked on the condition of the teeth, followed the serrated lines which marked the sutures of the cranium, and then, upon peering closely at a peculiar mark in the temple let forth a long, low whistle of surprise.

Just above the temple, there was the small flat head of a nail. It had been driven deep into the skull and was visible on the inside, projecting about three inches inward. The nail was brown with rust. Perhaps it was as old as the skull. Had some dark deed been done, and the murderer free to roam the streets of London Town?

Their minds filled with suspicions, the doctor and the gravedigger took the skull to the magistrate. The grave was marked and records were sought.

Hidden a Score of Years

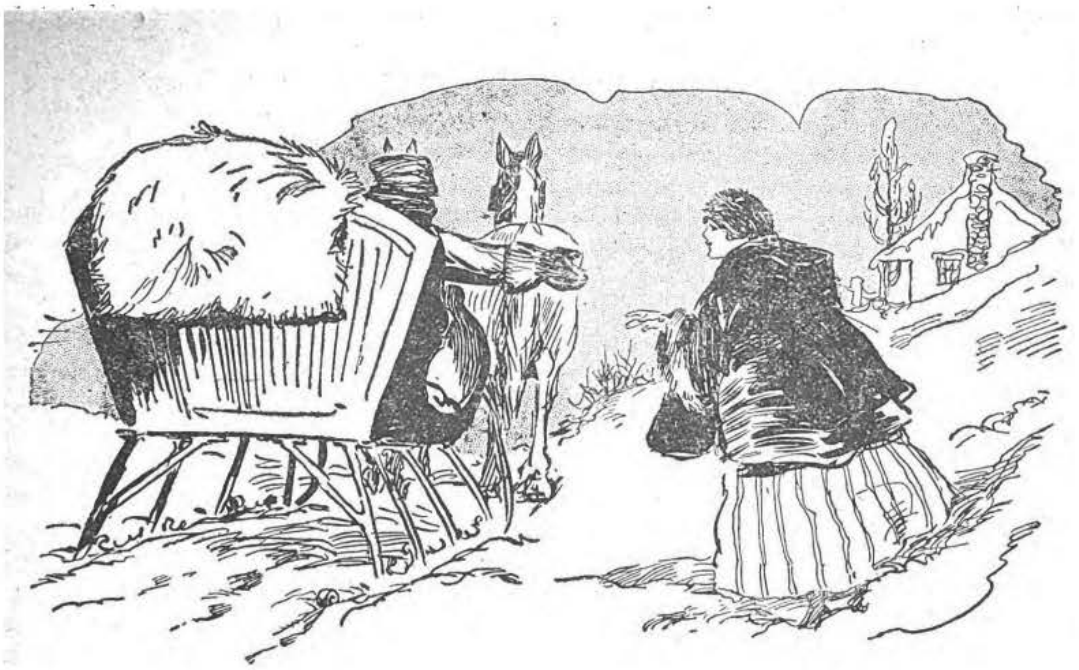
The skull was that of a young man who had died twenty-two years before. His widow was still alive and in London. She had married again, and was keeping a tiny cottage with her husband, at the other end of the town.

When she was summoned before the magistrate and questioned about her former husband, she said that they had been living a peaceful life together, but that one day her husband caught a severe cold and died suddenly a few days later, much to her grief. Then the skull was brought out before her. The cavernous eyes gazed at her coldly and relentlessly. The point of the nail, projecting through, inquired and accused.

With a shriek of terror, she fainted away on the court room floor. Cordials were applied and she recovered soon after. She made a complete confession of her guilt.

She told how she and her former husband had been living together; how, secretly, her present husband had come to woo her. She fell in love anew. And without any one's knowledge dispatched the man who stood in the way of her new happiness.

Subsequently she was hanged, while all London wondered at the vengefulness and cunning of Fate.



Laughing, she took the gloved hand which had reached out of the bundle of furs

WHO KILLED GUILELMA?

By Louise Rice

ALL THAT IS KNOWN OF THE LAST DAYS OF THE BEAUTIFUL MAID OF OLD NEW YORK WHOSE END IS ENSHROUDED IN MYSTERY

A Story of Fact

READERS of FLYNN'S have shown an extreme interest in true stories of unsolved mysteries. Miss Louise Rice has selected a particularly fascinating one from the history of early New York.

FLYNN'S desires to encourage its readers in the enjoyable and brain-sharpening pastime of armchair sleuthing. To that end it challenges its readers to delve to the secret bottom of *Who Killed Guilelma?* FLYNN'S will publish such solutions as seem most adequate and most interesting.

It will pay the regular rate paid for manuscripts for all solutions found worthy of printing. You will find it a fascinating job. There are several suspects who might logically have been guilty. Which one was it?

Edgar Allan Poe took the mystery of the disappearance of Mary Rogers and made one of the most logical and fascinating bits of detective literature of all time of his findings. Can any of you reason so clearly from the known facts in the case of Guilelma Sands?

Solutions to this problem will be judged from two standpoints, first, that of logical, deductive reasoning; second, that of clear, graphic presentation.

All competitors should attempt to answer the questions propounded by Miss Rice in the latter part of her article. And more important, they should give a complete detailed account of the night of tragedy, with a satisfactory explanation of the crime.

All solutions of the mystery should be mailed to Miss Louise Rice, care FLYNN'S, 280 Broadway, New York City. Miss Rice has kindly consented to judge the contest. All solutions should be mailed before September 26.

THE scene is New York City. The time is 1799.

If you have ever been interested in the history of America's great metropolis, you can understand the enormous difference between the scene as it was in 1799 and as it is in 1925. In any case it will be interesting to touch on a few of the high lights of that difference.

In 1799 the city lay on a little pinch of land at the very tip of the island of Manhattan. The narrow little sidewalks on William, Pearl, Nassau, and Gold streets, from which the swarms of people to-day spill out all across the whole street, were then ample for the uses of the inhabitants of those exclusive residential sections.

Where Wall Street now wends its narrow way, ringing to the tread of the greatest financiers in the world, there was then the remains of an actual wall, built a few years before that to keep out thieving Indians and wandering hogs and cattle. In Maiden Lane the boys and girls strolled of an evening, under the trees which flourished there, their roots sunk in the banks of the pebbly stream which still flows under the sidewalk.

Over to the east there was a broad, tree-hung country road which terminated in a handsome country residence which, because of its trees and flowers, was called The Bowerie. That is the name by which the road, no longer tree-hung, is called to-day. But it is safe to say that no old New Yorker, miraculously returned to life, now, would be able to identify it.

Just off it, eastward, where pleasant meadows used to slope down to the water, is the most thickly populated block in these United States.

Such a thing as a motor propelled vehicle had not even been dreamed of; transportation on the water was by sail, alone. Distances covered by the casual commuter to Long Island, to-day, were then matters of a day's journey and were undertaken only occasionally.

It would be too long a list to give here, if I were to mention all the things and all the conditions which have changed our present life from the life of 1799, but a few of them will show the enormous gulf which lies between life in New York City of only one hundred and twenty-six years ago, and now. There were no telephones, telegraphs, sewing machines, transatlantic cables, farm machines such as we know today, steamboats, railroads, handy kitchen stoves, radio, steam heat, electricity in ordinary use, airships, efficient postal services.

These are, of course, only the highlights of the differences, but a moment's thought will serve to show how profoundly all of life, as we know it, would be affected by such conditions as would follow on the lack of these great mechanical servants. Life everywhere was provincial, for communication with places at even a little distance involved labor and trouble and often danger.

The remotest hamlet in Alaska is more cosmopolitan, to-day, than New York City was in 1799. Without a steamboat to make travel on water swift, without such a thing as a railroad, with a " city " of an area so small as that indicated, it was impossible that drifters and " underworld " characters should even approach such a community without being noted, so that, in addition to all the other differences, we have to note that New York City of that time had no slums and no criminals and no unknown persons.

Socially, the life of the town centered in the homes, for there was not a single place in it where a decent woman could entertain or be entertained, save in homes. The hotels and the taverns were exclusively male places of assemblage, to an extent hard to realize to-day, when even the sacred barber shop has been invaded by m'lord's wives and daughters.

No woman could go casually out to take a stroll, as she can to-day. She could go to church unattended, and that was about all, unless she went visiting an accredited woman friend.

Every man who appeared in a tavern was known; every person who made a purchase in a shop was known. Even the carriages and sleighs and the horses were known. A stranger was instantly spotted.

In such a community as this it is not surprising to learn that there had never been any serious crime, save such as might be committed in understandable anger or through thievery.

A Favored Suitor

Well then, let us begin the story of the crime which was not only an astounding mystery for those times, but which would be, at any time, and which still remains one of the great problems on which the criminologist has spent endless time and thought.

In this city of New York, of the year mentioned, in its last month, there was a great fall of snow. Not the kind which comes with bitter wind and stinging sleet, but the slow, steady fall, windless and accompanied by occasional bursts of sun, which make the ideal winter.

The outlying farm colony of New York City, lying around and back of Trinity Church, had in it a number of nice young folks, who enjoyed that winter very much. They had sleigh rides by the winter moon, and skated on the several shallow ponds which lay around Vesey and Fulton streets (only there were no streets then and Fulton had not been heard of) and had discreet tea drinkings and even a few informal dances.

The gayest of all and the ring leader was Guilelma Sands.

The girl had been left an orphan the year before and she had then gone to live with her cousin, Mrs. Ellis Ring, and the husband, Ellis Ring and another cousin, Hope Sands. The Ring household was a Quaker one, but Guilelma dragged it out of the prim dullness which it had had.

She was not only a raving beauty but had a personality so marked that even in that day, when feminine personalities were rather discouraged, she took all hearts by storm. It is the fashion, of course, to say of any woman who is brought before the public eye in a mystery story that she is beautiful. but there is not only hearsay evidence as to the startling quality of Guilelma's charm and loveliness. There are still extant many letters, written in that year, by people who knew the girl well.

She was "sweet as sugar" they wrote of her; she had "eyes that speak" and she had "a laugh to cheer the heart." These were not amorous young gentlemen, who wrote so, but staid older people; many of them Quakers and not given to extreme statements.

As was to be expected, this gay and laughing girl, who was also of so sweet a nature that she could win the praise of a dour old Quaker, did not lack for suitors, but it was soon clear on whom her choice was to fall. In the household of her cousin was a boarder, Levi Weeks, a staid and respectable young man, of considerable means.

Although not accustomed to go out socially, he was dragged into the happy times of that December by the girl who was destined to play such a frightful, such a tragic part in his life. He went out with her, although he did not skate and did not dance, and it was not long before the young people who were Guilelma's friends understood that an early marriage might be anticipated.

Levi belonged to a family in which, for that time, there was a fair amount of wealth. His brother owned The City Hotel, one of the largest of the inns and he was, himself, a "master carpenter" by which we would now mean a carpenter and builder.

The Wedding Night

The Rings had known him quite awhile, for he seems to have boarded there for several years. There was a tea drinking party early in the month of December, when Ellis Ring and Mrs. Ring, both very quiet and reserved persons, were present and when they seemed to give the affair between the beautiful girl and the staid young man their approval.

What happened between the early date in the month when this tea drinking took place, and the twenty-ninth of December, when, after the early tea, Guilelma told Mrs. Ring that she and Levi had determined to be married that night, is not known, but of one thing we may be certain

and that is, that if we knew what happened, we would have clews to what has baffled every investigator then and since.

Hope Sands went out "visiting" that night. She was never asked where she visited and no one ever came forward to say that she had been at any known house.

What Mrs. Ring Observed

Ellis Ring went out. He was never asked where he went, but to a newspaper, afterward, he made the statement that he had gone to look after some horses which had strayed.

The Ring farmhouse, it may be noted in passing, was on the present site of the Franklin Street station of the Ninth Avenue Elevated. This location is an important point, as will be seen later on.

Levi Weeks went out. He was never asked to account for what he did or where he went.

At a few minutes before eight Mrs. Ring started to go upstairs to see Guilelma, of whom she had heard nothing since the girl had made her statement and gone to her own room.

Levi Weeks came in the front door as Mrs. Ring paused, but he did not take off his hat or coat. He stood moodily staring out of the small window in the entry. Mrs. Ring felt vaguely troubled, she said, by his manner and turned and went upstairs without speaking to him.

Guilelma was dressed and ready to go out. She had on her hat and coat and also wore her fur neckpiece and muff, stylish appendages which she liked to use, although they were considered very worldly by her Quaker cousins. Mrs. Ring said nothing of moment to the young girl and after awhile went downstairs again. Weeks was still in the hall, staring out. Mrs. Ring went on into the sitting room and shut the door.

Shortly afterward some one ran down the front stairs and the front door slammed. Mrs. Ring, really upset by the odd behavior of the two young people, hesitated a moment and then ran to the front door to look out, in the very natural interest she would feel in seeing the last of them as unmarried but the snow was heavily falling by that time and she could see nothing of either.

A little before ten o'clock Hope Sands came in. She went directly to her room. At ten Ellis Ring came in. He went directly to the bedroom occupied by himself and his wife. Mrs. Ring was still sitting up though it was an hour past her usual bedtime, but neither Hope Sands nor her husband looked in on Mrs. Ring nor inquired if the engaged couple had returned, or if they had been married as Guilelma had said they planned.

A short time afterward Levi Weeks came in. The first thing he asked was if Guilelma was home?

Mrs. Ring said she wasn't.

Weeks wanted to know with whom had she gone out.

Mrs. Ring regarded him, as she afterward stated, "with amaze."

"Indeed, Levi, to tell thee the truth," she said, "I thought that she went out with thee."

"If she had gone out with me, you may be sure that she would have come back with me," Weeks stated, and then fell to pacing the floor.

For "quite a while" this continued, said Mrs. Ring, but as the night wore on and the girl did not return they fell into broken and agitated talk about her. Weeks protested that he did not have an idea as to where she could be, nor with whom, and that he would go mad if she did not return soon. Once he turned away and had a desperate fit of weeping, and once he wrung his hands and said that if Guilelma did not return to clear him he was a ruined man.

Mrs. Ring said to him, gravely, at that, that there must be something on his conscience, at which he scowled and replied, "no more than lies on some others."

Before Morning Came

In the early dawn Mrs. Ring went upstairs to wake her husband and found him stirring "although there was still needed candlelight," and in a few minutes he was at the houses of the nearest neighbors, beginning the inquiry for the missing girl.

Again we must return to the thought of the conditions of that day and remember

that such a thing as a young woman, of any respectability at all, being out of sight for even an hour or two of a night, was unheard of; and that such a thing as an innocent cause for such absence would be hard to conceive of, under the conditions of life as they existed then.

Persons Unknown

So that the alarm of the Rings and of Levi Weeks was far greater in proportion than would be that of a family, under the conditions of to-day, when anything from a broken down automobile to a prolonged party might keep a perfectly innocent girl abroad.

The first thing that Ring turned up was the fact that Guilelma had gone away in a sleigh. Laughing, she had run out of the house, and, laughing, she had taken the gloved hand which had reached out of the bundle of furs in the vehicle. Those who saw her thought, of course, that it was young Weeks taking his sweetheart out for one of the rides in which she delighted. One witness was an old aunt of Chancellor Ferris, of New York University. In 1861 the chancellor wrote to a friend:

"An old aunt of mine who lived opposite the Rings and knew Guilelma Sands well saw her on the night of the fatal sleigh ride when she was just about to step into the sleigh, and always spoke of her as the loveliest young creature she had ever seen."

"That moment" was the last that was ever seen of the girl, alive or beautiful.

Days passed, the newspapers gave the disappearance some respectful attention, and the girl did not come back. There was only one boat on which she might have left and it was intercepted and proved not to have her aboard. There were no trains for her to have taken. There were no roads along which she could have traveled with a stranger without being noticed.

Meanwhile "The Manhattan Company" which supplied water, through wooden troughs, to certain public pumps in town, had some trouble with its system, which they traced to a well out on the lonely Lispenard Meadows. Beside that well they found Guilelma's poor little "worldly" muff and in the well, the girl, herself.

Her hat, shoes, stockings, and coat were never found. Her dress had been torn away from the upper part of her body, and around her beautiful round throat there were dreadful blue bruises which told how her life had been taken from her.

New York was instantly in an uproar.

It was the first great crime of the little city. It would have been a great crime for any city.

The first thing that was done was to perform a post mortem on the body which at once did away with a number of gruesome but perfectly natural conclusions concerning the crime. Guilelma had no cause to kill herself and there was no cause why any man should have killed her to conceal his own villainy.

A coroner's jury came to the verdict that the girl had come to her death "at the hands of a person or persons unknown" but the finger of suspicion already pointed to the one person who had had any real intimacy with the dead, and so Levi Weeks was arrested and brought to trial in the old City Hall, on March 31, 1800.

The distinguished counsel for the defendant were Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. This was a short time before their famous duel, but outwardly, at least, they were good friends, at the time of this narrative. They were able lawyers and did their best for their client, of whose innocence they then and afterward declared themselves convinced.

An Alibi for Weeks

There were a good many in the city who were also convinced that the quiet and industrious and moral young man, who seemed to be crushed to earth by the tragedy which had overtaken his love, could never have been the man to murder his promised wife; but the general feeling ran high against him, so much so that a number of prominent citizens constituted themselves his bodyguard on his journeys to and from his prison to the courthouse.

It was said in the papers that Weeks never gave a sign that he even saw the hooting, jeering, and threatening mob which always surrounded him on these trips.

Chief Justice Lancing was the trial judge

and his lucidity of mind and fairness of disposition did a great deal to keep the trial from becoming a burst of hysteria.

The object of the defense was to establish an alibi for Weeks. It succeeded, at least to the satisfaction of the judge and jury.

After All Was Over

It was proved that Weeks arrived at his brother's house—the City Hotel—at eight-thirty, and that he left it at nine-thirty. Mrs. Ring testified that he got into the Ring farmhouse at ten. The walking time from the farmhouse over the country road, which was what Broadway was, was about fifteen minutes. This allowed a possible fifteen minutes on both ends of the visit, which was unaccounted for. There were many habitués of the hotel who saw the accused for the length of time stated and so testified.

Mrs. Ring, on the stand, in monosyllables, had nothing to add to what she had already told for the newspapers. Weeks had left the house at eight, had returned at ten. She told of their vigil and what he had said.

Asked what he meant by saying that if the girl did not return he was a ruined man, Weeks replied concisely that he knew that if anything happened to her the suspicion would fall on him—as it had—he grimly added.

The contention of the distinguished pair who were defending the young man was that he had no time to have gotten into a sleigh, done harm to the girl, and disposed of her before walking into his brother's hotel. The guests said that while there he was as calm and grave as ever.

Ellis Ring stated that the first he knew of any trouble was when his wife awakened him in the early morning and he was sent out to search for the missing girl.

Aaron Burr, with his usual sensationalism, tried to make good copy for the newspapers, as he always did. At one point in the trial he declared that the murder of the girl and the accusation of Weeks were part of a plot on the part of some " dastardly scoundrels " engaged in a vague plan to ruin the young man, and at another moment he dramatically accused a man in the back of the court room of being " the real murderer."

The force of this last was considerably diminished when it was found out that the accused was a hanger-on of the Burr-Hamilton law firm, and the judge and jury very properly ignored both incidents.

Weeks swore solemnly and with such assurance as to shake even the suspicion of the people who believed him guilty, that he not only had no hand in the murder of the girl, but that the whole matter was a complete mystery to him. The papers recorded the fact that a general change took place as the trial proceeded, which held that Weeks did not commit the murder, but that he knew something about it and that there were, in fact, many things about the whole matter on which there did not seem to be much light.

Weeks was acquitted.

According to the meager information that we have of him, Levi Weeks became an even more silent man than before and was never known to refer to his sweetheart, the trial or any of that part of his life connected with the affair.

Ellis Ring and Mrs. Ring seemed to feel acutely the notoriety they had vicariously gained. They sold the farm (or rented it out—the record is not clear) and moved up the State. No mention is made what became of Hope Sands.

Some Pertinent Questions

At the time of the trial of Levi Weeks even the word psychology was unknown, and none of the methods of handling criminals and alleged criminals which we know of to-day, had been thought of. To be sure, we are still handicapped in criminal trials of even this enlightened period by the failure to really visualize strange and unusual human stories, but this is steadily improving.

Any reader of the daily press can remember recent crime cases in which the truth has been brought out by what we may call the hypothetical question method.

This method consists in looking, not only at the facts, but at possible facts. It consists in trying to reconstruct all that went on *before* the commission of the crime, and

not merely trying to establish what happened then and afterward.

Let us ask, then, some questions pertinent to this great and intricate mystery.

That which starts us off is the fact that in the beginning of the month of December, 1799, the month in which the crime was committed, there was a pleasant tea drinking at the Quaker farmhouse at which Ellis Ring, Mrs. Ring, and Hope Sands were present, at which the marriage was discussed and during which the whole atmosphere was most friendly.

Was There Collusion?

This incidental testimony was not brought out at the trial but was part of a number of statements which the newspapers of New York and Philadelphia and other cities procured, and it is from three persons who were also present at the tea drinking.

In the light of this, let us consider the fact that Guilelma casually mentions to her good cousin, as they arise from the early supper table, that she and Weeks are to be "married that night, privately."

What happens? Do the two women, Hope Sands and Mrs. Ring congratulate the girl and bear her off in a gay whirl, to be dressed? Do Ellis Ring and Weeks confer as to the details of this wedding or as to whether the married pair are to return there? Does Levi Weeks say a word to anybody about his arrangements? Is there light and laughter and bustle in that house which had seen so much unwonted festivity?

There is not. Emphatically, there are none of these conditions, but quite the reverse. Something very odd falls on this household. Hope Sands, who was never a girl to go visiting and who had been drawn into social life only with the advent of her gay young cousin, goes right out visiting and stays out.

Ellis Ring had some tenant farmers and several men who lived near by who knew him well. It had begun to snow, but he did not call on any one for help when he went to hunt the strayed horses. No one ever reported seeing him, although the fields lay all about the houses of the neighbors.

Levi Weeks, who had always been a great stay-at-home, went out immediately after supper. So far as Mrs. Ring's testimony is concerned, he seems to have said practically nothing to his promised wife, not even to say when he would return for her.

Guilelma goes to her room and remains there until eight o'clock, without a word. The gay, the irrepressible Guilelma!

Levi Weeks comes back and stands staring out of the window. What does he see on the wintery, twilight filled street to make him act in the peculiar manner that he does?

And where has he been, anyway?

In this household where there has been such friendliness and such good humor, how strange of Mrs. Ring to let the two young people go out of her house to take the most momentous step of their lives and yet not so much as wish them good fortune.

How queer for Hope Sands and Ellis Ring, both coming in from an absence of several hours, and seeing the unwonted light in the sitting room, not to come in, to see whether the young pair were there or not. How more than singular when we consider that it continued to snow all that night and that they must have been cold and wet. There were seldom fires kept in bedrooms in those stern days. Why did neither of them stop to warm themselves?

Did Levi Weeks, Hope Sands, and Ellis Ring know anything of each other's movements during the two hours when they were all out of the house? If so, why and to what purpose? And if not, how singular that they should go out when it was so against their custom, as shown at the trial, for them to be away from home after supper, unless they were all dragged out with the never-to-be denied Guilelma.

Can You Solve It?

This brings us around to the remarkable discovery that from the time that they sat down to supper to the following morning, Mrs. Ring's is the only testimony that we have concerning what actually went on in that house. No one saw Weeks go out after supper and no one saw him come in at eight.

He appeared at his brother's for an hour, and that is positively the only corroboration that we have of Mrs. Ring's state-

ments, except that Weeks did not deny them.

Mrs. Ring is the only witness to the fact that her husband and her cousin Hope were out until late. Not a soul was ever reported as having seen them—or, at least, of having stated that they were seen.

No trace was ever found of the sleigh and no one saw it draw up at the door of the farmhouse. There was just that one glimpse of it as Guilelma got into it. The road which ran by the house was a country road, despite the fact that the town lay so near, and there were not many passing.

It was only by accident that Chancellor Ferris's aunt happened to look out of the window and see the laughing girl get into the vehicle.

Why did she get into the sleigh, at all, unless some one whom she knew was in it? Weeks denied that he was that man and no other man was ever asked to deny it. The sleigh was of rather an unusual design. No one ever came forward to say that a sleigh and a "team" (two horses) had been taken or rented or borrowed from his place. Where was the sleigh procured?

Again, if Guilelma, at eight, ran downstairs thinking that she was going to be married to Weeks and if he had already passed out of the house and gone on, not seeing her, what did he think about the plans for their wedding? He had not seen the girl, so far as Mrs. Ring's testimony showed, from the time that he left the house just after she had made the announcement of their impending wedding.

If Guilelma did not go with Weeks, what hypothesis can be made as to her movements, especially in view of that fact that she was her usual gay self at the lost moment that she was ever seen alive?

SLIPPERY MARY BROWN

MARY BROWN, alias Frances Stanly, a shrewd New York shoplifter, was committed for theft and locked up for trial in May, 1864. She pleaded guilty and was remanded for sentence.

Heavily veiled, she was led by an officer on the way to the Tombs. On the corner of Chambers and Center Streets, Gerard Hale, alias John Cahill, jostled against the officer in such a way that Mary easily slipped out of the policeman's hands and another woman similarly dressed and veiled took her place.

All this was so swiftly done that the officer had no suspicion that any deception had been practiced. The girl walked quietly at his side until they came to Worth Street, where she started to go on in another direction. The officer gripped her arm and tried to pull her forcibly toward him.

The girl then began to scream for assistance, crying that she was a respectable lady and that he had better not insult her. A crowd soon gathered, where amid the clamor the girl raised her veil and looked at the policeman and at the people standing about, with a highly indignant air. Seeing that the girl he held captive was not Mary Brown, he let her go and began looking about in his bewilderment for the vanished shoplifter. She was naturally nowhere to be seen.

In the excitement the accomplice also escaped, leaving the policeman to return empty-handed to make his excuses at headquarters as best he could.

Some time afterward, Mary Brown was captured again in Yonkers, together with her accomplice, who was found to be from Rochester and wanted there as accessory to a murder committed there the previous year.

"I was going to horsewhip you—girl though you are, but I shall reserve my strength for this cur"

HIGHWAYMAN'S CONSCIENCE

By Roland Johnson

THE SHADOW OF A GIBBET FALLS ON THE MAN WITH A WHIP WHILE THE MOTOR CRACKSMAN SUCCORS A MAID FORLORN

AT about this time, things were hot for Basil Lisle. His wholesale thefts of motor cars—the mysterious manner in which he disposed of them—the lack of clews—had cast the limelight of publicity on the Motor Cracksman. The special flying squad had been doubled in number. The police were continually on the alert. Road transport in general was something more than alert. It was windy. Insurance companies had been forced to raise motor insurance premiums. Other countries scoffed.

Thus it came to pass that in the twilight of an autumn evening, when the last rays of the sun cast a mellow glow over the Cheviot Hills and lit up the heather around Carter Bar with empurpled glory, a slim, elegantly dressed young man sat himself on the bank at the side of the road at the summit of the winding gradient, the divide between England and Scotland.

A new field of activity for the Motor Cracksman—a sparsely populated, altogether lovely countryside of moors and crags and lonely ranges of undulating hills. Basil sighed with satisfaction as he watched his manager, Stacey, swirl away in a cloud of dust. Basil was alone in the heart of nature's best.

He smiled as he looked up at the ancient gibbet which civilization had seen fit to convert into a signpost. "England—Scotland," he read, and the smooth cheek was puckered with dimples and creased with merriment. His brilliant eyes were half closed. His white teeth gleamed.

Upon such a gibbet had hung by the neck his ancestor, the Laughing Highwayman. Times had changed and highway-

men were all but obsolete. Basil Lisle—the sole representative of a noble gathering! Son—disinherited son—of Sir Fortescue Champneys Basil Lisle of Winterton, Northumberland, whose estates had been passed by his offspring only half an hour previously.

The main road between Newcastle and Edinburgh was deserted. Sheep wandered idly on the thoroughfare. The sun sank beneath the neighboring hills. But for a soft wind in the heather, and the distant "maaaa" of the flock, all was silent.

Basil lit a *Perfectos Finos* cigarette and lay on his back to survey the deepening blue of the dome of heaven. In the course of time, some vehicle was bound to pass—and pass into the possession of the Motor Cracksman.

"I pity the poor devil—he'll have a long walk!" murmured Basil to himself as he inhaled a deep breath of smoke and puffed rings which hovered like miniature clouds above his head.

From the valley came the deep-toned hum of a motor car as it breasted the three-mile gradient. The last of the day faded moodily into darkness. Basil rose to his feet, and pulled his felt hat well over his eyes.

"Sports Hillman—in a hurry—climbing well," he said to himself, as he took up a position in the middle of the road. He fingered his revolver carefully and buttoned his coat beneath his chin.

The beams of the headlights, as the vehicle shot round the corner, dazzled him. The car pulled up no more than a yard from him with shrieking brakes.

"You seem in a hurry, and I'm very sorry!" he said gravely, as he sprang lightly onto the running board.

For a moment the occupant sat very still, but stared with great brown eyes lit up in fear.

"Who are you? What do you want?" she faltered. "Let me pass—I—I—must get—on!"

Basil bowed with old-world courtesy. The Laughing Highwayman himself could have done no better.

"Madam, I deeply regret the necessity which compels me to relieve you of what is undoubtedly a smart and well-tuned little car. Would you mind dismounting?"

"I don't understand. Who are you, a thief?" The girl was trembling—only a thin slip of a girl, thought Basil.

"Yes. It's a lovely evening, isn't it? The Cheviot Hills are the finest sight I know. Please hurry up."

"It isn't fair," sobbed the girl. "Why, I might have run you down!"

"I am nimble on my feet, but I admit that you might have made the attempt. However, as you may observe, I am armed."

"You would shoot a woman!" Her lips curled with scorn.

"I haven't done so yet—in the circumstance, I usually aim for the tires."

"Let me pass this instant!"

There would have been nothing easier for Basil than to bend forward, seize the girl around the waist and lift her out of her possession. There would have been nothing easier than to leave her crying bitterly by the roadside. Basil, however, preferred gentle persuasion.

II

"PERHAPS you don't understand," he said softly. "I am, as you may observe, a slim but muscular man. You are a very beautiful little girl, but you lack both stamina and muscle. Don't make me do things I don't want to do. Let's be peaceable. Get out!"

"Peaceable! You don't understand—let me go!" she cried, as she put out the clutch and tried to push into position the gear lever. Basil's delicate hand closed around hers in a grip like cold steel.

"Don't be silly," he said amiably.

Then, as he proceeded to explain to her the hopeless and defenseless position into which her lot had cast her, there was born on the night air the sound of an approaching car—a low growl of a burr, a sharp blip—a powerful exhaust note which indicated to Basil that something more than usually powerful was contained under its bonnet.

"Come," he said sharply, "I have no time to waste. Quick, out with you!"

He bent over her, and was astonished to find that the girl was trembling with terror, gasping for breath, filled with intense apprehension.

"Listen," she cried. "You seem to be —that you were once—a gentleman. I call upon you to help me. You hear that car? It must not find me here—I will *give* you my car, if only you will let me go. I have no time to lose." Tears were falling fast. "Please—oh, please! Let me go!"

"It's chasing you?" asked Basil quickly.

"Yes—hurry—"

"Shift along. I know this make of car, we'll have a race!"

Basil's eyes were sparkling with excitement as he took the wheel. With a click he engaged first gear, a rapid acceleration of the engine, a release of the clutch, and the Hillman darted forward like a live thing. The ancient gibbet passed in the headlight beams like a flash as the car entered Scotland, and began the treacherous and steep descent into the Jedburgh Valley.

Two hundred yards along the straight, followed by an almost hairpin bend—another two hundred yards, uncambered curves negotiated on two wheels. The girl clung to her seat and gasped for breath. Never had she driven or been driven like this. It was not for nothing that Basil had raced on Brooklands.

"Quite happy?" asked Basil coolly, as he fingered the steering wheel with the touch of a master.

"So—long—as—we—escape—I don't mind!" came the low reply.

As they shot into the cover of a tree-bordered stretch where the river Jed gurgled happily, they heard half a mile behind them the frenzied, long drawn out note of an electric horn.

As Basil negotiated the winding and deserted road which crossed the river by steep bridges, he wondered into what drama he had been cast. Why should this slip of a girl be running away? What motive was there behind her actions? It seemed unbelievable that she also was outside the protection of the law, a hunted thing living by her wits.

"Where do you wish to be deposited?" he asked politely.

"Anywhere—that is—some hotel. I don't mind," she replied.

"You appreciate the fact that I am taking your car with me, don't you?"

"Yes, you can have the car now. I don't want it," was the calm reply. The lead which Basil had obtained seemed to have given her confidence. She was no longer trembling, and at time a smile played around her lips, conjuring up dimples.

"Well, well, well," said Basil reflectively, "I 'spose, by any chance, you're not making an unsanctioned loan of this vehicle? I mean—you haven't borrowed it for an indefinite period against the owner's will?"

"Don't be absurd. If you are suggesting that I am 'one of you,' you simply do not understand! There is no reason why you should. I am giving you the car, what more do you want?" she retorted.

"Perhaps I don't understand, that's what intrigues me," said Basil. "I can't place you at all. You say it *is* your car?"

"Of course."

"And I may have it?"

"Under the circumstances, you may!"

"Thanks very much."

"You have driven this car as it's never been driven before. I don't think that I could have got away from Sir—from the car behind. I am, so far as that is concerned, grateful. I never could have imagined being grateful to a thief, but this appears to be an exception.

"For that reason I am making you a present of the car which you could, I suppose, have taken by force, when we were on top of Carter Bar. I will be still more grateful," she was speaking rapidly and nervously now, "if you will forget everything about me the moment you have left me at some hotel, when we are quite clear from the car behind.

"Whatever you read, whatever you think, I want you to cast right out of your mind. If you will do this, then I also will forget about the crime which you attempted to commit to-night."

"That's very kind of you, but I'm afraid it won't avail me much!"

"Perhaps the money which you sell it

for, will enable you from now on to lead a straight life."

"Perhaps," said Basil without optimism, and then he chuckled: "My dear young lady, you are delightful! All right. I'll keep my bargain, and you keep yours. Although it is your duty, you know, to report me to the nearest police constable. Can you stray so far from the narrow path of duty?"

She flushed at his quiet laughter.

"If you thought more of your duty to your fellow men and women, perhaps you would be a respectable citizen!" she flashed.

Basil did not reply, but with one hand he stroked his temple, which was seered by a long scar.

"Perhaps," he said. "And perhaps not!"

III

THEY were nearing the outskirts of Jedburgh, and Basil was wondering to himself if, after all, he were safe in trusting his passenger. He would like to draw up at the first good inn and wish her a pleasant good night—even to pass the time of day with a policeman as a "respectable citizen." Was it safe?

Then, suddenly, with the sound of a gun, a tire burst.

"Damnation!" said Basil softly, as he leaped out. "We're in for it now! Where are your tools?"

The two worked as one, Basil on the wheel brace, and the girl unstrapping the spare wheel. She was once again the agonized woman, panting with dread.

"Can we manage it before he comes?" she moaned.

"Three more minutes and we'll do it!" answered Basil. "Who is this gentleman of whom you are afraid? If there is anything I can do, you have only to ask me. I am an expert at dealing with refractory husbands!"

"There is nothing—ah!"

Two great beams swerved gracefully in the distance, and the roar of a car traveling all-out plainly could be heard.

"I am afraid we'll never do it," said Basil quietly, as he stretched himself. "Are you quite certain that it would be unwise to take me into your confidence? We will have to face facts together, you know!"

The girl turned to him pathetically.

"I wonder if I could trust you? You look trustworthy enough, but—"

Down upon them came a great gray car, swerved ahead and backed in front of them. A huge man clambered hastily out of the driver's seat.

"So I've caught you, have I?" he snarled.

Basil stepped forward in front of the crouching girl. He did not trust the stranger—a powerful man—any less than he trusted the great whip in his hand.

"Excuse me," he said. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"What's your name?" snapped the other. "Blarst you, what's your name? You have run off with my daughter."

"My name? Oh—er—I haven't got a name. That is—"

"Father, this gentleman was good enough to help me when the tire punctured." The girl turned to Basil with streaming eyes. "Leave us. You have done your best and I thank you!"

"I do not intend to lose sight of this most interesting drama," said Basil coolly, as he eyed the man in front of him. There was something oddly familiar about the pose: legs wide apart, hands in coat pockets with elbows to the front.

"I ask you once again, you scoundrel, who are you? Thought to get hold of her money, eh? Thought that I'd relent when you were married, eh? I suppose you *do* intend to marry her, and aren't just thinking of blackmail? Whatever it is, expect nothing from me, and you, Beryl, you're coming straight home with me in the car.

"Leave us for a moment. I was going to horsewhip you, girl though you are. I'm going to reserve my strength for this cur!"

Beryl came forward and placed her hand on the sleeve of her father's coat. He shook it off.

"Listen, father! I never meant to marry any one, but you were so absurd about letting me meet men and go to dances, that I thought I'd give you a fright. When I

wrote you that note, and ran away in the Hillman, I thought it a joke, and—"

"Joke! Hell of a joke, eh? Running about the countryside at this time of night with a young spark! Leave us, girl."

"Leave us, Beryl," said Basil quietly. "Finish fitting that spare wheel, and drive where you want to!"

"You will take your car home," said the father harshly. "This man will stay with me!"

"That is my intention."

"Before I horsewhip you, I demand your name!"

"A reasonable request," said Basil smoothly, as he watched the girl called Beryl, deftly fitting the last of the nuts.

"Well, sir?"

The girl had finished. Quickly she climbed into the driver's seat and looked mutely at Basil, as though even then she was prepared to continue the flight. Basil shook his head and smiled slightly. He did not want the car any more, besides, she was much too nice and much too pretty to be deprived of her possessions.

"Good-by, my dear!" he said finally.

The sports Hillman was reversed slightly, and then shot away into the darkness.

"Hie!" yelled the father furiously. "You're going the wrong way!"

"Never mind; you've got me instead!" And Basil Lisle laughed softly.

IV

"NOW then, sir, you want an explanation, I presume?" said Basil, as he lit one of his priceless cigarettes. "I suggest that we sit in your car, the air is cold, and I confess to being rather tired!"

The man was almost gasping for breath. He had, since the departure of his daughter only a few minutes ago, given himself over to a continuous stream of bad language. He had exhausted himself.

"An explanation—"

"Yes, Sir Fortescue Lisle!"

"Eh? You know me, then?" cried the man. "You admit it? I thought you stated that you had never met my daughter prior to this evening?"

"Quite right, but no one could possibly forget your language," said Basil amiably.

"Who are you, damn you?"

Basil walked slowly toward the great gray car, fumbling with his head. When he turned round, a black silk handkerchief covered his face. Two eyes gleamed cheerfully through slits.

"Good life!" cried Sir Fortescue.

"You know me now?"

"I've seen your photograph!"

He had. A similar photograph had been displayed in every newspaper in Great Britain.

"I took precautions that my face was previously in the shadow," said Basil. "But here I am, for what it's worth!"

"The Motor Cracksman!" Sir Fortescue was trembling.

"That's correct. Will you take your place in the passenger's seat of your beautiful new car? Must have cost you nearly two thousand pounds, eh? These Sunbeams are not cheap. It's not often that I strike lucky."

Without a word, Sir Fortescue did as he was bid. Very carelessly, a revolver rested on Basil's lap as he talked. Sir Fortescue noticed it.

"I take it," said Basil, "that Beryl, as you call her, is your daughter, aged, I believe, eighteen?"

"That's correct, but what's it got to do with—"

"That's enough," interrupted Basil. "A daughter by your second wife—after you more or less killed off your first wife by persistent cruelty, eh?"

"How dare you make such accusations, sir!"

"You're a contemptible bully," said Basil quietly. "I know it. You wonder how? Well, I'm not going to satisfy your curiosity. I gather that you drove your daughter away from home just because you are so infernally unreasonable. And then you insult her in my presence."

Sir Fortescue was sitting very still. He had caught the sound of a heavy measured tramp. A policeman's helmet glinted in the headlights.

"Don't get excited," said Basil softly. "I see him, too. Feel this revolver, eh?

Tickling your ribs a bit? It's got a light trigger, and by Holy Mike, it 'll go off if you make a sound! I say that on the word of the Motor Cracksman!"

The constable passed.

"Good night," sung out Basil. The policeman turned.

"Good night, sir!"

Basil turned to his prisoner.

"Now then, you realize how completely you are in my hands? One of these days I expect Beryl—pardon me for calling her by her Christian name, but I've taken a great fancy to my—to Beryl—will return to you. If you don't treat her as she has a right to be treated, I'll do worse than steal your new car."

"Steal my car?" muttered Sir Fortescue uncomprehendingly.

"Of course, what do you think?" Basil replied.

"But—steal—my—car," said the poor man stammering.

"Yes. And if it were not for the fact that I have a certain respect for gray hairs, I'd take you out into that field and whip you—flog you so that you couldn't sit down for a week!" said Basil. "I know you're a bully, I know you'd *murder* me if you could! Never mind," his voice trailed off dreamily.

"I'll just be content with your car—and one other thing—stay still while I turn it round, if you please; I don't want the alarm sounded any sooner than need be! I'm going to deposit you in the very spot where I had intended to leave your daughter—Beryl!"

"You'd leave me stranded in some god-forsaken place?"

"I'd leave you stranded in the worst spot I know, if I had the time, but, you see, time is precious, for I know very well that immediately after I've left, you'll raise Cain and the police, what? So I'll have to be content with the very top of Carter Bar, where, even at night, cars have been known to pass by. You'll find a gibbet at the top—very homely thing for your family. Hum!"

"You shall suffer for this!"

"No doubt. We all suffer for our sins, I'm told. You'll suffer a trifle, too, Sir Fortescue, unless I'm very much mistaken!"

V

THE car was speeding along the road to Newcastle and London, traveling at a smooth forty miles an hour. The passenger looked longingly at the overtaken policeman.

Half an hour later, when a new moon shone from a clear sky, Basil deposited his passenger—almost forced him out of the car—opposite the ancient gibbet.

"Good night, Sir Fortescue. You'll envy me in my bed at Newcastle!"

"Blarst you!" said the other savagely.

In the pale dawn, an unkempt, hungry and cold gentleman, picked himself out of the front seat of a lorry and banged on the door of the Otterburn police station.

"What's this? Why, are you drunk?" asked the officer, as he stood in the doorway, clad in little else but his nightshirt.

"Drunk? Don't be impertinent, my man! My name is Sir Fortescue Lisle, of Winterton."

"Sir Fortescue?" the officer was all attention. Sir Fortescue was well known for miles around his country house.

"My car has been stolen—stolen by the Motor Cracksman!"

The officer glanced dubiously at the untidy figure in front of him. He didn't look like Sir Fortescue Lisle, and although he meant to leave nothing to chances, he had been credibly informed that the Motor Cracksman had last been heard of in Sussex.

"What car, sir?" he asked cautiously.

"My new Sunbeam—a gray touring car. You cannot miss it; it is impossible to be mistaken. The scoundrel insulted me—insulted me, sir! And then left me on the top of Carter Bar to the mercy of the elements! But you have him, if you act quickly. He had the audacity to tell me that he would stay the night in Newcastle. You can get him—act, man, *act!*"

The officer sprang to the telephone. Here, indeed, was a chance for promotion. Rapidly he spoke into the receiver. Within

a quarter of an hour detectives had set out to scour every garage in Newcastle, searching, searching for a great gray Sunbeam car.

Newcastle police station hummed, bent upon having the honor of securing the world-famous Motor Cracksman. A great gray car; conspicuous, obvious, not to be missed.

"You're sure you're right, sir?" said the officer at Otterburn, as a qualm of anxiety passed over him when he realized the magnitude of excitement which he had just stirred up.

"Right? Don't be a fool, man!" cried Sir Fortescue, pulling out a visiting card. The last doubts of suspicion passed from the officer's mind.

"You must have had a rough time of it, sir. Would you care to come inside and have something to eat?"

Half an hour later the officer again rang up Newcastle.

"How's things?" he asked.

No doubt about it—things were humming. Every available man had been put to the work. Every road—north, south, east and west—was guarded. So often had the elusive Motor Cracksman slipped through their hands that the police had doubled, trebled and quadrupled their precautions.

"I'm going home. Get me a private car," said Sir Fortescue. "And let me know immediately he is apprehended. The scoundrel—I suppose there is no chance of escape?"

"I should hardly think so," the officer smiled. "Why, you don't know the Newcastle police force, sir! Once they're on a job, they're *there*, and that's saying a lot, sir, compared to some places."

"I'll give a hundred pounds to the man who lays hands on my car," said Sir Fortescue in a fit of generosity. "And *two* hundred to the man who arrests the Cracksman!"

"You will, sir?" cried the officer eagerly. "Just a moment, sir, I'll phone it through to Newcastle!"

A quarter of an hour later, a car stood throbbing at the police station door. Sir Fortescue climbed wearily into it, stiff in every joint, and barely thawed from his night in the open.

"Lisle Hall," he snapped to the driver, and sank back, falling fast asleep.

The occupants of Lisle Hall were still in bed when the owner drove up to the entrance. The driver shook him gently by the arm.

Sir Fortescue rubbed his eyes.

"Am I dreaming?" he murmured, and then, forcing himself into wakefulness: "Why, damn it, it's here the whole time!"

Sedately drawn up to the door was a great gray car, and fastened to the steering wheel was a brief note:

DEAR SIR FORTESCUE:

For the sake of your daughter, whom you treat so badly, I herewith return you your beautiful car. She averaged forty from Carter Bar. Not bad, what?

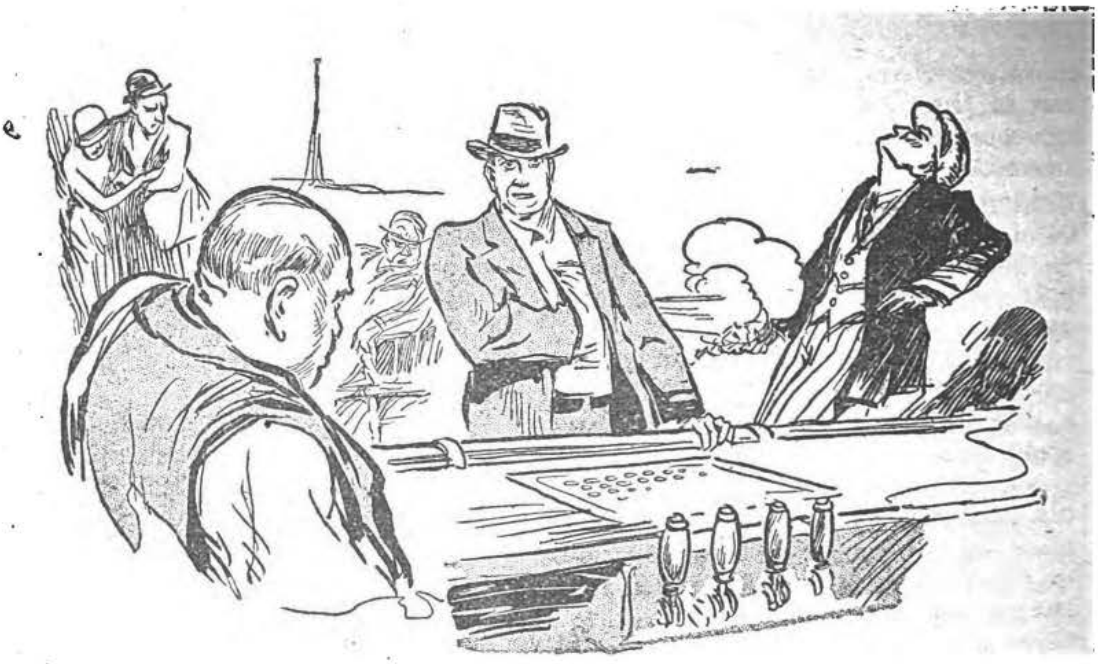
Yours sincerely,

THE MOTOR CRACKSMAN.

While a frenzied gentleman was endeavoring to cool the ardor of the Newcastle police, and at the same time listening to a carefully calculated reprimand from a prematurely aroused chief constable, the Motor Cracksman was eating an early breakfast of ham and eggs at the Otterburn Hotel, fifteen yards from the Otterburn police station.

"A pity to lose a good car," murmured Basil to himself. "But to steal from one's own father—even if one *is* disinherited—would be the outside edge of a limit!"

"The Vanishing Car" will appear in an early issue of FLYNN'S



His hand drove deeper into his shirt, and without turning he shot twice

THE SPIDER'S WEB

By E. J. Smithson

THE DUKE MAY BE A CROOK, BUT HE IS A SQUARE SHOOTER—WHEREAS THE SPIDER IS ONLY A SPIDER

THE "Burrow" suddenly became deathly quiet. Pasty-faced, furtive-eyed young men, nonchalantly breasting the mahogany bar, removed thirsty lips from cool edges of slender-stemmed glasses, casting, as they did so, sharp, apprehensive glances at the tall, muscular figure gliding across the floor.

By the time this newcomer reached the bar these youths had tiptoed away to merge with the shadowy, smoke-filled corners of the room.

The fun never begins in the Burrow until long after the theaters have coughed up their nightly crowds into the brilliantly lighted streets; but of those who chanced to be there at this hour—the petermen, barons, snatchers, and others classified by titles just as strange—every black-hearted one of them cut short his clumsy, vulgar jests to gaze with a snort of reluctant awe at the man striding so silently past them.

High-pitched, raucous laughter died on the carmined lips of dowdy, blowsy women. Even the mechanical piano, dinning away lustily in one dark corner, subsided wheezily as though it, too, sensed in its inanimate way the threat of imminent danger. An air of unreality pervaded everywhere.

The man whose presence so strangely dominated the room reached the bar just as Jerry, fat and oily, looked up from his sweaty task of polishing the bar-top. The grimy towel dropped from his pudgy fingers as their eyes met and held. His loose, weak mouth gaped wide to voice a thin squeal of alarm.

"M' Gawd," he whispered dramatically, "it's th' Duke!"

He picked up the towel and nervously renewed his task of polishing. After a moment of violent rubbing he substituted a sponge for the towel and with it sopped up the few glistening pools that studded the bar.

"Wha—what 'll yuh have, Duke?" he finally managed to ask in a placating quiver.

The Duke smiled with friendly warmth. "Not a thing, Jerry." He paused; then, in a disarming, matter-of-fact tone: "Seen Spider lately?"

Now, to the casual observer, the terror that flashed in Jerry's eyes at this commonplace remark, the sudden shifting of men to the walls and exits that marked the Duke's approach—all would have been difficult to explain. But to those initiated into the strange traditions of the Burrow explanations were needless.

For up and down Pilcon Street had gone the word that the Duke was "looking for a guy."

And in Pilcon Street, that shambling, narrow thoroughfare haunted by forgotten men, looking for a guy meant looking for trouble.

For years back, far removed from the era of dandified, slick-haired gangsters a day or two out of short trousers, disputes between the light-fingered gentry had been settled in the Burrow. This has been the custom then as it was now. Disputes to a finish, always. No compromise. And always, whether the combatants elected to fight with gun, knife, or fists, plenty of floor space was needed. That, and easy access to exits; for it had been proved time and again in the Burrow that bullets followed no definite paths and gleaming knives often found flesh other than the victim's.

It was known in attic, cellar, and alley that the Duke was on the warpath. Rumor, long since verified, had tagged Spider as the man who had been "buzzing the Duke's moll." This in itself was of no great importance along Pilcon Street, where Love walked with the downcast eyes of Shame; but Pilcon Street was interested, emphatically, as to the method by which one man would exterminate the other. Their blood lust was so strong that bets were made as high as ten to one that the Duke would "get" him.

Jerry's eyes were quick to note the careless manner in which the Duke lounged against the bar. He caught the menace of the almost imperceptible movement of the Duke's right hand as it slid cautiously into his open shirt front. He followed the Duke's steely, steady look which fastened itself upon the glistening mirror lining the back of the bar. There was something more than carelessness, Jerry knew, in the way the Duke's left arm rested in the hollow of his back.

"See here, Duke," Jerry pleaded, "yuh can't start anything in here to-night. No rough stuff goes—see? This joint has orders to be run decent and orderly. One bark from a rod and the chief closes th' dump. And me for the hoosegow and a trip up the river. Yuh dassent even look cockeyed in here any more, any time."

Jerry paused, out of breath, frightened a little by what he had said. He swabbed his dripping forehead with the dirty towel. The Duke regarded him with a smile and Jerry took courage. "So do me a favor, will yuh? We're friends, ain't we? Then beat it th' hell outa here—won'tcha, Duke?"

"Sure—anything to oblige," promised the Duke, watching carefully the mirror in front of him. "You certainly are nervous, Jerry."

"Spider?" went on Jerry, oblivious of the promise and eager to forestall trouble. "Why, I ain't seen that bird f'r a week. Honest t' Gawd, Duke. Not since his moll's been in stir. Yuh knew some ambitious flattie pinched her, didn't yuh? Spider's out with his mob, most likely." He paused, slightly confused; then, with a squaring of his shoulders: "Say, Duke, I know what you're here for, but forget it; beat it th' hell outa here, will yuh?"

"You talk like an old woman," the Duke suddenly snapped. His voice, somehow, had lost its friendly warmth. It became as sharp and as thin as a steel blade, and as deadly. His eyes narrowed to mere slits, never leaving for a moment the mirror's glistening surface.

"Of course we're friends," he went on;

" but you tell Spider that the Burrow won't hold us both at the same time unless he keeps away from my g—." He hesitated over the word as though ashamed; then, with a shrug: " Well, you tell him what I've said. He isn't dumb. Now give me a ginger ale."

Relieved, Jerry turned to pour a drink. As he did so a door creaked. It opened slowly.

The Duke's lips tightened to a thin, bloodless, white line as he saw, reflected in the mirror, a boyish figure lurch in and come to a stop and look curiously about.

II

A VOICE, high-pitched, suddenly exploded with profane complaints. " What th' hell! Is this dump a morgue? Jerry, you fat, belly-wise bum, gim-me a drink!" Spider staggered slightly as he walked forward through the uncertain light.

Ten feet from the bar he stopped dead still, regarding, with a mixture of curiosity and perplexity, the broad, motionless back of the Duke, who leaned as carelessly as ever against the bar.

Vague shadows that were men began to stir uneasily along the walls, to press closer and closer against the darkness. The air, smoke laden, dank, seemed charged with an indefinable tension.

Jerry, with his ginger ale bottle poised above a glass, took on the grotesque appearance of a gargoyle struggling fearfully into life. His lips moved in a mute message of warning.

" Spider," he gulped, after a tremendous effort, " you git outa here!"

" Yeah?" sneered Spider. " What for?" He advanced another wavering step to reach a position slightly to the left of the Duke's back.

" Oh!" he exclaimed lightly, as though aware for the first time of the identity of the man in front of him. " Who's your quiet friend? Kinda unsociable, ain't he?" He swayed ahead another teetering half step, halting to rock back and forth on uncertain heels.

" Yeah," he went on, talking to himself, but loud enough for his voice to carry into the farthest corner, " I hear th' Duke wants t' see me. Well, I'll tell the cock-eyed world I'm here. Nobody ever had to wear out his brogans trying to find Spider Dappitt."

He burst into a gay, drunken giggle of amusement. " Whatcha goin' t' do about it, Duke?" he snapped, addressing, for the first time, the unwavering back before him. " Sore about your moll, eh? Well, believe me, brother, she's the classiest jane that ever wore a short skirt. Bought some gloves at her counter to-day. An' here's some more good news. I'm goin' t' take her out to-morrow night. Some baby, I'll tell th' world!"

The Duke, impassive as a statue, never turned to answer his tormenter. He knew, and the Burrow knew, that the slightest move meant death. With eyes contracted to pin-points he continued his scrutiny of Spider's reflection in the mirror. Spider's voice became taunting, mocking, daring—every word an invitation to battle. Angry because of the Duke's indifference, he changed tactics and resorted to invective, mouthing vile epithets that even made the shadows along the walls gasp.

The flabby Jerry, frightened now in every nerve and muscle, managed somehow to summon up courage enough to attempt a summary ending of coming trouble. Grasping an empty bottle firmly by the neck, he soft-footed along the bar's length with the somewhat hazy idea of crashing it down upon Spider's head. His plan of attack was short-lived, for Spider saw him. His voice rang out menacingly.

" Back up, papa!" he shouted.

Jerry's huge bulk jelly-rolled to its original position.

Spider renewed his attack.

" Say, Duke, wouldn't she make a fine moll to run with my mob? Wouldn't th' heelers, th' housemen an' all th' rest of th' boys be crazy about her? Betcha I could train her to be th' best come-on baby that ever walked down Pilcon Street."

He waited a full half minute for an answer from the imperturbable Duke. Furious, finally, because of his failure to stir him, Spider began to praise the girl in vul-

gar Pilcon Street argot—filthy phrases that again drew gasps from the shadows.

There is always a limit to everything. According to the Burrow and its habitues, it had been reached in this particular instance. The Duke had played fair with Jerry. He had kept his promise—as long as any promise could decently be kept. If the Duke was the man his reputation claimed him to be, something was going to pop. And the Burrow, crouching silently against the walls, sensed this and waited expectantly for the coming climax. What it was waiting for came like a thunderbolt.

Without turning, with his eyes glued to the mirror, the Duke said in a voice deadly for its very calmness:

"You're a dirty liar, Spider!"

As he spoke his right hand slowly buried itself deeper into his shirt front. Observing closely, one could have seen the bulge of tightly clenched fingers.

Watching Spider's reflection, he saw the latter's arm drop in a lightninglike movement to his hip and whip back, waist high, with a snub-nosed, ugly-looking gun. And then, so fast that it would take a camera eye to register the speed, the Duke's hand drove deeper into his shirt—a desperate effort, seemingly, to poke his finger through the cloth—and, without turning, he shot twice—the fanciest bit of trick shooting the Burrow ever had witnessed.

A noise much like the explosion of twin firecrackers filled the room. Following the explosion, shadows along the walls took shape and edged out cautiously toward the light. But before they had time to reach the man now writhing on the floor the Duke had picked him up and tossed him across his shoulders.

With a fierce whisper to Jerry to "get a croaker," the Duke rushed his limp burden to the rear of the Burrow, crashed through a door, and was gone.

And, as though nothing had happened, the Burrow, with nothing more than a regretful sigh over the sudden termination of gun play, went on heavily with its grim efforts to wring laughter from life.

Dawn was beginning to sift through the half drawn blinds, outlining, with its gray, indistinct light, the white-faced man on the bed, the three men half dozing on chairs in the center of the room.

Soon one of them, youngish-looking and more wide awake than the other two, approached the bedside, felt the sleeper's pulse, came back after a minute, and said: "Your friend is out of danger now. I'll have a nurse over some time around noon. See that he keeps quiet until she comes." He busied himself packing queer-looking, shiny instruments into a long black grip. Snapping it shut, he inspected the sleeper again. Bidding the two men a whispered good-by, he tiptoed softly to the door.

"Your friend had a mighty narrow squeak," he said from the threshold. "If anything should happen before the nurse arrives, telephone me instantly."

"He's a good croaker," yawned Jerry in approval; "and he won't squawk." Another prodigious yawn. "Duke," he continued heavily, "I didn't ask yuh t' tell me about this here girl of yours, but now that yuh've gone and done, yuh mustn't blame me for buttin' in with a little say-so of my own." He stopped to clear his throat. "Love—I mean, y' understand' th' story-book kind of love—never came my way; but I've read a lot about it—see?

"Maybe I'm th' wrong guy to say it, bein' an old bach an' livin' where I do, but dammit I've got a hunch yuh can't go around courtin' a decent girl and stick around Pilcon Street. Th' two won't mix. Yuh ain't playin' square—see?" Jerry paused to grin sheepishly. "I'm a hell of a cuckoo to be peddlin' advice, eh? But, honest, Duke, now that this here thing has been settled, yuh'd better beat it. Yuh don't belong here—yuh never did. Yuh don't drink, yuh don't snuff th' snow, yuh don't mix with th' janes.

"I kept track of yuh f'r th' two years yuh been here. Now, mister, listen. If yuh can think as fast and as straight as yuh can shoot, yuh'll pack up your turkey and blow. If I was in th' same jam as you"—here he paused to wave a fat arm toward the farther side of the room, where the morning light showed a complicated arrangement of wires, tubes, batteries, and

wires—" if I was you," he repeated, " I'd stick t' this radio business you're so damn nutty about.

" If yuh can nick one grand for that little thingumagig yuh told me about las' week, I'd never come begging for adventure in th' Burrow. Yuh've made Spider crawfish. He's a liar and says so. Ain't that enough?"

Out of breath from what undoubtedly was the longest and most earnest speech he ever made in his life, Jerry paused to draw moist palms across tired, bloodshot, sleep-hungry eyes.

" Gawd!" he wheezed apologetically. " I must be dopey to talk like this. Excuse me, Duke, will yuh?"

The Duke's shoulders twitched as if in pain. With elbows resting on knees, he cupped a haggard face in open palms.

" What's th' matter?" inquired Jerry solicitously. " Toothache?"

" Shut up!" barked the Duke in a muffled voice.

" Well," returned Jerry, smiling, " do I hear a second?"

The Duke answered by jumping up with a suppressed cry and pacing tigerishly the length of the room. He paused now and then at the bedside to watch Spider lying there silent and quiet as death itself. Then back to the swift pacing, with Jerry following him with eyes of understanding.

Once Spider stirred restlessly and moaned. With a catlike movement the Duke was at his side.

" How's tricks, Spider?" he questioned softly.

Jerry went to the windows and threw back the blinds. A warm flood of sunshine flooded the room. Spider blinked at the brightness. Then he smiled—a boyish smile, frank and engaging.

Jerry regarded him thoughtfully, but said nothing.

" Some shooter, Duke," the wounded man whispered painfully. He extended an arm across the white counterpane.

" Shake," he said, and again that boyish, disarming smile.

The Duke grasped his hand. Spider sighed wearily and closed his eyes.

" I'm goin'," announced Jerry a moment later. He put on his hat and coat laboriously. The Duke followed him to the door.

" Think over what I've said, Duke." Jerry's voice dropped to a murmur. " There's another thing yuh want t' get wise to, friend. Spider's a sick boy an' all that, an' yuh're sorry for what happened, an' I'm glad t' see it—but this honor among thieves is story-book bunk. Get me? I've lived too long in Pilcon Street, Duke. Yuh couldn't find the word forgiveness down there with a telescope. " Yuh take my advice and forget this friendship stuff with Spider. He's a tricky devil. There's others that'll tell yuh that, too, besides me. His record for double-crossing is as black as a dark cellar on a dark and stormy night."

" I'll take care of myself, Jerry. Thanks just the same."

" Yeah? Well, I'll see you here to-night. Good-by."

III

WITH Jerry's words ringing in his ears, the Duke resumed his feverish travels back and forth, every step taking him back into a past that rushed up to meet him like a hideous nightmare.

" Jerry's right," he whispered fiercely. " I don't belong here. I've got to get out, or the Burrow will get me."

He kept repeating this over and over again. His face was white and haggard. He stooped as one might from carrying a heavy burden. He muttered to himself as one misdeed after another arose to flog his conscience.

He recalled his return from the army, adventure crazy, restless, jobless, his soul shaken by the horrors of war. He relived in memory his long unsuccessful search for something that would bring him back into the ways of his former life. He dwelt, with a shudder, upon his final bid for food and clothes.

He went over his life in Pilcon Street, where he had won the title as the " nerviest guy that ever tapped a safe." Mocking, taunting him with agonizing memories, his past marched like a living thing by his side.

"Lord!" he moaned with the sweat of repentance dripping from his forehead.

Through pain-stricken eyes there shot, at last, a gleam of happiness as he recalled his first meeting with Mary Monahan, the dainty, black-eyed, fearless, laughter-loving girl who had captured his heart. He lived again under the warmth of the smile with which she regarded him that unforgetable day when he first came to her counter, and how she had laughed that tinkling, merry laugh of hers when blushingly he had asked for a dozen pairs of gloves "for a sister about your size."

Two days later he had come again, drawn irresistibly by the beauty of her. "For a sister about your size," he had repeated.

"Your sister," the girl had said shyly, "must be hard on gloves."

"That's no kid." He recalled the blush that followed his crude attempt at humor.

"Oh, yes, they are." She had refused, with an innocent twinkle of her black eyes, to accept the joke; but at the sight of his crestfallen face her silvery laugh had rung out, clear and as sweet as a soft-toned bell. It had cemented, then and there, a friendship which had flourished like the green bay tree. Dinners, dances, shows, long rides into the open country under a mellow moon had worked their enchantment upon them both.

Fresh and holy in his memory was that first trembling kiss of surrender when, for a reflecting moment, a maddening, heart-throbbing moment, her lips had rested as light as thistledown upon his. The sweet confession of love—the plighting of vows—Despair as black as the pit engulfed him, made him so weak and dizzy that it was with extreme difficulty he found a chair to rest his aching body.

Spider awoke, saw him slumped dejectedly near by, and crooked a beckoning finger.

"Duke," the wounded man whispered weakly, "I made a damn fool of myself. Want to square it. Never did have a date with your girl—been where she works and all that, bought gloves like I said; but she turned me down flatter than a week-old flapjack.

"She's strong f'r ya, Duke. Say, it's kinda hard to talk, m' throat's so damn dry. I'm tellin' ya th' truth, Duke. Just a little sore at th' way ya treated me, I was, an' a little bit drunk. Pilcon Street's been handin' me a lot o' bunk—thought I'd get even. Forget it, eh, Duke? Bygones t' be bygones, huh?"

"Bygones are bygones, Spider," answered the Duke.

A great load freed his soul. He had the glow that comes from a bath. He felt clean and decent. He was immeasurably glad now that he had had the sense to keep his suspicions from Mary. He breathed deeply, filling his lungs with the air of pure happiness. When Spider's eyes closed the Duke was humming a gay, lilting melody.

He bathed, shaved, and dressed. When the nurse arrived at noon he hurriedly gave her the doctor's instructions and left with a cheerful whistle, a piercing challenge for the world to dare match his joy.

They ate together, the Duke and the girl, Mary Monahan, in a quiet, out-of-the-way place. And in the short, dramatic hour that was theirs he told her of his life—the black stains against him; of Pilcon Street and the Burrow, Jerry, Spider, everything—and at last, hesitatingly, the fight and the reason for it.

Mary Monahan listened patiently, with amazement at first, then fear, and at last, as the Duke went on relentlessly, in sorrow. Tears were streaming down her face when he finished.

"Well, that's about all, Mary. I'm what they call a no-good guy—a plain crook. I'm sorry—but that doesn't help you much, does it? I would have kept away from you, but that's easier said than done. Well, it's over. Being what I am and what you know me to be, I'm going to get up and walk out of that door, and so out of your life. It's—it's about the only thing I can do. Sorry that I hurt you—but I had to tell you—"

The Duke was too much in earnest about it all to be dramatic. That, possibly, was what made it so.

He arose and extended his hand.

Mary got up, too, and came around the table. She faced him, her clear, steady eyes holding him spellbound. And thus they stood, the both of them, quiet, trembling, with lips slightly parted.

After an age-long moment the girl, starry-eyed, gave a little heartrending cry, put her arms about his neck, pulled his face down to hers, and kissed him full upon the lips.

" Oh," she said tremulously—" oh, but you're so dumb, so very dumb! Come," she sobbed, " we're going out together."

Their waiter, old and wise, scowled when he saw the girl's tear-stained face. " Why they fall for these drug store cowboys is more'n I know," he muttered with a helpless gesture. " Making a pretty girl like that cry!"

And being a waiter, old and wise, in all probability he changed his mind when he found under the Duke's plate a crinkly ten-dollar bill.

The following two weeks went by on golden wings, each day a lifetime of happiness such as the Duke never dreamed possible. The Burrow, with a knowing smile, accepted his announcement of " going straight " for what it thought the news was worth. As good or better men as he had quit Pilcon Street gladly, finally to sneak back " home." " Once a crook, always a crook," was the proved motto ruling their lives. Only jail kept them away.

One night after a show and a dinner with Mary, the Duke entered his apartment to find, besides Spider propped up in bed reading, three flashily dressed men sitting close together on chairs propped against the farther side of the room.

Spider's " Hey, wake up!" brought them to their feet.

" Sorta surprise party, Duke," said one, blowing a huge white funnel of smoke from thick lips.

" Got sompin' for yah," announced another. " Come on an' sit down."

" We just got back," said the third with a knowing wink. " Had a good trip."

Reluctantly the Duke found a chair, drew it up, and sat down. Lighting a cigarette carefully and looking each evil visitor squarely in the eye, he said in a note of finality:

" You can count me out, boys. I'm 99 44-100 per cent pure. Yes, you can count me out."

The three worthies failed to see the humor of it.

" Ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredth per cent pure bunk," said Nicky Harris, a tall, angular, pock-faced man with a cast in his right eye. He squirmed nervously and coughed. " Pure bunk, Duke," he repeated. " Don't make me laff."

" Easy, Nicky, easy," purred " Silk Cat " Jerivan, portly, red-faced, sober-minded. " I heard about it, Duke, and I'm mighty glad to hear of it. Now, you know me well enough to know I would never come to you for help only under circumstances which I am about to relate."

Silk Cat Jerivan, dignified as a judge and as courteous as a Beau Brummel, sighed sorrowfully. He seemed about to cry.

" We've been out together, and we know each other. You're a square shooter, Duke. Turn down a friend? Of course you wouldn't!" Jerivan grew confidential. " Billy Rand's in stir. They're bearing down hard on him. It's going to take a pile of money to get a good mouthpiece (lawyer). M-o-n-e-y, in capital letters, will spring Billy, and nothing else. Why he pulled his rod on the captain God only knows. Anyway, Wilson died this morning, and it's Billy for the hot chair unless Pilcon Street digs up. Croaking an officer makes this a tough one to get by headquarters."

Silk Cat paused long enough to let this sink in. Then suddenly he leaned over, placed his lips to the Duke's ear. He whispered long and earnestly. And when he leaned back the Duke jumped up, walked nervously about the room, came back, said tensely:

" I can't do it. It may be easy, but you'll have to find some one else. I'm through for keeps."

The men looked at him sullenly, half contemptuously.

" Aw, be yourself, Duke!" snorted Ducky Dumont, heretofore the silent mem-

ber of the group. A slim-waisted, ferret-eyed gangster was Ducky, famed in the underworld as a killer. A deadly little rat. "What's once more in a lifetime?" he went on. "Th' girl can't kick. She'd do th' same in a pinch. Gawd! We can't go back on a guy, Duke. An' like Silk Cat says, th' job's a pipe. Open and shut. Tailor made. Charity work, that's what. An' easy as pie. No trouble, no hurry, an' a mile from anywhere.

"Jus' five lousy minutes with those nimble fingers of yours, an' th' job's done. Silk Cat, Nicky an' me out in th' bushes watchin'. Ya can't throw us down. Say, ya wouldn't send Billy to th' heater?"

Ducky's voice rose to a wail. Silk Cat Jerivan kicked him into silence. "For the love of mud, Ducky, if you want to broadcast this thing, I'll take you to a station."

Nicky Harris got up, soft-shoed over to the bed, stuck his face close to the sleeping Spider. Satisfied that he slumbered, Nick came back.

"Have t' watch that bird," he grunted. "Damn poor guy t' have around. Tricky as a snake."

It took the better part of three hours for the courtly, suave Jerivan to persuade the Duke to take a five-minute detour from the straight and narrow.

"Call me when you're ready," he told them, white lipped, when the three bade him good-by."

"Whatcha looking so white about?" questioned Spider the next morning. "Seen a ghost, or sumpin'?"

"An army of them, Spider," said the Duke wearily.

That day and the next and the next the Duke kept to his room. He dared not trust himself to the gentle sweetness of the girl he loved. On the night of the fourth day he called her up. Her voice calmed and steadied him, yet every word was a sharp, agonizing stab of remorse. He told her that he had been out of the city, that he was going out again early the next morning. When he'd be back he could not say, but she was not to worry. He spoke cheerfully, yet she must have sensed something wrong, for Spider, watching him, saw him shake his head in vigorous denial.

"No, no, Mary," he insisted. "I'm all right. Fine. Don't worry, please."

IV

AT ten that night, an hour after his conversation with Mary, the telephone shrilled its summons. The Duke approached it with dread in each lagging step. He placed the receiver tight against his ear, closed his eyes, and listened intently to the soft-pitched voice of Jerivan.

"We're leaving in thirty minutes, Duke. Ready?"

"Any time." He dragged the word out against his will.

After a time he went into his bedroom. He came out dressed in a rough, ill-fitting dark suit that evidently had seen much wear.

Spider's eyes gleamed.

In vain the Duke tried to calm himself. He talked of inconsequential things to Spider, played the phonograph, smoked innumerable cigarettes, toyed aimlessly with the bulbs, batteries, wires, and tubes of his radio set, paced the floor nervously. At twenty-five minutes past ten he doffed a light-gray cap and ulster.

"Now," snarled Spider five minutes after the Duke had departed. He slid from the bed as lightly as a cat. He exchanged his pyjamas for the suit of clothes he found in a closet. Smiling to himself, he took a turn or two about the room, pausing now and then to rub his injured shoulder. "Knew sompin' would turn up," he muttered. "Nobody in this whole damn world can make a monkey out of Spider."

He found a flask and poured himself a stiff drink, smacking his cruel lips at every burning swallow.

A few minutes later he went to the telephone and called a number.

A feminine voice answered.

"This Mary Monahan?" asked Spider. His voice was sharp and businesslike.

"Yes. What is it."

"Well, this is Spider Dappit. Yes, yes, Spider up at the Duke's joint—the guy he shot. Remember?"

"Yes," came the answer. "What is it?"

"Why, nothin' much. Kinda worried, though, about th' Duke. Wondering what ailed him th' las' three or four days. Been hangin' aroun' this dump actin' like a sick cat. To-night he ups an'—"

"But he's been out of town. He told me so. Spider, you must be wrong."

"—Then to-night he ups an' beats it outa here with three of his pals—"

Aware of the girl's anxiety, Spider gloated over his sport of torture.

"I—I don't understand, Spider. You must be wrong. You—"

"—An' by now he's out on the Merrifield Road, headed toward Judge Mentern's house—th' swell dump sittin' back so pretty from th' highway. Yuh've been past it many's th' time. Remember it? Well, th' Duke said he wanted t' clean up before gettin' hitched. Seems like he didn't want yuh t' know about it. Thought, somehow, yuh might kick. He said las' night—"

"It's a lie, Spider—it's a lie!" blazed the girl.

"—And so I got kinda worried—see?—like I said. Say, yuh listenin'? I got kinda worried, an' so what do yuh think I'm goin' t' do?"

"Oh, I don't know. Warn him, won't you, Spider? Save him. Oh, you're going to help him, aren't you?" Her voice went on and on, pleading hungrily for something tangible to allay her fears.

Spider gulped down another swallow of burning liquor.

"Tell me, Spider—tell me you're going to help him."

"Sure I'm goin' t' help. Like I said, I got kinda worried. So damn worried that I'm goin' t' call headquarters—police. They will save him."

He laughed heartily over this, slapping his thigh with his free hand and rocking back and forth in his chair, unable to contain his mirth.

A gasp that broke into a startled cry reached him.

"You're lying, Spider. You wouldn't play a trick like that on the man who befriended you. You're lying, Spider. Tell me so."

"Lyin', hell!" barked Spider. "Befriended me, huh. Like hell he did! What's that? Say, don't call me a liar! Well, have it your own way, m' dear. An' say, kid, when yuh go down t' headquarters t'-morrow morning, tell th' Duke that he can't shoot me full of holes without payin' for it. Knew if I waited long enough I'd get even. 'Bygones are bygones, eh, Duke?' I said to him; an' th' poor fish fell for it." From his lips poured peal after peal of vicious laughter.

A distant thud as of a body falling checked a cackle of delight.

He barked profanely into the telephone without result.

"She don't believe ol' Spider, eh?" he muttered. "Well, we'll see." He banged the receiver back on the hook, let it remain there for a moment, then took it off and called a number. The conversation that followed was decidedly businesslike. It seemed to have a sobering effect upon Spider, who, immediately after it was over, made quick preparations to leave the apartment.

After an eternity Mary got to her feet. Slowly and painfully she raised herself to the telephone and called a number. A bell rang in the Burrow, and Jerry came padding of heavy feet to its summons. A girl's voice whispered in his ear, so clear, so close, that at first he imagined the speaker was at his elbow.

A look of surprise shone in his face. He listened patiently, then, stirred into action, said in a voice grown hoarse with excitement:

"All right, all right—I'll be there in five minutes. Now yuh hang onto yo'self until I get this thing straight."

Jerry ambled behind the bar.

"Th' Burrow's closin' early. Everybody out," he roared.

Rushing frantically about, he turned off all the lights.

In two minutes the Burrow was empty and locked up, and Jerry in a taxi was speeding like the wind to Mary Monahan, begging at every bumpy interval that the driver "step on it."

Mary met him at the door, white-faced, trembling, and with fear in her eyes. She told him quickly what Spider had said.

"Didn't I tell him that Spider was a dirty, double-crossing little rat? 'I can take care of myself,' th' Duke says. Yeah, I guess so." Jerry was angry and worried. "We've got to show some speed," he added.

"But what shall we do?" rejoined Mary, despairing.

He regarded the girl thoughtfully, appraising her carefully.

"Yuh love him, just th' same, little lady?"

"Better than my life," she announced in a clear voice.

"That helps."

"I'll do anything—anything to bring him back."

"I've got a scheme—maybe," Jerry said. He reached into his pocket, withdrew a pearl-handled, blue-barreled, dainty instrument, and placed it carefully in the girl's hand.

"Got lots of nerve?" he questioned quietly.

The girl looked at the gun, at Jerry. She nodded.

"Do anything to save th' crazy fool?"

Again her eyes went to the gun, and again she nodded.

Satisfied, Jerry sat down. He talked fast and convincingly.

A minute or two later a taxi drew up at the curb. The two piled in after Jerry gave the driver minute instructions as to directions.

"I know a short cut," Jerry whispered as the car wove in and out of the down town traffic. He looked at his watch. "We got plenty of time. All we want now is a little favor from Lady Luck. Maybe if I was you, Mary, I'd pray a little."

And she did. An earnest prayer, such as any girl would make to save the soul of her sweetheart.

V

THE house, the Duke discovered, was as easy of entrance as his pals had said. A careful reconnoiter of the grounds had proved the home's complete isolation. He approached a French window. A slight push and he was inside. He paused a moment to get his bearings. With ears attuned he catalogued those sounds so peculiar to the night. Satisfied as to his safety, but still cautious, he dropped to his knees and crept, with the surety of a cat stalking its prey, over the soft nap of the carpet until the stairway leading to the floor above was reached.

Up this stairway he went, one slow foot at a time until the landing was attained. Here he threw his flash on a penciled drawing which he withdrew from an inner pocket, regarded the diagram carefully, and then, sure that he understood its directions, he proceeded as cautiously as before down a long, narrow hall.

At the end of this hall a door opened on his left. This he opened, stepped across the threshold, closed it softly until he heard the latch click. A deep sigh of relief escaped him. Standing motionless, he again classified the strange sounds drifting through the house. After a tense moment of waiting, he took out his watch, the ghostly light of the dial reminding him that time, after all, was as much his enemy as the law. He heard, faintly, the swish and sweep of motor cars speeding up and down the Merrifield Road. Tiptoeing to the nearest window, he peered out into the darkness, trying to spot the shrubbery in which his pals lay concealed.

Satisfied that they were on guard, but still as cautious as ever, he pulled down the heavy curtains of all the windows—making certain, too, that each was down far enough to exclude all light either from without or within.

This completed with the methodical quickness of a man who knows his work, the Duke turned on his flash and began a hurried but sure examination of the walls. He found the trick wall-safe, and, in less time than it takes to tell it, his dexterous fingers, aided by a thin, short piece of steel, had pried it open. He was breathing hard now, from the excitement of his quest, every muscle of his lithe, vigorous body as taut as steel wires.

Far down the Merrifield Road came the faint but sinister sound of an auto horn. Faint as it was, the Duke's sensitive ears caught it, interpreted it—the high-pitched,

blood-chilling call of an ambulance or patrol rushing madly on its errand of mercy or justice.

The Duke inserted a lean hand into the gaping mouth of the safe. What he found inside he hurriedly stuffed into a black bag that depended from his neck from two leather thongs.

Another long-drawn-out blast came down the wind, nearer now, and urging him against delay. He wondered vaguely if his pals had caught the possible significance of it, if they would be prepared for instant flight the moment he appeared. Everything, he knew, must work with clocklike precision. He speculated, calmly enough, on whether, after all, the sound carried a threat, or if it was his mind that was jumpy.

But another blast, clear, and not more than a mile or so away, convinced him.

He turned to go.

And as he did so he was bathed in a flood of light, so intense, so strong, that it flattened him against the wall and held him there petrified from fright. He made a tremendous effort to reach his gun, but every part of him was powerless.

" Caught with the goods!" The words crashed through his brain. As in a dream, he thought of Mary, of his promises, and the realization of what capture meant gave him life.

His hand moved to his shirt front. His fingers seemed cold and stiff.

" Stick 'em up—high up, kid! Way up, that's it!"

The voice was gruff, but deadly determined. The sound of heavy feet thumping across the room came to the Duke, and then, so close that he seemed to feel the speaker's lips upon his ear: " Steady now. Keep 'em up." The man at his back removed the black bag, opened it quickly, and returned its contents to the safe.

" Hold th' light on him," he commanded. " Now, march!"

An iron finger jabbed the Duke in the back. He walked directly up the blinding aisle of light with the man in the rear prodding him with the gun barrel. He imagined he heard a sob as he stepped gingerly across the threshold. " Some new flattie losing his nerve," he said to himself. It gave him an odd feeling of amusement at first, but when he heard a quick, frightened intake of breath he suddenly became alert. His mind was crowded with a thousand plans of escape.

Down the long hall the strange procession went, down the stairs, through chilly, high-ceilinged rooms to a door at the rear.

" Open it, kid," muttered the man at his back.

Single file they crossed this threshold and down a path which led through a garden. Passing through a fence and a hedge they came at last to a field of grain. Here they halted. Near by stood a car with purring engine, but without lights.

Back of them they became suddenly aware of men running this way and that about the grounds. Soon shouts and curses filled the air, and at intervals the sharp flash of guns pricked the darkness.

A shadow emerged from a clump of trees near by and came to life with a loud shout of " Halt!"

The summons brought a sharp, terrified cry from one of the Duke's captors. He turned about and took a step toward her.

" A girl!" The Duke's head began to swim. Either he was dreaming or else his capture was the strangest thing that had ever happened. What was a girl doing on a job like this? The shadow came toward them, stumbling over the small shrubs that dotted the grass here and there. It gave voice to another cry of " Halt!" and again came a sob of terror from the girl.

" Why don't you tell him who you are?" whispered the Duke. " Want to get shot up?"

The girl was crying now. Once she almost fell.

" C'mon! C'mon!" cried the man at the Duke's side. " Into the car! This kidnaping stunt's over."

A gun barked. The Duke felt the searing pain of red-hot iron on his shoulder. He fell to his knees. The man and woman with him picked him up.

The man whispered encouragement in the Duke's ear.

" Jerry!" he gasped, at last recognizing the voice of his friend.

"Yeah, it's Jerry; an' lucky for you. But it's goin' to be a corpse unless we get th' hell outa here. Step on it, brother," he shouted, addressing the driver who crouched behind the wheel.

"You're a fine egg!" snorted Jerry as the car shot down the narrow side road. "Huh! Riskin' our necks for a simp like you! Dammit, yuh oughta be crawlin' on your hands and knees t' th' girl here."

"Don't!" pleaded Mary Monahan, crying softly.

Her arms crept about the Duke's neck. She heard a faint whisper of "Mary!" and then lay almost crushed beneath the limp body of her lover.

Nicky Harris, Ducky Dumont, and Silk Cat Jerivan were "sent up the river" for indeterminate sentences on the charge of attempted robbery and resisting an officer. And the Duke, as sick as he was, would have confessed and gone with them if he had had his way.

Long since he had told Mary the reason for his share in the crime; and she, like a brave and loyal sweetheart, had forgiven him.

"But I want to start all over," he said earnestly to Mary one day as he sat propped up in bed. "My shoulder is almost well. I could walk down to headquarters. I want to take what's coming to me. I'm not trying to show off. I'm trying to prove to you that I love you."

"There yuh go again," interrupted Jerry, who had dropped in to pay his daily visit. "Don't be foolish. Th' bunch isn't askin' yuh t' do it. Mary, isn't, an' besides yuh didn't take anything, did yuh? Th' stuff is still there, isn't it? Pilcon Street's goin' t' get th' bunch out 'fore long. Don't be so damn Don Keesoti or whatever's his name that fought windmills. Do like you said—get outa town and start that radio business."

"But I want to start right," repeated the Duke, still pursued by the ghosts of remorse. He turned to Mary. "What about it?"

"And I want you to—oh, if you only knew how much!" Her voice choked. Then smiling at him through misty eyes, she said shyly:

"I think you've paid enough. I'm so sure of it that your first walk from this room will be with me to—to an altar."

And they did, and it was.

THE PLOT THAT FAILED

THOSE who know declare that the Michigan State penitentiary at Marquette is almost escape proof. Few convicts have ever been successful in a crush out of this modern prison. Indeed, few have had the heart to attempt such an apparently hopeless task. It is a byword in that part of the country that many go in, but few come out of the great gates by any other route than a completed sentence, a pardon, or a parole.

But Isadore Londe knew nothing of this. As a member of the Egan gang in St. Louis he was a notorious gunman and lawbreaker, a wild, reckless, devil-may-care youth who defied the police brazenly and openly boasted that a prison had not yet been built that could hold him.

In time the youthful gunman's hold in St. Louis was broken. His pals and protectors were sent to the United States prison at Leavenworth for a daring mail robbery and the police were hot on his trail for the score of crimes which he had committed. Londe fled to Detroit, where one of his first acts was to hold up and rob a jeweler. He was promptly caught and just as promptly convicted and sentenced to serve from fourteen to forty years in prison.

So Londe, the St. Louis bad man, went to Marquette, undismayed by the misfortune. He did no boasting, but it was plain that he did not intend to stay there long.

At the penitentiary, he was a marked man. The warden had read his record and knew him for a desperate criminal, for all of his smooth voice and soft black eyes.

"Watch him," said the warden, and guards trailed Londe wherever he moved.

A man stood behind him at his tasks during the day and eyes peered into his cell regularly through the night. Londe accepted it all without resentment. He was waiting.

Gradually Londe found his men, Eddie Weisman, of Chicago, a gunman and thief; Joe De Florio, a highwayman, and Vance Hardy, a murderer, were selected. A hard trio they were and well Londe knew it. They were the kind he wanted for the big crush to liberty.

Bit by bit the plot was communicated to the selected prisoners. All were doing long terms and were carefully watched, but Londe managed to pass his plan along and it was unanimously approved.

The prison authorities do not know how the weapons were smuggled into the prison, but on the morning of June 28, Londe, Weisman, De Florio, and Hardy appeared in the penitentiary yard fully armed with automatics. Two guards standing at the entrance to one of the cell houses were seized, disarmed, and captured.

"Now," ordered Londe, "go over the wall with us and if those guards in the towers shoot at us they'll kill you, too."

The men sallied across the yard toward the walls. By this time the break was known and all the guards were on the alert.

As the convicts came across the yard with the two kidnaped attendants ahead of them, the men on the wall opened fire, carefully aiming to avoid hitting the kidnaped men; but the care required ruined their shooting and Londe and his confederates reached the wall in safety. Over they went with the aid of a rope ladder. On the other side they released the guards and ducked into the heavy woods which surround the prison on all sides.

Hastily organized posses of guards and civilians took up the trail. The news of the escape was broadcast by telephone, telegraph, and radio and every road in the vicinity was blocked, but no trace of the convicts was found. They had disappeared into the woods.

On the Fourth of July the escaped men broke from cover and appeared at Republic, Michigan, where they stole a fast automobile and headed it for the Wisconsin line, a few miles away. Once more the roads were blocked and once more the fugitives dropped from sight.

"We went into the woods near Republic and held a pow-wow," said De Florio, "and Weisman and Londe had an argument about what we were going to do. Weisman wanted to lay low in the woods, but Londe insisted on stealing a machine and making for the border.

"As things turned out, Londe was wrong."

At any rate, Londe chose a road and headed his car for the border, declaring that he was going to drive through or lose his life in the attempt. It happened that the road he selected was blocked near Sagola by Sheriff Cleveland of Dickinson County and several deputies.

As the roaring exhaust of the convicts' car reached the ears of the posse, its members ranged themselves along the side of the road. When the car came abreast, a deputy stepped into the road, waving his arm and shouting for the driver to stop. It was dark and the deputy leaped to one side just in time to avoid the speeding automobile. The next minute four members of the posse had fired into the tires and the car swerved into the ditch. Three men leaped out on the side toward the posse, the fourth going out the other side.

By the light of his flash light one of the deputies recognized De Florio.

"That's them!" he shouted. "Let 'em have it!"

Sawed-off shotguns carrying wicked lead slugs roared in the night and the fugitives turned to run. Londe, Weisman, and DeFlorio fell wounded in the roadway. Hardy, who was the man on the other side of the machine, reached the woods in safety and got away, although it is believed that he was wounded.

So on a quiet Sunday morning, the three bad men from Marquette were returned to their prison, each strapped to an iron cot.

As Londe saw the walls of the prison he choked back a cough, the result of his wounds, and said:

"Well, back home again."

And Weisman retorted:

"Yes, you got your fast ride. That was what you wanted."

The lady detached an earring and placed it on the salver

BEATING THE GAME

By Florence Crewe-Jones

A VISIT TO THE PREFECT OF POLICE IN PARIS AND A FEW ANECDOTES OF CLEVER FRENCH CRIMINALS

A Story of Fact

WHEN I confided to a well informed Frenchman that I was determined to interview personally the Prefect of Paris Police he did not, after the manner of an Englishman, remonstrate with, "But, my dear madam, it isn't done." He contented himself with, "There is also the Dalai Lama at Lhassa if you will seek the inaccessible."

But then my Gallic friend knew nothing of a certain quite powerful letter of introduction to the august personage of the Prefecture which I had been at great pains to obtain. anv more than he realized how moving could be the interest of an American in the present-day personification of the *deus ex machina* of nearly all the best detective stories of fifty years or more.

Here was the force that guided Vidocq and Lecoq, who had brought the villainous Vautrin to his last avatar as one of his own agents, imprisoned Rubempré; the center about which all of du Boisgobey and Gaboriau had revolved, yes, the rival of Arsene Lupin.

Pretty much all fiction, perhaps, but the characters and the deeds of well turned fiction have a way of attaining in the minds of men a more certain immortality and lasting reality than those of mere life.

And, after all, the difficulty of attaining to the sanctum of the Prefect is more a legend than reality. At least so I found it, but it may be that my aforementioned letter had something to do with my success. And I do not mean that a call on the Prefect is a mere matter of stepping into his office and saying: "Good morning." It isn't.

First there is the Prefect's concierge. And he *is* a concierge, a strapping Frenchman, in the smartest blue and gold uniform imaginable, gleamingly spotless of linen. He holds the outer door and takes some satisfying before one is permitted to enter even the building. Once barely inside one is face to face with a no less resplendent personage with gimlet eyes and a sharp-shooting cross-examination.

Storming the Gates

He satisfied, one is given over into the hands of a *huisser* or usher who conducts one, no, not to the Prefect, but to his secretary. This official doesn't X-ray one nor does he take Bertillon measurements of the caller, but he's not at all afraid to be inquisitive.

But finally, in my case at least, all the outer gates are taken and, passing through a noiselessly swinging door, one finds one's self in the Presence.

It was M. Nudian who received me, and it happened that at that time he was just completing his duties as Prefect of Paris in anticipation of becoming Prefect of the Seine, retiring from the former position in favor of M. Morain, the present Prefect.

Courtly and distinguished, with an air of diplomacy and finesse that would have distinguished a perfect ambassador, M. Nudian was anything but "easy copy" in an interview. He was high in praise of the service he commanded, but it seemed that my quest for dramatic exploits was to be in vain.

Then a queer quirk manifested itself. I had asked if the police were ever completely foiled by criminals, expecting some equivalent of that "Oh, we get 'em in the end" of Scotland Yard or American "headquarters." But instead of that came a gurgling laugh.

"Oh, yes, the rogues often fool us," said he, and it was plain to see a manifestation of what has always distinguished the heads of the Paris police from their confreres of other countries—their sense of the humorous, the adept, even when they are at the wrong end of the joke.

And then I found that while it is the most difficult thing in the world to persuade any Paris police official of standing to tell of an incident of which he was the hero, he will talk willingly enough of the exploit of a rogue—that is, an exploit that seems to have something of adroitness and indignation in it.

So, if I couldn't obtain from M. Nudian a tale in which his men had out-Sherlock-Holmesed the prodigy of Baker Street, listen to what I did learn:

It began through an incident of amazing effrontery at the Paris Opera. Certain visiting royalties who must be nameless here were being officially entertained and their great box was the center of all eyes during the intermissions. Also, in one of the stage boxes and also the center of her circle of attention, was a lady of the demimonde who at one time had attained to a stage career not at all through any talent, but on account of her undoubted beauty.

With this young woman, Mlle. M, was her protector, a wealthy South American. She was wearing some wondrous diamond earrings, the parting gift of a lately departed Indian prince who had been one of her most ardent followers.

An Unusual Request

It was during an entre-act that an elderly attendant, duly arrayed in the royal livery of the visiting mighty ones, appeared at the box of Mlle. M, a silver salver in his hand, with the statement that the Grand Duchess of X would be greatly pleased if Mlle. M would permit her to compare one of her marvelous earrings with a jewel she, the grand duchess, was wearing.

The young and dashing Grand Duchess X, who had the reputation of doing the most *outre* things and who had often amazed the court with her actions, was sitting in full view of Mlle. M, surrounded

by brilliantly uniformed officers, laughing and chatting.

The lady of the demimonde highly flattered that her jewels had been noticed by royalty, proceeded at once to grant the request, detaching one of her earrings and placing it on the salver. The attendant bowed ceremoniously and disappeared.

Need it be said that although Mlle. M scanned closely the box of the grand duchess, she waited in vain for any evidence of the reception of her jewel to manifest itself. Suspicion faintly stirred and the South American left the box to make inquiries.

A Clever Foe

Nothing could be learned, but still not at all sure that the duchess had not her jewel the owner refrained from notifying the police till the next morning.

Then, accompanied by her protector, she visited the Prefecture. It was quickly realized by the police that they had for antagonist one with a more than ordinarily alert mind. He had been satisfied with one earring, he had played to perfection a part almost sure to blind Mlle. M's caution by the appeal to her vanity. He had appeared, done his work and disappeared under the eyes of thousands. Before Mlle. M left the Prefecture, it was agreed that the name of the Grand Duchess X must not be mentioned in the case.

She and her protector had taken but a few steps into the courtyard, when she heard her name called and, turning, beheld a young man, hatless and with a pencil behind his ear, hastening toward them.

"The Prefect," he explained, "has sent me to ask you to take back to him, or to send by a person you can trust, the second earring. He wishes to show it to his inspectors and to photograph it to send to the jewelers of Europe and America. It is important that he should have it at once. We can send an officer with you who can bring it back, if you wish."

Mlle. M. saw no reason to reject a proposition that seemed so plausible and natural. Her car was standing outside the Prefecture. She and the South American got in and the officer sat with the chauffeur.

Arrived at her home, the officer took occasion to ask her if she was quite sure of her chauffeur. She was. It was then determined to send the second diamond earring back to the Prefecture by the officer, the photograph was to be quickly taken and the chauffeur would fetch the jewel back. The officer was given the jewel; he, in turn, gave a receipt, in proper police form; the chauffeur drove him away, he saluting ceremoniously.

Two hours later the chauffeur telephoned to ask how much longer he should wait. His mistress told him he might send word inside and ascertain if the jewel would be required overnight. Then, surprisingly to the victims, it was discovered that no one in the Prefecture knew anything about the matter.

"That feat," concluded my informer, "required boldness and imagination coupled with certain other attributes that we could not pin on any known criminal, and, as matters turned out, we were right in refraining from suspicion in certain quarters where, at first, it seemed that it might have been centered.

"For in just a month to a day the jewels were returned to the Prefecture with a polite but naturally anonymous note regretting the trouble to which we had been put. Trouble! It was a pleasure to deal with that one, particularly as no one lost anything in the end.

An Innocent Accomplice

"Who was it? Probably some young dare-devil, perhaps an acquaintance of the charming Mlle. M. It may be he did it on a wager. Well, he won—and the chances are his brains are too good ever to allow him to become a real criminal."

And the young grand duchess never dreamed that she had figured in one of the cleverest robberies of the time!

Impersonation of one sort or another is a favorite motif of the French criminal. Upon impersonation is based the plot of an extraordinary story told me personally by M. Goron, late chief of the secret service of France. Now in his seventies, he is apparently as alert and keen-minded as

ever, and is ever delighted to talk over the exploits which have won for the secret service of his country the praise and wonder of other nations.

Half of one entire wall of his library is taken up with a great iron-barred and nail-studded door upon which hang all manner of strange and intriguing implements and machines. One, I noted, was a cat-o'-nine-tails which he had acquired for some service he had done Scotland Yard—just a little souvenir of the occasion.

Matterings of Scandal

Here, too, are pistols that have figured in famous crimes, daggers that have discharged their lethal office on noted occasions, locks, pieces of rope, irons—all of them having their story and all, perhaps, potent to rouse dreams of old active days in M. Goron's mind when he looks them over one by one.

And the great door—well, once it was the forbidding portal of the old Mazar prison. When that famous building was torn down, the door was given to M. Goron by the French government.

But to M. Goron's story:

Paris was not only astonished, but indignant to learn from the papers one morning that the home of the Marquis Panisse-Passis in the Avenue Marceau, a few steps from the Champs Elysees, one of the richest and most exclusive sections of Paris, had been thoroughly looted the night before; astonished, that criminals should venture into a neighborhood ostensibly so well guarded; indignant because the papers inferred that the police were not altogether guiltless of connivance with the criminals.

There were those who asserted that the officials had even helped the thieves to load their car with the stolen property.

At the time the marquis was spending a few weeks on the Riviera and a concierge and his wife were in sole charge of the handsome residence. At dusk on the night of the robbery the concierge had heard a vehicle stop outside, followed immediately by a peal of the bell.

Opening the door the concierge beheld three gentlemen in frock coats and top hats, the usual apparel of police dignitaries. Apparently in charge was a tall man with a graying beard and with the red rosette of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. It was this man who spoke.

"I am M. Clements, Police Magistrate," said he, "and this gentleman"—turning to one of the group with the utmost dignity—"is the Prefect of Police."

Overwhelmingly impressed, the concierge threw the door wide open, the gentlemen entered, one of them turning immediately to secure the lock. All went into the concierge's loge, his wife retreating to the background at his awestruck whisper: "It's the police."

"We must have light to see what we have to do," said the man who had declared he was the Police Magistrate, and immediately upon its being brought, served upon the still trembling concierge a paper upon which the frightened servant managed to read:

> In the name of the law, order is given, *et cetera, et cetera,* to M.—name illegible—Commissary of the Judicial Delegation, to arrest the Marquis of Panisse-Passis for having forged on the Company of Panama a check for two hundred thousand francs, and his concierge for having collected such check.

"And now," said the Commissary, "show us the way. We are going to begin the investigation here and now."

"But this thing is monstrous," cried the unfortunate concierge. "I have never collected any such check for the marquis."

Defending Her Master

"It matters little whether you admit it or not," declared the Commissary with an air of solemnity. "We have every proof. You are the accomplice of the marquis. We even know that you received thirty thousand francs for your part in the affair. Show us to your master's study."

Here the wife of the concierge spoke up. Something appeared wrong to her. She said afterward in court that the men didn't seem quite genuine. They had an air of being "dressed up" in their impressive apparel.

"We have orders to allow no one in in the absence of the marquis," she said.

"Your orders mean nothing to us," as-

serted the man who wore the ribbon of the Legion. "I am in command from now on."

While the woman still tended to be defiant, the concierge himself was so thoroughly frightened that with "One must obey the police," he was about to lead them to the study, when there came a sharp knock on the door.

"Ah, here are our men," exclaimed the Commissary, and to one of those who had accompanied him: "Brigadier, open the door."

Defying the Facts

Two more men entered, in a few moments the whole party was in the study of the Marquis de Panisse-Passis, and then, for some obscure reason that the police have never been able to fathom, before proceeding with their work of robbery, the pseudo-Commissary, the pseudo-Prefect, one who acted as secretary and the others assisting, proceeded to put the poor concierge through a cross-examination that veritably turned his sparse hair gray.

He protested his innocence only to be told by "M. Clements:"

"The law would not take this step without ample proof of your guilt. The charge against you is serious. I have all the papers with the details. See, here is the date you received the check." He read the date.

"But at that time I was not employed by the marquis," protested the concierge.

"Exactly," replied M. Clements, "and it was as a reward for that service that the marquis took you into his employ. Is that not logical?"

The examination finally came to an end, the concierge was made to sign the process verbal, and then the robbers actually brought in the wife and put her through another long series of questions. Why all this time was wasted by the thieves is more of a puzzle to the police. If it was an irrepressible sense of humor, they certainly went to the most outlandish pains to indulge it.

At length, however, they must have decided it was time to get down to business, for locking the servants in different rooms they began systematically to pillage the mansion. From about seven in the evening till midnight they worked with but one intermission when the pseudo-Prefect descended to the cellar to bring up choice wines with which he regaled "M. Clements" and his subordinates.

Famous masterpieces from the picture gallery were piled ready for transportation, taken from their frames and wrapped in portieres. A collection of autographs of all the kings of France and the principal persons of their reigns, mostly with their likenesses, a collection not equaled in the world, was made into a compact bundle.

A safe was opened with an instrument which astonished the police later and which was the ingenious invention of one of the band. In the boudoir of the marchioness the thieves forced a secret inner closet lined with metal; in that they found the key to a coffer in which her jewels were kept. They seized negotiable bonds to a large amount. They went carefully through the family plate, discarding all pieces but the best and most valuable with the certainty of experts.

And then, as if timed to the minute, just as all was ready, two vans appeared before the house, the goods were hurried into them and they were driven away.

Sealed Lips

"M. Clements" and his "Prefect of Police" still lingered. Before them again were brought the concierge and his wife and asked if they now had anything to confess. They were warned against the certainty of punishment if they pursued a life of crime and "M. Clements" made a moving speech exhorting them to tell the truth this time and start anew on the path of virtue.

Finally, on their reiterating that they had nothing to confess, he regretfully said that they were quite hopeless. They were then bound to chairs, placed back to back, the "Prefect" saying as he left that he would be back in an hour's time to take them to prison. Meanwhile they could be thinking over their sins.

It was not until morning that they succeeded in freeing themselves and informing

the police. Their cup of misery almost ran over when they were at first suspected of being accomplices in the robbery, but that was only a passing phase and they were soon cleared. The marquis and his wife returned from Nice. Paris newspapers boiled with the robbery. It was the culmination of a series and the police felt themselves the center of an indignation that must be appeased at any cost.

In order to warn all dealers in objects of art against dealing in the stolen property complete lists of all the purloined valuables were published in the papers. These lists clearly showed the faultless taste of the robbers. In every case where there had been a choice they had selected the better object and left the inferior. That is, where they did not take both.

A Spectacular Raid

For eight days M. Goron with all the facilities at his command worked on this case before he had a ghost of a clew. Then through one of his "indicateurs" he learned something about a certain Pierre Alleaume, a man of bad record. He soon placed this man, but refrained from arresting him; having him followed instead and learning his associates. In a week more M. Goron was certain of every member of the band, of the parts each one had played in the farcical arrest and examination of the concierge.

When all was ready, seventy or eighty agents of M. Goron acted together and descended upon their respective quarries at the unholy hour of five in the morning. Alleaume, master-thief, was torn from the arms of his beautiful mistress, who fought the police like a tigress till overpowered. Twenty-four persons altogether were arrested, among them a young actor playing a minor part in one of the principal theaters, a part in which he had actually worn several pieces of the marquis's jewelry.

Alleaume himself was a professional thief, well known to the police. He had but shortly before completed a ten-year sentence at Clairvaux. In his handsome apartment most of the jewels and plate from the marquis's mansion were found, also silks, furs and valuable laces robbed from various stores. Confronted with these Alleaume confessed his guilt, but absolutely refused to name his accomplices.

He did, however, regale the police with numerous absurd stories which cost the authorities much time and trouble to investigate fruitlessly. For instance, two men whom he knew by no other names than Julot and Amedee had met him the evening of the robbery and taken him and some of their friends along to make a big haul. He had assumed command and in the end had given them some of the jewels and sent them off.

On the morning of the arrests of the twenty-four one little old man made his way to the roofs, dodged over them and temporarily escaped. He dropped, however, a valise containing fifty-two forks and spoons with the marquis's initials on them, also seventy-two knives with solid gold handles. More than a score of the latter had been broken up for melting.

Other members of the band, despairing through the publicity the case had been given of being able to dispose of pieces of plate, had committed like vandalism, and when the marquis called with the Chief of the Sureté at the place of a receiver of stolen goods at Montrioge he was heartbroken to find in bits the magnificent pieces that had come down to him through generations.

A Nest of Treasure

When the rooms of one "Renard" were examined it was determined that he was in reality the head of the band. It required almost a week for the police to properly docket the contents of this not very large apartment, veritably piled with incriminating matter.

There were the private papers of the marquis, his cross for valor, his medals, unset stones, much of the plate that had not already been found and five valuable paintings. In the mattresses was a large amount of money in gold and in bonds from the Credit Foncier.

Also, and most interesting to the police, there was a complete collection of printed and engraved matter fabricated by "Renard" to further his blackmailing proclivi-

ties. It was he who had taken the part of M. Clements on the occasion of the great robbery, and here ready to hand, were found papers with the heading of the Prefecture of Police, imitations of numerous official stamps and seals, the visiting card of the Prefect of Police, cards of Inspector Jaume of the secret service, various other visiting cards imitated from those of important officials, such as the secretary of the Minister of the Interior, and so forth.

Again, there was a beautiful outfit of burglars' tools and a machine invented by "Renard" to open safes. Experts who examined it pronounced it to be the last word in efficiency. It was this that had been used on the safe of the marquis.

Lastly, there was "Renard's" personal notebook. In it were the names of two hundred persons who were robbery prospects. The name of the marquis was among them. Opposite each name was a list of habits of the prospect, his hours of absence from home, his age, character, mode of living, times when he might be expected to have most money about him, and so forth.

With the revelations that came through the search of "Renard's" rooms, the case, so far as the police were concerned, was pretty well cleared up, but it had its reverberations and echoes throughout Paris for many months. A real Commissary would present himself at a house to make a search only to be eyed coldly by the concierge who would ask: "How do I know you are genuine?"

The Commissary would show his badge.

"Ah, yes, but 'Renard' also had a badge. But you are doing it right. Yes, get angry and argue with me. That's the way 'Renard' did it." Then there would be loud words and on more than one occasion authentic police officers were hustled off to headquarters by uncertain gendarmes.

M. Goron himself, of all others, was once the center of this feeling of distrust. He had gone to interrogate a man who had much cause not to want to see him. He was in a hurry and therefore not at all happy when the concierge of the house he wished to enter began to accuse him of being an imitator of the robbers of the Panisse mansion.

The man M. Gordon was after looked out from a side window, realized, if the concierge didn't, that there wasn't any doubt of this policeman's authenticity.

Meanwhile M. Gordon, just about to reprimand the concierge in no uncertain manner, heard a noise behind and beheld the man he was seeking making off. The officer was after him in a flash, brought him back to the house by the collar—and whether he recognized professional methods or not—this time the concierge made no objection to the passage of the chief of the secret service and his charge.

THE DREAMERS TELL

ABOUT the year 1870 in Somersetshire, a farmer disappeared mysteriously and could not be found. A short time after two different men, each living in different villages some distance apart, had identical dreams on the same night. Each stated the particulars of his dream to the local magistrate, saying that the body of the murdered farmer had been revealed to them and was at the present time at the bottom of a well in the farmyard.

But the men were laughed at because it was known that no well existed on that farmyard. However, a thorough search was made and, to the astonishment of all, an old well was found there hidden under some manure. The body of the farmer was there.

On the principle of the proverb, "He who hides can find," the public suspected the two men themselves, but it was afterward found that the farmer had been murdered by his two nephews on account of a new will in their disfavor. They made a complete confession and were hanged.

It was said that the two dreamers had known nothing about the disappearance of the farmer until the night of their dream. The villagers accepted them thereafter as messengers of God's vengeance.

"Henry!" she screamed. "Henry—his gun—look out!"

HENRY ROOD. SUCCESSOR

By Jack Bechdolt

THERE'S MORE DETECTIVE INSTINCT IN HENRY'S TEMPER THAN IN FIFTEEN COURSES AT THE EUREKA CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

HENRY ROOD paused outside the door of the Argus Detective Agency.

His heart missed a beat or two, then it raced to make up for lost time. His chest expanded as he looked at the ground glass panel.

There it was. The sign painter had just finished the job. The gilt letters leaped out at him:

THE ARGUS AGENCY
Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins
Henry Rood, Successor

It was almost unbelievable, how opportunity had come to Henry Rood. Not two months ago he had been one of many students of the Eureka Correspondence System of Crime Detection, specializing in Finger Printing and Deduction. He was just one of the boys in Milledge, known to everybody as plain Henry.

Not half a dozen of Milledge citizens even knew that he was taking the course, and of that half dozen not one would have believed this of him. But there it was. Look at that door!

"Henry Rood, successor!"

Henry Rood, successor to Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins himself. None other than the Watkins referred to often in the text books issued by the Eureka schools in such wise as "*Cf.* Watkins on the Blankthorne Case," or, "See Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins's report on method of handling the famous Vandergrift jewel case, Ante 241."

Successor to Watkins of whom Prof.

dent Ransom of the Eureka schools declared: "Of all the great detectives of my day I recall none who can compare with my old friend Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins for courage, sagacity, and the acute mentality necessary to the intricate methods of deduction of which he is a past master!"

The day Henry Rood received his diploma from the Eureka schools he bought a ticket for the city. Then he had nearly twelve hundred dollars left, money realized from the sale of the old Rood place on Mill Street.

He had expected to begin in a small way, of course. He knew that even the greatest detectives must begin with little things.

He had not been in the city twenty-four hours. He was sitting in the lobby of the big hotel, wondering rather dazedly just how one started about being a great detective. A hand touched his sleeve and a hearty, somewhat hoarse voice said, "Pardon me, sir, do I address Henry Rood of Milledge?"

The speaker was Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins.

"Saw your name on the register," the great detective explained. "Got the clerk to point you out. You see I've heard about you often—through my old friend Ransom of the Eureka schools. Felt I had to know you at any cost. Ransom says to me, 'George, get in touch with a young fellow named Henry Rood. Watch Henry Rood. Keep your eye on that youngster!' His very words, I assure you.

"'Henry Rood's one of the most promising men we ever enrolled at old Eureka,' Ransom's words to me, Mr. Rood. I wouldn't try to kid you. 'Henry Rood will go far and make us old timers take notice,' Ransom says. 'His thesis on deduction alone proves that.' Have a good cigar, Mr. Rood!"

Henry accepted the cigar, flushed, a little awed, almost incredulous that he heard Watkins aright.

The great detective, the old lion himself, was not only affable he was openly admiring him, Henry Rood!

Henry knew that he had studied hard to finish the courses at Eureka, but that he had made for himself anything of a reputation never dawned on him, despite the warm encouragement that institution had given him.

After that meeting things happened with a rapidity only equaled in some of Henry's happy dreams. He dined with Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins. They discussed the detection of crime from many angles. And presently it came out in a burst of confidence that Geo. Tyler Watkins was looking for a resident manager of the local branch of his famous Argus Agency—and Henry Rood was the man to whom he was offering that golden opportunity!

Not only that, but Geo. Tyler Watkins felt that he was getting old. The dean of the profession looked old, Henry thought, and worn a little shabby. In fact Watkins contemplated retiring one of these days and he indicated that it was quite possible a live young man like Henry Rood might well step into his place.

When Geo. Tyler Watkins mentioned offhand that, of course, it would be necessary for a resident manager to invest a little money in the business—just as a guarantee of good faith—Henry's only worry was that his little capital would never interest the great detective. But even that was arranged.

Such a thing was not usual, Watkins, said, but in the case of Henry Rood he would make an exception and for merely a thousand dollars cash Henry might purchase the local agency.

II

HENRY ROOD standing outside the door that bore his name as successor to Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins in new gilt letters, was twenty-two years old. He was big all over, yet did not look his age because his face was slightly round and in spite of all his efforts to assume a keen, deep look just a trifle innocent and bland.

He wore a new blue suit which he had bought from a Chicago mail order house just before he left Milledge. He wore a black velour hat which was a size small for his head because the mail order house had misunderstood his handwriting. He wore new yellow shoes which pinched his feet.

Henry felt of the knot in his tie nervously and adjusted the velour hat before he opened the door. He was a little afraid to open the door.

In the outer or general office of the Argus Agency which was a little cubicle adjoining the even smaller cubicle that was the private office, sat a young woman with a pert face and short black hair. Though she looked very nice in every way she also looked very smart and citified and sophisticated—almost like an actress, Henry thought. And when her eyes turned on him, which they had frequently the day before when he was introduced to Mildred Canby, Watkins's secretary, Henry almost feared she was inwardly laughing at him.

Maybe his clothes weren't just right?

Henry got out a pocket mirror and studied his reflection anxiously. He didn't like his tie. Somehow that tie didn't quite live up to Henry Rood, Successor.

Henry turned and left the vicinity of the Argus Agency rapidly. He went down to the street and to the Acme store opposite.

The Acme store displayed some very smart haberdashery. Henry hurried in.

The small chain store was quiet and empty of customers. A young man came from the rear quickly, a sleek, black-haired young man with nervous black eyes. "Yes, sir?" he inquired briskly.

"One of those ties—and I'll wear it," said Henry, indicating his choice. He gave the young man a ten-dollar bill. While the young man jingled the cash register he changed to his new tie and approved of his reflection in one of the store's numerous mirrors. He pocketed the change and hurried back to the Argus Agency.

Mildred Canby's eyes were turned on Henry when he opened the door.

The concealed smile peeped out at him.

Henry felt for his tie and blushed as he said good morning.

He tried to look stern and mysterious, as a detective should, but he caught sight of his face in the office mirror and was chagrined to see how round and innocent it looked.

Henry entered the private office hurriedly.

Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins greeted him with a hearty good morning.

Watkins looked very much like the half tone portrait of himself published in one of the lesson books of the Eureka Correspondence System, except that he looked older, fatter and somehow shabbier. A round, soft looking man of fifty with a curiously red face, bristling white mustache, a mane of white hair that was leonine, a husky voice, and a tremulous hand. His frock coat would have been more imposing if it were not a little untidy.

Capt. Geo. Tyler Watkins rose and seized Henry's hand in a firm, enthusiastic grip, pumping it up and down while he beamed on him like a benevolent, white-haired lion.

"Rood, I've got good news for you—the best of news. Your first day—luckiest stroke in the world—wonderful opportunity—the Acme stores bandit case—"

"The what?" Henry gasped.

"Look, look here. Read that. There you are!"

Watkins pressed into Henry's hand a circular issued by the Acme chain stores corporation, offering two thousand dollars' reward for the capture of two men who had held up ten of their stores within two weeks and looted the safes.

"Rood, my dear boy, I'm going to give you that case. Yes—I'm not kidding you—take it. It's yours—"

"What for?" Henry said faintly.

"What for! To solve, of course! Go get 'em, boy! Track 'em down, slip the bracelets on 'em, turn 'em over to the police—"

"Who, these chain store bandits—"

"Of course!" Watkins's face changed swiftly to a look of deep concern and pain. "Rood! Don't tell me you're not grateful! Here I hand you two thousand dollars the first day you come in here—hand it to you on a silver platter—"

"I am grateful," said Henry doubtfully. "Oh, yes, yes, indeed, captain, I am grateful, only—"

"Of course you are," Watkins agreed heartily. "I don't often make mistakes in reading a man's character. There's nothing of the viper about you, Rood. No, thank Heaven—"

"No, sir," Henry agreed, still bewildered, "I'm sure there isn't, captain—"

"But you're a little floored, eh? I sprang it on you too quickly? There, there, boy—just my way, that's all. I said to myself, when that circular came in, here's where I start Henry Rood on his career. His first case—what a chance! I'll let him capture these men—take the reward—get his picture in all the papers." Watkins added shrewdly, "And of course, you have the benefit of my advice and experience. I'll work with you, show you the ropes, everything—"

"Oh, oh, fine!" Henry beamed suddenly and returned Watkins's warm handclasp. "Why, that's awfully good of you—"

"Well, I'm that way," Watkins admitted with due modesty. "When I like a man, I'm *for* him! Yes, sir! Now Rood, you are going out to get these men and solve that Acme stores mystery single handed. I've got all the fame I need. I want you to have some. When we make this arrest—"

As if this were a stage cue, Mildred Canby knocked and opened the private office door. She handed Watkins a yellow telegraph envelope.

Watkins tore open the envelope and read. His face changed to a look of deep annoyance. "Tut, tut, this is awkward—bad, bad! Rood, look here."

Henry read the telegram:

> Cleveland needs you at once. Famous Moffat jewel case ready for pinch. Urgent. Take first train. PARKINSON.

"Parkinson's my Cleveland manager," Watkins explained hurriedly. "I'll have to go." As he spoke the great man took the telegram from Henry so quickly that Henry never saw that the message was typed on a telegraph sending blank which anybody may secure from any telegraph office.

"Miss Canby, next train for Cleveland leaves when?" Geo. Tyler Watkins panted.

"Ten ten," said Mildred. "You can just make it."

Watkins seized his hat. He picked up a small traveling bag which stood ready packed beside his desk.

"But—" Henry gasped, "When will you be back?"

"Maybe next month—maybe next year—all depends—"

"Yes, say, but look here! You were going to introduce me—show me all the ropes—you said—"

"Too bad, Rood. Have to do the best you can—"

"But this bandit case—"

"Yes, yes, you handle that case, Rood. Yes, indeed! Remember I rely upon you—"

Henry stammered frantically, "But you were going to tell me—help me—"

"Duty, Rood. My duty to my public!" Geo. Tyler Watkins drew himself up, his hand thrust within the fold of his frock coat. He looked wonderful.

"Like a soldier, Rood. Obey orders. No questions. That's a detective's life, always under orders." Watkins grasped Henry's hand suddenly and pumped it up and down with hearty good will.

"Go to it, my boy. Hang on to that case like grim death. The old fighting spirit, eh? Never say die! Ah, I can see by your eye you mean to track those clever devils to earth. Good boy, I rely upon you, Rood—absolutely—for the honor of the Argus Agency. God bless you, boy!"

A final pump of Henry's hand and Watkins and his bag actually were gone.

III

MILDRED CANBY went slowly into the outer office, her eyebrows elevated into two thin-line question marks.

She lingered at the keys of her typewriter, idly.

"There's something funny about that bird Watkins. I always knew it!" she declared softly. Her glance turned on the door of the private office.

"The poor simp!" she said, apostrophizing Henry Rood.

They certainly did things fast in the detective business!

Here the ink was scarcely dry on the bill of sale which endowed him with the Argus Agency and Henry Rood was in complete charge and plunged into the midst of his first great case!

Henry sat down at Geo. Tyler Watkins's desk, feeling rather giddy. He felt obliged to take his head between his hands to be sure it was still attached to the end of his spinal cord. He needed a quiet moment in which to think.

There was a push button on the desk. It sounded a buzzer which summoned Mildred Canby. After a mental struggle due to his secret fear of the young woman, Henry touched the button and cringed to hear the loud, angry buzz it produced. Mildred dipped her pert nose in a powder puff and appeared.

"Miss Canby," Henry said, trying to make his round face stern, "what other important cases have we on hand beside this Acme bandit business?"

Mildred tossed her head. "Haven't any—"

"Nothing that needs immediate attention?"

"Nothing that needs any attention so far as I know—"

"We have a file of these Acme robberies?"

"Sure. Watkins had me cut out a lot of newspaper clippings about them—"

Henry looked serious. "*Captain* Watkins, Miss Canby," he corrected. Discipline must be maintained.

Mildred sniffed audibly. "Sure, *captain*, if you like it better—"

"Well—let me see. Rather fortunate there's nothing else pressing. I think we'll concentrate on the Acme bandits. Ah—just clear away any other routine—clear the decks for this case, Miss Canby—"

"There's nothing to clear," Mildred insisted pointedly. She seemed almost unpleasant about her insistence.

"Very well. Let me have the Acme file."

Mildred paused outside the door.

"Honest, I ought to tell him!" she sighed. "He's got to know— But I just haven't got the heart, the poor sap!"

The Acme robberies baffled police and public. Ten daring daylight robberies of various units of the chain stores system, all much alike in their salient features. Two men seemed responsible for all of the thefts. They came in as customers, diverted the attention of clerks, held them up with pistols, tied them, robbed the safe or till or whatever new hiding place had been found for the day's receipts, and vanished again into the streets.

The robberies were accomplished quickly and quietly and during hours when the chain stores were empty of customers. Descriptions furnished by frightened clerks were of little avail. Nobody could guess where the next attack would come. The Acme corporation was growing frantic and the local papers bitter in their opinion of the mentality of the public's guardians.

Watkins was right. This was a wonderful opportunity for Henry Rood. If he caught those bandits he would be richer by two thousand dollars and famous as well. All he had to do was catch the bandits!

Conscious of the tremendous responsibility imposed on him by Geo. Tyler Watkins, Henry studied the reports until his head ached, trying vainly to apply to the facts any of the theories taught by the Eureka Correspondence System of Crime Detection.

With an aching head and a leaden heart he went out to a late lunch and learned from a newspaper extra that the daring Acme bandits had added an eleventh store to their list of victims, even as he pondered.

There was a man waiting for Henry in the Argus office. His heart warmed at sight of him, expecting a client. But it was only the man with the telephone bill. Henry paid the bill.

A letter lay on his desk. It was the electric light bill, nothing more.

Mildred followed him into the private office. She looked determined.

"Mr. Rood," she said, "I'll be leaving you to-night—"

"Oh, say—look here—you can't do that—"

"And why not?"

"Right the first day I take hold here! Right in the middle of my first important case? Who's going to look after business?"

"There isn't any business. There never was, since I've been here—"

"Well, there's this Acme case for one thing—"

"The Acme bandits! You don't mean to

tell me you actually expect to catch them—"

"Yes, I do," Henry insisted earnestly. "Of course, I haven't got my clews, yet. And I've got to have my clews to get started. But I'm a pretty fast worker when I get my clews—"

"Well, you don't need me. Besides, I'll cost you twenty-five dollars a week—that's my salary. And the agency already owes me two weeks' back pay—"

"Oh, sure, that's all right!" Henry promptly found the money in his thin bill fold and handed it to her without brooking further comment.

"But this is out of your own pocket," she protested.

"Oh, I'll arrange that with Captain Watkins—"

"Captain Watkins! You'll never see that old crook again. Don't you even know that?"

While Henry gaped Mildred went on vehemently, "I felt he was a fake from the first. He never had any detective business. All he did was rent an office and hire me. That was only a month ago. Then he looked for somebody to sell it to. If you ask me, I think it's a game of this particular correspondence school you studied detecting at—a post graduate course. Here, I can't take your money!"

With a quick gesture, half peremptory, half pitying she forced the money back into Henry's hand. While he sat stupefied she poured out her wealth of suspicions of Geo. Tyler Watkins, including the matter of the fraud telegram.

IV

"GET wise!" she cried. "Don't you understand what happened to you? Watkins is nothing but an old bum and this detective business he sold you isn't any business at all. You'd better know it now than later—you were stung!"

Henry took it very quietly, so quietly that Mildred began to feel uneasy about him. He repeated one word, "Stung." He added finally, "Say, maybe you're right about that, but—look here—if Watkins is a fake how about the Eureka schools?"

"The Eureka schools! If you ask me, it sounds like a lot of apple sauce."

Henry pondered this.

"Well," he said at last, looking around him for consolation, "I've still got a detective agency—and everything—"

Before Mildred could answer the outer door opened. She slipped out and returned to announce, "Mr. Rogers to see you, Mr. Rood."

Henry straightened in his chair, seized pen and ink and paper and began to write industriously. "Show Mr. Rogers in, Miss Canby."

Mr. Rogers came in, a saturnine man with a bright, alert eye.

"Sit down, Mr. Rogers," Henry nodded, intent on being busy. He wrote some more. Then, "You are in need of a detective, Mr. Rogers?"

Mr. Rogers's smile was grim and foreboding. "I'm in need of a detective who can find the cash to pay the installment on this office furniture," he declared. "Otherwise, it goes back to the Busy Bee to-night. The amount is fifty dollars and we ain't going to wait any longer."

Henry had less than seventy dollars all told. Fifty of that belonged to Mildred, her wages. He said to Mr. Rogers, sternly, "I'm glad you called. Since taking over this agency I am not pleased with this office furniture. Send your men to-night."

"I sure will!" Mr. Rogers promised and took his departure, encountering another caller as he went out.

"Mr. Phelps to see Mr. Rood," Mildred announced.

"It's about the rent," said Mr. Phelps as firmly as Mr. Rogers had just spoken. "There's a month due and unless we get it—"

"How much, Mr. Phelps?"

"Seventy-five dollars. A check will do if you haven't cash—"

"You may advertise this office for rent in the morning paper," Henry interrupted. "It does not suit the Argus Agency."

Mildred and Henry stood in the street, before the recent home of the Argus

Agency. Mr. Rogers's men had moved out the furniture. The agent of the building had the keys. Already a painter was at work with a chisel blade, scraping the golden legend off the door, including the name of Henry Rood, Successor.

Henry drew a deep breath and squared his shoulders. "Now that the decks are clear I'll take up that Acme bandit case," he announced quietly.

Mildred made a little choking noise, half exasperated, half admiring.

During this last hour Henry had puzzled her more and more. He was so quiet. And if a round, bland and juvenile face can be said to look stern and stubborn without losing its roundness and boyishness, Henry's face began to look that way.

"Well, you poor fish!" Mildred exclaimed, moved deeply.

"Yes, I'll need that two thousand dollars to rent a proper office and get new furniture for the agency. And speaking of that, you must take the fifty dollars due you—"

"Certainly not—" Mildred began angrily.

Henry's lips pressed into a firm line and his mild eyes grew cold. "Mildred," he said ominously, "I've been through a pretty hard day and I'm beginning to get mad. Take this money!"

Mildred found her hand extended meekly. Something about Henry scared her.

Henry started to count bills. He gasped and declared, "Well, I'll be darned!"

"What's the matter?"

"I'm five dollars short—and by thunder, I know why! I was short changed—this morning—in that Acme store across the street. I bought a tie and gave the clerk a ten dollar note. He gave me change for a five, and that's all!"

Henry's jaw had dropped.

It snapped shut suddenly and a blazing red flooded his face.

"Oh, that's a shame," Mildred sympathized hastily.

"No, it isn't," Henry's voice was bitter. "I deserve it, anybody that would let a crook like Watkins get away with such a raw deal. Buncoed and then short changed. A fine start I made." Henry's groan ended there. A new light came into his eye. "Now I am mad," he announced and started across the busy street, purpose showing in his every move and determination written on his face.

Mildred ran after him. "Where are you going?"

"To get my money. I'd know that clerk in a million. He'd better square himself quick. I tell you I can be pushed just so far—"

Henry had his hand on the door of the Acme store. It was locked. Vigorous shaking, not even a kick on the panel helped matters.

"I'll go to the main office," Henry muttered. "They'll give me my money or something's going to happen. There's a limit to the things I'll stand."

"Well, I'll say good night," Mildred announced, touching his sleeve to attract attention. "Here's my address. Be sure and let me know how you come out—"

V

"OH, say!" Henry was jarred out of his thoughts of vengeance. "Say, I've got to keep in touch with you. I—I'll need you pretty soon and—anyhow—"

"Yes, of course. I'd be glad to have you call even if it's not on business," Mildred agreed. They lingered at the corner, saying this.

"Anyhow, you've been mighty decent." Henry was smiling wistfully. A man shoved him impatiently as he brushed by.

Henry turned with ominous calm. "Be careful who you're shoving, you—"

The passer-by turned to snap back, "Who says so?"

Henry had started to retort in kind. Instead he uttered a shout and leaping forward caught the stranger and halted him. "You, is it? I'll trouble you for the five dollar bill you short changed me this morning—"

"You're crazy!" The sleek, black-haired tie salesman struggled under Henry's grip. "I don't know anything about any five dollar bill—"

"Oh, yes, you do! You sold me a tie,

this morning in the Acme store—and short changed me—"

"I never was in an Acme store in my life. I tell you this guy's gone cookoo!"

The captive panted this last at a gathering knot of curious passers.

"Friend," Henry said grimly, "don't trifle with me, I'm mad—"

He said no more.

The captive struck and he swung a wicked right.

Mildred screamed. Henry Rood lay on his back on the pavement. The tie salesman was flying up the street.

Henry didn't lie on his back any longer than it needed to bounce him upright again, and he bounced like a new rubber ball.

He didn't stop to announce that he was mad, but the glimpse of his face Mildred caught as he raced after the tie salesman, told her that he was indeed.

The black-haired man was a good runner but Henry had overtaken him in less than a minute. Henry's long arm reached out and encircled his neck. Henry's other hand swung on his face.

The man went down and Henry bestrode him.

"Give me my five dollars, you crook—"

The prostrate man wriggled like a snake. His boot toe caught Henry in the ribs.

Henry fell upon him and they rolled in the dirt.

The crowd had pursued them and ringed them in, Mildred in the front row.

"Henry!" she screamed. "Henry—his gun—look out—"

A sharp "Ahhh!" from the spectators and the circle broke at the flash of a nickeled pistol.

The pistol barked, but did not bite.

Henry's brown fingers clamped over the wrist of the hand that held the weapon. fingers spread and the pistol dropped. Henry kicked it aside and found time simultaneously to ward a blow and land one of his own.

His victim quieted suddenly. Henry leaped upright and jerked the man to his feet.

"Now what's all this?" demanded a new voice and a heavy hand spun him about to face a blue coat and brass buttons.

"Look out—he's loose!" Henry shouted, wrenching free in time to clamp five fingers in the fugitive's collar. He whirled his man about and confronted the patrolman.

"This man short changed me five dollars in the Acme chain store this morning. I want my money," Henry declared.

"It's a lie, I never was in an Acme store in my life!" the prisoner cried shrilly, wrenching violently under the restraining hand.

"He was," said Henry grimly. "He sold me a tie, this one I've got on," indicating his tie he was astonished to find it dangling under one ear. "It was that Acme store right down in the next block—"

"Oho!" The patrolman's interest heightened suddenly. "He sold you a tie—in the Acme store? At what time—"

"Ten minutes of ten. I know exactly—"

"He's crazy!" the prisoner screamed.

"He short changed me," Henry insisted. "I'd know him in a million."

"The Acme store, at ten minutes of ten!" said the patrolman and turned on Henry's captive with sudden decision. "Stick out your hands—no funny business now!"

Steel handcuffs materialized about the captive's wrists. "You come along, too," the patrolman added to Henry. "Sold you a tie in that Acme store did he—at ten to ten? Well, it was just a quarter of ten when two crooks tied both the clerks in that store and locked them in the back room, while they frisked the safe. If he was there—"

Henry Rood thought faster than he had ever thought before. He said coolly, "Certainly, I knew that all the time. This is one of the men I'm looking for. I'll have his pal for you before long. He was robbing the store when I came in and tried to fool me by posing as a clerk. Why, I've been working on that case all day to get the two thousand dollars reward—"

"Of course he has!" The corroboration came promptly from Mildred Canby. "Officer," she said, "this is Henry Rood, head of the Argus Detective Agency."

"Never heard of it," the patrolman sniffed suspiciously.

"Well, you're going to, from now on," Henry Rood promised.

By the light of the match he fished out a gold watch and chain

MR. HYDE OF MONTCLAIR

By S. A. McWilliams

HOW A HIGHLY RESPECTED CONTRACTOR FOLLOWED HIS CRIMINAL "HOBBY" IN A FASHIONABLE RESIDENTIAL TOWN

A Story of Fact

STANDING out like pioneers in a new field are the names of those few criminals who have successfully led a double life and preyed on their fellow men while they were respected members of the community in which they lived. Always sooner or later the grim fate that pursues the criminal has led to their discovery and undoing, but even then some of them appear to have been endowed with a quality that has mocked at their captors and made them scorn the simple humans they had victimized.

Out of the past their names come, surrounded with a glamour and strange tales that outrival anything that has been penned in the world of fiction. At times they seem to have borne a charmed life, coming and going as they pleased like shadows in the night, evading the traps that were set for them and leaving no clews for their victims to follow.

Whole towns were terrorized by their depredations. The best efforts of police officials were made to seem futile by their cunning, until some simple unforeseen incident accomplished what the police had failed to do and uncovered a leading member of the community as a thief.

Such was the career of James G. Tuthill, a thief by night and a highly respected building contractor by day in the fashionable town of Montclair, New Jersey. Slipping quietly out of the night, he came and

went, robbing his neighbors at will. By day he mingled with the people he had robbed and sympathized with them even while he was marking down new victims for his visits.

On December 17, 1889, the home of T. H. Bouden, a wealthy resident of Montclair and a member of the New York Stock Exchange, was entered between six and seven o'clock in the evening. Watches, diamond rings, money and other jewelry amounting to one thousand dollars were stolen. The Bouden house was built of stone and stood on a high piece of ground in the most fashionable part of the town. The thief had entered by climbing to a small porch on the second story of the house, where a window had been left unlocked.

The Thoughtful Mr. Tuthill

Bureau drawers and wardrobes were ransacked by the thief in his search and their contents strewn on the floor. Rich dresses and costly wearing apparel were trampled under foot and ruined. The money and jewelry were taken from a bureau in the room of Mr. Bouden, who was away from home on a business trip. None of the family or servants saw or heard the thief, and he left no clew to his identity behind him.

The little town was in an uproar. The burglary was the culmination of a series of mysterious raids that had been going on for almost two years. Time after time traps had been set, but the unknown burglar always had evaded them and escaped. Several weeks before, the home of Thomas Jefferson, son of Joseph Jefferson, the actor, had been entered. It was only a few doors away on Hawthorne Place. Verandas extended across the house, the tops of which were on a level with the second story windows.

About ten o'clock in the evening some friends who had been calling on the Jeffersons got up to go. They were accompanied to the door by Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson. As they came out on the porch a man called to them from the sidewalk and ran up the steps. It was Tuthill.

"There must be some one in your house, Mr. Jefferson," he exclaimed, pointing to a ladder which was placed against the top of the veranda. "When I came by a half hour ago that ladder was not there. Call the police quick. We may be able to catch him."

Scattering around the house the group stood on guard until the police arrived. But no one was found in the house. An investigation showed quantities of fresh mud on the ladder rungs and an open window above the porch roof, but the burglar had vanished. To Tuthill's great surprise, he found that the ladder had been taken from a house which his men were building near by.

Finally after a search had failed to reveal any clew to the marauder, Tuthill departed, followed by the thanks of the Jeffersons and policemen. No one for a moment had thought of suspecting the quiet, unassuming building contractor, and as he hurried along the street toward his home, he chuckled to himself. Interrupted by the sound of the visitors leaving when he was climbing into the second story window, he had not had time to escape. His quick wit and iron nerves had enabled him successfully to divert suspicion from himself.

This narrow escape was merely an incident in the amazing career of crime which he was leading at the same time he was carrying on a legitimate business in the town. Threatened constantly with capture or death at the hands of the people he was robbing, he seemed to derive his greatest pleasure in matching wits with his victims and escaping from the dangerous situations in which he constantly found himself as he boldly went about his thieving.

The Lure of Instinct

Indeed the thrill and constant danger involved may have been the real cause for his double life, for Tuthill was making a comfortable living from his business as a building contractor. Several years earlier he had drifted into Montclair and apprenticed himself to a boss stone mason, George Booth. He learned the trade easily and boarded at Booth's house all the time of his apprenticeship. Two fellow apprentices boarded there, too.

They noticed that he had a great fondness for reading detective stories in yellow and paper covered books. He never said much about his literary tastes, but on the rare occasions when he did unburden himself, he told of his great admiration for the "second story men" of whom he had read. The exploits of these acrobatic criminals whose specialty it was to shin up veranda sides, water pipes, awning posts and convenient ladders and steal valuable property while the inhabitants of the house were below in the dining room, seemed to have a fascination for the young stone mason.

Just One of the Boys

When he had learned the trade, he married a girl in the town and started in business for himself. Two years before he had been married to a woman in Port Jervis, New York, but when he found she had two other husbands still living, he fled from her. As a stone mason and building contractor Tuthill was a success. His manners were pleasant and his prices reasonable. Everybody in the building trade liked him and he always kept his contracts. The skill with which he did his stone masonry was equaled only by that which he displayed as a burglar.

Among the men of the town Tuthill was known as a good sport. He played a fairly good game of poker and "went around with the boys" in a mild way. It was in this connection that he had first attracted attention in the town. Three strangers dropped into Empire Hose Company No. 2 one night and sat in a poker game. Tuthill, a member of the company, was one of the players.

The three strangers won consistently—so consistently that Tuthill became suspicious and began watching them. In a few minutes he detected one of them cheating and things began to happen. Tuthill was short and he weighed only one hundred and fifty pounds, but when he went into action he seemed much bigger. A fellow fireman told with awe of the fight the next day. "Two of them were bigger than he was, but he lammed all three of them so quick that they didn't know a fight was going on until it was over," he said.

But these nights out were few and Tuthill spent the greater part of his time building up his business. He had the reputation of being a thrifty, industrious citizen. If any one had suggested that he was the thief who had been terrorizing the town, the idea would have been ridiculed. Jim Tuthill's honesty was too well known for any one to imagine he knew anything about the mysterious thief.

The discovery of the robbery of the Bouden home reduced the wealthy residents of Montclair almost to a state of siege. Special watchmen were posted at night and every one was on the *qui vive* at all times. For the ghostly thief was only one of the things that were troubling the townsmen. A "Jack the Peeper" was abroad.

For several months women living on Fullerton, Mountain, and other fashionable avenues had been horrified at various times to find a man silently watching them about bedtime from the roofs of their verandas. Again and again the midnight visitor had been chased down the street by angry husbands and brothers bearing shotguns, but never had they succeeded in capturing him.

Always working alone and with the odds thus doubled against him, Tuthill then began a series of exploits which caused him later to be termed the smartest thief that ever visited New Jersey. The ingenuity and resourcefulness he displayed as he matched wits with his neighbors in the ensuing months was matched only by the cool daring and audacity of his acts.

Not only did he continue his thefts, but he even sold his stolen watches and rings to men around Montclair. A few days after the Bouden robbery, a constable proudly showed Justice of the Peace Morris a watch he had bought from Tuthill.

A Surprise For the Thief

"He let me have it cheap because it was second hand," the constable explained. "Second hand" the watch certainly was, but Tuthill's nerve was not. And neither the confiding constable or the justice of the peace knew until months afterward that they held in their hands the key to the robberies which were still going on.

The next place to be "visited" was the

home of Henry Horton, a New York banker, who lived next door to the Jeffersons. Mrs. Horton was thrown almost into convulsions one night by discovering a man trying to get in through the second story window. She had just returned from the city on a midnight train. After entering the house she went to close the front blinds and saw a man climbing up the porch post. Running upstairs she told her husband what she had seen and was approaching the front window to watch the nocturnal visitor, when she met him face to face.

The Evidence of Busy Nights

Her screams alarmed the servants. The coachman seized his pistol and chased the man through the streets of the town, but failed to catch him. The description which she furnished to the police failed to fit any one they suspected and again their search was futile.

While they were still working on this case the home of Benjamin Strong was visited. One night while the family were still in the parlor, footsteps were heard on the porch. A son who was studying in a room on the second floor also heard a peculiar sound on the top of the porch, as though the buttons on a man's coat were scraping the tin roof as he crawled along on his stomach.

Going to the window the boy raised it. As he did, the man jumped to the ground and escaped. Two other times the marauder returned, but was unable to gain an entrance because things were securely locked.

His next visit was more successful. The home of Henry A. Dykes was rifled and seven hundred dollars taken. As usual there was no clew to be found and the police were baffled in their search. It seemed almost as if the unknown burglar was playing with them at times and laughing to himself at their bewilderment. For in less than a week a pocketbook containing six hundred and forty-two dollars was taken from the home of William Atkins of Cedar Avenue, and this theft occurred in broad daylight.

The Atkinses had just moved into the house that day. Mr. Atkins had brought out the money from New York for his wife, who was going to buy a horse and carriage the next day. When he arrived at the house that afternoon he counted the money out and handed it to his wife. The blinds had not been hung in the house yet and another house was being built beside it. Tuthill had charge of the job. It was "knocking off" time and his men were going home, but Tuthill lingered.

He saw Mrs. Atkins put the money in a pocketbook and place it under a lamp before she went out to the dining room for supper. Very thoughtfully Tuthill placed one of his empty lime barrels beside the house, climbed in the window and helped himself. When the Atkinses returned from the dining room the pocketbook containing the money was gone. Muddy footprints on the floor led to the window, but there the trail ended.

His carpenters, masons and laborers were all agog the next day over the latest mysterious robbery. Tuthill was the only one who didn't bother his mind about it. He simply said: "It's too bad," and went calmly about his work. The many wild surmises and tales that the workmen told about the unknown burglar as they worked, appealed to his sense of humor, and more than once he laughed silently to himself.

But his greatest merriment came when he read in the local and New York papers of the visits of that other midnight prowler, "Jack the Peeper." As befitted an honest, hard working boss mason, Tuthill's usual hour for retiring was about nine o'clock. Whenever he took his walks for the benefit of his pocket, he waited until a couple of hours after he thought it was right for people to go to bed.

What He Was Looking For

So it came about that a dozen of the charming young women who lived in the fashionable parts of the town were frightened by discovering a man watching them from the porch roof outside their windows. Everyone thought it was some crank who wanted only to annoy beautiful women. But the "Jack the Peeper" was really the ingenious Mr. Tuthill watching where the ladies put their jewels, hiding his eyes while

they were actually disrobing, and shocked at nothing but the fact that the girls sat up so late at night.

Tuthill's Fatal Visit

It took the Montclair citizens a number of months to connect the mysterious disappearance of their jewels with the visits of "Jack the Peeper," and in the meantime the thefts continued. A second call at the Dykes home netted one thousand five hundred dollars. The home of John Daniels on Orange Avenue was entered and a watch and chain valued at one hundred and fifty dollars was stolen. S. B. Steward of Walnut Street had jewels and watches taken.

No precautions seemed able to prevent the unknown burglar from carrying out his raids. No chance was too great for him to take, as the people searched in vain for a man of the type they imagined the thief must be.

If Alexander Robertson had not moved from Brooklyn to Montclair on St. Patrick's Day, in 1890, the chances are that Tuthill might have continued his peeping and purloining indefinitely.

Robertson had leased a house on Grove Avenue, but it was not quite ready for occupancy. He took a room for the night at the home of George Booth. Tuthill had picked that evening for a quiet call on his former employer. Robertson was awakened in the night by a bright light flashing in his eyes. He felt as if he had a nightmare.

In the middle of the room stood a tall man with a flaring match in his fingers. He was looking around, and just as the match burned out he began to move toward a chair on which lay Mr. Robertson's trousers. He struck another match and by its light fished out a gold watch and chain worth seventy-five dollars.

Robertson lay perfectly still while the stranger helped himself. He had a good look at the man's face by the match light and scanned it closely. The match burned out. The stranger glided noiselessly across the room, slipped out the window and disappeared into the night.

As the man's head dropped below the window sill Robertson came to life and began to shout for help. By the bright starlight he saw the prowler pick up a pair of shoes on the lawn and run down Grove Avenue. All the household woke up, looked around for the thief awhile, and then, convinced that it was of no use to search, went peacefully back to bed.

Later the same night, John Manuel, who lived next door, came home and was surprised to see a man on his lawn. The fellow walked softly up the steps to the porch and began to climb one of the posts. Manuel, without saying a word, ran across the lawn and jerked at the climber's leg. The man's hold was lost and the two came down in a heap on the grass.

Several times Manuel almost had his assailant pinned down, but on each occasion the porch climber twisted free. Suddenly Manuel was back-heeled and hurled to the ground. By the time he had regained his feet the stranger had disappeared. After he had rested awhile and got his breath, he went indoors and told his wife of the thief he hadn't caught.

"If it wasn't Jim Tuthill," said he, "then I'm a Dutchman, which I'm not." Still, he did not complain to the police, because he had not lost anything and he did not care to stir up trouble for an old neighbor.

A Plan to Trap Him

Alexander Robertson called on Justice of the Peace Morris the next morning and told of his loss. He described the man minutely and declared he would recognize him anywhere, because he had memorized his face by the light of the matches. Judge Morris suspected a man other than Tuthill and had his whereabouts on St. Patrick's night investigated. The suspect was able to prove an alibi. Some one suggested that Tuthill fitted the description perfectly.

The judge was in a pickle. To arrest a man of Tuthill's good standing in the community and find, as most likely would be the case, that he was innocent, would be dangerous. Finally a builder who had an office near the railroad station was induced to invite Tuthill to come around at nine o'clock the next morning and make estimates on foundations for some houses.

Robertson was to stand in the window of a coal office near by and watch Tuthill when he passed. A policeman was to be on hand and arrest Tuthill, if Robertson identified him as the thief.

His Iron Nerve Still Useful

True to his reputation as a thrifty, punctual citizen, Tuthill came along at eight thirty the next morning. Robertson was standing at the window of the coal office, but the policeman had not arrived. As soon as he saw Tuthill, Robertson began jumping excitedly around and exclaimed:

"That's the man who stole my watch and chain."

Half a dozen men in the coal office who knew Tuthill, laughed at Robertson's actions and words. But one of them called Tuthill in. Tuthill walked calmly through the door, nodded to his acquaintances and turned to face his accuser.

Not for a moment then or later did the master criminal show the slightest hesitancy or fear in his manner. The iron nerve and cool wit which had enabled this man to carry out his robberies so successfully in the face of all the precautions of the townspeople and the police, were never more strikingly exhibited than when he was brought to bay.

"What have you done with my watch and chain?" demanded Robertson.

"What the devil is the matter with you? I don't know you," Tuthill retorted angrily.

Robertson was badly rattled. He didn't think it would be wise to have trouble with a man who could walk up and down the side of a house the way this fellow did. Nevertheless, his belief that he had found the thief who had stolen his watch was unshaken. Tuthill left and walked on to the builder's office to keep his appointment.

His accuser ran up the street and after some search found a constable who was doing some carpenter work on a new house. The constable knew nothing about Robertson or his watch, so in spite of all the excitement he undertook the case with caution. He took Robertson to Police Justice Milligan who issued a search warrant for Tuthill's house.

The two men went there, but found it was locked. As they were returning unsatisfied they met Tuthill and showed him the warrant. Tuthill led the way home again.

"Come on in," he said briskly. "I'll be glad to help you look around. It's all a mistake, though. You won't find anything. Somebody will have to suffer for this. It's an outrage."

The searchers found no trace of anything that didn't belong to Tuthill. The first floor of the house was occupied by another family, so they did not look there. Tuthill casually remarked that he would go down in the cellar and get a scuttle of coal while his visitors were searching. They thought he stayed away a long time, so they followed him down.

The constable caught sight of a hole in the wall, left there by the removal of a beam. He poked around in the opening and found three gold watches and chains, two big diamond rings, a lady's gold watch, a dozen rings, plain gold, turquoise, amethyst and topaz, together with numerous other pieces of jewelry.

"Where in the world did those things come from?" asked Tuthill with a most surprised look on his face.

"I guess you know," said Robertson.

Tuthill kept on "wondering" innocently and his conduct was so far removed from that of a thief that the constable did not even think of arresting him. When they had made sure there was no more jewelry left in the hole, the three men walked up the street together. Tuthill strolled into the coal office and sat down to talk to some friends.

The Final Proof of Guilt

Robertson and the constable took their find of jewelry to Justice Milligan's office and then set out to find Thomas H. Bouden, who had been robbed of valuables similar to those found. Bouden identified his wife's diamond ring and Justice Milligan issued a warrant for Tuthill's arrest. The constable slowly and thoughtfully went back to the coal office with it.

Robertson was happy at the prospect of getting back his watch. But the two men were destined to be disappointed. At the

coal office they found that Tuthill had not waited for them. Instead he had boarded a noon train for New York. It was the first mistake in judgment Tuthill had made since he had started his life of crime, and it cost him dearly.

In spite of the discovery of the jewelry none of the people in the town could believe that Jim Tuthill was the thief who had been coming and going in their homes for more than two years. They believed there must be some mistake. But his flight did what Robertson had been unable to do and convinced them he was guilty.

While the many victims of the fugitive were comparing notes and locating more of their jewelry through some pawn tickets found in the Tuthill home, several constables were set on his trail. One of them finally ran him to earth at the home of an uncle in Brooklyn. He was arrested as he returned from the theater, where he had whiled away his time during the evening.

Even then Tuthill's cool nerve was still with him. He "came quiet," but he declared there had been a great mistake somewhere and said he felt sorry for his accusers. His protestations of innocence and the steadfast story he told for a time almost convinced the police that a mistake had been made. But as their investigations revealed more and more of his activities by night, the steadily mounting proofs that he was the long sought supercriminal were too great to be denied any longer.

While definite proof of many of his robberies was never found, sufficient evidence was obtained to make his conviction easy. A few months later the announcement that he had been sentenced to a long term in prison caused the citizens of Montclair to sleep more soundly at night.

THE BABY SHOPLIFTER

THE shopkeeper in Vienna stood in constant terror of a particularly bold and notorious shoplifter, a certain Jewess of forty. She was artful, elusive and too frequent a practitioner. So many were the ingenious ruses put to use by her that the police department of that city had to keep a constant watch lest the citizens become too frankly unappreciative of its ability.

Several times in her career she was apprehended and caught, but the unwary eyes of the law could seldom produce sufficient evidence against her so as to render her inactive for a little while at least. Then, too, her pleas seemed so artless and sincere, her excuses and alibis so innocently truthful, that the judges themselves were often in serious doubt of her guilt.

Once, however, she was a bit too reckless at one of her operations and she was caught red-handed. This time there seemed to be no alibi that she could offer. She had been seen performing quite coolly and deliberately. The one best thing to do, she was told, would be to acknowledge her guilt freely and so hope for a mitigated sentence.

A certain affair in her recent past life came to her aid. When she was brought up for trial she did not deny her guilt, but claimed that she could not legally be put into prison. Six months before her arrest she had been baptized in a Roman Catholic church. Offering papers to prove this, she pleaded that she was therefore legally an infant and not responsible before the law.

The rule of that country being that the date of birth figured from the date of baptism, the court sustained her plea, and the six-months-old shoplifter was released.

Dr. Hailey felt himself stiffen at the voice that came from Pierrot

THE DOUBLE THIRTEEN

By Anthony Wynne

FEAR OF A LIVING DEATH IN A BLACKGUARD'S DESPERATE PLOT BRINGS DAYS OF ADVENTUROUS PERIL TO OLVA VORLOFF

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

THE Hon. Robert Barling had won the hand of Olva Vorloff, daughter of Countess Vorloff, formerly of Russia. Olva had promised to marry Robert, when at a dance the same night, she asked to go home early. Morning comes and she has disappeared, leaving a note to her mother saying she is safe, but that she must not be pursued or the police notified. Robert, however, does notify the police, and Inspector Biles and Dr. Eustace Hailey take up the search. It is known that a Russian by the name of Danatoff had called at Olva's home late the night of her disappearance and had been given a letter. Danatoff's hotel suite later is found plundered. Olva is pursued to a deserted country house, where her abandoned car is discovered. She apparently had been in a collision. The door to the garage is found unlocked and a horrible sight greets the searching party.

CHAPTER XIII

DR. HAILEY'S DISCOVERY

HUDDLED up on the driver's seat of the car, with his chest supported against the wheel, was the body of a man. His head hung limp and ghastly, and his hands had slipped to his sides.

The doctor opened the door and grasped one of the hands. It was as cold as marble. He released it again and bowed his head. A sense of horror, swift and compelling, held all four men in silence. Their eyes traveled from the piteous, dead figure to the jagged edges of the shattered windscreen.

Biles was the first to recover himself. He had an electric torch in his pocket and flashed it on the terrible spectacle. As he did so Bob uttered a cry:

"Danatoff!"

The detective raised the dead face. There was no mark upon it, save the old healed

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scar on the left cheek. The features were composed. Evidently M. Danatoff had suffered little in his final moments.

The sergeant found a switch on the wall of the garage and turned on the light. Then the cause of the Russian's death was made plain. A deep stain showed on the front of his waistcoat. The doctor unbuttoned the garment and exposed the skin.

A small wound, the livid edges of which contrasted vividly with the surrounding pallor, was situated immediately under the right breast. Danatoff had been struck through the heart. The mystery of the broken windscreen was explained.

"The murderer," Biles declared in tones which he contrived to render matter-of-fact, "must have pushed the car in here. That would not be difficult, because the ground slopes downward from the yard to the garage. It is obvious that the shot was fired outside."

"The car was stationary at the time," Bob said, "otherwise it would have continued its way and struck against the wall, and there is not a scratch on the paint anywhere."

He was standing in front of the vehicle, examining the dumb irons. Dr. Hailey noticed that his expression had become tense with anxiety. He glanced at Biles and saw a hard glitter in the eyes of that professional man-hunter. Murder, to a detective, is a challenge calling forth an instant and instinctive response.

They lifted the body from the car and laid it out on the stone floor of the garage. The doctor noticed that the lining of one of the pockets of the dead man's coat had been pulled out. He called his companion's attention to this fact. The detective passed his hands rapidly through all the pockets. He extracted a purse containing a small sum of money and a fountain pen. He laid those objects on the narrow work table which ran along the end of the shed.

"It's pretty obvious," he declared, "that the attack must have been premeditated. No doubt the poor fellow was lured to his doom, and shot as soon as he reached the yard."

Biles drew Dr. Hailey aside.

"It's obvious, of course," he insisted in low tones, "that the Countess Olva played a big part in all this—possibly the only part. In the circumstances, and with all deference to you, my dear Hailey, young Barling cannot remain here with us. I am ready to believe that he knows as little as we do, but the coroner's jury is bound to take his conduct in following Danatoff about into consideration, and also the fact of his intimacy with the Russian girl."

Biles spoke with some difficulty, and it was evident that he expected opposition. But Dr. Hailey assented at once.

"I quite agree with you," he declared, "and I will speak to him."

He approached the young man, whose features had become haggard during the past hour. He told him what the detective had said. Bob cried out in strong protest:

"But that is monstrous! Have we not come to find Olva? And we are as much in the dark on that matter as ever before. I cannot abandon the search at this stage, surely."

"The police, you see, have power to do as they think fit in a case of this kind."

The doctor's voice had a ring of finality.

"They don't suspect me—or, at least, if they do, the remedy is in their own hands. I am free to act as I choose."

Dr. Hailey laid a sympathetic hand on his shoulders.

"I think," he said, "that in this matter also you must consider not your own feelings, but those of the woman you love. I should be merely insulting your intelligence if I pretended that, just at the moment, no suspicion attaches to the Countess Olva. As her *fiancé*, your position here is really impossible."

He paused. Bob had turned pale. He looked up with beseeching eyes.

"What does he—Biles—suggest?" he asked hoarsely. "What has he said to you?"

The doctor did not reply. He led the way to the door of the garage and they passed out into the silence of evening. Already the long shadows were gathering about the walls of the old house. The young man repeated his question in tones of still greater anxiety.

"You see," Dr. Hailey said, "it is known

that the murdered man received a letter from the Countess Olva last night and that on receipt of it he left his hotel, never to return. It is known also that his room was burglarized this morning. To-night we find him murdered within a few yards of the girl's car. His pockets, too, have been searched, just as, later on, his bedroom was searched."

"But what does that prove?" There was a desperate note in the boy's voice which touched the older man deeply.

"It doesn't prove anything," he said, placing emphasis on the verb in a manner which sounded deadly in spite of him. "But it presents a case which obviously requires an answer. Why did your *fiancée* come here at all? Why did she write to Danatoff? What was it brought the murdered man to such a place at such a time?

"Why, again, did the countess draw her car across the road, and who ran into her car—because, obviously, Danatoff's car has been involved in no collision of any sort. Biles is a good fellow but he has what I call 'the Scotland Yard mind.' The most obvious explanation, according to that point of view, is nearly always the correct one."

Bob bowed his head.

"I see," he declared in tones of deep apprehension. He moved away a few paces and then swung round and returned to his friend. "But you will stay, won't you? Because you believe that Olva is innocent. Oh, promise me that you will not leave the case until the truth has been made plain."

"I will do all that I can do." Dr. Hailey opened his snuffbox and took a small pinch. "You realize, of course, that there will be an inquest to-morrow or the day after, at Wycombe. They are sure to invite you to give evidence. Perhaps it would be as well to stay the night in the town."

Bob went away into the darkness, a tall, lonely figure, bowed a little, the doctor thought, under the weight of the horrible anxiety which had been laid on him so suddenly. Dr. Hailey returned to the garage. As he entered he saw Biles rising from his knees with a look of triumph in his eyes. The detective held a small object in his hand which he was carefully scrutinizing.

"Look!" he cried, "a bronze hairpin. The Countess Olva, as you know, has golden hair."

The doctor took the hairpin and glanced at it. He nodded in his rather melancholy fashion.

"It must have fallen from her head while she was awaiting her victim in here. My own theory of the crime is that she allowed him to open the garage door and then fired."

He paused and turned his gaze on the body at their feet.

"It's political, of course. Danatoff was concerned in the business of getting people out of Soviet Russia—we have had our eye on him and his activities for some time. Probably the girl had taken pay from the *Tcheka*. They have their agents everywhere. I wonder why they chose this place of all others. If only these conspirators could get over their fear of London and realize that the very minute they leave it they are playing into the hands of the police."

Dr. Hailey had taken more snuff, a sign, as Biles knew, that his brain was active. When the other finished he asked:

"It would be interesting to know how she got away from here?"

"Oh, probably walked into Wycombe and caught the early train." The detective turned to the sergeant: "There is a train to London about six, isn't there?"

"Yes, sir, six-ten."

"But that leaves us with the difficulty of the collision, doesn't it?" the doctor remarked. "Why should the Hillman coupé have been drawn across the road, and what car was it which bumped into it?"

Biles evidently had not taken this matter into his calculation.

"That certainly is a difficulty," he confessed, "because there is no doubt at all that a collision did take place and that Danatoff's car was not involved in it. It is just possible that the girl had an accomplice and that their cars fouled in the dark in that narrow roadway."

"Possibly." Dr. Hailey's voice was not enthusiastic. He stood looking down at the dead face, with its livid scar and fine, clear-cut features. Danatoff had certainly been a very handsome man.

"I suppose the inquest will take place to-morrow?"

"I think so. There is enough evidence, in spite of the gaps, to justify it, and to secure a verdict of murder against the Countess Olva right away." Biles glanced round the garage with an air of satisfaction.

"I fancy," he added, "that we can't learn much more here. The next thing to do is to circulate a description of the girl to the police. Will you be ready to assist at the autopsy, if the coroner calls upon you?"

"Yes."

Dr. Hailey's voice was rather hurried. He had been examining the broken windscreen of the car, while Biles was speaking. Suddenly he strode to the pile of fragments of glass which had been collected in the yard. He lifted one of these, the largest, and held it out in front of him.

Then he came to the front of the car and attempted to fit it into the ragged hole in the screen. As he did so he uttered an exclamation of astonishment. The fragment was definitely thinner than the plate from which it was supposed to have been derived.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MYSTERIOUS CAR OWNER

BILES possessed a mind of the rigid type. Once he had constructed his theory of a crime he resented the intrusion of new facts which might have the effect of upsetting it. But the fact which Dr. Hailey now brought to his notice was not of this order. It confirmed his theory, and so he hailed it with immense satisfaction.

"A second car!" he declared, in the tones of a man whose last doubts had been removed.

"It seems so."

Dr. Hailey took a pinch of snuff.

"Then I am right, after all, in thinking that the girl must have possessed an accomplice."

The detective paused and then added:

"That explains the damage to the Hillman coupé. No doubt they arrived at the same time and fouled in the narrow roadway. The accomplice would naturally back his car out and bring it round by the front avenue, while the girl made her way up to the house on foot.

No doubt she was rather frightened and so ran through the wood. The second car must have shared in the damage inflicted by the shooting, and hence the two types of broken glass."

Biles's voice had grown more confident as he spoke. He recalled the afternoon visit of the man Tsarov to the Vorloffs' house in South Street and his interview with Olva.

"They must have arranged the details of the crime at the meeting," he told the doctor. "Probably the girl's surprise at seeing the fellow was pure affectation, a mere pretense to deceive her servants. No doubt they considered it safer to reach the scene of the murder separately."

Biles turned to the sergeant.

"It will be necessary to keep a watch on this place. Can you spare the men?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Very well, we can go back to Wycombe now, I think. To-morrow morning we may be able to reconstruct the crime to some extent by piecing the broken glass together. That may possibly indicate the direction in which the shots were fired. It will be necessary for me to go back to London after dinner. I suppose there will be no difficulty about getting a car?"

"None, sir; I'll see to that."

They rolled the door of the garage into position and replaced the padlock, though it was impossible to secure it. The night was clear and the sky had become filled with stars. They walked down through the quiet woods to the main road. As they entered the town the sergeant left them and then went on alone to the "Red Lion."

"I must put the facts of the case as we have discovered them before the chief at once," Biles said. "He will have left the Yard, of course, but I shall get him at his house in Kensington. I propose to come back here immediately afterwards, so as to start again first thing in the morning."

Dr. Hailey nodded.

"If I may," he declared, "I shall stay here. No doubt our worthy host will be able to supply me with a sleeping suit."

They engaged a private sitting room and ordered dinner to be served in it. When the servant, who conducted them upstairs, had lighted the fire and gone away Biles took from his pocket the articles he had removed from the dead man's person; he laid them on the mantelpiece and scrutinized them.

The purse was an ordinary pigskin type; it contained some small change. The fountain pen was a "Christy," and bore no marks of identification. He turned to the doctor, who had seated himself in an armchair and who seemed to be preparing to doze.

"It seems obvious, doesn't it," he said, "that Tsarov is the man we must look for. I have very little doubt, in my own mind, that he was the occupant of the car which collided with the Hillman coupé and in which the murderers escaped."

Dr. Hailey inclined his head.

"It may be so," he agreed.

"Meanwhile, I have taken the number of Danatoff's car. The sergeant is making inquiries about it at once. My own view is that the murdered man was in some plot or conspiracy with these others, but that they had reason to suspect him of treachery.

"I fancy that explains the search of his bedroom this morning. Probably they had discovered that he was acting as an agent for their enemies as well as for themselves and that he carried important papers."

"But in that case," Dr. Hailey asked, "why did the Countess Olva pass him without acknowledgment at the Brook Street dance?"

Biles shrugged his shoulders.

"If you will forgive my saying so, we have only Barling's statement for that. Even if it is true, it is not surprising. A girl would naturally wish to avoid a man whose murder she had planned a few hours earlier. That may be why she left for Moorfields Lodge before his midnight visit to South Street."

He paused. The case, so far as he could see, was complete. It remained only to discover the whereabouts of the Countess Olva and her accomplice, Tsarov, the man with the glaring eyes. He did not anticipate very great difficulty here, because Scotland Yard's net is drawn tightly enough round the foreign population of London, whether that population happens to be situated in the East End or in the West.

A waiter came into the room to set the table for dinner. Dr. Hailey asked him,

"Do you happen to know if a Mr. Barling has taken a room in the hotel for the night?"

The man shook his head.

"I don't know, sir, but I'll inquire." He went away and returned with the information that no gentleman of that name had engaged a room. The news caused Biles to contract his brows.

"I wish I felt as sure of our young friend as you do, my dear doctor," he remarked.

There was no reply. Dr. Hailey appeared to be falling deeper and deeper into study. The detective went away to wash his hands. When he came back the soup was on the table. They did not speak much during the meal, though the doctor tried to open several subjects of conversation.

Biles, the man-hunter, was too much occupied with his hunting. Just as the waiter was about to uncork the half bottle of port which Dr. Hailey had ordered the door of the room opened and the sergeant of police came in. He appeared to be somewhat excited, and his big red face glowed.

"Excuse me, sir," he apologized, "but I have been able to trace the car in which the body of the murdered man was found. I managed to get through to the County Hall in London before they closed for the night. The car is registered in the name of Browning and the address is given as ten Jermyn street. I found the party in the telephone book and rang up the number. He was not at home."

Biles's eyes gleamed.

"Did you ask, sergeant, how long he had been absent from home?" he demanded ironically.

The policeman's expression became grave.

"Yes, sir, I did; and that is the queer part of it. Mr. Browning only left his flat at five o'clock this afternoon."

"What!"

"I think there is no doubt about that, sir. I was speaking to his servant, who is quite positive on the subject."

The detective drew a sharp breath.

"But we happen to know that he was murdered last night."

His voice challenged his subordinate unmistakably.

"Yes, sir, that is so. But the man was positive all the same."

The sergeant moved uneasily from one foot to the other.

"It might be," he ventured, "that the car we found at Moorfields did not belong to the murdered man, after all."

CHAPTER XV

FINGER-PRINTS THAT IDENTIFY

WHEN Biles left him to return to London, Dr. Hailey went to bed. He felt rather ill at ease, though he could scarcely explain this feeling. The explanation of the crime which the Scotland Yard man had evolved seemed a reasonable one. There could be no doubt that it was Olva Vorloff's letter which had lured Danatoff to his doom; nor was it possible to doubt that the girl had been present at Moorfields Lodge at the time of the murder.

The inference was scarcely to be resisted that she had played, if not the chief, at least a very important part in the crime. Her conduct before she left London supported that idea—the reluctance she had shown to meet Danatoff face to face, her interview with the mysterious Russian during that afternoon, her warning to her mother not to call in the police. Taken together, all these constituted a damning chain of evidence.

And yet, for some reason, they did not carry that absolute conviction to his mind which brings release from anxiety. He tried to discover the reason for his hesitancy and realized that it lay in his knowledge of Bob Barling. Bob, he was assured, loved this Russian girl with all the strength of his soul.

Dr. Hailey was no sentimentalist, but his experience of men and women had convinced him that lovers are less frequently deceived in one another than is commonly supposed. Love may be blind where the details of character are concerned, but it is singularly clear-sighted, as a rule, when faced by the larger issues. It wanted, he told himself, a very great deal of proving that such a man as Barling had set his affections irrevocably on a cold-blooded assassin.

For that actually was what it amounted to. No doubt the girl and her mother had suffered severely; no doubt they had ample reason to hate the gang of ruffians who ruled Russia at the moment. But these feelings could not justify murder, except to a mind essentially perverted or diseased.

They could not justify it, even if the intended victim had proved himself a traitor to those who trusted and relied on him. There is in assassination a quality of vileness which has rendered it loathsome and hideous to all noble minds from the beginning.

Thus it followed that either Bob Barling had entirely misread his *finacée's* character or the Countess Olva was acting in this matter under a form of compulsion which she was powerless to resist. He tried to think what compulsion it would be possible to bring to bear on her, but could arrive at no answer to his query.

She was free; she had money. In England her life was certainly not in any danger because of her political activities. Nor was it possible to entertain the idea that there was anything in her past which might serve as the occasion of blackmail—at least, of blackmail to commit murder.

His mind grew weary in this search, and he fell asleep. When he awoke it was day. Biles was standing by his bedside. He sat up sharply.

"My dear Biles, what a shock you gave me!"

The detective looked very tired, but his air of confidence showed that he was well pleased with the course of events.

"I've just got back from London," he declared. "I had a busy night, but not an unfruitful one." He lowered his voice. "There is absolutely no doubt now that the car in which Danatoff's body was found did not belong to him. I have traced the fellow Browning in whose name it is registered, and he bears no sort of resemblance to the murdered man.

"But there are the best reasons for think-

ing that he is our friend Tsarov, the girl's accomplice, masquerading under a false name." He paused, and added, "It seems he returned to Jermyn Street early yesterday morning and spent the day indoors. He went out about nine o'clock last night, just after the police sergeant here rang him up. The statement that it was a servant who was answering the telephone was untrue. Browning keeps no servant."

He stopped. Dr. Hailey inclined his head.

"I see."

"The flat is a mere office—an address. I ascertained from the doorkeeper that Browning has used it very little, and always in the same way. He comes, as a rule, toward evening and then goes out again. Mostly, he returns in the small hours of the morning and stays till breakfast time, when he finally disappears. Yesterday the doorkeeper did not notice him come back, but thinks that he may have done so.

"What are your reasons," Dr. Hailey asked, "for supposing that Browning and Tsarov are really one and the same man?"

The detective took his pipe from his pocket and filled it before he replied.

"Browning," he said, "always wears a heavy overcoat with a high collar and has a big slouch hat over his eyes, so that the doorkeeper has never had a perfectly clear view of his features. But the description of his height and build correspond closely with the description of Tsarov which I had from the Vorloff's servant."

Dr. Hailey's wits were gradually mustering.

"If I recollect," he remarked, "Tsarov also struck the servant as having very peculiar, glaring eyes."

"Yes." Biles struck a match and lit his pipe. "And young Barling noted the same thing about the man he encountered in the High Court Hotel. I questioned the doorkeeper in Jermyn Street on that point, but he declared that he had never seen Browning's eyes at all and so could not say what they were like."

He paused again and struck a second match.

"Happily, another means of identifying Tsarov with Browning is available. In the Jermyn Street flat there were a number of finger-prints. I had those copied at once. I have just been up to Moorfields Lodge and compared the copies with a finger-print I noticed last night on the broken windscreen of the car. The identity is certain."

The doctor's eyes became vague.

"That, my dear Biles," he said gently, "proves only that Browning was in the car; it does not, surely, prove that Browning is Tsarov."

There was a hint of reproach in his tones, but the detective showed no resentment.

"Of course not. But, taken in conjunction with the fact that we have found the same finger-print on a mirror in Danatoff's room at the High Court Hotel, it is, I think, very significant. Unless we are to disbelieve everything which Barling told us, Tsarov certainly did visit that hotel on the morning following the crime. There was no doubt about his glaring eyes on that occasion."

He paused a moment to allow these considerations to sink into the doctor's mind. Then he added:

"Presumably, the finger-prints in Jermyn Street are Browning's. If so, then Browning was an occupant, on the night of the murder, of the car in which Danatoff's body was found. He was also the man who broke into Danatoff's room at the High Court Hotel.

"But we happen to know that this thief had peculiar glaring eyes and that a man named Tsarov, with the same glaring eyes, called on the Countess Olva the day before—that is to say, on the day of the murder. The conclusion is, I think, irresistible that Browning and Tsarov are the same person."

Dr. Hailey nodded. "I congratulate you, my dear Biles," he said, "and I apologize for my doubts. So that it follows that this man is the real villain of the plot."

The detective contracted his brow.

"I confess," he remarked, "that I don't see the justification for that view. My own idea is that the woman was the chief actor. I feel quite confident that she summoned Tsarov in the first instance. When a man has a woman in his power he invariably, in my experience, sends for her to attend him. He does not go to dance attendance on her."

The doctor had risen and found his snuff-box. He took a large pinch.

"I wonder," he inquired, "why Tsarov should have put the body in his car and used Danatoff's car to escape in?"

"Because the windscreen of his own car was so badly smashed."

"But," my dear Biles, "we know that the glass was broken in Danatoff's car also."

CHAPTER XVI

BILES TIES A HARD KNOT

THE detective nodded. "Quite so. I have been looking into that matter. Some of the fragments of the thinner type of glass have glue adhering to their edges. In other words, they are from a window with a wooden frame. That shows the car to have been an old-fashioned coupé or landaulette—probably the former. A broken window in such a vehicle is a small matter. It can easily be dropped out of sight."

Biles's pipe had gone out. He relit it carefully, while his companion prepared for his bath.

"The inquest," he announced, "is timed for to-morrow morning. The autopsy is to take place this afternoon, and I have been instructed to write you to be present, if you so desire."

He went away. When Dr. Hailey rejoined him at breakfast his enthusiasm had not abated in the least.

"Sergeant Jones has just been here," he announced. "He came to tell me that the Yard has rung up to say it is still without information about Tsarov or the Countess. It looks like proving a more difficult search than I expected.

"By the way, I am having a sharp watch kept on young Barling—for his own sake as well as mine. He returned home last night and then went to South Street to the Vorloff's. He remained there till eleven o'clock."

Dr. Hailey's eyes clouded. He raised his coffee cup to his lips without responding. Biles's capacity as a detective was very great, perhaps supremely great, but he lacked one element of the complete sleuth—knowledge of the human mind in its nobler manifestations. All men and all women were potential criminals in this man's eyes.

As soon as the meal was over they drove to Moorfields Lodge. The body of the murdered man had been removed to the local mortuary, but otherwise everything was exactly as they had left it the night before. Biles told the policeman on duty to wheel the car out into the yard, so as to bring its windscreen immediately over the spot where the broken glass had been discovered. He seated himself in the vehicle and bent forward.

"My idea now is," he told Dr. Hailey, "that Tsarov arrived on the scene after the murdered man. In that case Danatoff's car would be standing in the yard, probably on my left. I fancy Danatoff had already alighted, and I think that the girl fired at him just as her accomplice appeared.

"She must have missed in the first instance, because Danatoff certainly defended himself—as the broken windscreen proves. It is quite possible that her first bullet smashed the window of Danatoff's car instead of hitting him. That would account for the fragments of thinner glass. In any case, the unfortunate man would not see his real assailant, because of the glare from Tsarov's headlights, and would naturally assume that the attack was coming from the newly-arrived car. The headlights, on the other hand, would illuminate him and so furnish an easy target."

"Tsarov, if you are right," Dr. Hailey said, "took a very considerable risk, did he not? It was highly probable that if the victim was armed he would be hit."

Biles shook his head.

"You forget," he remarked, "that Tsarov knew the attack was coming. No doubt, as soon as the girl began to shoot he took the precaution of ducking from behind the scuttle-dash of his car. That would afford him pretty safe shelter."

He got out of the car and led the doctor across the yard to a point near the corner of the house. He pointed to a number of recently made scars on the old brickwork.

"That is where the murdered man's bullets struck," he declared. "If you examine them you will see that he was probably standing near the garage door at the

moment when he fired. He was evidently about to enter the garage, where apparently the secret meeting to which he had been summoned was to be held."

Dr. Hailey nodded. He treated his friend to a glance of admiration.

"You have the bullets?" he asked.

"We have two of them. The others must have glanced off."

"Are they different from the bullets fired at Danatoff?"

Biles's face clouded for an instant.

"Unhappily," he said, "I have not been able to recover any of the latter. One of them, no doubt, is hidden in the man's body. But, for some reason, those which missed him have not scarred the wall behind."

The doctor's eyes narrowed.

"That is certainly strange is it not?" he asked. He added: "I suppose there is no fresh light on the cause of the accident to the Hillman coupé?"

"None. That is another point which I have not been able to clear up to my satisfaction. The only thing that seems quite certain is that a collision did take place."

He stood for a moment with bent head and then turned to his companion:

"Suppose we go down and reëxamine the ground," he suggested. "I ordered them to leave the car in case it should be necessary to do that."

They walked down through the woods, along a footpath which cut off an angle of the carriage-way leading to the back door. The ground was strewn with newly-fallen leaves. Nevertheless the doctor kept a sharp lookout. Before they had advanced far he stopped and called his companion's attention to a foot-print on the soft earth. It was a woman's, obviously that of Olva Vorloff, for they saw that it corresponded exactly to the prints they had already found near the car.

"She was running even when she got up here," Dr. Hailey said. "The reason which compelled her to do that must have been an urgent one."

He stood for a moment, looking round him. Then he stepped off the path and went a short distance down the steep bank in the direction of the main road. Biles saw that his eyes were searching the ground with eagerness. When he had descended about fifty yards he stooped down. Then he arose and beckoned his companion to join him.

"Look there; a man's foot-print, going in the same direction as the girl, but at a lower level. Running, too."

The detective bent and examined the fresh evidence closely. He nodded as he stood erect again.

"There is no doubt of it."

He rubbed his long chin in the manner which was habitual with him when a new difficulty arose. Dr. Hailey watched him with a sympathy born of complete understanding of his feelings.

"Possibly one of the policemen may have come up this way last night."

He glanced at the doctor, but the latter shook his head.

"The boot which made this impression is a fine one," he declared. "Look at the shape of the heel-mark and how clean cut it is. Look at the sole—without a trace of a nail."

As he spoke, Dr. Hailey moved down the bank in a direction parallel to that taken by the footpath. He soon found further examples of his clew, and was able to trace the foot-prints right down to the spot where the collision had occurred. They ended there.

"So," he said, "it is obvious that this fellow, whoever he may be, arrived by car, crashed into the Hillman coupé and then got out and ran as fast as he could up through the woods toward the house. He was not Tsarov because Tsarov's car has certainly not been in a collision of this sort."

"Of course not." Biles's face had cleared again. "*But he was Danatoff, my dear doctor.* And that, don't you see, gives us the complete answer to the riddle which you propounded. Danatoff must have meant in the first instance to reach the house by the back way.

"Probably the conspirators knew that he always used that way, and laid their plans accordingly. If the Hillman coupé was drawn across the road at this spot their victim would be certain to collide with it,

because, owing to the bend in the road, he would not see it until too late to pull up."

He drew a sharp breath.

"Danatoff," he added, "would naturally be very much mystified, and possibly alarmed. He would make all haste to seek an explanation at the house, where, in view of this new evidence, I think we must conclude both Tsarov and the girl were awaiting his arrival."

"You mean that you think he left his car down here?" Dr. Hailey asked.

"Yes. He would naturally do that. It would take too long to back it out and bring it 'ound by road."

Dr. Hailey closed his eyes.

"But in that case, my dear Biles," he asked, "how do you account for the fact that we found pieces of broken glass—of recently broken glass—not belonging to Tsarov's car, in the yard?"

The detective shook his head.

"That certainly is a difficulty," he confessed.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEATH BLADE

DR. HAILEY attended the autopsy, much as he disliked doing so. He felt that he owed this service to Bob Barling and, moreover, his own interest in the case was now thoroughly aroused. Brilliant as had been the unraveling of the mystery by Biles, there were flaws in the chain of evidence which keenly excited his curiosity.

The examination, which was conducted by a local doctor named Wallace, had scarcely begun when an astonishing discovery was made. This was nothing less than the presence in the wound of a long knife-blade of the rounded stiletto type. The two medical men gazed at one another in astonishment.

"So he was stabbed and not shot."

Dr. Hailey affixed his eyeglass and bent over the long, deadly-looking blade.

"As always," he said in self-reproachful tones, "when one is in a hurry gross mistakes are committed. I confess that I did little more than glance at the wound last night. Because it was a small and round wound I jumped to a conclusion."

"My dear fellow, I formed exactly the same opinion myself, and I made quite a careful examination before you arrived."

Dr. Wallace was a genial man with the brisk air which most doctors in large country practices possess. He handed the stiletto to his companion, who carried it to the window of the rather dingy room. The blade was of exquisite workmanship, and richly chased. It bore a tiny coat of arms on one side and on the other the letter V surmounted by a coronet. Dr. Hailey pointed out these features to his colleague.

"That clinches the matter, I suppose," Dr. Wallace exclaimed. "V can only stand for Vorloff in this case."

"I think so."

They completed their work. Danatoff had been struck through the heart and must have perished instantly. Dr. Hailey returned to the Red Lion, where Biles was awaiting him. He told the detective what they had discovered.

"My God! So he cannot have defended himself at all."

"I should imagine not."

"But there is the car with its smashed windscreen to prove that he did—and the bullet marks on the wall, too."

The doctor did not reply. He knew how bitter must be his friend's feelings at this sudden disruption of his theory of the crime. He felt for his snuffbox and took a pinch in his most leisurely fashion.

"What do you make of it?" Biles asked in tones of considerable weariness.

"I don't know. As yet I have been unable to arrive at any conclusion."

"In any case, there is no doubt about the part played by the girl. She, and she alone, could have been possessed of that knife." He thought a moment and then added: "I wonder why it got broken in that fashion."

"The blade is very slender, you know."

"Still, if he died instantaneously, his body would tend to slip down. People who are mortally wounded fall, as a rule, on their faces, don't they?"

"As a rule. Sometimes, however, they recoil with enough strength to fling themselves backwards. It may have been so in

this case. Heart wounds are not necessarily fatal instantaneously—that is, if they miss the 'bundle,' the nerve connecting the various chambers of the organ. I know a man now who is walking the streets of London with a German bullet actually imbedded in his heart."

Biles raised his head sharply:

"So he may have been able to shoot after all?"

"I could not deny the possibility. But, frankly, it is that and no more."

They relapsed into silence. Dr. Hailey took more snuff, his companion puffed vigorously at the long black cigar he was smoking—a type of cigar which competed with his pipe in his affections. At last the doctor asked:

"Have you any of the bullets you found in the yard?"

Biles felt in his pocket and drew out a small specimen box.

"This one was found," he said, "just after you left me. It had been pressed into the earth by somebody's foot."

He handed it across to his friend, who took it and scrutinized it. It had been faceted and twisted by its impact against the wall of the house.

"It seems to have been fired at an angle to the wall."

"Yes."

"Consequently, if Danatoff really did shoot after he was struck by the assassin he must have fallen at a spot not very far from the garage door."

Biles assented. "The direction of the bullet marks on the wall brought me to that conclusion, as I think I told you," he said.

"Yet there was no sign of blood there," the doctor declared. "I looked carefully, both last night and this morning. Nevertheless, the front of the murdered man's waistcoat was deeply stained with blood."

"On the other hand, he might have staggered a few paces before he fell. You did not examine any other part of the yard, did you?"

"No. I was testing a theory of my own, and when it failed I left the matter."

They returned to the scene of the crime. One of the dead man's shoes had been fetched from the mortuary and Biles took this and fitted it into the footmarks which Dr. Hailey had discovered in the wood. The shoe fitted so exactly as to leave no doubt that the print had been made by it. They followed the track of the footmarks right up to the edge of the wood, where they disappeared on the red carriage drive.

Suddenly Biles uttered an exclamation. He pointed to another footmark a few feet lower down the slope and going in the direction away from the house. Dr. Hailey, who held the shoe, bent down and fitted it to the new mold. Again the result left no doubt that Danatoff had been the author of that print.

The two men looked at each other in amazement. By common consent they began to follow the fresh tracks which were clearly visible on the soft earth. The footmarks led them down through the trees at a slightly lower level than that at which they had just ascended. They came to the London-Oxford Road near the point where the back way to the house left it.

Obviously Danatoff had climbed the low wall at this point and entered the roadway. They moved along the wall a few steps in the direction of the back way and came on the footmarks again just before they reached it. The man, apparently, had reclimbed the wall in order to return to his car. His path for the last fifty yards lay over a patch of stony ground, which accounted for the fact that this clew had so far been overlooked. Dr. Hailey took a memorandum book from his pocket and made a quick sketch which he handed to Biles.

"So, after all," he remarked, "he must have arrived at the house in his car and not on foot."

Biles nodded. "So that the difficulty of the thin glass is removed and also the fact of the wide distribution of the glass over the yard. But that only seems to bring us to a new difficulty. Do you know, my dear doctor, that this case is beginning to get a little on my nerves."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"So far," he said in soothing tones, "every fresh fact has justified you, is it not so?"

They mounted again to the house, the

detective leading the way. When they reached the yard Biles stood still and turned to his companion:

"Danatoff must have had his suspicions aroused," he declared. "Probably he remained some time on the edge of the wood spying out the land. He would see very little if Tsarov's car had not arrived. That fact may have reassured him and caused him to go down again and bring up his own car.

"I suppose he had a look at the main road to satisfy himself that there was nobody about. If we grant that he had just descended from his car when Tsarov drove round the corner of the house the situation becomes clear, I think."

"You mean?" The doctor's voice had a new note of eagerness.

"I mean that he may have seen the man at the wheel and recognized him. These Russians all know one another. Thus he may have understood that he was caught in a trap, and so began shooting there and then." The detective swung round and pointed with his outstretched arm to the garage door. "But the girl was there, behind him, waiting with her knife." His tones rang triumphantly. Here, at last, was the complete explanation.

He added: "She must have jumped forward while he was shooting at her accomplice and dealt him his death blow before he had time to recover from the shock of her sudden appearance. He would almost certainly lurch toward his car in his agony and fear, and so fall some distance from the place where he was struck. Probably, too, his pistol was flung through the window of his car as he fell."

Dr. Hailey had bent down while Biles was speaking. He pointed now to a small stain on the ground at their feet.

"I think you are right," he declared, "for that, unless I am very much mistaken, is blood."

When they returned to the hotel a new piece of evidence awaited them. It was a sheet of thin paper, folded twice, which the sergeant of police had discovered in the lining of one of the sleeves of the dead man's coat. Biles glanced at it and then handed it to his companion.

"I wonder if this is what cost him his life?" he asked grimly.

The paper was inscribed in this way:

43	11	12	29	31	15	12	1	17	12	10	36	2
1	17	12	34	49	40	18	6	29	27	28	39	4
34	1	17	12	26	42	19	6	39	38	40	5	10
2	34	35	39	1	17	12	10	8	1	17	12	28
29	16	19	29	12	31	14	1	17	12	10	37	32
38	10	1	17	12	28	12	23	10	26	51	37	27
40	29	12	1	17	12	29	39	46	36	29	28	14
5	1	17	12	12	2	36	10	13	19	20	42	25

Dr. Hailey glanced at the cipher with eyes which gleamed. Such puzzles gave him sheer delight. He raised his eyeglass and scrutinized it for some moments.

"There are thirteen figures in each line," he said. "The figure twelve occurs more frequently than any other. Let us see." He counted. "It occurs fifteen times in the eight lines. On that showing we should be entitled to call it the letter E—though somehow I doubt the value of this time-honored method of analysis in the present case. Quite frankly, my dear Biles, I have never before seen a cipher of this type."

The detective nodded.

"They would be sure to take every possible care," he stated. "After all, once across the frontiers of Russia it is a matter of life and death. Probably the figures represent a list of the names of the people they can or cannot rely on for the guidance of the messengers they send out with money. There's a pretty extensive campaign being conducted to get people out of that hapless country—and no wonder."

The doctor did not reply. He had seated himself and was going over the cipher. Biles saw him take out his memorandum book and make lists of figures and then more lists. A smile dawned on the detective's thin lips. There was a broad streak of the schoolboy, he reflected, in this distinguished physician's character which was liable at any moment to overcome his otherwise highly developed faculties.

That was one of the secrets of Dr. Hailey's charm. It proved his disinterestedness, so to speak. He stood watching him for a few minutes and then rang the bell and ordered whiskies and soda. A moment later the servant returned to say that he was wanted on the phone.

When he came back Dr. Hailey was still at work on his new-found puzzle. Biles announced in tones of great bitterness:

"That was the Yard, to say that Bob Barling has given them the slip. He left his house in Curzon Street early this afternoon and the fellow whom I told off to watch him lost sight of him in Piccadilly Circus. It is more than vexing, because I had relied on his evidence to-morrow morning at the inquest."

Dr. Hailey raised his head from his task. His eyes had suddenly become greatly troubled.

"With your consent, my dear Biles," he said, "I am going up to London now to look for him."

CHAPTER XVIII

OVER THE PHONE

AS he drove to London in the car he had hired at the Red Lion, Dr. Hailey attempted to clear his mind. He could not dispute the fact that the theory of the crime which Biles had elaborated was a very satisfying one. It seemed to cover every scrap of evidence which they had collected. What was more, it had proved itself capable of absorbing each new clew.

That, as he well understood, is the real test of any theory. In detective work, as in science, it is the exception which disproves the rule. He took from his pocket the plans he had made and reëxamined them by the dim roof-light of the vehicle. Then he put them away once more and closed his eyes. He could not discover a single flaw in the carefully constructed chain.

And yet, what he called the "psychological argument" against this solution remained. Everything was right except the actors in the grim drama, who seemed to have been cast in the wrong parts.

It was a slender enough objection to a case which he realized would convince any jury that might be summoned to adjudicate on it. British juries are not open to psychological pleadings. Like British detectives, they have few prejudices and a strong sense of evidence. Moreover, it would assuredly not strike them as surprising that a beautiful Russian countess should commit murder.

A faint smile flickered on his lips as this thought crossed his mind. For how much the label on a man or woman counted! For how little, comparatively, the spirit which animated! Indeed, spirits and temperaments were bestowed according to label, just as a tailor distributes his "ready-mades," according to numbered sizes. Russian countesses, sailors, policemen, doctors, clergymen, men of the world—all possessed their reach-me-down characters warranted to bring conviction to the minds of the readers of Sunday newspapers.

When the car turned into Curzon Street he was still pursuing this line of thought. He put it away from him the moment the vehicle stopped at number fifty. He ascended the steps of the house and rang the bell. Then he turned round to watch the gradual approach of a man whom he had already observed coming down the street. There was a lamp opposite the house, so that he was able to see the fellow's face quite clearly.

Dr. Hailey recognized the alert police officer under a manner of indifference. So Biles believed that Bob's absence from home was only temporary.

The servant who opened the door recognized his visitor and greeted him deferentially.

"Unhappily," he said in response to the doctor's question, "Mr. Barling is not at home. Nor do we know when he is likely to return."

"In that case I will come in, if I may," Dr. Hailey said.

He entered the hall and the servant closed the door.

"The fact is that I've been helping your master about a matter which is causing him grave anxiety," he told the man. "I am most uneasy about him, for reasons which I cannot discuss. It is very important indeed that I should find him at once. You must help me in that. You do not know, I suppose, why he went away this afternoon or where he went to?"

The man's face became grave. He shook his head.

"I have no idea, sir. He told me merely

that he would not be back to dinner and that he would not require anything when he came in."

"Did he receive any letter or telegram before he left?"

"No, sir; I think not. I took his morning letters up to him myself. There were about the usual number, but there has been nothing at all since."

"What about the telephone?"

"I can't say for certain, because there is a switch into the library. When Mr. Barling goes into that room he very often makes the connection himself."

As he spoke the telephone bell rang. The man strode away to answer the call. Dr. Hailey followed him. He entered the library just as the receiver was being lifted. The man listened a moment and then said:

"Very good, sir. Excuse me, sir, but Dr. Hailey has just called to see you. He says his business is urgent and will you please speak to him."

He held out the instrument to the doctor, who took it eagerly.

"Barling? Hailey speaking. My dear fellow, I am so glad to hear you. I was afraid. What is that?"

The voice at the other end had become faint suddenly, as though the speaker had withdrawn himself from the instrument. It broke off altogether. The doctor's eyes darkened impatiently. Then a woman's voice was distinctly audible, saying: "No, absolutely no."

"Hullo. Yes, Hailey speaking. I did not catch what you said."

Bob's voice came clear and emphatic.

"Look here, old man, I'm awfully sorry, but I can't talk to you just now. Don't worry about me. I'm as right as rain."

Then followed the unmistakable click of the receiver being hung up.

"Are you cut off, sir?" the servant asked, noticing the look of astonishment on the doctor's face.

"No." He put the instrument down on the table and turned to the man. "Why did your master ring up?"

"To say he would probably stay away the night."

Dr. Hailey lifted the telephone again and asked the operator from what exchange the last call had come. He was told Hampstead. His eyes grew blank. He stood looking down on the rich carpet as though he expected to find a solution of the difficulty in its intricate pattern. Then he cast a quick glance over the desk on which the telephone stood. He walked round the desk and seated himself in the armchair which was drawn up to it.

As he did so he uttered an exclamation. He reached forward and lifted a small memorandum block from the table.

Its surface was quite clean, but several pages had been torn off and on the page now left uppermost there were faint impressions, clearly those of the last note made. He saw the letter "B" and then, a little space beyond, "swick," thus "B—swick." He carried the block to the window and examined it with close attention. Then he brought it back to the desk and focused his eyeglass on it at various distances from the eye. The figure 1 preceded the B. He wrote down the first words that occured to him—Bellswick, Billswick, Bruns—.

He exclaimed eagerly. He could see now that the word was almost certainly Brunswick. He glanced at the following word and concluded that it was intended to signify Rd., though only a very faint impression had been left on the paper.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MASKED REVELERS

HE turned to the servant:

"You have a Post Office Directory?"

"I think we have a small directory, sir."

"Bring it, will you?"

The man left the room. He returned in a few minutes with a volume which the doctor realized could help him but little. He glanced through its pages and then handed it back.

"I'm afraid it will not serve my purpose," he said. "I must have a complete list of the streets."

He got up and prepared to go away. The servant accompanied him to the door and called a cab. He drove straight to Harley Street and went at once to his study, where

the latest edition of all the chief directories awaited him. There were, it seemed, two streets bearing the name of Brunswick in the Hampstead area—Brunswick Road, on the top of the hill, beside the Heath, and Brunswick Avenue, near Swiss Cottage. It was probable that both of them contained many telephones, because that area is inhabited largely by well-to-do city men.

He picked up his own telephone and asked to be put through to the controller's office in Queen Victoria Street. Then he asked for Mr. Oldish.

"This is Hailey speaking. Hailey—Eustace Hailey. How are you, my dear Peter?"

Peter Oldish had been his friend since they were at Uppingham together. That boyish alliance had ripened and mellowed with the passing of the years. It had developed, in the case of Oldish, into a profound admiration for the doctor's gifts, which made him ready and eager to give any help in his power.

Within a few minutes he had switched his friend on to a subordinate official, who told him crisply that sixty-five telephones were installed in the two Brunswick thoroughfares in Hampstead. Of these, thirty-one were at numbers not beginning with the figure 1. There thus remained thirty-four subscribers whose addresses ranged from number one to number nineteen and from number one hundred to number one hundred and ninety-nine.

"It is Brunswick Road rather than Brunswick Avenue which interests me. How many have you there?"

"Only six. Brunswick Road consists of big houses, standing on their own grounds. The numbers only go up to twelve."

At his request, Dr. Hailey was furnished with the numbers of these telephones and with the names of their subscribers. He turned up the names in the telephone book, but obtained no further enlightenment. Then he glanced at his watch. It was nine o'clock. He rank the bell for his butler, Jenkins.

"I shall not have dinner," he told him. "You might leave some cold supper for me."

"Yes, sir."

It was obvious that Jenkins did not approve of this arrangement.

"Meantime, call me a cab. I am going up to Hampstead—to Brunswick Road."

When the vehicle started he threw himself back uneasily on the cushions. He felt profoundly anxious about Bob, the more so now that the suspicion was hardening in his mind that the woman's voice he had heard on the telephone at Curzon Street was Olva's.

Could anything be more likely than that she would appear to her lover in her emergency and ask him to shelter her from the police? Nor was it possible to doubt that he would assist her by every means in his power.

This thought made the pace of the taxicab, as it crawled its way up Fitzjohn's Avenue, seem interminably slow. The boy would never stop to think of the consequences of his chivalry; nor would even the fact that the police already had evidence more than sufficient to send his *fiancée* to the scaffold influence him. The Barlings, for all their foible of luxuriousness, were a tough breed. Thus, even if he succeeded in finding Bob his enterprise would probably be in vain.

He wondered for a moment whether its success might not complicate instead of help matters, and whether, therefore, he had not better abandon it. But that idea, which had vexed him since he left Curzon Street, was, after all, a cowardly one. To yield to it would be to abandon his friend and admit at the same time that Olva was guilty.

And, in spite of all the evidence, he was not ready to make such admission. His duty surely lay in giving such assistance toward clearing up this terrible affair as might rest in his power.

Brunswick Road proved to be one of those quaint, old-world thoroughfares which make Hampstead the most attractive of all the outlying areas of London. The houses stood behind the brick walls, over which ivy strayed deliciously, its polished leaves reflecting the gleam of the widely separated street lamps.

An air of remoteness dwelt among its trees. He had instructed the driver to go slowly along the whole length of the road in

the first instance, but he realized now that this method would afford him no information. So he stopped the cab and got out, telling the man to wait for him.

At that moment the sound of a girl's laughter came to him from one of the nearby doorways. A man's voice answered her. He felt a thrill of excitement tingle along his nerves. The voice was unmistakably Bob's. He sprang forward in time to see a big car emerge slowly from a carriage drive and swing out into the road. As it passed him he had a clear view of its occupants through the open side window.

They were a man and a girl, both wearing fancy dress and both masked.

The car sped swiftly away toward London. It had disappeared from view before he was able to reach his cab. He sprang into that vehicle, shouting to the driver to follow as quickly as he possibly could.

CHAPTER XX

AT THE CARNIVAL

UNHAPPILY, as the Scotland Yard man who had been told to keep an eye on Bob had discovered earlier in the day, following a motor car is not easy in the streets of London. There are so many chances to be encountered, any one of which may defeat the most skillful driver. Though his taxicab took great risks all the way to Baker Street, Dr. Hailey saw no more of the big limousine.

He gave up the chase there and told the man to take him home.

When he reached Harley street it was past ten o'clock. He paid off the cab and entered his house with a feeling of great despondency. He had failed just when success seemed to be within his grasp—for he had not the slightest doubt that the man he had seen was Bob.

He went to his dining room and sat down to the cold meal which had been provided for him. Was it possible that they were escaping from London in these garish costumes? Or were they going to some dance? He could not believe the latter explanation, because the risk of detection for the girl would be terrible, supposing that, by some mischance, her mask slipped from her face.

All the evening papers had now got wind of the sensation, and her picture had been reproduced in each one of them.

But if they left London, where could they go? Bob, so far as he knew, did not possess a country house, and he certainly could not take a girl wanted by the police to his brother's place. Nor was it likely that they would be so foolish as to make for any of the ports, knowing, as they must know, that every police officer and embarkation official there would be on the lookout for them.

He rose from the table and went back to his library. He picked up the *Evening News* and read the account of the "Moorfield's Lodge Mystery" through with great care. The report was accurate, so far as it went, though rather exaggerated importance was attached to the presence of the damaged Hillman coupé and to the Countess Olva's use of an *alias* at the Hammersmith garage.

No attempt, however, was made to offer any solution. He turned the pages of the paper to look at the illustrations of the scene of the crime, promised at the end of the article. As he did so he started. On the same page as these pictures was an article headed:

TO-NIGHT'S GREAT CARNIVAL

Mirth and Mystery at the Albert Hall

NO ADMITTANCE EXCEPT BY MASK

He glanced down the column and then laid the paper aside. He rose to his feet. Was it possible that, after all, they had flung their anxieties to the winds and gone dancing? The temptation held out by the masks would be great, and they were young and in love and desperate! Moreover, that was the last place any one would be likely to look for a woman over whose head a charge of murder was hanging.

He looked up the number of the Albert Hall and inquired whether or not he could still obtain a box for the evening. He was referred to an address in the neighborhood where the office for the ball was situated. A woman's voice informed him that two boxes on the grand tier could be had.

"Very well, I will take one of them."

He went to his bedroom and changed into a costume which he had had made for him the previous winter and in which he had scored a considerable success. It represented Sir John Falstaff. He pulled on a heavy overcoat and put his mask in his pocket. Then he strode through to the garage at the back of the house and got into the very smart coupé which he habitually drove himself.

He parked the vehicle with the others in front of Albert Hall Mansions and entered the great building. In the cloakroom he put on his mask. Then he strolled round the circular corridor until he discovered his name on the door of his box. He entered and shut the door behind him.

The scene was magnificent, more magnificent, he thought, than any which he had previously witnessed in the same building. The vast floor was crowded with dancers on whom the red and yellow and blue rays of light were focused from the great lanterns in the roof. The colors mingled and were dissociated again with kaleidoscopic effect. Then they swept upward over the battlements which constituted the scheme of decoration. The effect was of some medieval revelry taking place in the shadow of a great stronghold, and the masked faces intensified that impression. The watcher felt himself transported to a magic past, full of strange and alluring adventure.

Dr. Hailey, in spite of his keen powers of deduction and analysis, was very susceptible to "atmosphere" of this kind. He experienced a subtle joy, which astonished him anew and made him wonder why he so seldom indulged himself.

He told himself that a man who habitually starves any social instinct loses something of the completeness of his character. He sat back in his chair with half closed eyes, giving himself up to the rhythm of the music and watching the play of colors on the masked faces and exquisite costumes.

As usual, one saw more lovely women on this floor in five minutes than in as many hours anywhere else. Albert Hall dances are as cosmopolitan as Epsom Downs on Derby Day, and scarcely less interesting. All manner of men and all manner of women meet on that splendid floor. All nations, too, and all ranks.

He saw a lovely, golden-haired girl, whose success in a recent *première* was still echoing in the newspapers. She was masked like the others, but she wore the bizarre costume of her part, so that the world might recognize her. The velvet strip over her eyes seemed only to enhance the subtle quality of her beauty.

Then his eyes strayed to another girl with hair like beaten copper, whose dancing attracted attention even in that careless throng. He smiled, believing that he recognized the lady and then again doubted his recognition. Even the smallest mask, he told himself, was certainly a most efficient means of disguise.

The music stopped and the floor became less crowded. It resembled now a scene in an Eastern bazaar. Troupes of people stood about talking, or strolled from side to side to greet their friends in the boxes. A few had removed their masks, preparatory to going to supper. Dr. Hailey glanced at his watch and found that it was nearly midnight.

He left his box and walked along the corridor till he came to one of the passages leading to the floor. He moved slowly round the huge amphitheater toward the orchestra. As he reached it a card was displayed with the name of the next dance, and almost simultaneously the conductor raised his baton. He drew back among some palms which flanked the platform.

The moving tide of dancers began to flow again under the moving lights. Then voices grew quieter until, mingled with the music, they recalled the murmuring of a summer sea.

Radiant eyes gleamed from behind the masks and red lips smiled. Far above, seated at what seemed to be the windows of the great circumambient fortress, men and women crowded the fronts of the boxes to gaze on the enchanting spectacle.

"I have promised, have I not?"

Dr. Hailey felt himself stiffen. The voice had come to him unmistakably, with its clipped, well-bred accents. He turned his head sharply. It was Bob Barling, dressed as a Pierrot. The girl with whom he was

dancing wore a peasant costume which might have belonged to Spain or Italy. She was tall, graceful, and, he judged, beautiful, though her mask obscured the greater part of her face.

He caught his breath in an exclamation of amazement. The sheer boldness of this performance thrilled him. He waited until they returned following Bob's tall figure meanwhile with riveted gaze. As they drew near he had a clear view of them and tried to impress the details of their costumes on his mind. He felt no doubt now that the girl was Olva.

Her golden hair gleamed splendidly under the lamps. Her dancing, too, possessed that mysterious quality of *abandon* which no Englishwoman ever displays. They passed so near to him that he must have heard even a whisper, but they were not speaking at all.

At the far end of the Hall they left the crowd of dancers and disappeared from view. Dr. Hailey lingered, wondering whether or not he should follow them. But just then, glancing up at the tiers of boxes, he saw them appear and seat themselves in one of these, where supper had already been laid out.

CHAPTER XXI

WERE THEY GUILTY?

THE box was immediately above his own, so that he must lose sight of them entirely if he went there. He considered a moment and then mounted the stair to the second gallery and made his way into the large box reserved for representatives of the press. In that throng, he knew, he would pass entirely unnoticed. He sat down in the front of the box and turned his gaze to the man and woman whose audacity still held his imagination enthralled.

They had not removed their masks, but they were eating their supper with, so far as could be seen at that distance, complete equanimity. He observed the girl raise her glass and touch Bob's glass before she drank. Then the young man leaned toward her with a champagne bottle in his hand and gave her more wine.

He turned from them and let his eyes wander over the gay throng below. But he was no longer watching these people. His mind was busy instead with the problem which this daring adventure had created. What was his duty in relation to these lovers, one of whom he had been delighted to call his friend? There was no warrant out, of course, against Bob Barling, but Olva was definitely "wanted" as a person accused of murder. Even to give her shelter was a crime of the most serious character.

Then he tried to think what must happen if he took no action in the matter. Where would they go when the ball was over? The house at Hampstead might give them shelter for a time, but, sooner or later, the police would be certain to discover it.

When that happened Bob would be charged as an "accessory after the fact," and possibly convicted of murder. It would be asserted that he had known from the outset of the crime and had condoned it, and his action in following the murdered man from the High Court Hotel to South Street would be made use of to prove his complicity.

He got up and left the box. To whom, he wondered, did the house in Hampstead belong, and how had they gained entrance to it? He was compelled to admit that the fact of its being available when required was an ugly one. It certainly suggested very strongly that preparations had been made in advance of the crime.

That assuredly would be Biles's reading of the case, and Biles's readings usually convinced the juries to whom they were submitted. The thought crossed his mind that this murder must have deeper roots than any mere matter of politics. If Bob were indeed a party to it—and he had by no means brought himself to accept so terrible a conclusion—then the victim must have possessed some sinister power over Olva and must, in his last days, have been exercising that power with ruthless violence.

He came to his box and sat down. He found his snuffbox in a remote pocket of his costume and took a large pinch. That theory, and that theory alone, would account for what seemed to have happened. The Barlings, as he knew, were a wild

breed when it came to matters of chivalry. They would go to great lengths to defend the honor or safety of their womenfolk. Nevertheless, they were not the kind of people to leave the actual work of vengeance to a woman's hand. Why had not Bob gone to Moorfields with Olva in the first instance?

Suddenly he started. Was it certain that he had not gone? By his own confession he had followed Danatoff to South Street and then followed him back again to his hotel. After that, he had stated, he went home, but what proof was there of the accuracy of his statement? Biles clearly had not believed it; nor had it been corroborated in any way. It would not be corroborated, because the servants must have all gone to bed before their master returned.

He took another pinch of snuff and then closed his eyes. The band was playing a curious throbbing dance, very popular at the moment. The words, which he had heard somewhere, beat on his brain, " What shall I do—if you—get flu—. What shall I do?"

Then words and music faded as the thought grew clear in his mind that Bob had had plenty of time to go down to Wycombe in pursuit of Danatoff and return again to Curzon Street before 6 A.M., the time when Olva Vorloff's mother rang him up on the telephone. The journey need not occupy more than an hour and a half, because the roads would be quite empty. That would leave a margin of about an hour for the doings at the lodge.

The doctor sighed deeply. In that case Bob himself had almost certainly struck the fatal blow. Probably he had gone down in his own car and driven right up to the house at which, as he knew, Olva and Danatoff would have already arrived. If Danatoff's purpose with the girl was a shameful one he would instantly realize his danger when he saw Bob and quite probably open fire on him.

With a start of astonishment Dr. Hailey realized that this was equivalent to saying that Bob and the man Browning, in whose name the car with the shattered windscreen was registered, were the same person. But, in that case, what of the finger-prints discovered by Biles? Was it possible that Bob himself had visited the murdered man's room at the High Court Hotel?

Dr. Hailey leaned forward in the new anxiety which was gripping him. He had to admit that such a visit was quite possible. It might have been made in company with the man Tsarov, who was clearly connected in the same way with the business.

Bob could then go downstairs and demand an interview with Danatoff, knowing that Tsarov would answer the telephone. He did not, for the moment, see what object they could have in behaving in that fashion, but that, after all, was a detail. No doubt Olva had been conveyed at once to the house at Hampstead or, more probably, dropped there on the return journey from Wycombe.

As he reached this point in his theory the doctor felt a sense of horror such as even he had not formerly experienced. When he had convinced himself that Bob was the last man to have any dealings of any sort with murder he had left out of account the one possibility which might, which must, qualify that conviction.

No Barling would regard killing as murder when that killing saved a beloved woman's honor from the defilement of a scoundrel in the act of threatening it. Nor would any member of that family dream of confessing such a crime—and so perhaps obtaining mercy for himself—if the confession entailed a scandal in which his *fiancée* must be involved.

That stark truth had begun to fill his mind when, suddenly, he caught sight of the couple whose fate so greatly oppressed him gliding past his box in each other's arms. The girl was still entirely self-possessed, but he thought that Bob was unusually flushed about the neck, and that he danced with a less easy grace. Probably the champagne which he had drunk had gone to his head, for the nervous strain of the last twenty-four hours must have been terrific. The human brain possesses only a limited resistance to any stress, whether of life or of liquor.

They came back down the hall, but now the colored lights were in play again, so that it was difficult to form any judgment.

Showers of tiny balloons, released from receptacles in the room, floated down on the dancers, who were, in addition, enveloped in streamers of colored papers thrown from the boxes. The light caressed these gay toys producing a strange, wild effect which seemed to intoxicate the spirits of the dancers.

The pace of the music quickened, until a delirious note was mingled with its rhythm. Men and women gave themselves to the impulse of the moment. There were cries of excitement and the laughter of women, and, now and then, small explosions of the balloons which had fallen among the dancers' feet.

And then suddenly the band stopped and the great white lamps shone again on the scene.

Dr. Hailey searched the gay mob to find the lovers, but could not. He hurried from his box to the floor and looked up at the box which they had occupied, only to discover it empty.

He strode back to the gallery and made his way to the entrance hall, where the main cloakrooms were situated. He was just in time to see Bob present his ticket for his hat and coat.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LIGHTED WINDOW

DR. HAILEY got his coat and went out to his car. He boarded the vehicle and sat watching the entrance of the hall until Bob appeared with his companion. The young man came to the edge of the curb and waved his hand for a taxi. Then he turned to the girl and seemed to lurch against her.

A policeman who was standing near took his arm and steadied him. Then the cab drove up and the couple entered it. The doctor moved slowly from his position.

It was obvious that Bob had drunk too much champagne, but, in the circumstances, that was scarcely to be wondered at. Only now, when he was far removed from the events of the last days, would the full meaning of these events become apparent to him.

And such a revelation, as the doctor well knew, must be almost unbearable to a mind so delicately poised and fastidious as his. Olva, accustomed to the horrors of the Bolshevist reign of terror, would scarcely react to circumstances which, in her lover's case, must prove overwhelming.

The taxi he was following ran straight to Hyde Park Corner and then turned up Park Lane. It dived, thereafter, into Mayfair, came to Oxford Street at Orchard Street, and continued its way by Baker Street and Regent's Park. Obviously the destination was Brunswick Road, Hampstead. Dr. Hailey slackened speed so as to arouse no possible suspicion in these empty thoroughfares.

He ascended Fitzjohn's Avenue slowly and mounted on a low gear to the crest of the Heath. He took his car down the semi-circular road which communicates with the Vale of Health and left it drawn up at the curb just where Brunswick Road takes off. He walked slowly along in the direction of the house from which earlier in the evening the couple he was following had emerged.

When he came to the house he saw the tail lamp of the cab gleaming like a ruby through the bushes. A moment later the vehicle lurched down the short drive and emerged on the road. He strolled on, wondering at the foolhardiness which had betrayed the secret of this refuge to a driver with whom, possibly, the police might ultimately get in touch. Why had they not returned as they went, in the private car?

The explanation, perhaps, lay in the fact that Bob was no longer master of himself. It was quite likely that he had forgotten his car when he summoned the cab. Olva would be too glad to get him safely away to offer any objection, even if the danger of the step occurred to her.

He walked back toward the house, the number of which was ten. There was nobody in sight and silence dwelt everywhere. When he came to the gate he glanced round to assure himself that he was not observed and then slipped inside and moved to the shelter of the shrubbery which surrounded the house. The night was rather cold, and he felt a trifle shivery in his thin costume. Nevertheless, he was determined,

not to relinquish the enterprise until he gained every scrap of information which might be available.

The house was a large Georgian building, standing in fairly extensive grounds. By the dim light of a clouded moon he saw that it was separated from its neighbors on each side by strips of lawn, flanked by bushes. Wooden railings indicated the boundaries. He crept up toward the front and took careful stock of the windows.

They were all dark; nor was there any light showing anywhere. The house, indeed, gave the impression of being untenanted, because the shutters of the windows on the ground floor had been closed. Keeping as near as possible to the shrubbery he moved round the left side of the building and came to the back. That also was dark and deserted-looking.

He approached one of the windows and tried to peer in, but was unable to see anything. The room he thought must be the kitchen, but, if so, it did not appear to have been in use very recently, for the glass of the windows was covered with dust.

He stood a moment, with his ear to the sill, trying to detect any sound which might indicate that the place was, in fact, inhabited. He heard nothing. The uneasy thought came to him that, possibly, his entrance to the grounds had been observed.

That would explain the absence of any sign of life—for he could not for a moment doubt that Bob and his companion had entered the house. But, in the young man's present state, a careful watch was, to say the least of it, unlikely. He began to wonder whether or not he had better go away and leave them. After all, it was not his business to act the spy on his friends.

That mood lasted, however, only for an instant. Whatever the doubts which might have crossed his mind, he had no proof of any sort that Bob Barling was seriously involved. Indeed, the young man's behavior on the previous day had been such as to discount the theory of his complicity. He had spoken and acted with the frankness of complete innocence. Dr. Hailey recalled that fact with a sense of deep satisfaction.

He even blamed himself for having given his suspicions too free a range. It was fatal in detective work, as he knew, to leave the personal element out of one's calculations, and yet that was precisely the fault of which he had been guilty. He recalled with a sense of bitterness that he had accused Biles of the very same error only a few hours before.

His duty was clear—to pursue the inquiry on which he had embarked to its conclusion with a perfectly open mind. Unless his knowledge of his fellows was greatly at fault the discovery of the truth must aid, and not injure, those whom he had learned to trust and respect.

He had just reached this conclusion when he started slightly. There had come to him faintly, as though through closed doors, the echoes of a woman's laughter.

The sound seemed to proceed from that side of the house which, so far, he had not inspected. He walked toward it, stepping carefully on the damp grass. He came to the corner of the building and then suddenly bent down.

Right in front of him and but a few paces distant, the gleam from a lighted window shone out against the darkness of night. It fell garishly across the lawn to the shrubbery, which it illuminated brightly.

He crept out, in the shadow, to a distance which he judged to be safe and then moved forward again to a point from which he could hope to obtain a view of the room and its occupants.

An exclamation of amazement broke from his lips as he achieved his purpose.

Seated at a table facing him was Bob Barling, his mask removed, his face flushed and bloated with wine, his eyes apparently half closed. The girl was beside him, bending over him with her arms around his neck. She seemed to be in the act of kissing his brow.

Suddenly she straightened herself and turned to the window, laughing gayly. Dr. Hailey strangled a second cry of amazement on his lips.

Her mask was gone. This was not Olva Vorloff at all, but a woman he had never seen before, a woman whose beautiful face was marred by the ineffaceable signs of a life of reckless pleasure.

A sense of lively disgust swept his mind.

So this was the explanation, this wretched, vulgar spectacle!

Dr. Hailey was a man of the world, but there are various meanings attaching to that much-abused term. The idea that he could have been so grossly mistaken in Bob overwhelmed him. He put it away from him. But there was the evidence before his eyes, evidence which he could not, if he would, refuse to accept.

The young man whom he had pictured as risking everything for the woman he loved, whom he had even seen as a criminal in love's defence, was no more than a common *debauché,* a fellow so devoid of decent feeling that he could forget the plight of his *fiancée* in an hour and give himself with reckless *abandon* to vicious conduct of the crudest description. Biles had been right after all; his cold mind had perceived a side of Bob's character which the eyes of his friends never recognized.

The doctor prepared to make his escape from the garden. Not here certainly would he discover the evidence which he sought, and the idea of continuing to witness this revolting scene was hateful to him. He took a step forward on to the lawn, his earlier caution abandoned. As he did so Bob staggered to his feet and stood leering across the room at the girl, who had retired to a corner and was now regarding him with a mocking, pleasure-haunted smile.

"Sit down, boy!" she cried in tones which carried through the panes of the window.

She pouted as she spoke in a manner so provocative that Dr. Hailey watched in spite of himself. The young man took a step toward her and then lurched against the table. Suddenly he gathered himself together and almost sprang to her side. He seized her by the shoulders as an angry schoolmaster might have seized a troublesome small boy. His red face was thrust toward her face.

"For God's sake," he shouted hoarsely, "don't play with me!"

But the effort seemed to exhaust his resolution. The weak, bibulous look which the doctor had noticed in the first instance returned to his eyes. He lurched and then, to steady himself, flung his arms round the girl's neck. They sank together on to a sofa to which, with considerable skill, she had managed to guide him.

Dr. Hailey could endure no more. He turned on his heel and strode down the lawn toward the gate. A sense of utter weariness and disillusionment possessed his spirit. Never again, he felt, could he put his trust in any one whom he had not proved to the very hilt. Never again.

He stood still suddenly, riveted to the ground.

A woman's crying, piteous, heart-broken, thrilled in the silence.

CHAPTER XXIII

VOICES IN THE NIGHT

THE sound continued in varying cadences. It was the most grief-stricken which, Dr. Hailey thought, he had ever heard, as though hope had been cast down from her place in a strong spirit.

And then suddenly the silence fell again, and there came a new sound as of heavy shutters being closed. At the same moment the beam of light issuing from the room behind him was cut off.

He remained standing still, gazing at the dark outline of the house, his mind a prey to all manner of new anxieties. What had occurred in that room since he left his point of observation? What fresh, terrible event had happened to wring from those mocking lips so bitter a recantation of their folly? What was happening there even now, while he stood irresolute?

His mind cleared suddenly as the face of the sea is cleared of mist. He strode back to the side of the house and posted himself before the darkened window. Not a gleam of light escaped from the closed shutters. He came on tiptoe to the sill and bent down to listen. There was no sound in the room. He waited, but the silence remained unbroken. An owl hooted in the distance. Far away, like a wind moving among great trees, the voice of London whispered her immemorial message.

He turned from the window and glanced about him. It might be possible to gain an entrance to the house elsewhere and so come

to the room from within. But even if he succeeded in that enterprise, what assurance had he that his intrusion would be of service?

Both Bob and his companion had been drinking and it was possible that this mood of folly had merely given place to a lachrymose state. Such swift transitions were common enough. Yet the cry which he had heard had not suggested that explanation.

He moved back a few paces toward the boundary fence in order to gain a clearer view of the upper windows. They did not seem to be shuttered, as the lower windows were, but their height from the ground and the fact that the walls were bare of any creeper made that a matter of no consequence. Without a ladder it would be impossible to reach them. He passed his hand across his brow in an anxious gesture. There seemed to be nothing for it but to abandon a hopeless enterprise.

He had just reached this decision when the sound of a twig snapping close behind him came to his ears. The sound was clear and unmistakable. He bent down and strained his eyes to penetrate the shadows of the bushes. A moment later he saw a dark figure emerge a few paces away from him and begin to cross the lawn. It showed up distinctly in the weak moonlight.

He moved forward, keeping well within the shelter of the shrubbery. The figure came to the shuttered window and then he heard a gentle tapping on the glass pane. It was followed by the sound of the opening of the shutters, but, because the room was now in darkness, he was unable to see who had opened them. A voice with a strong foreign accent exclaimed in tones of great relief,

"So it is you. I thank God! When he jumped to close the shutters I feared very much."

Dr. Hailey heard a laugh, which was clearly that of the girl, Bob's companion.

"Oh," she cried, "that was his last kick. He went to sleep after it and I turned out the lights. Listen!"

Her tones were cheerful and confident and betrayed none of the fear which had sounded in the cry of a few minutes ago. She spoke again, but in accents so low that he could not hear her. Nor did he dare to risk showing himself on the lawn.

"I think it is good," the man answered her. He seemed to hesitate a moment and then repeated that statement. Then he left the window as quickly as he had approached it and came back across the lawn. The doctor waited until he had reëntered the shrubbery before attempting to follow him.

The man went straight on to the low fence which separated the house from its next door neighbor. He climbed over the fence and dived into the shrubbery on the opposite side of it. Dr. Hailey was just in time to see him hurry across the open space beyond to the door of the house. He entered, shutting the door behind him.

Hailey waited a moment and then followed across the lawn. The door was a heavy one and he realized at once that it would be a matter of extreme difficulty to force it. He left it and crept along to the window on the left hand side. It was unshuttered. He climbed up on to the sill and inspected the catch.

As he anticipated, it was of an old-fashioned pattern. If only he had brought his pocket-knife with him! But he had left that, with his other personal belongings, when he changed into his fancy costume. He stood irresolute, trying to think of some means of replacing it.

Then his hand encountered the top of the dagger which was part of his costume. He drew the thin blade and inserted it carefully between the sashes. He pressed on it. The catch was released with a sharp click.

He put his thumbs on the top of the lower sash and raised it gently a few inches. Then he descended again and pushed it up from below. He climbed carefully into the room. The window was curtained, but even after he had drawn the curtains well back he was unable to see anything. Adopting a well-tried thief's trick, he went down on his hands and knees and crept round the room until he had located the door. When he turned the handle it opened readily.

The hall, however, was as dark as the room had been. He stood listening on the threshold. Not a sound, not even the ticking of a clock disturbed the heavy silence. He moved cautiously along the wall in a

direction away from the front door, testing each step with the toe of his shoe before he took it. That precaution saved him from disaster at the foot of the stairs, which he quickly reached. Without delay he seated himself and removed both his shoes. Then he began to ascend the broad flight.

Near the top of it a faint murmur of voices reached his ears and made him pause. The sound was coming from somewhere on the left, but whether from a room near at hand or far away he was unable to decide. Nor could he detect a single word. He finished his ascent and advanced along the passage to which the staircase had brought him.

The voices grew clearer now. They were coming from a room at the back of the house, the door of which he found easily. It was shut. He put his ear to one of the panels and listened.

The conversation was being carried on in a foreign language—in Russian, he thought. A man and a woman were taking part in it. The man's voice was strong and commanding, but the replies which the woman made sounded faint and indistinct.

Should he enter the room at once and confront them? But to do that would merely be to give them warning of his presence. They were probably armed and would soon overpower him.

Suddenly the talk ended and he heard footsteps crossing the floor. He withdrew hurriedly from his position and went on tiptoe farther along the passage till he came to a second door on the same side. He stood straight up against it, trusting to the recess it afforded to hide him.

The alarm, however, was a false one. A moment later the conversation was resumed in the same tones. With great surprise he observed that it was not less distinctly audible than it had been before.

That could only mean that the two rooms communicated with each other and that the means of communication was open. He grasped the door-handle beside him and, using infinite care, attempted to turn it. The locked moved without noise of any kind. He pushed the door ajar and peered into the room beyond.

It was unlighted, but a strong beam of light from a second door which he saw was standing half open penetrated its darkness. The voices came to him now with absolute distinctness, the man's voluble and eager, the woman's colorless, like the voice of a sick person in a delirium. He stole into the room, half closing the door behind him. Then he tiptoed forward to a point from which he might hope to gain a view of what was passing in the next apartment.

The sight which met his eyes was stranger than anything which his imagination had dared to picture.

CHAPTER XXIV

A DROP OF BLOOD

LYING on a sofa, with her splendid golden hair half obscured by a bandage which encircled her brow, was Olva Vorloff.

Her eyes were closed. Her hands, white and frail-looking as lilies, were folded on her breast. A look, strange, cold, expressionless composed her features. But it was not this which held Dr. Hailey's attention spellbound. At the foot of the sofa, gazing down on the girl, and all the while as he gazed pouring out in a dull monotone a torrent of words, was the most extraordinary-looking being whom he had ever seen.

It was the man's eyes which fascinated him. They were small, but they glared so terribly that they seemed to possess his whole face; and they had a quality of passion which was like kindled flame.

The doctor approached as near to the open door as he dared. As he did so the man stooped down and lifted one of Olva's hands. She opened her eyes and at the same moment an expression of grief and despair came into her face.

It seemed that, at that moment, the man's eyes lost something of their wildness. They appeared to fall before Olva's eyes, and when he raised them again they were gentler; but even so, they had not lost their passionate intensity.

"Oh, no, no; I don't believe it. It isn't true!" the girl cried in bitter accents. "You shall not make me believe that it is true."

He answered her in Russian. He came to her side and raised her up to a sitting posture. Then he sat down beside her and took her hand in his hands. He raised it to his lips and kissed it reverently.

She did not resist him. Indeed she lifted her eyes to his face as though his words had consoled her. She spoke to him, too, in Russian, evidently replying to a question which he had asked. Dr. Hailey saw the terrible eyes gleam anew. Then another question was asked and answered.

Suddenly a frown gathered on Olva's brow. Her expression changed and she raised her hand in a gesture of repudiation. The light flamed in her hair, lending a weird, unearthly quality to her beauty.

The man rose and stood with his back to the doctor. He seemed to have thrust out his hands toward the girl. Then he stood hesitating a moment.

And, gradually, her opposition to him passed and her face recovered its look of serenity. She closed her eyes.

He laid her gently back on the couch and then stood some distance from her, gazing at her fixedly. It was obvious that he was disconcerted. He spoke again, in very low tones. He seemed to be repeating the same words over and over, like an incantation. At last he called her by name.

"Olva! Olva!"

She opened her eyes. They were calm now, and full of confidence in him. She held out her hand to him and he came and knelt beside her. He spoke and she answered him quite freely, without a trace of the resentment she had shown a few moments before.

And, after that, silence fell in the room. Her eyes closed again and she seemed to have fallen asleep. The man rose and stood beside her for a few seconds. Then he turned and went to the door leading to the passage. At the same moment a telephone bell in some neighboring room began to ring with the brazen insistence of its kind.

The sound aroused the girl. She started up and glanced wildly about her. Then she seemed to recollect herself. Her face became suddenly deadly pale. Dr. Hailey saw tears start to her eyes. She rose from the couch and stood a moment looking vacantly toward him. Then she walked with quick steps to the window of the room and threw it open.

He started forward, seized by a sudden dread that she was going to throw herself out. But a moment later he saw that this was not her object. She had come to watch. She raised her hands to her eyes, peering into the darkness like a lookout man on a ship. Then, as suddenly as she had opened the window, she closed it again. She turned and seemed to totter back into the room. Her cheeks were bloodless and her eyes stared. She groped at the empty air with her hands.

A moan, heartbroken and very pitiful, escaped her lips. Next moment she had fallen full length on the rich carpet.

The doctor sprang to her assistance. He knelt beside her and put his fingers on her pulse. It flickered faintly beneath them. He chafed her hands and then her cheeks and her brow where the bandage left it exposed. Suddenly he bent down and put his ear to her chest. A look of consternation appeared on his face.

He seized her arms and began to swing them vigorously in the manner of those who work to restore persons from the effects of drowning. Then he listened again and then again resumed his labor. The horror in his eyes grew deeper. He bent over the pallid face. Surely he must be mistaken! There must be some fault surely in his observation. If only he had carried his hypodermic syringe!

Suddenly a cry escaped him. On her right forearm, from which the sleeve had been drawn back by his efforts, there had appeared a tiny spot of blood. Beside it was a puncture mark, which showed up clearly on the white skin.

Dismay darkened his eyes. He snatched again at her pulse with trembling fingers.

It had ceased to beat.

He staggered to his feet and sprang to the door of the room, shouting in his rage and horror.

And next moment a great darkness was spread before his eyes and he felt himself being hurled to destruction.

TO BE CONTINUED

He lay there at full length looking in all directions

CARMICHAEL UP A TREE

By John Laurence

WITH A DOZEN CLEWS POINTING ONE WAY, DR. CARMICHAEL LOOKS FOR THE ONE POINTING ANOTHER

TO the little group who were gathered round the pool there came the distant sounds of a powerful car slowing down and stopping. Two minutes later a lean, sandy-haired, quick-eyed man came striding through the heavy undergrowth from the direction of Norton Hall.

"Hello, Carmichael, you got my wire, I see," called out one of the group by the pool, a giant-framed man standing beside an inspector of police.

"Yes, and came straight down," replied the criminologist. "Pity you know the times when I am free so well, Bradfield," he said with a twinkle in his eyes.

Superintendent John Bradfield smiled.

"You've said yourself quickness is everything," he answered. "This is Dr. Carmichael, Miss Lawson; and this is Inspector Marshall of the local police. He's in charge, of course."

The professor looked keenly at the girl. Her face was full of piteous appeal as she acknowledged the introduction of the superintendent. Her voice trembled as she spoke. "Oh, Dr. Carmichael, Dicky didn't do it—he didn't do it," she half sobbed.

The professor gently put his hand on her shoulder.

"Didn't do what?" he asked softly. "You must remember, Miss Lawson, that I know nothing practically at present. The superintendent here just wired me to come to Norton Hall as fast as possible—and here I am."

Beside the giant-framed superintendent the girl looked almost fragile and her slim figure seemed to accentuate her fragility. But Carmichael saw that her clear blue eyes looked steadily into his, noted the firm line

of her lips, the steadiness with which she held herself. To his professional eye, however, the dark skin under her eyelids and the unnatural pallor of her lips told their own story of suppressed anxiety.

"You are in trouble?" he asked quietly.

"Dreadful trouble, doctor," she answered quickly. Her breath caught in a little sob. "I have told Superintendent Bradfield."

"I'll hear the outlines from him first then," said Carmichael gently. "And you can fill up any blanks."

"Miss Lawson is a distant relation of mine," began the detective. "She lives here. Norton is only a small village a few miles this side of Horsham. She is engaged to be married to Dicky Helston, the tennis player. You have heard of him?"

The professor nodded. He followed sport keenly, as he went to most forms of amusement from a music hall to the opera. "Tell me the chief sport and amusements of a man and I'll tell you his character," he had often declared. And as often he had proved himself right.

"Dicky Helston's brother Robert owns Norton Hall, and about a thousand acres of ground," continued Bradfield. "Yesterday morning Robert Helston was found lying in this pool." Mary Lawson gave a slight shudder as he spoke. "By the gamekeeper Mitchell and his chauffeur, Penfold. He had been shot through the head. Two hours later Inspector Marshall arrested Dicky Helston and charged him with the murder of his brother."

"Oh, Dr. Carmichael, he didn't do it," broke in the girl, clasping her hands appealingly. "Dicky wouldn't hurt anybody."

The professor patted her on the shoulder.

"Let me hear all the facts first, Miss Lawson," he said kindly. "I am sure you do not think for one moment he did it. If Inspector Marshall has made a mistake, and even with the best intentions mistakes cannot always be avoided, we will soon put it right. What were the grounds for the arrest?" he added, turning to the inspector.

"I wish you could prove I was wrong, sir," said the inspector quickly. "I was fairly forced into making the arrest. The revolver found by the side of the dead man belonged to Mr. Richard, and one cartridge was fired. The doctor found yesterday afternoon that the bullet in Mr. Robert's head fitted this revolver. We picked up Mr. Richard's cap a few yards away.

"It was reported to me by Penfold, the chauffeur, that the previous evening he had overheard the two brothers having a violent quarrel. He said that he heard Mr. Richard tell his brother he deserved to be shot. Both were seen going toward the direction of the pool between nine and ten."

"Who saw them?" asked the professor.

"Both Mitchell and Penfold, sir," answered the inspector.

"Young Helston inherits, of course?"

Inspector Marshall nodded.

"That is the motive that has been suggested," interrupted Bradfield slowly. "He was, they say, in debt and being pressed—"

"Dr. Carmichael, it's not true, it's not true!" broke in the girl. "Dicky didn't do it. Things are terribly against him. Of course he owes money, but it is nothing very dreadful. His tennis costs him a lot. It's not as though he gambled or anything like that. Oh, it's dreadful any one should think that he would kill his own brother to pay off a few debts. You surely don't believe that, Dr. Carmichael?"

"I believe nothing until I have heard all the facts, Miss Lawson," replied the criminologist quietly. "So far I have only heard a few facts from Inspector Marshall's point of view. Probably your *fiancé* will be able to put a very different complexion on the affair. You want to help him, of course. The best way is to keep as calm as possible, and tell me all you know, whether it seems in his favor or not.

"The more I know the better chance I shall have of getting at the truth. Be sure if Mr. Helston is innocent we shall have no difficulty in proving it. Now, when did you last see him, before his brother was found?"

"The afternoon previous. We played tennis together and I left about six o'clock. My mother and I were alone and I promised to be back early."

Her voice was under better control now.

"Mr. Helston was in good spirits? He wasn't worried about anything?"

She hesitated a moment before replying.

"He *was* worried about something," she

answered slowly. "He was very angry with his brother over something, but he wouldn't tell me what it was. They had had one or two rows about it before, I believe. You see I am trying to tell you the truth, Dr. Carmichael," she finished pathetically. "Though it is not in Dicky's favor."

"The truth can't hurt an innocent man, Miss Lawson," said Carmichael with an encouraging smile. "I hope your faith will be justified. Such faith as yours deserves to be. If the inspector will stay with me while you, Bradfield, take Miss Lawson up to the house, I should be glad," he added turning to the famous Scotland Yard detective. "Where was the body found, exactly," he asked as the others moved out of earshot.

"Here, sir," said the inspector. He had heard so much of the great expert that he willingly subordinated himself to watch his methods. And he was sincere in his wish that the man he had arrested should prove to be innocent. But even he could not but admit the facts were too damning.

The place to which he pointed was on the edge of the pool almost opposite to where the pathway led out.

II

CARMICHAEL slowly surveyed the spot and walked backward and forward in the ever widening circles. About a score of feet away from the edge of the pool stood a huge oak tree, its branches almost reaching the swampy ground. A number of boughs had evidently been recently broken off and there was a confused mass of footprints.

"The gamekeeper, Mitchell, and the chauffeur, Penfold, found him, and broke the boughs off to make a litter," explained the inspector.

Carmichael nodded at the explanation.

"What do you think of it, inspector?" he asked.

"Black, very black, sir," answered the inspector. "Though Dicky Helston's the last man I should have suspected. He's one of the best."

"It's too black," objected the criminologist. "There are too many of the stock ingredients to my liking. There's the brother in debt, the quarrel, the accused man's revolver and cap, the evidence that he was seen going in the direction of the murder. It's too much like a scene out of a two-penny-half-penny novel.

"A man like Helston, an athlete, a first-class tennis player accustomed to keeping his head in an emergency when a thousand pairs of eyes are watching him, is hardly likely to lose his head so completely as to leave such damning evidence behind as his revolver and cap!"

"Still murder's not tennis," said the inspector with unconscious humor.

"Well, we'll see," said Carmichael pulling out his watch. "We have got another hour of daylight. I should like to make a thorough examination here. It looks as though it's going to be a wet night. I should be glad if you would fetch along the gamekeeper and the chauffeur. It's always best to get first hand information. Where are the cap and revolver? I may want to see them later."

"At the station," replied the inspector, as he moved away.

Carmichael watched him under his shaggy sandy eyebrows until he had disappeared, and then, shifting his foot slightly, bent down swiftly and prized a round red object out of the mud. He looked at it for a moment before placing it in his pocket. Reaching up he caught hold of the big bough but a few feet off the ground and swung himself up into it.

He lay there at full length looking in all directions, his face almost touching the bark. Something seemed to puzzle him and then with a little smile he picked out of a small hollow a few black strands and slipped them into an envelope.

"Thought I smelled something funny," he murmured to himself.

By the time the inspector had returned he was standing beside the pool as though he had never moved.

He listened carefully as the two men told their story of the previous morning's discovery. The chauffeur, Penfold, by his accent, was clearly a London man.

"From Bermondsey, sir," he said in answer to the professor's question. "And don't I 'arf wish I was back again some-

times. Gets the fair pip with nothin' to do but 'ang about."

The gamekeeper grunted his disapproval.

"You're a countryman, I see," smiled Carmichael.

"Lived in Norton all my life, sir," replied Mitchell. "I was underkeeper here for fifteen year, and been headkeeper for five year."

"And your son will follow on, I suppose?" asked Carmichael, pulling out his cigarette case.

"There be no son, sir," replied the gamekeeper feelingly. "There be only my daughter Elsie, an' a fine gel she be."

"Have a cigarette?"

The professor held out his case, and the chauffeur eagerly took one. The inspector and the gamekeeper shook their heads.

"Don't hold with them things," said the latter. "Give me a pipe an' some shag, summat with a bite in it."

"How did people get on with Mr. Robert round here?" continued the professor shutting his case with a snap.

"'E was orlright, sir," replied the chauffeur. "Bit fond of the lydies, but free-'anded with 's money."

"Bit too fond of women, I reckon," added the gamekeeper. "Went out of his class too much."

"Well, that's all, thank you," said Carmichael. "I'll go up to the house with you, inspector."

"So Robert Helston was fond of the ladies?" he continued, when the other two were out of earshot.

"Well, young men must have their fling," smiled the inspector. "I don't say he wasn't worse than most of them. Of course Mitchell's a bit down on him because his daughter's the beauty round here and he was rather afraid for her."

"And his brother?"

"Dicky Helston's got no eyes for anybody except Mary Lawson," replied the inspector. "They've been sweethearts since they were children together."

"What story did he tell?"

"He admitted at once that he had had several rows with his brother and also that he had said he deserved to be shot, but he refuses to say what the rows were about. He admits that he went down to the pool between nine and ten and ran into his brother there and they had a bit of a scuffle. But he won't admit he was carrying his revolver or wearing a cap. Sticks to it he hasn't seen the revolver for months and said he went out bareheaded."

The other nodded abstractedly. It was rapidly getting dark and Carmichael could faintly make out the big old-fashioned building of Norton Hall.

"That's an old place if you like," said the inspector. "It's said to be built of ship's timbers from some of old Harry's. Some of them are over a couple of feet thick. The Helstons have had it for generations. I'll just pay my respects to the superintendent and then I must get back."

"Well, Marshall had a lesson in detective work?" smiled Bradfield as the two came in.

"I don't think Dr. Carmichael has discovered much," answered the inspector confidently. "I went over the ground pretty thoroughly."

"I have discovered enough to make me want to stop the night, if I may," said the professor quietly, turning to Mary Lawson.

"The devil you have," exclaimed the inspector. "I didn't notice—"

"You weren't there all the time, inspector," smiled the criminologist.

"So that's why you sent me to fetch Mitchell and Penfold," said the inspector ruefully.

"Have you really found something?" asked Mary Lawson eagerly.

"I can't really say," answered the professor. "All I can say is that I am not quite so sure of Dicky Helston's guilt as—well, as Inspector Marshall is, for instance," he finished with a twinkle in his eye.

Mary Lawson opened her mouth to speak and then stopped as she saw the professor shake his head slightly. She rightly divined that he was not buoying her up with any false hopes, that he had made some discovery which might mean all the world to her. And her eyes were shining with a new light as the inspector turned a few minutes later and bade them all good night.

"I shall be down at the station early tomorrow to look at that revolver and cap,"

said the professor genially as the inspector went through the door. "And mum's the word till I see you."

"You are running Norton Hall?" he asked turning to Mary Lawson.

"There's no one else for the moment," she answered. "Dicky and his brother were orphans, you know. Penfold has gone to fetch my mother."

Mrs. Lawson proved to be one of those dear old gray-haired ladies who seem to take one back to the days of crinoline. Her blue eyes were still as bright as they must have been forty years before and with her coming the atmosphere seemed to lighten immediately.

"I have read much about you, Dr. Carmichael," she said, ingenuously, over the dinner table. "And I have read that you are very clever."

"Madam, all that's printed is not necessarily true," he laughed.

"You will be clever enough to save Dicky," she answered soberly. "He's hot-headed, but he rings true. I knew him when he was a day old, and I should have been proud to have him as my son. He was very different from his poor brother."

The other nodded.

"I am hoping that you will have him for a son-in-law soon, Mrs. Lawson, though I mustn't raise false hopes."

"We'll have coffee in the smoking room, Elsie," said her daughter turning to the trim-looking, rosy-cheeked maid who had been waiting at the table.

"The gamekeeper's daughter is an Elsie," remarked Carmichael, as the girl closed the door behind her.

"Yes, this is Elsie Mitchell," replied Mary Lawson. "She's supposed to be one of the belles of the village. Half the men would marry her if they had the chance, but she has turned them all down."

The professor eyed the servant keenly as she brought in the coffee, but he made no further comment. For the rest of the evening, indeed, he exerted himself to avoid all reference to the murder of Robert Helston. He had traveled widely and had a happy knack of description which made them all forget for the time being the tragedy which had come so suddenly upon them.

"You have made me feel hopeful," whispered Mary Lawson, as she bade him good night.

"That's right," he smiled. "Don't climb your hills till you get to them. Accusing a man of a crime doesn't make him a criminal."

"And now, John," he added, when they were alone. "I want to see Helston's body before I go to bed. I shall sleep a little easier perhaps afterward."

The superintendent asked no questions. He had worked too often with Carmichael not to know that it was useless to ask any questions until the other was prepared to place all his cards on the table.

"He's in his own bedroom," he said shortly, "in his coffin. The inquest is to be held here to-morrow morning at eleven. Come along, I'll show you where."

III

HE led the way up the black-beamed staircase, and into a low-ceilinged room at the top of the stairs. The coffin was resting on a long low table, and the professor quietly lifted the lid. In his lifetime Robert Helston must have been a handsome enough man, though the heavy underlip bore out the chauffeur's judgment that he had been a little too fond of the ladies.

Save for the hole in one temple, from which the blood had been carefully washed away and the skin as far as possible replaced, there was nothing to show how he had come by his death. The bullet wound, indeed, was hardly noticeable, but the professor bent over the dead man's face eagerly and examined the wound closely.

"Getting nearer, John," he cried with a little note of triumph in his voice. "I recommend you to study that wound a little. It is very interesting. I'm off to bed. I want to be up early in the morning."

Carmichael was certainly up earlier than the superintendent, for the latter heard, as he was dressing, the criminologist whistling to himself outside the house.

"You were out bright and early, Michael," he smiled as the doctor sat down to breakfast.

"I have been down to the police station this morning," answered Carmichael cheerfully. "And I shall be back in London this afternoon with the slightest luck."

Mary Lawson's hand shook as she passed over the other's tea. He nodded in reply to the question in her eyes.

"It's all right, Miss Lawson. Dicky will be released this afternoon. Please don't ask any questions, yet."

The tears came to her eyes but Carmichael affected not to notice them as he spread the marmalade on his toast.

"It has been a most interesting case, John," he said. "And a lesson to our friend Marshall that the obvious is not always the truth."

A few minutes later he leaned over and whispered a few words to Mary Lawson. The superintendent saw her eyes open and she nodded an agreement to the request of the criminologist.

"I shall not be more than five minutes," he said as he rose and went out.

Within that time he had returned.

"Come along, John," he said. "I have arranged to meet the inspector at the lodge at half past nine. It's nearly that now."

The two found the inspector chatting to the gamekeeper Mitchell.

"He lives in the lodge," exclaimed Carmichael as they approached. "Well, inspector, are you ready?"

"Yes, sir," answered the inspector.

The professor rapped out a question.

"Why did you shoot Robert Helston, Mitchell?"

With a hoarse cry of rage the gamekeeper, taken off his guard, sprang with raised fist in the direction of Carmichael, but the burly arms of the inspector closed on him before the blow could fall.

"Damn you, I should have had them both but for your cursed interference," he shouted. "He was after my gel. It's in the Helston blood. They're all the same."

Then with an effort he subsided into silence.

"Come along, John," said the professor as the inspector and his prisoner moved away.

"What made you suspect?" asked the astonished superintendent.

"I felt pretty sure that Dicky Helston wasn't guilty almost from the beginning," remarked the professor. "The case was too black, too obvious against him. My first step in the right direction was when I was standing by the pool. Half buried in the ground I found this."

He held out the round red object he had picked up.

"An artificial cherry," exclaimed the detective.

"Exactly. Used chiefly for trimming ladies' hats," continued the other. "Of course it might mean nothing or it might be very vital; but it was worth considering. As I was standing there, waiting for Marshall to bring along the gamekeeper and the chauffeur, it struck me what a fine hiding place that oak was to watch any one by the pool.

"The lowest branch is extremely low down, and any one lying his full length upon it and keeping still would be practically hidden from any one below. While I was lying there ruminating on that fact I detected a faint smell of tobacco, and found these."

He pulled an envelope out of his pocket and shook a few black strands into the palm of his hand.

"Shag," said Bradfield.

"Exactly. More to get Marshall out of the way so that I could make an examination undisturbed than for any other reason I had sent him to fetch the chauffeur and the gamekeeper, who had discovered the body. They both gave me some very valuable information. By a little artifice I discovered that Mitchell smoked shag, and from both that Robert Helston had been too fond of women.

"The inspector supplemented that information by telling me that Mitchell was afraid for his own daughter because of her good looks. I am afraid he had justification for that fear. This cherry came off the girl's hat. I asked Miss Lawson to keep her occupied for five minutes after breakfast while I looked over her room.

"She has a hat trimmed with cherries, and undoubtedly she used to meet Robert Helston down by the pool. Undoubtedly, too, her father found out that meeting place and lay in wait for them.

"But he overstepped himself in more than one way. He had become insane with hatred against all the Helston family and determined at one blow to wipe out both brothers. He's practically insane on the subject, through brooding. His wife ran off with some man years ago and I expect that was really the cause of his unbalanced mind.

"That was why he used Dicky Helston's revolver, why he planted that cap there. You remember last night I suggested to you that that revolver wound was worth studying? The bullet had traveled downward, showing whoever had killed Robert Helston must either have been a very tall man, or was in some position above him. The revolver, as a matter of fact, was fired from the bough of the oak tree.

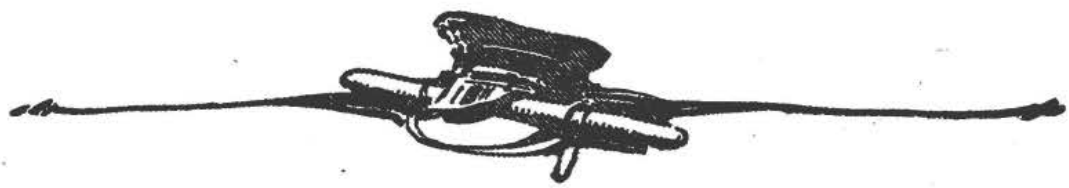
"I had a chat early with Dicky Helston this morning and he told me what he had refused to tell the inspector, when I told him all I knew. His rows had been with his brother in an effort to stop the intrigue with Elsie Mitchell and in the heat of temper he used that phrase 'You deserve to be shot.' The very cap which Mitchell had taken down to use as a clew against the brother will provide a clew which will help to hang himself."

"How?" asked the superintendent.

"Dicky, like a good many other young men, is fond of greasing his hair," chuckled the criminologist. "The inside of that cap was all greasy as well, and sticking to it I found some fragments of shag, fragments from the gamekeeper's pocket."

"Michael," said the superintendent solemnly. "The next time Dicky Helston's playing in a first class match we'll go and watch him."

"I'm willing," said the professor cheerily. "Let's go up to the house and put Miss Lawson's mind at rest."



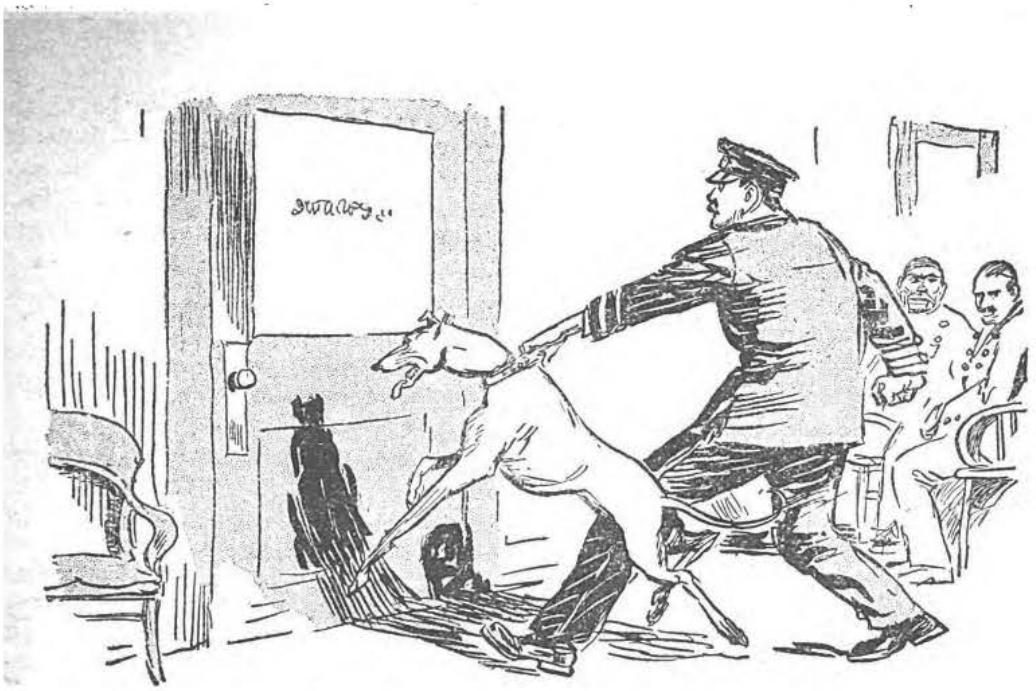
THE FATAL HAIR

THE microscope has long been considered an indispensable instrument in the detection of crime. It can distinguish the difference between the bloodstains of man and animals. It can also determine to the minutest detail the diameter of a hair—for it is known that the dimensions of hair vary greatly among individuals.

Some forty years ago in San Francisco, a lady had been stabbed to death by a Sunday school superintendent, whose name was Durant. The murder remained a complete mystery until some hairs were found on the victim's clothing and examined. They were found to be horse hairs, and when placed under the microscope and the diameter measured, were discovered to correspond exactly with the hairs of Durant's horse.

To test the fallibility of this theory, the hairs of other horses were examined under the microscope and different results were found.

At the trial the stable boy testified that his master, Durant, had taken his horse out on the day the murder had been committed. The evidence of these points alone was so strong that Durant finally broke down and confessed his guilt before the conclusion of the trial.



The policeman fairly had to drag the dog away from the door

CROOKS ARE CROOKS

By Harold Van Dyke Smith

FATHER AND SON WERE ON THE FORCE, EACH TESTING THE METHODS OF THEIR DAY—AND BOTH WON

NICK PERTAN had ruled the police force of South Shore with an iron hand for twenty-five years. The grizzled old veteran had worked up from patrolman to chief, and was a relentless law enforcer. Proudly he clung to the tactics of the old school. He knew by sight practically every crook in his territory, and many in surrounding cities—knew their parents before them—knew their foibles and weaknesses. His testimony had sent many a criminal "up the river."

South Shore had been a model for all California. But the chief was growing old and criminals were changing. Science was aiding the underworld and its denizens were staging a comeback. The rich little city was juicy picking.

In his heart, Nick Pertan began to doubt his ability to cope with the modern criminal. Inspector Lape, of the homicide squad, had his eyes on the chief's chair, but then he, too, still followed the tenets of the old system. On all hands science was forcing out the old strong-arm methods. Crime experts and crime detecting machines flourished. City after city had succumbed to the new order—and worst of all, the chief's son, Vic, was a devotee of it heart and soul.

Vic had scorned pounding a beat, then following his father's footsteps up the ladder to supreme command. Instead, he had worked his way through college, then taken up scientific criminology in Chief Vollmer's Police School at the University. So Vic was not a policeman—he was a specialist. And Nick Pertan hated specialists!

There were too many of them in all walks of life.

Coincident with a "Perfect Criminal's" setting aristocratic South Shore by the ears, sudden fame had come to young Pertan in Los Angeles. As a microanalyst he had solved a baffling movie murder.

And now came the supreme test between the old and the new, for the mayor of South Shore had called in Vic to help run to earth the murderer rampant in the city. Nominally, young Pertan was under the jurisdiction of his father. He had insisted upon being so, for in no way did he desire to humiliate the old chief who had so long kept crime at a minimum in South Shore. But just the same, it was the old against the new—father against son. The entire force watched and waited, and bet on their favorite.

"Blackmail and murder! Blackmail and murder!" boomed Chief Pertan's voice angrily. "God, Vic, if the Perfect Criminal would only leave a finger-print or some kind of clew!"

"He will dad—chief. No one can beat the law forever!"

"Humph! we can't wait forever. The city's panic-stricken! Three leading millionaires murdered in six weeks and the fiend still at large—and damn it! I know it's 'Slink' Monty!"

"But you've put him through two terrible sweats. The last time you kept him awake for three days and nights and had him steadily plied with accusations, but, as usual, he came through claiming his innocence!"

"Listen, son, you've got theories and science, but let me tell you that crooks are crooks and seldom reform! Monty's old man before him was an expert criminal—one of the first to use soup to blow a safe. Never left a clew till dope got him.

"Each generation grows weaker and wiser and Monty's ten times the slicker old 'Lone Wolf' was. Take that taxi murder. No direct evidence against him, and he only got a light sentence for housebreaking. But spectacular crimes stopped while he was doing time, and commenced soon after he got out!"

"But that doesn't prove he's the fellow running amuck among the rich boys. In the old days he never gave the homicide squad a chase for their money, as this new terror has, did he? Give the devil his due! He's in love with 'Frisco' Nina, and has reformed."

The chief's face softened.

"You're in love yourself, Vic, and every lover loves a lover; though it's a hell of a lover Monty is. I'm going to keep at him till I get him."

"That's where you're wrong, dad. Criminals are really sick people and if they're given a real chance, they'll grow better—reform."

"They're sick people all right—their disease is contagious. Doctors quarantine such people, and if I had my way I'd lock up all crooks and keep them from contaminating others. Monty's getting more sick all the time—more dangerous.

"Why no one but a son of old 'Lone Wolf' could have devised those carrier-pigeons for transporting the blood-money. We've tried to trace them whenever the victims had gumption enough to notify us, but the damned birds always got away with the money tied to their legs. We've combed every bird place we know of and learned nothing, haven't we?"

"But the next place may be the right one!"

"Never! Here the mayor's imported you because you're an expert with all these new-fangled contraptions for detecting criminals, and in your month's service this self-styled Perfect Criminal has been more daring than ever. Why damn it all, Vic, my reputation and my job's at stake, and me almost entitled to a pension. All my life, lad, I've dreamed you would be on the force and ready to step in my uniform when I retired; but you've cast that honor aside and become a free lance crime analyst.

"I'm not sore, Vic, because you took this job and are trying to show me up as a has-been. If I'm to go that way, I'd sooner lose to you than any one. But suppose we both fail? Then Lape, who's been bucking us at every turn, will be put in command."

"We won't fail, da—chief," answered

Vic softly. "And I'm not here to expose you as incompetent. I'm here to help you. The mayor knows that. We'll capture this Perfect Criminal! You can make it easier if you'll let up on some of the strong-arm methods you used two decades ago. You're counting too much on the third degree, the stool pigeon, and—"

"But hell, Vic, there's more criminals being caught that way than by these scientific machines you've studied up. Take that lie-detector you received to-day; it's a farce. Oh, the papers splash with some new invention that accidently unmasks a criminal, but for every one caught that way there are hundreds caught by the old method. After all, we can only do our best, lad, and at that, I bet I win!"

"I want you to win," murmured the son sincerely, "but you can't if you don't meet crookdom on its own level. We've argued and argued this point, and I see I've got to show you to convince you. You think Monty's the Perfect Criminal; I do—" He stopped abruptly and glanced at the outer door. "Thought I heard a noise there several times, dad," he whispered. "Some one's listening!"

Silently Vic hurried to the door. It flung open in his face and Inspector Lape rushed excitedly in.

"I've lost Monty!" he cried as he saluted. "Got away in the after-the-matinee crowd and—"

"Hell!" snorted Pertan. "That's the second time he's eluded you!" He smiled triumphantly at his son. "That's evidence! Slink always disappears about time a crime's committed. I'm going to arrest—"

The desk phone jangled discordantly. A few excited words in the transmitter and the chief's face purpled. He swung toward his companions.

"He's got Judge Caban!" he choked. "Patrolman Murray's on the phone. Lape, get Doc Ake and your homicide squad and speed out to the judge's home on Palm Boulevard. You go, too, Vic. I'm sending out orders to comb the city for Monty and Frisco Nina. They'll come clean this time or stay in jail till they rot!"

A scant half hour later, the police car shot through the opening in the tall, English box-hedge isolating the judge's mansion from the adjoining estates, and with sliding wheels, halted under the side *porte-cochere*.

Patrolman Murray, greatly agitated, hurried to meet the officials.

"Not a clew!" he cried. "The judge's in the library, and I've got it locked, and the key in my pocket. Nothing's been disturbed."

"Lead on!" barked Inspector Lape.

With trembling hands Murray unlocked the library door and pointed silently within. The low, mournful howl of a dog became suddenly louder. In the center of the book-lined room, a blooded greyhound stood rigidly beside the crumpled figure of a man.

"If the dog could only talk," cried the patrolman. "It must have witnessed the crime."

Several minutes elapsed before the animal could be soothed enough to permit Dr. Ake to make a perfunctory examination.

"Of course he's quite dead," he announced. "Shot through the heart. The nature of the wound proves at close range—though there's no powder marks. A silencer must have been attached to the death gun—a pistol evidently. Look for the bullet."

Lape faced the patrolman. "Where's the judge's servants? Had some, didn't he?"

Murray glanced about. His jaw sagged. "Why—why—I ordered the butler and cook to present themselves. They—"

"Find them! Bring them here!"

Soon Murray triumphantly ushered in a sullen old man, and a sobbing woman.

Lape's eyes brightened as he saw the man.

"'Diving-Bell' Louie!" he cried. "Thought you had flown the country. What are you doing here?"

"I—I'm Judge Caban's butler, sir, and—"

"I found him out in the kitchen burning this paper!" broke in Murray. "And the cook was washing this pistol!"

The inspector eagerly snatched the articles. His eyes glittered as he scanned the charred paper. The carefully typewritten sheet was identical with others that had been found at the scenes of recent crimes. In printed capitals it was signed, "THE

PERFECT CRIMINAL," and as usual, demanded that four one-thousand dollar bills be tied to the legs of the five separate carrier pigeons that would be provided. They were to be released by 10 A.M. of that very day, or the judge's life would be forfeited.

"I suppose Judge Caban mysteriously received a cage with five pigeons in it?" cried Lape.

II

"Y-YES, sir," faltered the butler. "I—I found it on the back portico yesterday, and took it to the master. He just laughed and said some one had sent him some dog feed, so he killed the birds and fed them to Boris. You see the master had been in the Spanish-American war—he was a brave man."

"He was a fool! If he'd notified the police, we could have protected him." The inspector examined the pistol, and removed the cartridge clip. It was full. He turned on the sobbing cook. "After the murder, you took the automatic and reloaded it, then washed it to obliterate finger-prints, and kill the powder smell!"

The woman's eyes rolled heavenward.

"I—I—the pistol is just as I found it beside the body, sir. The master must have taken it from his hip pocket where he carried it. But he didn't get a chance to fire it."

"Mighty sure, aren't you? Why didn't you give the alarm?"

The cook wrung her hands and tried to speak, but couldn't.

The ashen butler broke in huskily: "Lulu and me—we—we were in the kitchen preparing the master's supper, sir. The servants' quarters are far back, and the walls are thick. Boris, the greyhound, suddenly startled us by howling at the door. Whining terribly, he led us to the master. We—we found him dead. The—ah—paper and pistol were beside him. The pistol was fully loaded."

"They were evidence. You removed them! Why?"

"I didn't do it! I didn't kill the master!" cried the cook hysterically.

"Dry up!" snapped Lape, "and tell why you were washing the finger-prints off the gun!"

"She wasn't doing that, sir," cried the butler. "She was—"

"Shut up, 'Diving-Bell,' I know your record!" The inspector glared at the woman. "Answer me! Why did you wash the pistol?"

"I—the master was—was always so particular, and the gun was all stained with blood, and looked terrible. I—I knew the master wouldn't like it that way, so I—I cleaned it."

The inspector sneered at the butler. "And I suppose you were burning this blackmailing letter because it dirtied up your clean floor?"

"Yes—yes, sir, that's it!" cried the old fellow eagerly.

Lape winked at Dr. Ake, then his mocking eyes leered at the butler again.

"But you admit the judge knew his life was threatened by the Perfect Criminal?"

"Y-yes, sir. But he said he wouldn't fall for the scare that had all the gentlefolks out here half crazy. He did have me lock all—" The butler stopped apparently startled.

The inspector laughed harshly.

"Slipped, eh? The judge had you lock up the house tight—and still he was murdered!"

The servant's voice sank to almost a whisper.

"That—that's it. But—but me and Lulu didn't do it! We—we were out in the kitchen getting the master's supper, and talking about getting married—"

"So that's what you wanted the money for? You go to headquarters for Chief Pertan to—"

"I don't want to go to the station!" cried the butler shrilly. "Pertan is a devil! He—"

"Forced you to confess you were the brains behind the swindle to raise the gold from the schooner, Golden Gate!"

"God! I—I can't stand another stretch in the Big House, sir," whined the servant. "I've been on the level ever since I've got out. I can prove it by Lulu. She—she—I—soon as I got myself in hand after dis-

covering the master, I tried to phone the police, but I couldn't get the operator. I rushed to the side door to call help, and found it unlocked. Some one had opened it, sir, for not an hour before I had locked it. I found Policeman Mur-Murray outside. Mebby he knows something."

"Maybe so, but you and the cook are under arrest. Handcuff them, Coile!"

The woman's tears disappeared as if by magic, and with an oath, she tore loose from the policeman and darted for the door. Lape grabbed her, and held her till the handcuffs were on.

"I know you, inspector!" she cried, "and I'll tell the chief an earful."

"Well, I'll be damned!" exploded Lape. "It's old 'Soup-house' Sadie, fat as a hog. The judge's passion for employing reformed crooks got him murdered, eh? Perfect Criminal hell! You birds faked that letter to throw us off the scent!"

"Don't say anything more till we get a lawyer, Lulu!" cried the butler. "They know we're innocent."

A cry from one of the homicide squad, and with his knife he pried a flat piece of lead from one of the ponderous bookcases lining the walls.

Vic Pertan beat the inspector to it.

"Too much lead to come from the judge's little weapon," he announced, as he examined it. "About a 38. That's the caliber that plowed through Caban."

"Damn it, who's in charge here?" snapped Lape. "Let me see the bullet."

"Guess you're right," he reluctantly admitted after inspecting it. He turned to Patrolman Murray. "How'd you happen to arrive so opportune, Tim?"

"Well, sir, since this Perfect Criminal's been at large, we've all been on our toes. I was coming down the walk bordering the judge's grounds, sir, when I heard a muffled explosion, and soon after, a taxi shot out of the road skirting this place on the south. He was breaking the speed limit, and I tried to get his number, but it had grown too dark.

"I joked to myself, now maybe that was this Perfect Criminal, and I stopped to see if I could locate anything suspicious. First thing I knew I heard some dog baying blood-curdlinglike, and I hurried up the drive and found it grew louder. Then the judge's door opened, and the butler rushed out shouting for help. I followed him inside and found the corpse. The phone wires were cut, so I dashed outside and pulled a box, and here you are."

"Hmm. Guess we've got the murderers all right; but did you examine the door to see if the lock had been tampered with?"

"I did, inspector," cried Vic. "There are scratches about the keyhole as if some one had been trying to pick it."

"Really?" cried Lape sacrastically. "Congratulations! Found any other clews?"

"They're hard to find here," answered young Pertan enigmatically.

Nettled, Lape turned to Murray. "Go out to the box and order a patrol here at once!" Then he speculatively eyed the whimpering greyhound. He whirled suddenly on the big-eyed butler. "Where do you claim this brute was when the murder was committed?"

"In—in this room, sir—still that can hardly be, for Boris would never have let the murderer get away. The master kept the dog quite close to him when he was home, sir, though he might have sent him upstairs for his pipe or something. He often did that. Perhaps before Boris could get the pipe he heard the shot, or smelled an enemy. He has a very keen scent, sir, and might have dashed after the murderer and chased him away."

"Or the beast might have liked you as well as the judge—for of course you and the cook fed him, and dogs don't bite the hand that feeds them—like you and Soup-house Sadie have."

"You grafter!" cried the woman. "We didn't kill the judge. He treated us white, and we loved him! I'm—"

"Lulu! I warned you!"

Lape laughed mirthlessly.

"Sure, shut her up, Diving-Bell. It'll be that much more for the chief to get from her— Damn it, why don't the patrol come? Nothing more here." Then he caught the grim smile on the young crime expert's face. "What are you doing with all those little envelopes laying on the reading ta-

ble?" he asked with ill concealed eagerness. "Clews in them?"

"Just found a few hairs clutched between the judge's fingers, and—"

"His own, or dog hairs," grunted the inspector.

"Possibly. But I'm taking them, and some I know are the judge's and the greyhounds back with me." Vic turned to the butler who had been watching him fearfully. "Carpet sweeper in the house?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"Send one of your men with him, Lape, and bring it to me."

"Going to sweep again, are you?" snorted the inspector. "Think you'd get tired cleaning these rich people's carpet for them. You do it every place a fellow's killed."

Without answering, young Pertan carefully placed the small envelopes containing the specimens of hair in an inner pocket. As he finished, a policeman arrived with the butler and the sweeper.

III

SOME of the homicide squad watched Vic curiously—hopefully. Others, headed by Inspector Lape, smiled—snickered. Carefully the analyst ran the sweeper over the carpet of the room. With about each square foot he swept, he dumped the sweepings on a spread newspaper, that he might know just where he picked it up. The total result was small. The room had evidently been cleaned recently—perhaps since the murder! Several small rolls of dust, a few hairs, and a flake of something brown constituted the findings.

With expressionless face, Vic carefully examined the dark-stained piece of brown material under his powerful magnifying glass. It was a flake of rubber, and of the same color and texture as that used in the prevalent make of rubber gloves—gloves such as criminals used to conceal their finger-prints!

He carefully placed it in one of his numerous small envelopes, then gathered the dust, and the hairs—quite evidently dog hairs—in another one, and pocketing them all, again approached the corpse. With his knife he scraped away some of the congealed blood around the wound, and placed it in one of the waxed envelopes.

"Are they really clews, Sherlock?" sneered Lape.

"You wouldn't think so."

Murray hurried in and announced the arrival of the patrol.

"I'm ready, inspector," murmured young Pertan. Then: "How about the greyhound?"

"Turn the brute out and let him eat some more pigeons."

"But he may identify the murderer for us. Since he doesn't fly at the servants, we can try him out on Monty, and—"

"Sure! I intended taking him all the time. But suppose he gets vicious?"

"I'll take care of him."

The trial room of the combination city hall and jail was crowded with officers and reporters as the prisoners were ushered in. Curious eyes followed the big, uneasy greyhound. Two burly bluecoats guarded the chief's sanctum, but they readily admitted the newcomers.

Pertan sat behind his desk, an unlit stogie rammed far back in his mouth, a determined glint in his brown eyes.

Standing facing him was a mere slip of a yellow-haired, handcuffed girl with tear-stained cheeks.

"Youse big stiff," she sobbed. "I've told youse and told youse I don't know nothing about these murders! Monty don't neither. You dicks have been hounding us to death ever since our stretch ended. Jest because I used to be a swell-booster youse won't give me no chanst to go straight. Monty wants to marry me, but youse won't let him hold a job long enough to scare up any jack for a license. Ask the Old Man up the river; we were models!"

"Old stuff, Nina, old stuff!" cried Pertan savagely. Then he turned to the new arrivals. "Getting mine, son," he boasted. "This damned kite won't come across, even though we caught her at the S. P. station with a ticket for Denver, and a hundred dollars to boot. She doesn't know the case we've got against her lover!" Her eyes bulged as he saw the prisoners. "Diving-Bell and—

Soup-house Sadie! Ha! Here's where I send you up again."

At the mention of the names, Frisco Nina swung startingly around. Her face whitened. The cook's mouth worked noiselessly, but the butler stared stonily ahead.

"Oh ho!" boomed Pertan joyously, "so you're all pals of the Perfect Criminal!"

"Pals, hell!" sneered Frisco. "I never saw those clams before."

"We—we demand a lawyer," cried the butler hoarsely.

"These are the judge's servants," stated Lape, as he pompously laid the pistol and charred paper on the chief's desk. "I've got the goods on them!" He pointed to his friend Riess of the *Herald*. "Get this, Frank: I'm the first to accuse these birds of murdering Judge Caban." Chief Pertan frowned, but the inspector continued, "You'll find out that this Perfect Criminal stuff—"

Pertan's huge fist jarred his desk.

"Damnation! What do you mean butting in this way, Lape? You're welcome to first rights on your prisoners; but get them out of here till after I'm through with this kite. Don't want them to get wise to everything, do you? Put them in non-communicating cells till I'm ready for them!" Then he noted the dog which Vic had to begin soothing. "What's that hound here for?"

"It's Boris, the judge's dog. He may be able to identify the murderer or his accomplices."

"By Gad! We'll try him on Nina at once!"

The greyhound had been standing rigidly by the door, its quivering nose searching the air. Vic led the magnificent animal up to the girl.

"Here, Boris!" boomed Pertan, as he caught the prisoner's arm. "Sic her! She helped kill your master!"

"Hey, I'm not afraid of dogs," snorted Frisco Nina.

The greyhound glanced casually at her, then its eyes roved uneasily about the room. Suddenly it tried to dash to the door, but Pertan held its leash.

"Great bloodhound, ain't it?" sneered the girl.

"Well, we've got a new one for you tonight!" snapped the chief. "Bring out the 'Sphyg,' Vic. It'll soon show up this kite's lying."

"Sure, bring out all you've got," laughed Nina derisively.

The Sphygmomanometer, or lie-detector, secured to a wheeled stand, was moved beside the willing prisoner. A machine based upon the theory that no criminal can conceal the agitation of his heart, and the quickening of breathing when accused of a crime he is guilty of, young Pertan had found it successful in all cases thus far.

It is an apparatus much similar to that used by doctors in testing blood pressure. It has, mainly, a rubber tourniquet, which is bound around the chest of the suspect, and a rubber band, which is bound about the arm. These tourniquets are connected to rubber tubes which end in indicators that rest on a paper which revolves slowly on a drum, on the blackened surface of which marks are made.

When breathing increases, the tourniquet is drawn taut, air is forced through the tube, and as the indicator moves up and down, it leaves a mark on the blackened paper. The bigger the intake of breath, the bigger the mark. The blood pressure part operates similarily. An excited heart pumps blood faster; the rubber band around the chest is stretched; air is forced through the tube and moves the heart beat indicator, and reveals the suspect's state of excitement. The bands were quickly adjusted in the proper places on Nina.

"Now," snapped Pertan, "you daren't lie! Monty's the Perfect Criminal and you're his pal!"

"Again I say, no!"

The machine recorded normal. The chief swore under his breath.

"The lie-detector brands that as a lie!" he bluffed. "We've got Monty dead to rights. Those two servants gave him away. You've been seen driving the car he always flees in!"

"All lies," murmured the girl. "Test yourself with this machine, and we'll soon see who's lying!"

The two indicators again made regular scratches on the paper! The microanalyst

stifled a grin. He was convinced the girl was telling the truth.

Not so with his father. Springing to his feet, he cried, "Enough! The machine proves your guilt!"

"Then it lies! If I could raise the jack, I'd hire a swell mouthpiece and sue you for damages. Youse bulls has got to stop trying to railroad Monty and me. Give us a chanst, and let us go straight."

The chief laughed harshly.

"Your crocodile tears don't sink in any more, Nina. Almost lost my job over them once."

The outer door was suddenly thrown open, and a thin, rather pitiful looking manacled youth was roughly thrust into the room by two plainclothes men.

"Nina!" choked the white-faced prisoner as he saw the girl.

"Monty!"

"Take the kite to a cell," ordered Pertan.

"Damn you, chief!" screamed the man. "She's no kite, though you'd make her one, if you could."

Pertan smacked his fist down on the desk. "Shut up, you murderer!" He glared at Inspector Lape. "Salt this kite away quick, and keep her quiet!"

"Don't fall for his bull, Monty," sobbed the girl. "I—"

Lape clapped a hand over her mouth, and as Vic released her from the machine, hurried her to a cell.

Chief Pertan savagely chewed his cigar, and stared disconcertedly at the frail prisoner.

"Full of hop, aren't you?"

"No! You know my trip up the river cured me, damn you!"

The chief roughly slapped the prisoner's face.

"Next time you address me that way you'll get put to sleep! Suppose you know Nina blowed the whole works?"

"Then why question me?"

Pertan spoke to the largest of the two men who had brought in the prisoner.

"Where'd you get him?"

"Down at the Freight Handlers' Club—just as he hopped from a taxi."

"Taxi riding! And he's supposed to be flat—that's what he claimed last time I quizzed him. What'd you find when you frisked him?"

"Nothing, as usual—that is except two bits."

"Hmm." The chief stared intently at the nervous prisoner. "So you're flat, yet you ride in taxis!"

"First since getting out. I walked clear out to Orange Avenue looking for work. Every place I stopped a bull told me to move on. My arches went bad while I was up in the Big House, and I couldn't walk back to Beach Street. The only friend who'd stake me for a bunk and grub hung out at the Freight Handlers' Club. I couldn't walk back there, so I spent six bits of my last buck to get there—and be pinched again."

"Bunk!" snapped the chief. "We got Frisco Nina at the station ready to skip to Denver. She was lousy with money; so your story about being flat don't go! That money she had was some you got from these millionaires you've been blackmailing and murdering."

The prisoner sighed, and dropped to a bench.

Pertan roughly caught him by the nape of the neck and jerked him back to his feet. "You don't sit down, or rest, till you confess, if that's a month!"

IV

"GOSH, I'm tired," huskily murmured the pale youth. "But I guess I'll have to stand, for I won't confess! I have nothing to confess! Nina got a hundred bucks or so from an insurance policy and offered me half, but I wouldn't touch it. I told her to go to Denver to get away from your hounding, and to rest up while I tried to get a job so I could marry her."

"Some bull, some bull," purred the chief. "The Perfect Criminal, eh? Following in your old man's footsteps—gone him one better. All he got was San Quentin; you'll get the electric chair!"

"And this is the land of the free," bitterly cried the prisoner. "A fellow makes one misstep, and you cops hound him for

life. Gawd, but you're making me think life isn't worth living. Why can't you be as square as the police in other cities? This'll be my second third degree in two weeks. Some day, chief, you'll regret your torture of Nina and me!"

A sudden whimpering drew Pertan's attention to the greyhound, which in his exasperation, he had forgtten. With nose to the crack of the outer door, the animal was plainly begging to be freed that he might hurry back to his dead master.

The chief looked around. Damn it where was Vic? Probably in his office trying to figure out a way to save Slink. Oh, well— He snapped an order to the patrolman holding the greyhound.

"Bring the dog here!"

The policeman had to fairly drag the dog away from the door. Pertan tried to excite the beast—urged it on the flinching prisoner—did everything he could to evoke a show of hostility from it toward Monty. The splendid animal only whined more pleadingly and gazed dumbly at the officers, as though wondering what it was all about, and questioning why they held him captive.

With a muttered imprecation, the chief disgustedly ordered the dog taken outside and turned loose. Then he stamped to the door of his son's laboratory. Vic was not there.

"Hey!" He glared at Lape who was at the desk toying with the pistol the cook had washed.

"Where's Vic?" he cried.

"Out in the jail getting some blood and hair from my suspects. He's trying to beat my time, I guess. Thinks he found some clews out at the judge's."

"Damn it! If he thinks he did—he did! He's an expert analyst, isn't he? Tell him I want him."

With narrowed eyes Inspector Lape obeyed the chief's orders. But it wouldn't be much longer that he would be under the thumb of that martinet. Riess, of the *Herald*, would see that he got the credit due him and the mayor would have to put him in command then!

Pertan stared contemptuously at the lie-detector. It had helped Vic catch the movie murderer. Must have been luck—Oh, well—. He'd run a bluff on Monty with it.

The microanalyst soon came in with a number of labeled envelopes in his hand.

"I wasn't through with you yet, sir!" snapped his father. Pointing to the wasted prisoner, he added. "Everything points to this fiend's guilt! We'll spring the same surprise on him that we did on Nina and his two pals who worked at the judge's. It 'll expose him as it did them and be the last link in the chain against him. No one can deceive the lie-detector!"

But the "Sphyg" did not unmask Monty! Try as the chief would, with sudden startling accusation and statements, the prisoner's answers brought forth none but normal marks on the paper—in fact hardly normal, for Monty seemed to be suffering from reduced respiration and low blood pressure.

At last with an impatient cry, Pertan began tugging at the tourniquets securing the prisoner.

"He's holding his breath," he snorted, "or else the damned machine's no good. There's the old cell down in the cellar that Monty knows of, where we'll give him something that'll make him want to shout his guilt to the sky!"

Vic caught his father's arm as he was following the luckless prisoner and his tormentors below.

"Can't you realize, dad, that some one besides Monty can be the Perfect Criminal? Lape's claims about the butler and cook are well founded, and—"

"Humph! Lape never had a well-founded claim in his life. I knew those servants when they were young; they're not the type that develop into perfect criminals. Why Soup-house Sadie even got married once and reformed for a long time. They may know something about the murder. Their meeting with Nina shows there's some connection, and I know I can find enough against them to send them up again; but damn it! Judge Caban trusted them.

"Told me so himself, and he never made mistakes in such things. I won't humor Lape enough to put them through a third-

degree right now, and anyway, when I'm through with Monty this time, I won't need to. Monty is old Lone Wolf all over; only his doggedness and cunning is tripled. Why, darn him, I know he's guilty, and yet he's just about got me persuaded he's innocent.

"I hardly know where I'm at; but I'm going to fight it through the old way, and if I fail, I'm through forever. But you—you're young. You can play the game the new way. I can't—I don't know how!"

Vic sighed.

"Your heart's all right, but your head's all wrong, dad—chief. Don't be too hard on the poor devil down there. The Sphyg—the dog—his alibis—everything proves he's trying to go straight for Nina's sake."

"Boy, you're hopeless. Once a crook, always a crooks, I tell you!"

"To-night, then, I'm trying to drive that out of your head." Vic showed his father several of the envelopes, and a hypodermic-like needle used in getting blood specimens. "I believe I've got the stuff to prove Monty's innocence!"

"You can't prove anything from a hair and a drop of blood." The chief's voice softened. "While you're up here trying to prove Monty innocent, I'll be down below proving him guilty. May right win!"

"It will." The analyst handed several envelopes and the needle to the chief. "All I ask is that you send me up several of Monty's hairs, and some of his blood for comparison purposes."

Vic hurried into the room he had fitted up as a laboratory, and quickly set about his tests. Placing the waxed envelopes containing the various specimens of hair and blood on a table, he took the one containing the three hairs the judge had clutched. Putting them on a piece of white frosted glass, he placed his photomicroscopic camera over them, and snapped the trigger. The same process was repeated with the hairs from the greyhound, and from the judge's head.

By the use of a special black enameled metal plate immersed in a collodion and a sensitive silver solution, he was only a few minutes in developing, fixing, and washing his photographs. The type's dark background showed up the pictures of the greatly enlarged hairs in a startling manner.

There was no similarity between the subjects of the three photographs! By the now visible hair cells and compositions, from the central pith to the outer cuticle, the pictures proved conclusively that the hairs clutched in the dead man's hand were human hairs, and they were not his own! Therefore they must be the murderer's!

Silently Vic turned his attention to the small piece of stained rubber. It was too small to contain an identifying finger-print, and moistening the blood-clot on it with a weak sodium chloride solution so as to differentiate the red and white corpuscles, he examined it with a microscope. While in normal blood there are about five million red blood cells per cubic millimeter of blood, the clot he was examining was woefully lacking in these necessary corpuscles. The blood was from a person, or animal, whose health was at a low ebb!

To determine whether it was human blood, or animal blood, the analyst placed the specimen under the powerful lens of his microscopic camera and snapped the trigger.

Before he could develop the plate, Inspector Lape entered with the envelopes.

"Here's your blood and hair," he sneered. "We had the devil's own time getting them, too. Any results?"

"Not many."

"Thought so," the inspector grunted. "This scientific stuff is all rot! Hear that?"

An agonized scream drifted up from below.

V

"THE chief's getting rough," grinned Lape. "Hates to admit he's licked; but Monty absolutely refuses to come across. I know he's innocent; but not because the lie-detector didn't give him away. Didn't expect anything from such a ridiculous invention; but that greyhound would have ate him up alive, if it thought he'd murdered its master. Ries is down there taking it all in, and when we get to shoving Diving-Bell and prove he killed Caban, and the cook helped him, he'll see I get the credit I've been robbed of so long."

Vic didn't answer—just deftly continued with his experiments.

"You don't think Monty's guilty either," went on Lape. "And you're trying to save your dad by faking up some exposition of my suspects. Riess and I see through you, even if the mayor don't. What have you got to say to that?"

Another of the prisoner's screams rang out.

"You should be at the torture," murmured Vic. "You enjoy such things."

The inspector only snorted; and slamming the door he went below.

The thought spurring the microanalyst on was that Monty and Nina were the victims of circumstances that might ensnare any innocent persons—even as his *fiancée* and himself. Once the web of the law weaves about you, justice becomes an uncertain quantity.

The development of the picture of the flake of rubber and the blood stain on it showed it was human blood there! The oblong, concaved and non-nucleated red blood cells told Vic that. The white blood cells showed up larger in the picture than the red ones, which was as it should be; but the white cells were almost as numerous as the red ones! That, again, gave proof of the impoverished condition of the blood, and the person losing it.

The test had thus far proven conclusively that the blood on the piece of rubber was human blood, greatly thinned and impoverished—as for instance Diving-Bell's must be. The thing remaining to be done was to find blood giving the same analysis and pictured formation. The hair would be tested the same way.

Patting his photomicroscopic camera affectionately, Vic next moistened a large drop of the congealed blood he had taken from the judge's wound, and placed it on a pane of frosted glass, and putting his microscopic lens over it, pressed the trigger. Carefully he developed the picture of the greatly enlarged drop of blood. The cell formations were normal; the red corpuscles being much more numerous than the white ones. The blood stain on the piece of rubber, not being the judge's, was quite evidently the murderer's! Would the next tests produce blood and hair matching that of the killer? Or were none of the suspects the Perfect Criminal?

Anxiously Vic separately examined and photographed every specimen of hair and blood, and with consuming suspense proceeded to speedily develop all pictures. Eagerly he studied and compared his complete set of photographs. He thrilled. Soup-house Sadie's and Nina's specimens were practically identical! They were related. The cook must be the girl's mother! Minutely he studied the photograph of the blood-clot on the rubber glove, and of the hairs the murdered man had clutched. Carefully he made comparisons. Suddenly his eyes brightened. He had found two pictures that matched them perfectly in every detail! At last science was to be vindicated!

The events of the crime swept through his mind. Motive? Method? Suppose he had been the criminal? Then over him flashed a vision of the crime and criminal. It must be the truth! Carefully gathering up his convicting photographs, he hurried to the underground cell.

As he arrived, his father glared at him with a red, exasperated face, and released his hold on the prisoner's arm which he had twisted cruelly up behind his back.

Monty was bathed in sweat, and his pinched face was drawn with pain. His head sagged forward on his chest.

"Kill me, kill me," he panted, "but I'm innocent!"

"I guess you win, Vic," admitted the chief reluctantly. "This bird still swears he's innocent."

The frail, white prisoner sighed in relief, and his bloodshot eyes upturned beseechingly at young Pertan.

"Yes, I guess I win," murmured the analyst.

Admiration for his son's prowess shone in the chief's eyes. He smiled triumphantly at Lape and reporter Riess.

"Well, we kept it in the family. Show us your proof, son."

Vic held up the photographs.

"After all, ch-chief, modern science and psychoanalysis triumphs over brute force and doggedness. At last the Perfect Crimi-

nal left behind the clews that unmasked him!"

"Name him! Name him!" urged the elder Pertan impatiently.

"I'd like to reconstruct the crime and the criminal first."

"And allow the fiend still more time to get away!"

"I don't think so. He, for it is a man, is too sure the police have nothing on him. Anyway, I don't think he could escape if he wanted to!"

"How'd you know the murderer's a man?"

"By the texture and cell-composition of the hair specimens, and also by the blood tests. A woman's blood has fewer and slightly different shaped corpuscles than a man's, and their specific gravity varies from 1.088 to 1.105, so I am practically certain the killer is a man."

"All right. Shoot!"

"In the first place it's another case of 'Find the woman.' The man committing these murders had some mighty incentive. He is a very brave man, perhaps; yet one in mortal terror. To our knowledge he has mulcted three millionaires out of twenty thousand dollars each. Pigeons carried that much money to him. Four men, including the judge, who refused his demands, he murdered to put fear into the hearts of his other victims, and to cover his own trail.

"The murderer craved riches, but not for himself, for he knew he had not long to live. Such men as he seldom make friends, though they madly crave them; and should they find one, they lavish everything on them—especially if it is a woman, as in this case. The killer is suffering with some dread disease, probably cancer. The micro-analyzed blood specimen proves that. Knowing his own bitter struggle for existence, and what his sweetheart has gone through, and fearing that every day may be his last, this madman has labored feverishly and desperately to pile up a fortune that his woman might enjoy after his death.

"I am certain that this man was clever enough not to reveal his present criminal activity to this woman, so that if the unexpected happened, and the crimes were fastened on him, she could never be implicated. Besides, she was the god his starved soul worshiped, and he would not have her think him a murderer."

"Humph! Diving-Bell and Soup-house Sadie must be friends of yours," sneered Lape.

The prisoner, the police, Riess, all had been listening breathlessly. The interruption jarred them.

Chief Pertan's eyes flashed.

"Shut up, Lape. Your own engagement was just announced last week!"

Oblivious to the inspector's venomous stare, Vic quietly continued:

"The more pain the murderer suffered, the more desperate he became. His time was growing exceedingly short, and he practically became a mechanical fiend. When he found that Judge Caban not only refused to send his pigeons with the required money, but killed them as well, he went temporarily insane and, picking the lock on the judge's door, entered his library and threatened his victim with drawn gun. As Caban reached for his pistol, the murderer fired. When he pulled the trigger of his weapon, he *pinched* his finger, and a piece of the rubber gloves he wore was *torn out* and dropped unnoticed to the floor with some of his impoverished blood on it.

"To make sure the judge was dead, and past revealing his identity, the murderer stooped over him to examine him. In a last struggle the jurist's hand clutched his murderer's head and pulled out a few hairs, which I found and examined. Before the fiend could do more, he evidently heard the greyhound somewhere in the house and hurriedly made his escape. Patrolman Murray saw his car as it shot out onto the main highway."

"How do you know that's just what happened, Vic?" gasped his father.

"From micro-analyzing the clews, putting the testimony together and placing myself in the murderer's shoes for a moment's thought."

"And that photomicroscopic camera told you what kind of hair the dead man clutched, and what that flake of rubber was from, and that the dark stain was blood

from some one having cancer or something? By Gad! Son, I'm proud to be showed up by you. You're a chip off the old block; and I'm converted to the new order of criminal detection!

"But—but your analysis can't tell who those hairs, and that blood belongs to! We'll have to round up every criminal from Frisco to San Diego, and compare theirs with what you've got. Then suppose it's no known criminal! It 'll be worse than searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack. You've proved Monty innocent; but how in hell are we going to find the real murderer?"

Vic smiled sadly.

"That's where you win, chief. This is a case where it took the old, the new, hunches and everything else to capture the guilty one. If it weren't for me, you wouldn't succeed in this case; and if it weren't for you, probably I wouldn't have succeeded!"

"What do you mean?"

"You've been right from the first. Monty's the murderer!"

"It's a lie!" screamed the prisoner. "It's another attempt to bluff me into confessing something I didn't do!"

The analyst clutched Monty's hands and carefully scrutinized them.

"Where'd you get the blood for my test, dad?" he cried.

"From his arm."

"I thought so!" Vic pointed triumphantly to a small red spot on the index finger of Monty's right hand. "There's the abrasion caused when the trigger pinched his finger. That's where the torn piece of rubber came from!"

"No! No! No!" shrieked the trembling prisoner. "That—that was a mosquito bite that I scratched. I swear it!"

Young Pertan shook his head sorrowfully.

"No use, Monty. Your blood and your hair prove you guilty! Dr. Ake can, no doubt, easily learn that you are suffering from a cancerous malady. You've been dying by inches, and trying to provide a fortune for Frisco Nina! While she evidently didn't suspect you, the cook, her mother, did, so she and the butler tried to destroy what they feared might be evidence against you."

"I'm innocent! I'm innocent!"

"I'm still up in air," cried Pertan. "Since your microscopic camera worked, the lie-detector must have, too; and surely the best actor going couldn't have deceived it when I shot those accusations at him! He could not control the agitation of his heart, and the quickening of his breath which made the machine's indicators record the perfectly normal responses! Then—

Vic had deftly felt over the prisoner's body and suddenly torn his clothing open.

"That explains it, dad—chief!" he cried. "He wears a tight-fitting rubber vest next to his skin! It prevented his respiratory reactions from communicating to the tourniquets and tubes of the charts. You remember I said we must meet crimedom on its own level. Every time the law invents a new crime-detecting instrument, crimedom perfects something to circumvent it!"

Monty wilted at this exposure.

"God! I can't stand it any longer," he sobbed. "I did it; I killed all those millionaires. The dude is right; though I can't see how he got me. He's a mind-reader! Oh, God, the pain inside me is killing me. Poor Nina!"

"Where'd you hide the money?" asked Pertan not unkindly.

"I won't tell. I've salted that away for Nina!"

"Better think a little," purred the chief. "She's a prisoner; we can hold her as an accomplice. She'll get a long sentence—and when she's out, we'll watch her till she leads us to the money—"

"You damned bloodhounds!" huskily cried the violently trembling prisoner. "Can't any one ever beat the law?" Suddenly his eyes glowed cunningly. "It's true; Nina doesn't know I'm a murderer. I don't want her to. She's pitied me and been kind to me. Let her go free, and I'll tell you where the swag is."

The chief cleared his throat.

"The police have nothing on Frisco Nina, and never will, if she behaves herself! We'll keep your secret, Monty, and

send her home with a clear record," he said.

"Sw-swear—it."

"So help me God, we'll not hold Nina if you come across."

A wan smile curved Monty's twitching lips.

"That was true about her insurance policy. Let her keep that jack. I—I spent one grand on radium treatments for my cancer; the other fifty-nine thousand is in a secret compartment in the gas tank of that yellow taxi I got out of at the club when I was arrested. It's numbered 'Nine' for Nina. and belongs to me. The chauffeur thinks I'm on the level, and hauls passengers in it when I'm not using it.

"I used it so if any one saw me, they'd think it was just one of the regulation yellow cabs answering a call. It dulled suspicion. The chauffeur keeps it at his home garage—22 Beach Street, and—" An inward convulsion wracked the emaciated little body, and the watery brown eyes glazed over. "If you double cross me about Nina," Monty choked, "I'll come back and—"

The body stiffened, and before any one could catch it, slumped to the floor. The Perfect Criminal was dead!

"SANCTIMONIOUS ROBERTS"

A WOLF in sheep's clothing is sometimes hard to discern. This was the guise of E. Z. Roberts, originally from Albion, Ohio, a counterfeiter who was finally apprehended and brought to justice through the United States Secret Service.

The first two dollar counterfeit national bank note, and passed by "Sanctimonious Roberts," was discovered by United States Secret Service Operator Charles E. Anchisi, in 1871. E. Z. Roberts lived in Salineville, Ohio. There he was known as a pious and sanctimonious citizen of undeniably pure character.

Roberts was employed at that time as superintendent of the Cleveland Iron Company, which was a well-paying and responsible position. It was through these business connections with his employer that the villain was able to gain contact with eminent and influential business men.

Superior talent and culture were Roberts's; a wealthy land owner, religious and apparently highly respectable, he was an influential man in his community. It was for these reasons that the uncovering of "Sanctimonious Roberts" caused such an "explosion" to society and intensified the baldness of his case.

The Secret Service operator had a sample of the counterfeit money given him by a merchant of Salineville. The operator suspected that Roberts had passed the bill but the clews were very faint. Wherever the Secret Service man went he met discouragement; no one would believe that E. Z. Roberts had a hand in anything but the upright.

At the Salineville post office the operator was told that most of the people receiving mail there were from the iron works or the mines. When questioned whether any two dollar bills of counterfeit quality had been received the man winced and admitted that he had, reluctantly producing two bills.

"Where did you get these bills?" asked Anchisi, with some interest.

"I don't care to say, sir. He's a good man, and above suspicion. I believe he's all right."

"Who *is* it? You must tell me," insisted the detective. "I am a U. S. officer. These are counterfeits."

"Well then, if I must, they came from Mr. Roberts."

"Both of them?"

"Yes, sir," replied the postmaster.

Anchisi went to some of the other stores where he learned that Roberts was buying groceries, dry goods, clothes, *et cetera.* There he found that he had passed thirty-five two's and that all were counterfeits.

In one other store he had put off two more of them, in another six, in another eight, in another four, and in one place also a ten dollar counterfeit upon the Poughkeepsie Bank.

Anchisi now thought it about time to spring his trap upon this unsuspecting but cunning villain, and he accordingly proceeded to arrest him, but found that he had left town "on business."

Following him to a railroad town about eight miles distant, the Secret Service man met Roberts and straightway clapped the "iron ruffles" upon the devout and easy hypocrite, informing him that he must accompany him to Cleveland.

"What does this signify?" demanded Roberts greatly astonished, plainly. "Why do you thus arrest me, sir?"

"For passing counterfeit money," said Anchisi promptly.

"*Counterfeit!*" exclaimed Roberts. "Why, I get all my money from the First National Bank of Cleveland!"

"This you must prove elsewhere, sir. You must come with me, *now*."

Roberts was then taken to jail at Cleveland. Here he told an altogether different story, viz: that he got all his money from the treasurer of the Cleveland Iron Company and added:

"I have just received three thousand dollars from that officer and these two dollar bills and tens which you say are bogus were in that parcel."

Anchisi was in possession of ample evidence to convict this rascal, in his own belief beyond a doubt; yet as a matter of form and with the desire to perform his whole duty in the premises in order that he might report fully to Colonel Whitley, he proceeded to confer with the president of the iron company in reference to the matter.

When the trial took place the developments showed that Roberts had exchanged the Cleveland Iron Company's money for his own in counterfeit while acting as superintendent and paymaster. Any information as to the manufacture of the bogus money was not obtained during the trial. But when leaving the court room Roberts said quietly to Assistant Detective Butts:

"If Anchisi won't be too hard on me, now, I will turn up a good many counterfeiters in this region that he don't suspect."

This announcement opened Anchisi's eyes. He took his prisoner to jail, locked him up, and gave strict orders that no letters nor communications of any kind should pass to or from him. An examination of Roberts's quarters revealed considerable counterfeit money and a convicting letter stating that a package of two hundred dollars in greenbacks had been sent C. O. D. for the sum of twenty-five dollars.

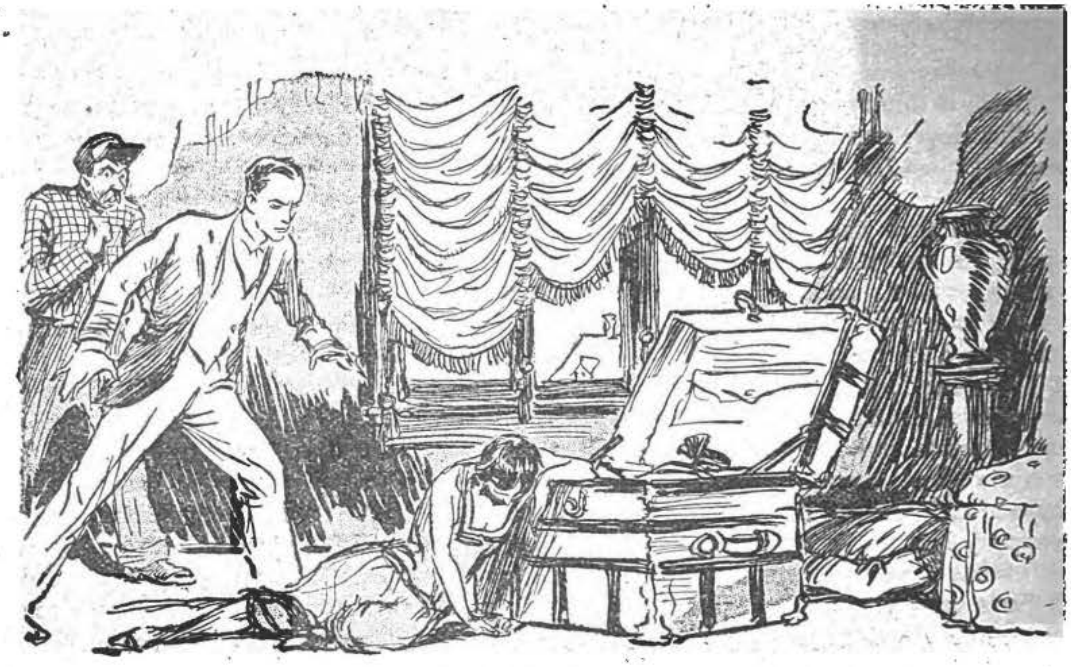
It also discussed the circulation of the notes and "not to have too many out in any one place." The communication came from Jefferson, Ohio, and Operator Anchisi immediately tracked down the writer to his lair. At that town several circulating cony men were shadowed to the home of one Milo Thorton. A raid was then made on this house as suspicion pointed that the place was a general headquarters for the counterfeit manufacture and disposal.

Nothwithstanding this, the raid proved bafflingly little. Hope had almost been abandoned when an old dry well was discovered in the back yard and there twenty feet deep lay the solution of the mystery. Engraving plates, manufacturing utensils, and many bundles of counterfeit money.

Following this, events shaped themselves rapidly. Eight days after Roberts's arrest Thorton had been tried, convicted and sentenced to the State prison at Columbus, Ohio, where he had been twice previously for the same offense. Thorton, however, would not squeal on Roberts although confessing to all of his own foul connections.

The entire affair brought about a wholesale rounding up of counterfeit small fry and large, that struck terror to the hearts of notorious rogues and scoundrels of those parts. "Easy" Roberts with his sanctimonious cheek, whining show of piety and injured innocence had stalked the State for a time but his end was that of all good swindlers—behind the click of the great steel door and into the home of silent men.

But "Sanctimonious Roberts" left a bold scar outstanding on the criminal annals of Ohio State, as well as his disillusioning of the hearts of many true friends and loyal citizens.



Before the trunk was the girl, head upon one outstretched arm

THE PURPLE SHADOW

By Florence Ryerson

BECAUSE SHE LIED ABOUT HER NAME AND ADDRESS MOYA DOUBLED THE SUSPICIONS ALREADY FELT, BUT DENNIS STILL HAD FAITH

THE girl who lived across the hall was looking thin and pale. As he turned into his own street Dennis Thorn saw her a few yards ahead, walking with the little drag of the feet which denotes weariness and, still more surely, discouragement. At the corner she turned her head to look into a window, and Dennis watched her thoughtfully. He had had his Cambria apartment only two weeks, but in that time her cheeks had become drawn and there was a telltale shadow beneath her eyes. Hang it all! She actually looked hungry!

He drew himself up suddenly. Nonsense! People didn't live in places like the Cambria and go hungry. And yet— She was some sort of artist. The portfolio under her arm and the studio apartment told that. Perhaps art wasn't going very well for the moment.

Speeding his feet, he climbed the apartment stairs close behind her and entered the automatic elevator.

"Sixth floor, isn't it?" he inquired, pushing the button. There was no answer, and he saw she was pressed against the side of the cage, eyes closed, the last vestige of color drained from her face. "Look here!" he exclaimed. "You're ill—let me help you."

She shook her head faintly. "No, no—I'll be all right in a moment."

The machine clicked at their floor, and she stepped from the car, and walked down the hall slowly but firmly. The momentary faintness seemed to have passed and a dim color stained her cheeks. But the eyes, blue behind their fringe of black lashes, looked overlarge for her slender face.

"Thank you," she said in dismissal. "I'm quite all right now."

"But—" Dennis sputtered. "I can't leave you like this."

The girl smiled.

"I was only tired," she said. "A little rest is all I need."

Dennis plunged ahead hopefully:

"See here—I don't mean to presume, but I'm Dennis Thorn, of the *Chronicle* dramatic department; and I live just across the hall. I wonder—that is—won't you take a bit of supper with me? You're not well enough to cook for yourself. If you'd rather not eat with me, I'll bring it in to you. I can't help feeling something to eat is just what you need."

He broke off, red with vexation. What evil genius had urged him to make that particular blunder?

"I'm not hungry," she said coldly. "Though it is very kind of you to offer. Thank you."

An instant later the door closed gently but firmly in his face.

Dennis crossed the hall, his brow wrinkled in thought. Hang it all! He had only wanted to help her, and she had acted like an insulted princess. Perhaps it was that unlucky remark about food. At the door to his rooms he ran full force into Sampson, the janitor.

"Just been fixing your radiator," said that worthy. "Doing 'em all over the house."

"Good thing," agreed Dennis vaguely; then, as the other crossed the hall: "Wait a minute. Are you going in there?"

"Yep. Going to give it the once-over."

"See here," said Dennis. "The girl in that apartment almost fainted when I brought her up in the elevator. I wish you'd see how she is." He proffered a cigar, and the other bit into it.

"Sure I will," he said, and rang the bell.

Inside his own half open door Dennis waited. It was foolish, of course, but he'd feel just a little easier if he knew. The door across the hall opened; he heard the voices of Sampson and the girl. The door closed. There was a moment of silence, then suddenly came a scream. The janitor appeared. His eyes were staring and for an instant he was unable to speak. Then:

"C'm here!" he said. "That girl—she's fainted. And there's a man in there—dead!"

The studio across the hall was large, larger than Dennis's own. As he entered the door it spread out before him like a modern stage setting. There was a great north light with hanging curtains of mauve, furniture upholstered in vivid cretonnes, and, in the foreground, an open trunk.

Before the trunk was the girl, head upon one outstretched arm. Beyond, in the angle between the trunk and a couch, lay the huddled body of a man.

In an instant Dennis had crossed the room and was upon his knees beside the girl. She stirred a little at his touch, and the lashes fluttered against her cheeks. As he lifted her to the couch she looked up into his eyes.

"Did I dream it?" she whispered. "Or was there—something?"

The janitor had disappeared. For an instant they were alone.

"I'm afraid it's true," he said gently. "But don't be frightened. The police will come in a moment."

"Police!" She struggled to rise. "Will they ask questions? Will they want to know my name?"

"Why, yes." He was puzzled. "Of course."

With an effort the girl rose and stood swaying on her feet.

"But I can't!" she said. "I can't talk to them! I must go!"

"You can't go," said Dennis kindly. "They'll want to know how you happened to find—that." Involuntarily he motioned toward the huddled shape in the shadow; and she shuddered as she turned to him.

"I've got to trust you," she said. "Will you do something for me now—at once?" She was regarding him with feverish earnestness, and, in spite of himself, he caught her excitement.

"Yes," he promised, "anything."

An instant later she had crossed the room and disappeared into the hallway to

some room within. When she reappeared she was holding an envelope in her hand.

"Keep this for me," she said. "Don't let any one see it—please!"

The door was flung open, and an officer entered, followed by Sampson and two other men. Vaguely Dennis recognized the manager and the hall boy from below. The officer, after a hasty glance, bent over the body.

"H-m! Stabbed!" he said. "Who found him?"

"I did," said Sampson. "Came in to fix a radiator."

"Save all that," said the other briefly. "Man 'll come from headquarters and take it. What we need is a doctor."

"I've sent for one," said the manager. "Here he is now."

The doctor entered—a quiet person, who examined the body briefly.

"Dead, of course?" inquired the officer.

"Yes, twenty minutes or half an hour, I should say. Stabbed with something sharp and thin—stiletto probably." For an instant there was silence, then the doctor looked up with a little exclamation. "Here!" he said. "The young lady—she's going to faint."

The girl pulled herself together and shook her head.

"No—no—I'm all right. But if I might go to my room—"

"Sure you can, miss," said the officer, not unkindly. "Only, don't leave the apartment until they come from headquarters."

With a wan little smile in his direction, the girl crossed the room, and Dennis saw her catch at the door for support as she passed through. For a moment he waited, then slipped after her.

A closed door faced him at the end of the hall.

"It's Dennis Thorn," he said, knocking softly. "Is there anything I can do?"

She half opened the door and stood outlined against the light beyond.

"Yes—oh, yes! I want that envelope again."

Puzzled, he reached in his pocket and passed it to her. As he did so his fingers, half unconsciously, appraised the small parcel. It was long and slim and held, unmistakably, a bit of cardboard

"Thank you," she said. "And now I—I think I'd like to be alone."

II

IN the studio Dennis found two new arrivals. A tall, gray-haired man with a square, unshaved jaw was bending over the body, while a shorter individual peered out the window. The tall man swung about.

"Here you are!" he said. "Thorn, dramatic critic on the *Chronicle*, aren't you? I'm Haynes, from headquarters, and this—intimating the other—is Durkee. We want to hear what you have to say. First place—know this man?"

"No," said Dennis. "Never saw him before."

"That goes for every one," said Haynes. "Unless that girl in there—"

"I'll call her," said Dennis eagerly; but the other caught his arm.

"Get her, Durkee," he said.

For an instant there was silence, then the girl apeared on the threshold. Outlined against the mauve curtains, she seemed very fragile, and her eyes looked out from a face that was pitifully drawn and white.

Haynes regarded her grimly.

"I want to ask you a few questions," he said. "Miss—Miss—"

"Neil," she said—"Moya Neil. I'll tell you all I can."

"Then, who is this man?"

The question was shot like a bullet, and Dennis caught his breath. The girl answered quietly:

"He is—I mean he *was*—Hugh Crafton, editor of *Tattle Tale*."

"Crafton!" Haynes started. "How do you know?"

"Because this very afternoon I was talking to him.

"Then," barked Haynes—"then he was here to see you?"

"No—I talked to him at his office."

He brushed aside her answer.

"But he *did* come to see you!" he insisted.

"He couldn't have come to see me because—he didn't know I was living here."

"Then what was he doing here?"

"Oh"—she wrung her hands in a little futile gesture—"how should I know? It all sounds absurd, but I haven't the faintest idea what he was doing in this apartment."

"Why were you at his office?"

"I'm an illustrator," she said. "I'd been doing a little work for the *Tattle Tale*. Oh" —as Dennis started—"I know it's not the sort of magazine one ought to work for, but I needed the money desperately for—for some one else. This afternoon Mr. Crafton said he wanted some sketches in a hurry, so I went down to his office. We talked for about twenty minutes before I left."

"What time did you leave the office?"

She seemed to hesitate. "I don't know exactly. I got home about quarter of six. I fancy it must have been quarter past five when I left the office."

"You came straight home?"

She caught her breath, then nodded slowly. "Yes—I came straight home."

Haynes thrust his pale face forward suddenly until his green-gray eyes were peering into hers. "You must have been in the apartment five—ten minutes before the janitor arrived—"

Dennis interrupted. "Two or three at the most," he said. "I came up in the elevator with Miss Neil."

"Two or three, then," amended Haynes. "Why didn't you see the body when you came in?"

"I—I was dreadfully tired," she faltered. "I only turned on the drop light and went straight to my bedroom. When the janitor came I turned on the overhead lights, and he—that is, we both saw that." She stretched out her arm toward the sheeted figure beside the trunk. "He was lying there dead."

"You're sure," he insinuated, "*very* sure you didn't see anything before?"

For a moment her fingers twisted in her lap, then she drew a deep breath.

"I know it sounds crazy," she said. "But I've *got* to tell you. When I went through the studio that first time I did glance over toward that corner. I didn't see the body at all, but there was a shadow on the floor, and it—it looked *purple*."

"Purple!" Haynes snorted. "What do you mean—purple?"

"I don't know," said the girl miserably. "It was only a glance out of the corner of my eye, but I remember thinking 'That shadow is purple.' Perhaps it's because I'm an artist and see color in things."

Haynes rose to his feet with a grunt.

"Guess we won't waste much time over that," he said. "What we got to do is to find out what Crafton was doing here anyway. You say you can't tell us that—eh?"

"I wish I knew," said the girl wearily. "He couldn't have been here to see me because I—I—that is, there were reasons why I didn't want him to know where I lived. You see, this isn't really my apartment."

"Not yours! Then whose—"

"It belongs to Helena Haight."

"Haight, the actress?"

"Yes. She's away on a yachting trip. I met her at a studio tea, and she—she rather took a fancy to a sketch I did of her. She offered to let me use her apartment while she was gone. At first I refused. Then later I found I needed every cent I could get, and I gave up my own rooms and moved in here. She'd given me a key in case I changed my mind."

"You didn't let her know you'd moved in?"

"No—at least I don't know. I wrote her, but the letter may not have reached her. She's off the coast of Florida somewhere in a yacht called the Ursula."

For a moment Haynes pondered, then his eyes fell on the trunk.

"Why's that here?" he demanded. "Going to skip out, were you?"

"No!" She caught her breath. "No—I—I just wanted something out of it."

"All right! All right!" he said. "That's enough now. You can go to your room. Only, don't try to get away—that's all!" There was a menace in his tone, and the girl started.

"You mean—you *can't* mean you're going to keep me here!"

"So you *were* leaving town!" he snapped. "Where were you going? Home?

Oh, I know you're not a New Yorker. Where are you from?"

"Where?" She seemed to be fighting for breath. "Boston," she said finally.

"Address?"

"Eleven twenty-four Park Circle."

"All right. I'll talk to you again later."

The girl turned, but at the door she started. Durkee was standing between the curtains. He grinned at her knowingly.

"What you trying to do?" he asked. "Burn up the place?"

With a little startled sob she slipped past him and into the shadows beyond.

"Look here!" Dennis turned on Haynes. "What do you mean?"

"Hold on! Hold on!" said the other good-naturedly. "Don't lose your shirt until you learn a little more." And to Durkee: "What's that about burning?"

"Been burning something in her room. When that fool officer let her go in alone. Found the room full of smoke and paper ash caught on the sill."

"Huh!" said Haynes. "Destroying evidence, eh?" And with a grin at Dennis: "Looks bad for your little friend!"

"She isn't my little friend," flared Dennis. "I never spoke to her until this afternoon."

"Then"—Haynes flicked his cigar—"why'd you send the janitor in to see how she was?"

Dennis started. Of course the janitor would tell, and they would argue a certain intimacy from the fact. Eagerly he recounted the events of the afternoon.

Haynes grunted.

"All right," he said. "I take your word for it. What you tell me only makes things blacker—especially the girl's looking so sick when you brought her up."

"But, don't you see—" Dennis was exasperated. "The man was murdered before she came into the room! The doctor said he'd been dead half an hour."

"Sure I see!" said the other. "But there was nothing to prevent her having been here earlier. She might have finished him off, gone out to establish an alibi, and come back later to 'discover' him."

"But—" Dennis began, then broke off. It was all logical enough, but nothing—no power on earth—could make him believe the girl in there a murderess.

"I don't know Miss Neil," he said slowly. "As I told you, we never spoke until to-day. But I'm not going to let a false accusation be hung on any woman. I'm going to take care of her interests in this business, if you don't mind."

"Sure I don't mind," said the other easily. "Help yourself!" And quite suddenly he grinned. "Anyway, don't worry. Guilty or not, they'll never hang her—not with those eyes and that hair!"

III

IT was morning before he saw the girl again. In the meantime she had spent gruelling hours in the district attorney's office. As she opened the door of the studio he saw that her eyes had grown larger, her cheeks more drawn, and there were little lines of pain about her mouth. As she sank upon the chaise longue her head tipped back against the lilac cushions, and she seemed for a moment unable to speak.

"Look here," said Dennis miserably, "it's horrible such a thing should happen to you, but it 'll all come out right in the end."

"You don't understand," she said. "There are other things that worry me."

"You must tell me about them," he said. "How can I help you if you don't?"

She regarded him gravely. "I don't dare. I've only known you for such a little time, and you're on a paper, aren't you? I can't take the risk. There's some one involved besides myself, you see."

Back of the pain in her eyes he glimpsed a certain fear.

"All right," he sighed. "Have it your own way. Tell me what you can, and I'll do my best."

"But there isn't anything to tell," she said, "except the few things I've repeated over and over. They"—she shivered slightly—"that awful Haynes and the people down town simply won't let me alone, because the man who was Crafton's assistant, Joseph Koons, told them Mr. Crafton and I had a quarrel yesterday."

"And did you?"

"Yes. You see, I'd done things for him before. I didn't like the paper, of course, but the stuff I'd done was all right. Just cartoons and headings. But the job he wanted me to do yesterday was different. You know the sort of thing he prints?"

"I do," said Dennis grimly. "Gossip—stuff that is just short of libel. Did you know he was even suspected of blackmail?"

"I didn't until yesterday," she told him. "He—he'd been rather nice to me, you see, always kind and considerate. But yesterday I saw all at once what he was. He wanted me to do thumbnail sketches for the margin of a story—oh, a dreadful story of some woman's past. And he didn't intend to print it at once. He was going to show it to her first and see whether she'd buy it from him. That's why we were talking so loud—that and the fact that he—he was rather making love to me."

"But, good Lord! Don't you see how important all this is?" demanded Dennis. "That story would establish a motive for the killing."

The girl shook her head.

"Mr. Haynes didn't think so. You see, from what Crafton said I gathered that she—the woman—didn't know any one had dug up her past. It was going to be a horrible surprise when she found out."

"Then"—Dennis spoke eagerly—"perhaps she killed him when he told her."

"But why here?" asked the girl. "Don't you see that's the inexplicable part about it? He'd gotten just a little too friendly lately, and I'd never let him know where I lived. What was he doing here in my studio?"

Dennis was thinking rapidly. "You don't know who this woman is?"

"No. I stopped him while he was reading it. He hadn't gone a page before I knew no power on earth could get me to illustrate the thing."

Dennis rose to his feet.

"We've got to find that story! Whether it was on him when he was killed or whether it is among his things in the office, we must lay our hands on it somehow. If it's found it may give us some clew to the woman. I'll go down and talk to Haynes." He glanced about the studio. "Surely you're not staying here?"

"Yes," she said bravely. "It's rather terrible, of course, but I've really no other place to go, and I thought perhaps I might find something to help us if I stayed."

"That's the stuff!" He reached out and clasped her hand. "I'll order lunch sent in to you. Oh, don't object—I'm giving orders now! I'll be back later and tell you what luck."

For a moment he smiled at her, and her lips curved into a faint pathetic reflection; but her eyes were the eyes of a frightened child.

It was the memory of that smile that drove Dennis at white heat to the office of the prosecuting attorney. Haynes was there, going over evidence, and he grinned at sight of Dennis.

"What do you think of your little friend by now?" he inquired.

"I've come," said Dennis, attempting to keep his temper, "to find out how long you're going to badger her. She's told you all she knows."

"Her real name, for instance?"

"What do you mean? It's 'Neil,' of course."

"No, it isn't," said the other. "At least, not of Boston. That address was a fake—and her clothing's marked with a 'K.'"

Dennis sank into a chair, something catching at his throat. "How do you know?"

"Telegraphed—and searched her rooms. Also, that story about going straight home from Crafton's office is bunk. Koons says she left the office before four thirty—too early for the subway rush. She'd have been home by five. That leaves three-quarters of an hour unaccounted for—and half an hour of it Crafton was lying there dead. What did she do in that time?"

"Let me see," said Dennis, dazed. "He was killed about five fifteen, you think?"

"Yes. He left the office about quarter of five in a taxi. That gave him time to get to the Cambria and the girl time to get home."

Dennis broke in on him suddenly: "By

the way, what did you find in his pockets—Crafton's, I mean?"

"Oh!" Haynes grinned. "You're thinking of that blackmail yarn! Nothing in it! There wasn't any such document, either in his pockets nor in the office."

"Perhaps he disposed of it somewhere."

"Rot. If her story's true, he had it at four thirty. He left the office fifteen minutes later, and Koons saw him take a taxi at the curb. We've traced the taxi to the door of the Cambria. How could he have gotten rid of it on the way—unless he tore it up? You'll admit that wasn't likely, in view of its value. Oh, I tell you that yarn is just a red herring she's trying to draw across her trail."

His voice changed. "You ask me what was found in his pockets, and I'll tell you. His watch and some small change—and a check for two hundred dollars made out to your friend, Miss Moya *alias* Neil!"

"A check for two hundred!"

"Yes. She says she doesn't know anything about it—and Koons says she'd never received any such amount before." He swung his feet to the floor. "That's one of the little things I want to look up, and then—I think we'll have your little friend where we want her."

"You mean—you can't mean you're going to arrest her!"

"Just that!" said Haynes. "I've been talking with the office here, and they think if a couple of things I have in mind turn out they'll have enough to go on."

"But," Dennis raged, "just to look at her you can see—"

"Sure I can see," said Haynes. "I can see how she could get any man going—Crafton, and you too. But she's not the first curly-haired baby I've put behind the bars. Though I'm bound to admit the jury's let most of 'em out again."

He dropped his hand on Dennis's arm. "Now, looky here, Thorn. I like you, and my advice is not to get yourself mixed up in this thing. The girl's guilty as hell. The way I've got it doped out, she was playing Crafton. Either she had something on him or else she was letting him make love to her.

"She went up to his office that afternoon for money—you heard her say she needed it bad.

"They get into a quarrel, and she grabs up something—probably a letter opener—and lets him have it. Then she goes out and disposes of the thing, whatever it is that she's used. She gets to thinking about the body lying there and some one coming in and finding it. So she goes back again. You took her up in the elevator. You said she almost fainted, and you helped her to the door. Did she ask you in?"

"No," said Dennis shortly, "she didn't."

"Not likely—with that thing lying there. Well—she opens her trunk and gets all fixed up to hide the body inside. But the janitor comes in and spills the beans. There—can you pick any flaw in that?"

"No," said Dennis. "I can't, because the whole thing's absurd. How could he have gone to see her when he didn't know where she lived?"

"You've only the girl's word for that."

"Did any one see Crafton go up?" asked Dennis suddenly.

"No—nor the girl—nor you, either, for that matter. The desk boy says he doesn't pay much attention to people going in and out. The switchboard's placed so he'd have to turn to do it."

He leaned forward. "I gotta run along now, but I'll tell you one thing. If she's going to keep out of jail, your little friend's got to prove an alibi for that half hour."

"I see," said Dennis slowly. In the back of his mind a thought was forming. "I think I'll go out too."

"My advice to you is to keep out of it," said Haynes. "Are you going to take it?"

"I am not!" Dennis squared his jaw. "And what's more—I'm going to dig up that alibi!"

IV

THE force of the declaration sent him out onto the street, but once there his steps lagged. He had nothing to work on but the faint beginnings of a theory based on the one thing he knew and the police didn't. The form of the papers the girl had burned in her room.

He groped back, trying to reconstruct the feel of the envelope she had put in his hand. It was long and slim, with printing on the outside. Of that he was sure. And inside was something which felt like cardboard. What was there that had printing on the envelope? Theater tickets? No. The cardboard was too large for that. Photos? Hardly. Railway tickets? He paused suddenly. That was it! What was it Haynes had said about her leaving town?

He swung about and retraced his steps. The thing to do was to try the ticket offices nearest the *Tattle Tale* office. There were several, but he invaded them all until he found the clerk he wanted. The man remembered yesterday afternoon. Yes, a girl had bought a ticket—good-looking girl, blue suit, he thought; anyway, fur around the neck and sleeves. Quite late—four or four thirty. The ticket? Oh, to some little jerk water place up Massachusetts way—Galvindale, or was it Balvindale? Wait—he had it! Kalvindale! Had quite a time working out connections. Sold the ticket to the nearest stop—Leadville. Why'd he want to know?

Dennis thanked him and departed. So that was where she had been! Not at her apartment, but in a ticket office. The fact, once proved, might form an alibi for that fatal half hour, but would it help her? She had been so pitiably anxious to hide the ticket—had risked everything to burn it. And—he paused in sudden thought—might not Haynes argue that she was planning what he called a get-away?

No—it would not do to turn the discovery over without some further thought—certainly not without talking to Moya.

"Moya"—he was calling her that in his thoughts, he found. It might not be her name, but it fitted her somehow. Well—he squared his shoulders—he'd have it out with her once and for all. Perhaps now that he knew about the ticket she'd be willing to give her confidence. Unconsciously he hurried his footsteps toward the apartment.

Moya met him at the door. At first glance he saw she had something of importance to tell him. Her eyes were bright and there was a faint color in her cheeks.

"You've discovered something!" he said eagerly.

"Yes. At least I hope so." She drew him into the room. "Do you see that window there—the big north light?"

His face fell. "They've been over that and the fire escape with a fine-tooth comb," he said. "I was out there myself. No finger-prints, and no footprints that told anything."

"I know," she said. "But somebody *did* go down the fire escape."

"How do you know?"

"Come here."

He followed her out the window onto the platform. An instant later she was below him on the step.

"Do you see that?" She was pointing at a space in the ornamental grillework, and he followed her gaze.

"Thread," she said. "A piece of silk thread caught in the grillework. I don't want to touch it. Will you take it out?"

Dennis disengaged the trifle. As it lay in his palm they both bent over, her hair brushing his cheek.

"Twisted silk," she pointed out. "Finished at both ends. Don't you see what that means?"

"No," he admitted stupidly, "I don't."

"It's from a tassel," she said. "That's the only thing that would be like that. If it were fringe, it 'd only be finished at one end. See—it's bent in the middle where it caught into the top."

"Of course," said Dennis. "That's what it is—a tassel, and not a very large one, either."

"Too small to have been on curtains, I think," said Moya. "More likely a woman's dress or hand bag." For a moment they stared at each other, then, "Did you notice the color?" she asked softly.

"Purple!" said Dennis suddenly. "By all that's holy—*purple!*"

Together they climbed the stair and went back into the room. In the center of the studio she turned to him.

"Do you think," she said, breathless—"do you think it will help?"

He was regarding it thoughtfully.

"I don't know," he admitted. "Of course Haynes might say you'd planted it

there, or that it blew from some upper window and had been there for weeks."

"Oh, Haynes—" She dismissed him. "I wasn't thinking about Haynes. What seems important to me is that some one was on the fire escape. You see, it couldn't have blown down from above—it was too firmly wedged in the iron; and as to the time element—do you remember when it rained last?"

"By Jove!" said Dennis. "It rained Wednesday—the night before he was killed! And this hasn't been wet!" She nodded, lips apart, and he touched her hand. "You're a wonder," he said simply. "I'd never have thought of that."

"Then you think it might help—" she began.

"Wait until I think," he begged. "Of course the fact that some one was there might help us in working out a theory, but you'd never be able to get Haynes to accept it—not unless some one saw her. And they couldn't. The fire escape's built against a blank wall, you know, and no one can be seen, even from the other apartments."

The light died out of her face.

"I'd so hoped it would help," she said. "I wanted to do something."

"You have," he assured her. "And I'm going to ask you to do something else. There's no use there being any secrecy between us now. You see, they've learned at headquarters that you aren't Moya Neil from Boston, and I"—he leaned forward—"I've found out where you were at four thirty that afternoon."

She started. "Then—then you know!"

"Everything," he said quietly. "That you bought a ticket to Leadville; that you were planning to leave that night."

For a long moment she sat, twisting her slender hands in her lap; then:

"I suppose," she said, "I was foolish to try to hide it, but I did so hope they would not find it out—the police, I mean. But now if they know—"

"They don't know," he assured her. "You don't suppose I told them?"

"You mean we can keep them from finding out?"

"I think so. You see, I only guessed because of the envelope you handed me that night—the one you burned."

She flushed. "What you must think of me!" she said. "I—I should have trusted you, of course, but I've always heard of the dreadful way newspaper men get their stories. You see, it isn't just myself. It might mean life or death to some one else."

"You still don't want to tell me?"

"Yes," she said, "I'll tell you now, of course. It's my mother." A sudden wave of relief broke over Dennis. He had feared—he scarcely knew what. The girl hurried on. "She's lived all her life in Kalvindale—it was named after my great-grandfather. My name is really Moya Kalvin."

"Then Moya Neil—"

"Wait, I'll explain. When I came to New York I thought I was going to be a great artist—a portrait painter. Then I found I'd only a certain knack for caricature. I began doing things for the magazines and sending money to mother. But she was so horribly proud that I let her think it came from portraits, and I signed my sketches Moya Neil."

"She"—Dennis hesitated—"she needed the money then?"

"Yes. We've been getting poorer and poorer every year. But I've been able to send enough to make her quite comfortable. That is, until last month. She wrote me she had to have an operation. It was to send money for that I did work for *Tattle Tale*—and moved here. They"—her lips trembled and her eyes filled with tears—"they say she'll get well if she isn't worried."

A sudden light dawned on Dennis. "So that's why you didn't want your name known!"

"Yes. It would be in all the papers and Kalvindale—oh, you don't know what a small town is like! My working for *Tattle Tale*—Crafton's being found dead in my apartment—nothing, no explanation would ever have settled the gossip in Kalvindale. It would kill my mother."

"And you were going home last night?"

"Yes," she smiled. "Haynes was right there. I wasn't going until next week, and was packing my trunk slowly; but after that awful interview with Mr. Crafton I

decided to go at once. I simply *hated* New York. So I bought my ticket and hurried home."

"Well—" Dennis rose to go. "I think I see a lot farther than I did before; but one thing more: You know they haven't been able to trace the thing Crafton was killed with. I was wondering. Is there—*was* there any sharp thing about the studio that might have been used? Anything that lay convenient to hand?"

For a moment she considered.

"Nothing I can think of," she said slowly. "Of course there are knives in the kitchen, but that's too far, isn't it? And there's a paper cutter on the table. One of those blunt Christmas present things that wouldn't cut butter."

"Is it still there?" He crossed to the table. "What are these?"

She followed his eyes. "Oh—just my working kit. Brushes, pallet knife—that sort of thing."

"Pallet knife," he said slowly. "It's that blunt thing, of course. Is there anything sharp?"

"Just a penknife," she said, "and that's too small. It's here." She crossed and stood beside him. "Everything's there except—" She started and bent over. "Why, where, I wonder, could it be?"

"What?" he asked. "Is anything missing?"

"My compasses," she said. "They're gone! And it could have been done with that! They were about eight inches long and folded up so that the end was sharp as a knife. I've cut myself on them."

"You're very sure they were here?"

"Yes. I was using them before I left. They were lying right there."

V

"WITHIN four feet of where he was stabbed," said Dennis slowly. "That shows it was not premeditated. I wonder—" For a moment he mused; then, suddenly: "Look here—about that shadow. I wonder if you could tell me more about it?"

She shook her head. "No. I wish I had not said anything about it. It sounds so silly. All I can do is to repeat over and over that it looked purple."

"Purple," said Dennis slowly. "But that is not surprising, is it? The whole room is mauve, and that's a sort of purple."

"I know," said Moya. "But it isn't that. It was thick and, oh, I don't know—full of color. If I could only make you see what I mean!"

"You do!" said Dennis. "I'm beginning to see a lot of things. And I know so much more than the police. Your real name, and why you needed money. They're making quite a point of that, and what Crafton was killed with—"

"And the purple thread!" said the girl. "Don't forget that!"

"I'm not forgetting," he said. "It's going to mean more than you know—that and the shadow."

"Oh—" She stepped forward impulsively. "You don't mean that you know anything about that—"

He rose to his feet and took her hands in his.

"I don't know anything," he told her. "But I guess—oh—a lot! I want you to promise me something. No matter what happens—no matter if they come to arrest you—you won't be frightened. Just remember I'll be back before they can really do anything."

"Back—" she faltered. "Then you are going away?"

"I may have to. There's something I want to find out, and the trail may take me anywhere. But you'll wait for me and not worry?"

Bravely she smiled back at him. "If you'll only tell me about that shadow."

He returned her smile. "I'm going to tell you about the shadow," he promised. "And why it was purple, too!"

It was four o'clock of the next afternoon when Dennis Thorn stepped into the Cambria elevator and pressed the button marked "6." He was travel-stained and weary, but there was a smile on his lips, a smile that broke into a grin as he caught the sound of voices from behind the studio door. He turned the handle and entered quietly.

As before, the scene spread out like the setting of a play. There was Haynes and Durkee to right and left, with another man, presumably from the district attorney's office.

And before them was the girl, fists clenched, head held high.

"You can't scare me!" she was saying. "You can't! You can't!"

Dennis stepped into the middle of the scene.

"What's wrong?" he inquired.

"Oh!" Moya turned to him. "I knew you'd come! I knew!"

Quite naturally he slipped his hand within the curve of her arm and turned on the others with a grin.

"You don't happen to be arresting her?"

"We are, if you want to know it!" said Haynes truculently. "She killed Crafton—and what's more, we know what she did it with! Her drawing compass!"

"They've found it," said Moya. "We were right. That *was* what killed him."

"What you got to say about it?" demanded Haynes.

Dennis reached into an inner pocket and drew forth a packet.

"Only that," he said.

For a moment the three men bent over the inclosed sheets, then Haynes looked up, his jaw dropping.

"My God!" he said. "How'd you get this?"

"Went for it."

"But how did you know?"

"I didn't," said Dennis cheerfully. "Just guessed."

"What is it?" demanded Moya. "What are those papers?"

Dennis reached out and took them from Haynes.

"This," he said, "is the story you refused to illustrate. This envelope contains a purple silk tassel cut from a velvet cloak, and this"—he held up a sheet of lavender paper scrawled in lilac ink—"this is a full confession by the one who murdered Hugh Crafton—Helena Haight."

"Helena!" Moya stared. "But how—where?"

"Here, of course. He'd sent her word that he wanted to see her on important business, and she wrote she would be in her apartment a few hours that afternoon. You see, she'd no idea of his business and also no idea the apartment was occupied. She arrived here about four thirty and came upstairs without seeing any one. Ten minutes later Crafton came with that dreadful story. He held it over her head and threatened to print it—with illustrations. He showed her a check made out to you which he said was to pay for the pictures."

"So that was the reason for the check!"

"Yes. The woman saw all that awful past rising up before her again, and she—well, she says she saw red. She reached for the nearest thing to hand—it happened to be your compasses—and flew at him like a tiger. He fell between the couch and trunk where you found him."

"But, she—she—" Moya's voice was a mere whisper.

"She heard us at the door," said Dennis. "Of course, seeing the trunk there, she had guessed that you had moved in. She realized it was too late to escape and hid behind the curtains by the north light. After you were in the bedroom she opened the window and slipped down the fire escape."

"But that shadow—" Moya began.

"Was the purple cloak she had thrown over the body."

Haynes gave a startled gasp.

"So that was it!" he said. "And of course she crept back after Miss Neil passed through—"

"And took it with her," assented Dennis. "It was over her arm when she went down the fire escape, and a bit of tassel caught in the grillework."

"But how"—Moya was staring up at him—"how did you ever guess?"

"Why, it's written all about you! Don't you see? Everything in this room is either mauve, lavender, or purple. The very writing paper is orchid, and the ink is violet. Wouldn't a woman who loved a color be likely to dress herself in it? And with the purple thread as a clew— Well, I went down to the paper and looked up the doings of the Ursula party. Found they were down at Newport News. I slipped down there for a few hours. It didn't take

me long to find Miss Haight had gone to New York for a single twenty-four hours, and those hours were the hours of the murder."

Haynes started forward. "Where is she now?"

"I don't know," said Dennis, selecting a cigarette and snapping a match alight. "On her way to South America, I hope—or the north pole. I let her see I knew the whole thing, then offered to let her escape for that—" He waved his hand toward the confession. "To tell the truth, I didn't think the removal of Crafton was anything but a boon to humanity, and—" He chuckled.

For a moment Haynes glared, then a reluctant grin broke over his face.

"You win!" he said. "I suppose I've got to apologize to Miss Neil. But really—you can hardly blame a fellow, finding those compasses of hers under the cushions of the divan—and her refusing to give her real name—it all looked pretty black. I'd give a good deal," he added wistfully, "to know what her real name *is*."

Dennis picked up his hat and handed it to him meaningly.

"That," he said, "is one of the things you will never, never know. But, if it's worrying you, I'll tell you something—it wouldn't do you any good to learn her name, because I'm not going to let it stay what it is very long."

And with a little grin he bowed them into the hall.

DON MICHAEL DARES ALL

SETTINGS for crime are not always religiously selected. The necessity for the marauder to do his deed often at an inopportune time or forego the doing of it often forces queer settings for the accomplishment of a blackguardly act.

Such was the case with one Don Michael, a resident of a small hamlet in Spain. He had hospitably entertained a brother in his home for several weeks when he learned through one of his servants that this sheltered brother had made seductive advances upon his wife. And his wife had not spurned them.

The infuriated Don Michael attempted to murder both the brother and wife with his poniard, but succeeded only in badly wounding them. The two evildoers fled for their lives. Don Michael made an oath he would have the life of his brother at all costs. Of this oath the brother heard and journeyed to remote parts of Spain. Years elapsed, and Don Michael had almost despaired of being able to inflict his sworn oath of vengeance.

The brother, perhaps repenting of his sins, perhaps seeking a cloak under which to hide in safety, turned to a monastery at Scalvi. He entered into the novitiate and pronounced the solemn vows.

At this time there was, in the town, the jubilee of the year and therein Don Michael was making himself merry. Through one of the townsfolk he learned of the presence of his brother at these religious ceremonies then in order. He made immediate haste to the church and entered the sacristy, where his brother sat. Here he awaited the conclusion of the service.

Affairs over, the friends and brother theologists approached one after the other to offer their congratulatory embraces. Don Michael was urged by friends to enter in likewise with a humble heart and ask conciliation. Apparently moved by the entreaties of his friends, Don Michael went forward with the others.

As he advanced he made a humble address. The new young priest extended his arms and pressed his brother to his bosom. As he did so his knees were seen to crumple; a low groan trembled from his lips, and he sank in a faint to the floor.

Don Michael, brandishing a crimson dagger before the horror-struck priesthood kicked the corpse at his feet and exclaimed:

"I have caught thee at last."

Thereupon he fled, and such was the confusion and dumb amazement of all that the murderer escaped and has never been discovered to this day.

Among other things found upon him were two five-pound notes

THE "d" MARK

By R. M. Freeman

INSPECTOR HICKMOTT KNEW "THE CHICKEN," BUT IT TOOK MORE THAN ONE TO FILL THE COOP

OUR old friend, Inspector Hickmott, was strolling eastward along the Strand on a raw, rather foggy evening in late November. To all appearances he was simply loafing, his demeanor being, more than anything else, suggestive of the bored idler who was just out to kill time. That suggestion, of course, was designedly fallacious.

The inspector was abroad on business—professional business. He was, in fact, on the lookout for a certain "long firm" gentleman who was urgently wanted. And as this individual was known to be a frequenter of the drinking bars in and around the Strand, Inspector Hickmott was drawing this neighborhood first as the most likely hunting ground in which to find his quarry.

The inspector was dressed for the locality. As, when business led him into Bond Street or Piccadilly he would invariably assume the regulation frock coat and topper of the West End clubman; as, when investigating in the purlieus of Hoxton or Whitechapel, he would don the attire of the typical East End artisan; so now, in this West Central Bohemia, he was habited Bohemianwise.

A brown Trilby hat was perched a little rakishly on his bullet head. An Inverness cape enveloped him to the knees. His feet were encased in boots of the hue which they know in the trade as "willow." He had, in fact, all the cut of the second or third-rate theatrical man—of the type which is as common in the Strand as are blackberries in a country lane.

There are those who like to make themselves conspicuous. Not so the detective

officer of the C.I.D. His rôle is rather one of modest self-effacement; his aim to pass unnoticed in his natural assimilation with his surroundings.

Just at the corner of Southampton Street the inspector met a man in whose face his keen, though outwardly unobservant, eyes instantly recognized something familiar. It was not the man he was looking for, but it was a man whose photographs, in various make-ups, were included in a certain interesting picture gallery at New Scotland Yard. The last time Inspector Hickmott had seen him in the flesh, now more than two years ago, he was wearing a ragged sandy beard and mustache. Now he was clean-shaven. But almost in a moment the inspector had identified him.

"By Jove! That's The Chicken," he muttered to himself. "What's he doing here, I wonder.

He turned away in an apparently aimless fashion and proceeded to follow that individual. After traveling a few hundred yards westward the other entered the saloon bar of a tavern on the north side of the Strand. Inspector Hickmott lounged in after him and ordered himself a whisky and soda. Glancing carelessly round as he sipped the beverage he saw that the man he was following had already disappeared from the bar. And as he certainly had not left by the street entrance it was obvious that he must have passed out through the opposite door, which led into the billiard room at the back of the premises.

Thither, with his half-finished drink in his hand, Inspector Hickmott presently repaired. The Chicken, *alias* Tom Slick, *alias* Carrots, and incidentally one of the cleverest forgers of the day, was a man worth keeping under observation. Inspector Hickmott strolled casually across to the raised settee at the top of the room and sat down as if to watch the play.

The Chicken and a fresh-complexioned young man, quite twenty years his junior, were taking off their coats. Three other men, typical billiard room loafers, were lounging on the settee. None of them took any particular notice of Inspector Hickmott.

The players selected their cues and began to chalk them.

"You ought to get your own back this journey," remarked The Chicken genially. "You had cruel luck last night. I never saw the balls run so badly."

"Yes, it was a bit off, wasn't it?" answered the young man. "Shall we string?"

They strung. It fell to the young man to break the balls.

"The usual quid, eh?" he inquired of The Chicken as he opened with a miss in balk.

"Right-o!" replied the Chicken, indifferently.

Then play began in earnest.

The Chicken at the commencement of the game appeared to be dead out of form. He missed some ridiculously easy shots. But Inspector Hickmott knew something about billiards. And he soon perceived that that wily individual was merely doing what is vulgarly known as "kidding." This view was entirely confirmed when The Chicken came away toward the end of the game with an unfinished thirty and ran out winner by eight points.

Two more hundreds were played. Each time The Chicken just won, and each time a sovereign changed hands. Inspector Hickmott took it all in with a cynical gleam in his eye. So The Chicken was amusing himself—in the intervals of more serious business, no doubt—by snapping up unconsidered trifles in the shape of sovereigns from young fools who fancied themselves at billiards. However, it was no business of his, the inspector told himself.

He couldn't interfere even if he had wished, which, in point of fact, he didn't. Nothing was further from his desires at the moment than to obtrude himself upon the attention of The Chicken, or to let that gentleman know that his presence in London had been observed and noted.

"If he stays in town," reflected the inspector, "it's as likely as not he'll engage my attention before long in connection with something considerably bigger than billiard sharping. Meanwhile my strength is to sit still."

Then he left the billiard room, where The Chicken and the greenhorn were already engaged in their fourth hundred up, and sauntered leisurely home.

One afternoon, a week or ten days later, he was sent for by the head of his department at the yard.

"I want you to run round to the Strand branch of the London and General Bank," said his chief. "They've just rung us up on the telephone. It's a forgery case, I understand. You had better go at once."

The inspector lost no time in complying with these instructions. A quarter of an hour later found him closeted with the bank manager in that gentleman's private parlor.

The matter demanding investigation was that of a forged check for four hundred and fifty pounds, which had been presented and paid across the counter five days previously. The customer on whose account the check had been forged had only discovered it that morning on looking at his pass book. He had, of course, at once communicated with the bank, and the bank had immediately telephoned to Scotland Yard.

"Here's the check," said the manager, handing it to Inspector Hickmott.

The latter took it and scrutinized it carefully. It was drawn on one of the bank's ordinary forms:

> Pay Geo. Duke, Esq., or order, four hundred and fifty pounds (450).
> (Signed) A. BLICKSTEIN.

The body of the check and the signature were in the same handwriting. The name of the payee was duly indorsed on the back.

"Umph!" said the inspector. "And this is a good imitation of your customer's signature?"

"Excellent," replied the manager. "It would have deceived any one."

"I should say that it would be an easy signature to forge, too," remarked Inspector Hickmott. "The handwriting is distinctly commonplace and characterless. By the way, who is this Mr. Blickstein?"

"He is a money-lender in a largish way of business," replied the manager.

"And this form now, is it one that has been abstracted from Blickstein's check book?" asked the inspector.

"No," was the rejoinder. "That is a curious feature in the case. We have identified it, by the reference number, as coming from the book of another customer of ours—a lady of the name of Jeppy, who keeps a private hotel in Jermyn Street."

"Have you referred to Mrs. Jeppy to see if she can give any explanation of this check form having been abstracted from her book?" asked Inspector Hickmott.

"Not yet," was the rejoinder. "There has been no time. Besides, I thought I had better leave all such inquiries to the police."

Inspector Hickmott nodded.

"Have you known Mrs. Jeppy long?" was his next question.

"She has been a customer of ours for twenty years," answered the manager.

"A satisfactory customer?"

"Oh, quite! She doesn't keep a big account, but it is always in credit. And I should say, from what I know of her, that she is an eminently respectable and responsible person," declared the manager with conviction.

II

"WELL, now as to the man who uttered this check," said Inspector Hickmott. "Does your cashier remember what he was like?"

"Yes, fortunately he took particular notice of him," rejoined the manager. "He is confident that he should know him again anywhere. But I will send for Mr. Slatter, and you can question him yourself."

He rang the bell. A clerk appeared.

"Ask Mr. Slatter to step in here," said the manager.

A minute later Mr. Slatter, the cashier, made his appearance. He was rather a good-looking young man. Indeed, he would have been quite handsome except for his chin, which was somewhat too pronounced, imparting to his face a certain air of dogged determination that indicated strength rather than amiability of character.

"This is Inspector Hickmott, from Scotland Yard," explained the manager. "He has come about that forged check, and would like to ask you a few questions."

The cashier bowed to the inspector and stood awaiting his inquiries.

"You remember the man who presented the check for payment, Mr. Slatter?" began the detective.

"Perfectly," was the unhesitating reply.

"Can you describe him to me?"

"Oh, yes! He was a tallish man, with sandy hair and light gray or blue eyes. I can't be absolutely certain which. He was very well dressed, and spoke like a gentleman."

"Had he a beard or mustache?"

"No; he was clean-shaven. I remember noticing, too, that he had a mole on his upper lip."

"Ah!" said the inspector. Then he added: "He was a total stranger to you, of course?"

"Yes; I had never set eyes on him before. That was what made me take careful stock of him. I always do of strangers who present open checks for any considerable amount," replied the cashier.

"Quite so," remarked Inspector Hickmott. "You don't often have to pay checks as large as this across the counter, I presume?"

"No; not in a general way," answered the cashier. "But in the case of this particular customer, Mr. Blickstein, it is by no means unusual. Borrowers naturally don't care, you see, to pass a money lender's check through their own bankers," he added in explanation.

"I suppose not," observed the inspector thoughtfully. "And the forger no doubt was aware of this, and laid his plans accordingly. By the way, how did he take the money?"

"Twenty pounds in gold, the rest in notes. I gave him two hundreds, four fifties, two tens, and two fives."

"Will you let me have the numbers of these notes?"

"Certainly. I'll get them for you at once."

The cashier went off and soon returned with a memorandum of the numbers, which he handed to Inspector Hickmott. The latter put them in his pocketbook.

Having now elicited all the information he could get from the bank, he went on to the private hotel in Jermyn Street to interview Mrs. Jeppy.

Mrs. Jeppy was a stout, elderly woman with a round, honest, good-tempered face. When she heard the object of Inspector Hickmott's visit she was quite obviously taken aback.

"Well, I'm sure this is news to me," she exclaimed. "I certainly hadn't noticed that any check was missing from my book. I can't help thinking that there must be a mistake. However, I'll get it and see."

She went off and presently returned with the check book in her hand.

"You're right," she ejaculated. "There is one of the checks missing, toward the end of the book. Here you are, see!"

And she placed the check book in Inspector Hickmott's hands. He took it and examined it. The stub of the missing check had been torn out. But by referring to the numbers of the checks on either side of it he was able to identify it with the forged check.

"You keep this book under lock and key, I suppose?" he inquired.

"As a rule I do. But I won't say that I never left it lying on the table," answered Mrs. Jeppy.

Inspector Hickmott nodded. He knew the ways of women, and suspected that the occasions on which the check book had been left lying on the table had been pretty frequent.

"You have no reason to suspect the honesty of any of your staff, eh?" was his next question.

Mrs. Jeppy shook her head.

"They're all quite honest, so far as I am aware," she rejoined.

"And none of the people who stay in the hotel would have access to your private rooms, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear no!" said Mrs. Jeppy.

"You have occasional visitors, however?" The inspector pressed her.

"Hardly ever," was the reply. "I never was one for making friends. My nephew Dick is about the only one who comes to see me. And he doesn't come often. Besides, Dick is as right as rain in money matters, even though he is a bit wild in other ways," she added with a sigh.

Inspector Hickmott metaphorically pricked his ears.

"Ah, well! Young men will be young men," he remarked in sympathetic tones, hoping thereby to encourage her into further communicativeness.

"There are excuses for Dick, mind you," proceeded Mrs. Jeppy, taking up the cudgels on behalf of her absent nephew. "He was as steady a lad as ever breathed until two or three years ago, when he had a disappointment in love. It was that that drove him a bit off the rails."

"Ah, the old story, I see! A woman in the case," smiled Inspector Hickmott.

"Yes," answered the voluble Mrs. Jeppy, now fairly wound up on this, to her, manifestly engrossing topic. "It was my lady bookkeeper. A nice, respectable girl she was, too, until some gentlemen got hold of her and made a fool of her. At least, I fancy that's what it was; though she kept her own counsel. Anyway, she left in a hurry, and nothing has been heard of her since. Poor Dick was fearfully cut up about it. He was head over heels in love with the girl, and had set his heart on marrying her. You can't wonder at his going a bit wild after an upset like that, can you?"

"No; it's natural enough, I suppose," said Inspector Hickmott. Then, having asked the worthy woman a few more questions, and satisfied himself that there was no more pertinent information to be extracted from her, he took his departure.

Just as he was leaving the hotel a gentleman, entering, passed him in the lobby. A sudden gleam sparkled in Inspector Hickmott's eye. The train of thought which he was mentally following in relation to Mrs. Jeppy's profligate nephew, Dick, was suddenly cut short. He felt it was now waste of time to pursue it. From the cashier's description he was already pretty certain of the identity of the man who had uttered the forged check. And the suspected man's presence here in the hotel of the customer from whose check book the form had been stolen supplied the missing link which he had been trying to find.

"Is that gentleman staying in the hotel?" he asked casually of the hall porter.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "He has been here for some weeks."

Then Inspector Hickmott felt absolutely positive of his man.

"Got you fair and square this time, my friend," he thought to himself as he went down the steps.

I need not say that the gentleman whom he had seen entering the hotel, and whom he thus inwardly apostrophized, was the notorious Chicken.

The inspector went straight off and procured a warrant. That same evening he effected the arrest at Mrs. Jeppy's hotel. The Chicken's attitude, when the warrant was read over to him and the usual caution administered, was one of aggrieved bewilderment.

"This is the first I've heard of it," he protested. "It is evidently a case of mistaken identity. I was never inside the Strand branch of the London and General Bank in my life."

"I'm afraid I must take you into custody, however," said Inspector Hickmott. "There's a cab at the door. You'll come quietly, I suppose?"

"I can't help myself," answered The Chicken. "But when I've proved my innocence I'll take good care to bring an action against the police for false imprisonment. Don't you forget that. This is outrageous."

"Well, come along," said the inspector, ignoring The Chicken's bluff.

They entered the cab together and drove to Bow Street, where The Chicken was duly charged. Then he had to submit to the ordeal of being searched. Among various other things found upon him were two five-pound notes. Inspector Hickmott pounced upon them and looked at the numbers. He could not forebear a placid smile of satisfaction. If anything was wanting to complete the evidence against The Chicken and make it finally conclusive, here it was. For these were two of the notes that had been paid on the forged check.

"I shall make an application to the magistrate to have that money handed over to my lawyers for my defense," exclaimed the aggrieved Chicken with a fine show of indignant innocence. "It's my own. I came by it honestly. And I can prove it, too."

"All right. If you can, so much the better for you, that's all," said the inspector with a grim smile as he placed the incriminating notes in his pocketbook.

"It's the truth I'm telling you," persisted The Chicken, excitedly. "I won those two fivers at billiards off a man at the Old Crown in the Strand. If you don't believe me, go and ask him yourself."

Of this remark Inspector Hickmott took no apparent notice. But it set him thinking. There was at least some circumstantial admixture of fact in The Chicken's story; for the Old Crown was the identical tavern where he (the inspector) had seen the many-aliased one billiard sharping a certain fresh-complexioned young greenhorn in circumstances already described.

He determined, therefore, to investigate The Chicken's statement. Not with the idea of finding corroboration of it (for, so far as the bank notes were concerned, he disbelieved it altogether), but rather as a precautionary measure, with a view to anticipating and checkmating any defense of that description which The Chicken might subsequently attempt to set up.

With this in his mind he betook himself to the Old Crown on the chance of finding the fresh-complexioned young man there and taking the opportunity of asking him a few questions. The object of his search was not at the tavern. But the billiard-marker recognized him at once from Inspector Hickmott's description, and was fortunately able to put our friend on the young fellow's track.

"Oh, yes, I know him very well!" said the billiard-marker, complacently pocketing the half-crown that Inspector Hickmott slipped into his willing palm. "Name of Minton. He's been here a lot lately, playing with a tall sandy gentleman, who didn't half kid neither. Wonder the young juggins didn't see it. Don't know his home address, guv'nor, but I do know where he works. That's at the *Daily Mercury* office in Fleet Street. I dare say they'd put you on to him there if you asked 'em."

The inspector thanked him for the information and went on to the offices of the *Daily Mercury*. It was now within half an hour of midnight, and he calculated that all the employees of the paper would be on the premises getting ready for the next morning's issue.

III

HIS visit was successful. Young Minton was there, and presently came down to see him in the waiting room.

"Sorry to keep you," he apologized. "But there were some proofs I had to attend to. You wish to see me on important business I understand?"

In a few words Inspector Hickmott introduced himself and briefly explained his mission.

"Oh, yes; I know the man to whom you refer perfectly," answered young Minton. "I have played billiards with him at the Old Crown pretty frequently of late, and he has won a goodish bit of money off me. But I have always paid in gold. Never gave him a bank note in my life."

"You are positive of this?"

"Absolutely."

"Thanks," said Inspector Hickmott. "That is all I want to know. I need not detain you any longer."

Next day a further find was made. The Chicken's bedroom at the Jermyn Street hotel was searched, and there the whole of the other missing notes were discovered concealed among some soiled underclothing in his portmanteau. Inspector Hickmott took them away with him to the Yard and checked them over. They were all there. Thus, with the exception of the twenty pounds in gold, all the money paid on the forged check was accounted for and all had been traced to the possession of The Chicken. The case was complete.

Inspector Hickmott was about to lock the notes away in his safe when his eye was caught by a penciled scrawl on the back of one of the fivers which had been found on The Chicken at the time of his arrest. He put on his glasses and examined the writing more carefully. It consisted merely of a few rows of figures set down one under the other, evidently a sort of arithmetical memo. But that was not all.

There was something else which made Inspector Hickmott suddenly contract his

brows into a thoughtful frown. One of the numbers had been crossed out, and crossed out in a certain way. Here, in exact facsimile, is the penciling on the back of the note:

100
98
100
~~98~~ 8
96
100
12

"By Jupiter!" ejaculated the inspector, bringing down his fist on the table with a bang. "By Jupiter!" he repeated.

I don't know what significance the reader may see in those figures. Perhaps he, or she, will see none at all. But to the trained eye of Inspector Hickmott the significance was immense. This was his chain of inference. First, those marks could not have been on the notes when they left the bank, for banks always pay out new notes.

Second, those rows of figures were probably, almost certainly, a memo of billiard scores. Third, from the *delete* mark against the deletion, the man who made the memo must evidently have been accustomed to the correction of printers' proofsheets. Such a man would be quite likely to have put the marks here inadvertently, and from sheer force of habit. No other class of man—even if acquainted with the existence of the mark at all—could conceivably have done so.

Now, The Chicken had many accomplishments. But, so far as Inspector Hickmott was aware, and he knew the fellow's record pretty well, a technical knowledge of proof reading was not among them.

For the third time, and with even greater emphasis than before, the inspector ejaculated:

"By Jupiter!"

The case, then, was by no means so clear as it had seemed. There was more in it than met the eye. This fresh clew must be carefully followed up. Exactly where it was going to lead Inspector Hickmott had not yet sufficient data to see.

But this much, at least, had been established—*viz.*, that this particular note had been through some one else's hands between the time of its leaving the bank and the time of its coming into The Chicken's possession. Further, that the some one else through whose hands it had passed was a man familiar with the technicalities of printing, and that all probability pointed to its being young Minton of the *Daily Mercury*.

Against this, however, had to be ranged the positive identification of The Chicken by the cashier at the bank as the man to whom he had paid the proceeds of the forged check. How were these conflicting pieces of evidence to be reconciled? Such was the problem which Inspector Hickmott had now to set himself to solve.

As a preliminary step, he made a further exhaustive search of The Chicken's room at the Jermyn Street hotel on the chance of there picking up some clew to the mystery. In the room itself he found nothing; but for all that, his visit to the hotel resulted in an important discovery. As he was bidding Mrs. Jeppy good-day at the conclusion of his search he happened to notice the direction of an envelope which she had just written and which was lying on her davenport. It was addressed to: "Richard Minton, Esq., c/o *Daily Mercury*, Fleet Street, E.C."

Inspector Hickmott, always on the alert, at once began to put two and two together. He remembered that on a previous occasion Mrs. Jeppy had referred to her nephew as "Dick." What if he should prove to be Richard Minton of the *Daily Mercury*—the young man who was so strangely mixed up in this mysterious case? If it should be so, the significance was obvious. The point must be verified at once.

"You were talking to me of your nephew, Dick Minton, the last time I was here," he remarked, throwing out this feeler with a casual air. "Curiously enough, I ran up against him the other day at the *Mercury* office."

"Oh, did you, indeed?" said the unsuspecting Mrs. Jeppy. "He hasn't been here just recently, so, as it happens, I was just writing to him to ask him what he had done with himself."

"He wasn't looking very well, I thought," observed the inspector. "Still worrying about that girl, I suppose. By the way, you've heard nothing more of her, of course?" he added, rather with the idea of diverting Mrs. Jeppy's attention from the

real object of his inquiries than because he took any interest in the lady bookkeeper's fate.

But in asking that casual question he had, as it turned out, "struck ile"—though without in the least designing to do so.

Mrs. Jeppy, respectable woman that she was, flushed painfully.

"I believe she is in a home somewhere at the present moment, and the child is out at nurse," she said. "Poor Mary Slatter! Who ever would have thought of her coming to this?" And the good creature heaved a melancholy sigh.

The inspector experienced something not unlike an electric shock, but he commanded his voice and features to perfection.

"Slatter, did you say her name was?" he asked carelessly.

Mrs. Jeppy nodded.

"Not a common name," observed Inspector Hickmott with elaborate unconcern. "I've only come across it once before, I think. There was a young man, a clerk in a bank, so far as I recollect—"

"You must mean Bob Slatter, one of the cashiers at the London and General, where I keep my account," interposed Mrs. Jeppy. "He's poor Mary's brother."

Inspector Hickmott left the hotel shortly after with an odd gleam in his usually expressionless eyes. He had not quite solved the mystery yet. There was still one important point to be cleared up. And this could only be done by poor Mary Slatter herself.

He at once devoted all his energies to finding out the home in which she had taken refuge, and within twenty-four hours he had succeeded in doing so. The information she gave him made all plain. It was as Inspector Hickmott had suspected since he first heard her name. The gentleman who had "made a fool of her" was our friend The Chicken.

Then all the various parts of the puzzle pieced themselves together before Inspector Hickmott's eyes. Here was an unhappy girl ruined and deserted by a worthless scoundrel. Here were her lover and her brother sworn together to have their revenge upon him. He is not acquainted with either of them; but they have made it their business to find out all about him. They have ascertained his recent return to London from the States. They have learned that he is an expert and notorious forger. This suggests to their minds an easy and effective means of revenge.

The lover scrapes acquaintance with him in a Strand billiard room which the forger is known to frequent. He purposely plays the part of pigeon and encourages the scoundrel to pluck him. Probably, almost certainly, he recommends the Jermyn Street hotel to him as a comfortable and desirable residence. Once there, the rest of the plan is easy.

The lover abstracts a form from his aunt's check book, forges a check on Blickstein's account with the assistance of his confederate, the cashier, at the London and General Bank; he presents it and the cashier pays it. In due course the forgery is discovered. The police are called in. The cashier, on being questioned, gives a description of the man who had presented the check, and of course he takes care that his description shall exactly answer to that of The Chicken.

The check form has already been identified as one stolen from the proprietress of the Jermyn Street hotel. The Chicken is found to be staying in that hotel. The inference is obvious. But in order that nothing may be left to chance, young Minton conceals the bulk of the incriminating notes in The Chicken's portmanteau. He also plants two other notes upon him in payment of his losses at billiards.

"Yes; they meant to get our friend The Chicken ten years," reflected Inspector Hickmott, "and by Jove they'd have succeeded too if young Minton hadn't inadvertently introduced that printer's mark in making his memo on the back of the fiver. But a man obsessed with the spirit of revenge is, to all intents and purposes, a lunatic. And we all know how diabolically cunning lunatics can be when they give their mind to it," added the inspector to himself sententiously.

I have only to record that, in consideration of the peculiar circumstances of the case, Slatter and Minton were dealt with mercifully by the judge at the Old Bailey.

THE HAMMERSMITH GHOST

ONE of the strangest defenses offered by a man accused of murder was related to the judges and jury in Old Bailey on the 13th of January, 1800, by Francis Smith, who was accused of shooting Thomas Milwood. Smith's defense was that he had mistaken Milwood for a ghost that had terrorized the neighborhood.

Stranger than the defense was that all three judges and the jurors believed the story. The jury, to save the accused from the gallows, attempted to bring in a verdict of manslaughter. This would have carried with it imprisonment. But the judges, severally and collectively, held that such a finding was impossible. The court ruled that the crown had proved a case that amounted to murder, and, further, that it was the law that if a man killed another without legal authority, but from a supposition that he ought to be killed, the offense was murder and was punishable by death.

The trial was short. Smith admitted shooting Milwood. He contended, and indisputable corroborative proof was offered to support his testimony, that residents of Hammersmith had been terrorized by what they believed to be the noctural perambulations of a ghost. Only a few days before the killing of Milwood, witnesses testified, the "ghost" appeared as a coach with eighteen passengers was being driven through Hammersmith. The driver, who had heard of the "ghost," leaped from his seat and left his coach and horses and passengers to their fate. The passengers screamed, the horses bolted, and the ghost went on its even way.

Smith, who lived with his parents near the scene of the "ghost" walking, decided to look up the ghost.

Smith, who was about thirty years old at the time, armed himself with a rifle before setting out on his ghost hunting expedition.

Five minutes after Smith left his home he saw approaching in the dusk a white form.

Here was the ghost!

Smith took careful aim. He confessed to feeling somewhat frightened as he did so.

"Damn you; who are you?" he shouted as he covered the apparition.

There was no response. The white form continued to advance.

"I'll shoot you if you don't speak!" warned Smith tremblingly.

But the white figure ignored the warning and proceeded.

Smith fired. The white form dropped to the street. Smith ran up to investigate. He had shot—not a ghost, but a man! He had mistaken the customary garb of a bricklayer for the cerements of the grave.

Terror-stricken at his mistake, the unfortunate slayer rushed through the streets crying: "Watchman, help!" This was the cry of our forefathers when they needed the assistance of the police. Smith eventually found one and returned with him to the scene of the slaying.

When the jury retired to deliberate they did not have the conscience to comply with the ruling of the court. Compliance meant the certain infliction of the death penalty unless the king exercised his prerogative to pardon. They could not return a verdict of acquittal, as the accused admitted the deed.

They returned for further instruction, making known their qualms of conscience. But the three judges were obdurate. The law was the law. It must be obeyed. *Fiat justitia pereat mundus.*

Again the jury retired and unwillingly brought in a verdict of guilty of murder. Coupled with their findings was a strong recommendation for mercy.

The judges felt sorry for the convicted man's unfortunate plight. And the presiding judge, before he went to dinner that evening, conveyed the message of the jury to the king, who instantly granted a respite at pleasure.

All London, all England in fact, was roused to pity for the convicted man. The pamphleteers made a killing. Petitions innumerable were sent to the king. And twelve days after the jury returned its verdict of guilty the king pardoned Smith on condition that he serve a year in prison. And the people and the judges and the jury were happy. So was Smith.

The detective was on him like a hawk, twisting him around

ASHES OF GUILT

By Ray Cummings

THE SLAYER OF HARRISON GRAYLEY WAS UNKNOWN, UNTIL HE HIMSELF CONFESSED IN FACE OF A STRANGE EXPERIMENT

THE Chemist smiled grimly. "True enough. Five logical suspects, gentlemen. One simple, commonplace motive—the old man's money. Except the housemaid. She was not an heir."

"Wait," exclaimed the Banker. "Don't dash into it this way. *I* don't know anything about it yet." He gazed at the group of scientists assembled in the small private clubroom. "Who got murdered? Won't somebody tell me?"

"I'll explain it all, George," said the Chemist quietly. "It was old man Grayley—you've met him, haven't you?"

"Grayley? Member of the Club?"

"Yes. Harrison J. Grayley."

"Oh." The Banker sat back. "Yes. Think I did once. Long time ago—a fat man—he ate too much."

"A scientist," said the Chemist unsmilingly, "whose work in bacteriology has been invaluable. That was years ago." He addressed the room in general. "A good many of you will need the details of the case. Harrison Grayley was murdered about two weeks past. A man of sixty-eight—retired from work for some years. He lived in Allison Hills. Seldom came to the city—has not been in the club for two years."

The Astronomer said: "I knew him, Rogers. Quaint old fellow. To think—murdered—"

"Wealthy," commented the Inventor, to no one in particular.

"He deserved it," put in the Surgeon. "His research work in—"

"Don't let's argue his research work," expostulated the Banker impatiently. "I came here because Rogers said he had a murder case. All I've heard is five suspects—"

"An unfortunate case for the police," the Chemist resumed. "Five suspects, and they cannot make an arrest. The evidence—rather queer evidence, by the way—applies equally to—"

"You'd better give George the main details first," the Doctor warned.

"I will," nodded the Chemist. "The case, gentlemen, may possibly be decided here to-night. They're coming here—I've sent for them." He glanced at his watch. "True enough. I must be brief. In a word—for those of you who did not know him—Harrison Grayley was a man about average height, but exceedingly stout. A gormand—he loved his food above everything.

"For all that, he was in good health—suffering only from gout. This, though it could not check his eating, he did suffer from severely. Almost continuously housed-ridden, nursing a foot which would not bear his weight.

"Yet, gentlemen, a likable character—mighty likable. But dogmatic, gruff. Strike him right; have him like you; he'd entertain you in princely fashion. But cross him—get him down on you—" The Chemist shrugged expressively. "I'd hate to have to live with him then."

"Has this got anything to do with his murder?" demanded the Banker. "We know all that—"

"It has, of course. One of the suspects is the family chef, an heir and exceedingly important member of Grayley's household, in his service many years. So much for that. And as for Grayley's bad temper, if he gets down on you—well, gentlemen, he's been at odds continuously with every member of his family.

"The murder was discovered by Elsie Queal, English housemaid. She went into his room to build a fire in his grate—the house was run Continental style—went into his room one morning, to find him dead in bed. A knife buried to the hilt in his back. This maid—we consider her one of the suspects, yet she is the only one who seems to have had no motive. She had been there but a few months. A suspect only because she was in the house. It had not been broken into; the murder obviously was what the police call an inside job.

"The knife, with no finger-prints on it, none to be found any where, in fact, was identified as belonging to the kitchen equipment. Any one of the family could have used it, of course. The housemaid—possibly to lead suspicion to the chef. He is Pierre Vanchi, an artist in his line, according to his employer. His motive would be the fact that he was an heir to the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, and he knew it. So far as can be determined now, he drew a good salary, was contented and had a real affection for Grayley, which the old man returned.

"There was in the house that night no one else save the three members of Grayley's family. An unusual family. Grayley never married. Thirty-eight years ago, a man of thirty, and then a rising young scientist, he had an unfortunate love affair. The girl died. Deciding never to marry, he adopted a child, an orphan girl of two years named Alice.

"Brought her up, loved her devotedly. But of late years he has grown to dislike her. She came of criminal parents—one of them dying in jail. She caused Grayley considerable unhappiness. Eloped at seventeen with one Heinrich Bundt, rather a worthless character. They have one son. Later Grayley became reconciled to Alice, wanted her back with him. She came, and brought her family with her. Grayley has had them with him for the last five years. Made them his heirs.

"A worthless man, this Bundt. And his son is as bad, a wild, reckless sort of youth, now twenty-two. The woman—she is forty now—living on the old man's money, putting on society airs—all three of them quarreling with him constantly. Yet he stood it, because doubtless in his heart he still loved the Alice he had adopted years ago."

The Chemist paused slightly, then added: "One of these five is probably the criminal, gentlemen. The specific evidence at the scene of the crime is peculiarly unfortunate. We believe that some one of these five, with or without the knowledge of some of the others, entered Grayley's

room that night—he seldom locked his door—and stabbed him as he slept.

"His room is remote from the rest of the household; any slight noise would not have aroused the house. And he was a heavy sleeper, easy enough to stab him as he slept.

"The evidence is unfortunate because, though it indicates the criminal, it gives a choice. All have been questioned and accused, but to no purpose. They protest innocence. The specific evidence has been kept from them. I doubt if any of them know the startling clews we have—evidence kept from them, because it could never convict, and if used by police routine, it might only serve to put them further on their guard. They are all very wary now, expecting an arrest—"

"What is the evidence?" demanded the Banker.

The Chemist turned to the Very Young Man. "Jack, bring that in, will you? I'll show it now, and then—"

As the Very Young Man rose, the Chemist added sharply: "Wait, Jack!"

The door was opening. "Mr. Bundt and family to see you, Mr. Rogers."

"Bring them in." As the attendant withdrew, the Chemist said hastily: "No more now, gentlemen. I believe I can fasten the crime on one of them. This evidence—you'll see—"

"Do *we* have anything to do?" asked the Banker anxiously.

"No. Just sit quiet. An audience—so that I can explain about the evidence—make them think— Sh! Here they are."

II

THE attendant ushered five of them into the room. Amid a confusion of introductions they took their seats, the three Bundts in a group a trifle apart from the club members, the two servants near and slightly behind them. Interesting individuals; the scientists regarded them curiously. The Bundts bore themselves with an air of repressed defiance.

The woman was modishly, expensively gowned. A tall, powerful-looking woman, with black hair and dark eyes set too close together. A face almost beautiful, yet unpleasant. Perhaps it was her expression of the moment, a haughty, superior air of resentment that one of her station should be annoyed in this fashion. Or perhaps it was something deeper, her innate character.

"Her husband, known to the family as Heinie, was a man just under fifty. A rotund, flabby figure, but with powerful, heavy shoulders. A red face of sagging jowls, pale watery eyes and a slack mouth. A face which in alcoholic circumstances might be jolly, but which now was sullen with a dumb aspect of alarm. A well dressed man, with expensive jewelry, none of which could hide the fact that he had never done anything worth while in life and never would.

To this latter extent Heinie's son George resembled him. A husky, well-built lad of twenty-two, jauntily dressed, with the supercilious air of his mother, which in him was merely insolence.

The maid, Elsie Queal, was of the self-effacing type which ordinarily would draw little attention. A woman in her twenties, rather plain of feature. She sat stiff and straight in her chair, quite obviously conscious of herself and her best clothes she was wearing; her manner partly fear, partly the aspect of one who resents being insulted.

Of them all, only one seemed of likable personality. Pierre Vanchi, the chef. A big, round, jellylike figure; bald head, with a moon face beneath it; and an absurdly small black mustache.

In his kitchen, white-aproned and white-capped, Pierre would doubtless have been a commanding figure, smiling and jolly, yet stern that everything should be of perfect creation. Now, however, with his tight collar and pinched-back coat of French model, gray-striped trousers stuffed with the fullness of his fat legs, and very shiny pointed shoes—he seemed thoroughly ill at ease.

And alarmed as well, with an air of anxiety to please, to placate everybody. He bowed elaborately to the club members, eyed the Chemist, and smiled weakly;

and then sat awkwardly on the chair given him, with his gray felt hat on his knees.

Such were the five members of Harrison Grayley's household, one of whom the Chemist had declared probably murdered him.

As the room quieted, the Chemist said: "I have asked you visitors here for what we may call an informal inquiry into the death of Mr. Grayley— Just a moment please—" Mrs. Bundt was about to interrupt him. As he checked her, she sat back, angrily fingering her necklace; and her husband said in an undertone; "Take it easy, Alice."

"An informal inquiry," the Chemist went on. "As I promised you when you agreed to come, it will not last long, and it will do much to free you from further annoyance from the police."

"That's what we want," said Heinie Bundt. "These crazy police—"

"Yes, I understand how you feel. I told you our inquiry here may clear up several things which must be disposed of before the matter can be dropped—"

"We don't care whether it's dropped or not," declared young George Bundt. "All we want is to be let alone, because we're not guilty and we're damned sick of—"

"George!" Heinie waved his son down with a vehement gesture; but the mother nodded her equally vehement approval. It was evident that mother and son were blusteringly aggressive; but Heinie, like Pierre, was anxious to placate.

"Quite so," smiled the Chemist imperturbably. "Well, I hope that to-night will settle it one way or the other— Ah, Marberry! Hello, Sergeant Croft. I've been waiting for you, stalling along hoping you'd arrive."

The door had opened unceremoniously to admit four men, two policemen in uniform and two detectives. The Bundts—father and son—were on their feet; the color drained from Mrs. Bundt's face, leaving a splotch of red rouge on each cheek; the two servants shrank in their chairs with gasps of alarm.

"Sit down!" commanded the Chemist. "If I got you—any of you visitors—here under false pretense, I can only claim that it was necessary. Sit down, sergeant. You, Marberry—here, sit by me." He whispered to the Detective aside: "Just started on them. We're all ready; I'll hammer 'em now. Watch closely; give me any pointers you can."

Aloud he resumed: "No cause for any of you to be perturbed, if you are innocent." The Bundts sat down.

"Thanks. That's better. I may want to question you. Will you all answer me freely? Or do you want to make trouble? We can arrest you, if we wish. You know the law isn't afraid of your money."

"I'll answer your questions," declared Mrs. Bundt. "But I've already been insulted enough. I should think—"

The Chemist waved away her statement. "To be wholly frank, I'll say that we are convinced now that one of you five murdered Harrison Grayley."

They were prepared for it. There was no outburst; only Pierre who mumbled: "*Non! Non!*" and waved his pudgy hands in horror. The others—as though with the realization that this was more serious than anything which had gone before—sat firm.

"One of you is the criminal," the Chemist persisted. "I'm going to give you straight talk; this won't take long, as I promised, because I'm going to the root of it at once. Sergeant Croft here, of Allison Hills, very shortly discovered far more of the circumstances of the murder than was ever revealed to you. Ah, that surprises you, doesn't it? Well, it's true.

"There were reasons—technical, legal reasons, if you please, which you do not understand and which do not concern you —why he thought it better not to make an arrest at once. Yet, almost from the first, he has known, has had the proof of who killed Harrison Grayley!"

It was a bombshell which threw consternation into the visitors. Detective Marberry whispered to the Chemist: "Struck at them all! But still I'm sure—"

"Yes. Watch closely." Aloud, the Chemist added grimly: "I'm speaking now only to the one who is guilty." His gaze passed from one to the other, rested on each accusingly; and each in turn flinched under it.

Pierre tried to smile. "*Mon Dieu!* You make me feel I am a murderer! But I loved him! For so many years I have—"

George Bundt protested: "Trying to frighten us! Let him try, mother; much good it 'll do him."

The woman sneered. Only Heinie Bundt and the maid said nothing. Heinie gripped the arms of his chair, his face fallen into sullen stupidity, masking, perhaps nothing, perhaps everything. And the maid, seeming ready to burst forth into voluable protestations, but thinking better of it and remaining silent.

III

"WE know who is guilty," the Chemist repeated. He turned away from the suspects to the room in general; but the Detective continued to watch keenly their every move, every expression.

"A queer case, gentlemen," said the Chemist. "Sergeant Croft had almost at once, evidence of the identity of the criminal. He chose to make the arrest before you, here to-night—a question of legal expediency involving the immunity a possible confession might give.

"You do not understand me—these visitors do not understand—and it is not necessary that any of you should. Enough to say that Marberry and Sergeant Croft preferred me to handle the case here before you. We are about to make an arrest.

"Sit down, George Bundt! If you annoy me further, we'll arest *you,* innocent or guilty! I have you all here now—all five of you—got you here under false pretences, if you like. But you're here, and you'll listen to me quietly whether you want to or not!"

The Chemist's voice grew less vehement.

"Gentlemen, I'm going to detail the events of the murder for you. Elsie Queal, here—" The maid started at this abrupt mention of her name—"discovered the body of Grayley. A kitchen knife was buried in his back. Evidently he had been murdered in his sleep; had never awakened.

"But, gentlemen, here is the part we have not so far disclosed. He did awaken. He was stabbed while asleep in bed, no doubt. Left there for dead. But he did not stay there. In a death agony, yet with all his faculties, he crawled from bed. The knife was still in him. He reached for it. Could not pluck it out. Crawled then from bed to his small desk across the room. It was a moonlight night; the room probably was moonlit. Yet he lighted the electrolier fastened to his desk, and died there in the desk chair."

As though fascinated, the visitors sat listening to the Chemist's words. Forgetful of themselves now, forgetful of the Detective's watchful eyes.

"How do we know all this? Simply enough. The wound was in Grayley's back. With the knife in it, there probably was at first no great flux of blood. Yet enough to wet his fingers as he groped around spasmodically to reach it. With the knife in that position he could not get it out. But blood stained his fingers. The cord of the desk electrolier had blood on it, and there were blood smudges on the large desk blotter, mingled with the ink spots which had been there before.

"The murdered man's blood, gentlemen. You may say, how do we know that? Might not the criminal have had blood-stained fingers as well? To that we say no. This criminal left no finger-prints on the weapon. A swiftly executed deed, but evidently done with some forethought. To deliver a blow like that—to leave the knife in his body and escape from the room at once, gave no cause for having blood-stained fingers. And we have, too, another reason for knowing all this—which I'll give you in a moment.

"Let me reconstruct the crime in still more detail. Some one crept through that dark, silent house, went to the pantry, secured the knife, went to Mr. Grayley's bedroom, stabbed him. And stood there in the moonlight watching his death struggles as he died. We know that, because we know that Grayley did not die at once; and the criminal must have lingered there, because we know that Grayley was aware of who had struck the blow!

"Then Grayley lost consciousness, ceased his struggles and was left for dead.

And it was after that—a moment, or longer we do not know—that Grayley must have recovered consciousness, still with strength left to drag himself from his bed. The criminal with the deed done, nevertheless, was torn by fear, with thoughts that perhaps something might have gone wrong in the haste of the moment.

"And so this criminal returned later to the scene of the crime and, horrified, found Grayley, not in bed, but dead in his desk chair. In a panic the body was dragged back, put into the bed. Blood was on the desk chair. With a bottom corner of a sheet, the criminal frantically wiped it away. We found smears on the bottom of the sheet which later was spread over the body.

"This terrified criminal forgot that the wound would not stain the sheet down there. And the smears on the chair were not wholly cleaned. It was all done so hastily, in terror and confusion. Other blood smears were left, and those splotches on the electrolier cord were overlooked. And blood marks on the blotter, left there in plain sight. And an ink-stained pen on the desk; the pen had blood on it, too!"

The Detective whispered: "That struck home! We're right! Hurry Rogers!"

The Chemist nodded. The room was silent, electrical, as he paused. The listening men sat tense; the five suspects did not move in their chairs, their fascinated gazes clinging to the Chemist's face. At a swift gesture from the Chemist, the Very Young Man abruptly rose to his feet.

Without warning or explanation he switched off the room's lights. Blackness for a moment. A gasp. The shuffling of feet; a stifled oath of surprise from one of the policemen loitering by the door; and in the center of the room, the sound of the Very Young Man moving something. Then a light sprang on, a narrow, white beam from up near the ceiling.

It descended vertically, leaving the room in shadow, but striking full on a small table. And on the table lay a black cloth some two feet square, a cloth bulging upward a foot from something concealed under it. In the intensely bright beam it lay, mysterious and sinister, and every eye in the room was riveted upon it. Shadows enveloped the suspects—a darkness carefully calculated to give the guilty one a sense of security from observation.

But it was a false security. A pale, unobtrusive yellow glow from a hidden light illumined their features, unnoticed by them in the clamor of attention the white beam drew; but it was enough for the Detective's keen, watchful eyes. And on four of the faces he saw surprise, perturbation and curiosity; and on the other—stark terror.

The Chemist's voice rang through the silent room—swift, grim words:

"Grayley knew who had killed him, gentlemen! And as he dragged himself there to his desk, his only purpose was to write an accusation before he died. To tell us who had killed him so that justice might be done. This murderer— Oh, yes, it was a man, we can exonerate these two women—neither would have attempted to lift Grayley's huge bulk from the floor to the bed—this murderer came back to the scene of his crime and found that his victim had written a death accusation.

"Just three words! But enough to tell us all we wanted to know! This murderer saw the words lying there—scrawled with pen and ink—and the blood-stained pen lying beside it, dropped from the man's dead fingers.

"Panic descended upon this criminal. He gazed at the three words—one of them his Christian name—damning him. Grayley in his death agony could not find notepaper. A magazine was lying on the desk. He tore from it one of its advertising pages, scrawled his three words on the white margin.

"The murderer saw all this, in a panic of terror. Then his head cleared. He snatched up the paper with its damning words, lighted a corner of it with trembling fingers, dropped it in the empty grate where it was entirely consumed. Burned it, gentlemen—destroyed this evidence against him. And when it was destroyed there before his eyes, relief flooded over him. His head was still whirling; he couldn't think clearly, couldn't reason, couldn't notice details.

"But he told himself he was safe. He

put the body back in bed. No real reason why he should have bothered. But his original plan was that Grayley should die in bed. The mind under terrible stress clings dumbly to its ideas. The body, being out of bed—Grayley writing a death-note—was unexpected, dangerous. So he put the body back.

"Then he tried—hurriedly, because he was afraid to stay in the room too long—tried to wipe away the blood stains about the desk and desk chair. He evidently did wipe away most of them. But curiously enough, those most prominent—those mingled with the ink stains on blotter and pen—those he did not see. Let that pass for a moment. We know why he did not see them."

IV

THE Chemist's vehement words flowed on uninterrupted. "Destroyed the evidence, gentlemen! Burned it to ashes—his name written out by his victim. But did he destroy it? Look there!"

Abruptly the Very Young Man snatched away the cloth. A small glass dome was revealed. Beneath it, lying on white velvet, a crinkled, yet almost flat oblong of ashes, a burned magazine page. Fragile—too fragile to bear its own weight if lifted—yet still intact. Burned evidence! But not destroyed. For etched in the gray-black ashes, the print of the page showed clear and legible. And scrawled beside it—handwriting. Legible in the brilliant white light, clear and sharp as an etching.

"Look at it, gentlemen! Come up here, all of you. Come up and look—the murderer's name, written by his victim!"

The room was in confusion. Several of the men started to their feet.

"I—I didn't realize—" Heinie Bundt's involuntary mumble. He was standing by his chair, swaying, staring across to where under the white light, lay the damning evidence.

"Didn't realize! Of course, you didn't!" The Detective like a hawk was on him, twisting him around, gripping him from behind. "Didn't realize we had you all the time, did you? Here he is, Sergeant Croft."

"I—let go of me! I didn't—" Bundt tried to jerk himself loose. "Let go of me! I didn't—I mean I didn't know writing would show on ashes—I mean—that's queer, isn't it?"

He was struggling to recover himself. Sergeant Croft was with Marberry, both of them clutching the man roughtly, shoving him back against the wall. The policemen hurrying toward them.

"Trying to bluster it through, are you? With your name lying right there! '*Heinie killed me.*' You remember how it looked, don't you?"

"I—no, I never—"

"'*Heinie killed me.*' That's what he wrote, and you burned it in the grate! You think you can stand up against the fact that although you burned it, you didn't destroy it? Go look at it! Why, from here, you can read it!"

"No! He—maybe he thought I killed him—"

"And you didn't notice the blood on the pen, did you? Or on the blotter? Because, in that artificial light, you thought those spots were ink. You tried to be a railroad man when you were young. We've looked up your record; you were barred because you were color-blind! You are, aren't you?"

"No! Yes—I—yes, I am. But—"

"That's enough! We've got you! Got you every way."

Abruptly Bundt sagged to a chair.

"Yes—you—I did it! What's the good of saying I didn't, when you've got my name there? I thought—I never realized I hadn't destroyed it."

With Bundt led aside, and the two detectives questioning him, the room was restored to order. The Chemist said: "As I told you, gentlemen, the evidence was peculiary unfortunate. We really thought from the first that Heinie Bundt was the murderer. Leaving blood stains amid the ink, but wiping away all others, suggested color blindness.

"But a point like that is wholly inconclusive. Nor did we think a woman had done it. But of that we could not be

sure, until near the last, when on Bundt's face, in what he thought was darkness, we saw the guilt. But that, too, was far from proof, or a confession.

"We had the burned magazine page. There it is. The writing is legible. I won't bother you with the chemistry of combustion—enough to say that the mineral constituents of ink will not burn, and that they remain etched in the ashes of paper. The thing is obvious; there it lies, for you all to read. But look at it closely. Different kinds of paper burn differently, as well as with a different color ash.

"This one, a rather cheap magazine paper, burned flat and almost unbroken. But as you see, one end is crinkled and twisted—shriveled in the burning. You cannot straighten out that shriveled portion; it would fall into fragments if you touched it. The writing there is irrevocably gone—destroyed forever.

"Peculiarly unfortunate as legal proof, for if you look closely, you'll see the ashes read: '——*e killed me.*' Quite obviously the Christian name of the criminal, but that name is all missing save the last letter. The whole thing in handwriting easily recognized as that of Grayley's.

"But whose Christian name? Grayley would instinctively call every member of his household by the first name. But which name was it? Heinie, or Alice, or George, Pierre or Elsie? The letter 'e' is a very common ending for given names. But unfortunate that all in this family should have it.

"So this proof, legally used, meant nothing. We have had, therefore, to build carefully into Heinie's mind the conviction that he was irrevocably trapped. He saw the evidence there under the dome—from a distance of ten feet.

"He could see the handwriting—and I told him what the three words were—*after* he had exposed his guilt to us. Told him his name was there and, of course, he assumed it was—remembered exactly how it had looked before he burned it."

The Chemist smiled at the club members. "I think that's all, gentlemen. Jack, will you remove the evidence? Careful! It's very fragile."

THE MYSTERY RIDER

ONE of the most mysterious recordings in police history is that written across the pages of the St. Louis police books of June, 1900.

A lone masked bandit held up a passenger train just north of New Orleans. After clearing most of the valuables from the express car, he cut the engine from the train and rode away with it. The events following his departure indicate that the bandit either lost his courage or his sense of location.

He bowled down the tracks at fifty miles an hour, shooting through small towns without slackening his speed. Farther on and beyond a larger town, mystery enveloped his actions, for he abandoned the engine, leaving his guns on the engineer's seat and made his way to a near-by swamp, where he concealed himself.

Here his body was later found with his throat cut, evidently a suicide. His identity has never been discovered, nor any information relative to his origin or home. His life to this day remains an unsolved mystery.

His death was a happy one to the police and railroad detectives, for he was a terror to the "thief taker," who had shot his way out of many a tight place, but *who* he was, *what* he was or *where* he came from has been kept a sealed secret on the lips of his friends and relatives.

SOLVING CIPHER SECRETS

Edited by M. E. Ohaver

CONTAINING SOME MEATY FACTS WITHOUT WHICH NO CRYPTOGRAPHER'S HOME IS ANYWHERE NEAR COMPLETE

THE art of secret writing has, in its long and eventful history, masqueraded under many different names.

Some of these are *steganography, steganology, cryptology, cryptography,* and *cipher writing.*

At the present time *cipher,* which in ordinary usage is synonymous with *cryptogram,* has come more especially to mean any particular system of secret writing, as the Gronsfeld cipher, or the Blair cipher, rather than some specimen of writing, or cryptogram, in that system.

But cryptography, too, derived from the Greek words *kruptos* — hidden, covered, secret—and *graphia*—writing—has survived in this struggle for existence, and may now be styled as the accepted scientific title.

Following are the names by which you can shake hands with this most interesting study in several other languages. *Cryptography* and *cipher* will be seen to crop up in most of them, in some form or other.

English:	*cryptography; cipher.*
Esperanto:	*kriptografio; secreta scribado.*
French:	*cryptographie; chiffre.*
German:	*kryptographie; chiffrirkunst; chiffreschrift; geheimschrift; geheimschreibekunst.*
Italian:	*criptografia; crittografia; caratéres secretos; cifra.*
Portuguese:	*cryptographia.*
Russian:	*tainopisanie; shifre.*
Spanish:	*criptografia; cifra.*

But the name under which this obscure department of human activities has been known is not all that has been changing. Cryptography itself has evolved from an art dealing with relatively simple methods of secret writing into a science of a complexity probably undreamed of by the old cryptographers.

Cryptanalysis is that branch of the science which treats of the resolution of ciphers without their keys. Several of the more elementary of these methods have already been described in Solving Cipher Secrets.

Two of these articles, published in FLYNN'S for February 21, and August 15, contained alphabetical frequency tables, one of the uses of which is to assist in the solution of the simple substitution cipher.

It may be remembered from the above that *E* is the most frequently used letter in the English alphabet. Consequently, a tabulation of the characters of a simple substitution cipher will ordinarily reveal at once just what cipher character is used for *E* for the reason that it generally predominates over all others by a considerable margin.

Unfortunately *E* is about the only letter that can be determined by this method. And in many messages, the shorter ones in particular, even *E* has an uncanny knack of not being the most frequently used letter. Quite often it comes out second or third in frequency, or even still further

down the scale, being overtopped by *T*, *O*, or some other letter or letters of high frequency.

From this it is obvious that some further method is needed in the solution of such ciphers unless mere guess work is to be depended upon.

To overcome this difficulty many methods of determining letters, and of differentiating between them, have been devised.

Various of these methods will be treated from time to time in Solving Cipher Secrets. That described herewith may be used advantageously with a simple substitution cipher having normal divisions between words.

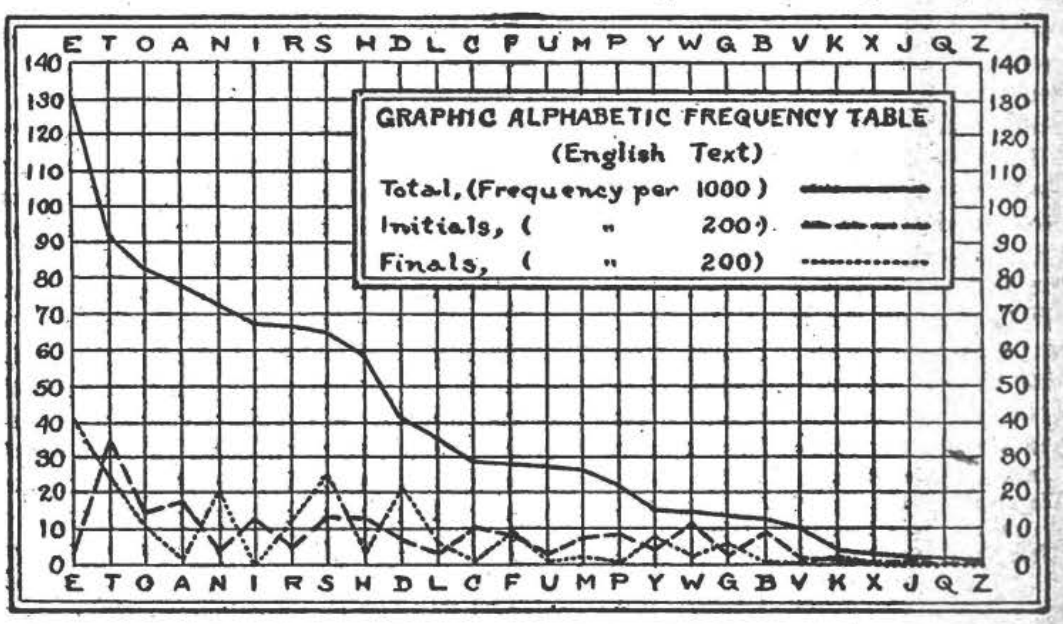
And it depends on the fact that the various letters of the alphabet, considered from their total frequencies as compared with their frequencies as initials and finals of words, bear certain well defined and easily recognized characteristic relationships, which will enable the decipherer to distinguish between them to a greater extent than would be possible by a consideration of their total frequencies alone.

A study of the graphic table of total, initial, and final frequencies herewith will make this clear.

TABLE OF ALPHABETIC FREQUENCIES

	Total	Initial	Final
A	78.1	17.4	0.9
B	12.8	9.2	0.2
C	29.3	10.0	0.3
D	41.1	7.0	20.7
E	130.5	4.6	42.0
F	28.8	8.2	8.6
G	13.9	2.7	5.6
H	58.5	13.1	3.9
I	67.7	13.0	0.0
J	2.3	1.1	0.0
K	4.2	1.2	2.2
L	36.0	3.4	6.3
M	26.2	7.0	2.8
N	72.8	4.0	20.1
O	82.1	14.7	10.3
P	21.5	8.4	1.5
Q	1.4	0.5	0.0
R	66.4	5.3	13.1
S	64.6	13.4	25.4
T	90.2	36.1	24.6
U	27.7	3.0	0.2
V	10.0	1.3	0.0
W	14.9	10.8	2.3
X	3.0	0.0	0.3
Y	15.1	4.4	8.7
Z	0.9	0.2	0.0
	1,000.0	200.0	200.0

In the graphic table the unbroken line shows the *total* frequency per 1,000 letters of each letter of the alphabet, based on a count of 5,000 letters straight English text,



This table, which is almost self-explanatory, has been constructed to conform with the alphabetic frequencies enumerated in the next column:

including initials and finals. For working convenience the letters are arranged in the order of their descending frequencies.

The dash line, and the dot line show the

frequencies per 200 of each letter of the alphabet, based respectively on counts of 5000 initials only and 5,000 finals only, in straight English text. Words of but a single letter are, of course, excluded from this count.

Since English words have an average length of 5 letters—see FLYNN'S for August 15, the frequency per 200 of any letter as an initial or final is practically equivalent to its frequency per 1,000 in a total count of all letters, including initials and finals.

Thus, in a message of 1,000 letters—or 200 words—*E* should average a total occurrence, including its use as initials and finals, of 130.5 times.

As an initial it would occur on an average of 4.6 times per 200 in a count of initials only; or the same number of times *as an initial* in the total count of 1,000.

And as a final it would occur on an average of 42.0 times per 200 in a count of finals only, or about the same number of times *as a final* in the total count of 1,000.

Now we have arrived at the main event, namely, the method of applying the tables toward the identification of letters in the solution of ciphers.

To illustrate, suppose you have a cipher of whose characters you have prepared a frequency table. It might be that you would be unable to decide which of the most used characters was *E*. And it would be hardly possible from their total frequencies alone, to positively determine the identities of any of the other characters.

But if, now, you proceed to make frequency tables of the initials and finals, important differences will at once be noted.

For example, as the tables herewith would lead you to expect, *E* will ordinarily occur more frequently as a *final* than as an *initial*, while *T* will occur more often as an *initial* than as a *final*. This one difference should identify these two characters at once.

Further, *O* will occur about equally as initial or final; *A* often as an initial, but seldom as a final; and so on. The relative *total* frequencies, as compared with initial and final frequencies, also play a prominent part in these determinations.

Considerable variations in cryptograms from this, or any other table, must, of course, be expected, and allowed for. The longer the cipher, the more nearly will the counts made from it correspond with those of the table.

Favorable results should be had with messages of fifty words—two hundred and fifty letters—or more. But even in shorter ones the tables are of definite aid.

Of course, it is possible to solve the simple substitution cipher with normal divisions between words by the method described in FLYNN'S for May 16. But the point is here that we are getting away from *guess work*.

By this method the decipherer should be able to determine the values of a number of the cipher characters by their mathematical relations in total, initial, and final counts, before any attempt is made to decipher the message itself.

To find only *E* and *T* in this way is to know the values of nearly one-fourth of all the characters in the cipher. And to determine *E, T, O,* and *A,* would mean that nearly forty per cent of the letters had been identified. The rest should then be easily discovered by context.

This method of determining letters by their occurrence as initials or finals is not at all new. It is foreseen even in the thirteen rules of Sicco Simonetta, written in 1474 A.D., the first of which takes account in a general way of the terminations of Latin words.

However, as presented here, this idea is not limited merely to the identification of letters as above described.

To illustrate, you will find appended two ciphers. In one of these the normal word divisions have been retained throughout. While in the other arbitrary divisions have been used.

Consequently, if both of these be tested by the above method, only one will react normally. Similarly, a message in some other cipher, say, the Gronsfeld normally spaced, would not come out in agreement with the tables.

Again, the relative frequencies of letters in different languages betray certain characteristic differences in their total, initial, and final counts, which should assist the decipherer in discovering if a cipher of the

type being discussed is in English or some other language.

Equipped with tables similar to the above for other languages, the decipherer can go a long way identifying beforehand the language used in a given specimen. Besides there are numerous other tests that assist in this of which you will hear later on.

So, in order to derive the greatest benefit from the following two ciphers, the fans should confine themselves as far as possible to the principle explained in this article.

Try first to find which of the two ciphers is normally spaced. Then decide on tentative values for as many letters of this one as you can before trying to decipher it yourself.

Finally, after you have read the cipher, compare the true values with your predetermined ones, and see how many you had correct.

We would be glad to hear what good fortune attends your first experiment with this method.

Let us know how many, and what letters you were able to predetermine correctly.

And also of any special method used in assigning their values that would be of interest to the fans.

Which of the two following ciphers can you solve by this method, and how will you solve the other one?

Look in the next *Solving Cipher Secrets* for an explanation of the mystery. In the meantime—

Here's your material:

CIPHER No. 1.

WK L VFUBSWR JUDPLVZU LWW HQ L QDF LS KHU XVHGIR UV HFUHW PHPR UDQGDD QGF RUUHVSR QGHQF HW ZRWKRX VDQGBHD UV DJREBMX OLXVFDHVDU, WK HU RPDQJHQ-HUDO, VWDWHVPDQ, DQGZUL WHU. HDFK OHWW HUR IW KHPHVVD JHL VUHS UHVHQWHGLQF LS KHUEB WKHIRX UWK OHWW HULQD GYDQ-FHR ILWLQD OS KDEHWL FDOR UGHU, GEH LQJ XVHG IRUD, HIRUE, DQGVRR QWKUR XJKWK HDOSKD EHW, FIL QDOO BEH LQJ XVHG IRUC. DPRUJW KHV HYHUDOP HWKRG VWKDWF DQE HXV HGW RUHVR OYHDF LS KHU RIWK L VWBSHPDBE HPH QWLRQHGW KDWXVHGZ LW KWKHDXJX VWXVF LS KHU GHVFULE HGLQI OBQQV IRUI HEUXDU BW ZHQW BILUVW.

CIPHER No. 2.

VK KSZ ZEGTIVKTPO PQ V NPOKSJ KTNZ KSZ JZV SVY JBOL JP MPD KSVK KSZIZ IZNVTOZY WZKDZZO NZ VOY KSZ XPOKTOZOK WBK V JNVMM JKIZVN. KSTJ T XIPJJZY, VOY DSZO T SVY GIPXZZYZY JPNZ YTJKVOXZ QIPN KSZ JVZ, T JVDV RPPY DVF WZQPIZ NZ JPNZKSTOR KSVK IZJZN-WMZY V RIZVK QTIZ. WBK VJ T YIZD OZVIZI T YTJXPCZIZY NF ZHPI, QPI DSVK T SVY KVLZO QPI V QTIZ DVJ V XVJKMZ PQ IZY XPGGZI, DSEXS KSZ WZVNJ PQ KSZ JBO NYVZ KP VGGZVI VK V YTJKVOXZ MTLZ QMVNZJ.

THE BLAIR CIPHERS EXPLAINED

The first of the two ciphers in Solving Cipher Secrets for August 15 was a modification of the dot writing explained in that article, first printed in FLYNN'S for July 25.

This cipher made use of a triformed alphabet, the three different shapes of types acting as substitutes for the three different positions of the dots, as represented by the figures 1, 2, and 3, in accordance with the following plan:

Each dot over the line, or (1), was represented by a Roman type; each dot upon the line, or (2), by an *Italic* type; and, each dot under the line, or (3), by a bold face type.

Substituting these values for the types, this cryptogram can be deciphered in exactly the same manner as the original dot writing, already explained in the above-mentioned issue.

Here is a small sample of it; enough to show how it is done:

CIPHER: The bearer of *this* message *is—etc.*
SUBSTITUTING: 111 111323 13 2322 1 133321 23—*etc.*
REGROUPING: 111 1132 3132 3221 1333 2123—*etc.*
DECIPHERING: B E A R E R —*etc.*

The apparent, or external meaning of this cipher is thus quite different from the internal meaning, which follows:

BEARER IS A COWARDLY SPY. SHOOT HIM AT SUNRISE!

Imagine how the poor fellow must have felt. The message he carried was really

his death warrant. He expected to be treated like a gentleman and a soldier. What he got was a dose of lead early the next morning.

In illustrating this triformed alphabet cipher of Blair's, three easily distinguishable forms of type have intentionally been used.

In practice, whether in printed or written character, these differences could be made so small that, as Blair himself put it, a correspondence could be conducted "without any suspicion of a cipher being present." This same is, of course, also true of Bacon's *biliteral cipher*, described in FLYNN'S for April 25.

The second of the two Blair ciphers in last Solving Cipher Secrets is the most complicated of all his examples.

If you failed to note that the three left-hand columns of Blair's original *Alphabet and Key* used the (.), or space, and each letter of the alphabet once only, you probably failed also to decipher the cipher. For this arrangement, or, in other words, this *key within a key*, is the secret of Blair's literal cipher.

To solve the cipher, first number the nine rows of these three columns thus:

1 *b c s*	4 *k d y*	7 *w h i*
2 *g m t*	5 *q f a*	8 *x n o*
3 *j p u*	6 *v l e*	9 *z r .*

Then you must substitute for each letter of the cipher the figure that appears to the left of the row of that letter in the above portion of the key.

The cipher then becomes a series of figures that can be resolved by the same method used for Cipher No. 2 in the July 25 issue, as explained in FLYNN'S for August 15.

A short fragment is sufficient for illustration:

CIPHER:	i	i	j	i	j	.	r	j	m	s	v	u	j	i	y	a—*etc.*
SUBSTITUTING:	7	7	3	7	3	9	9	3	2	1	6	3	3	6	4	5—*etc.*
GROUPING:	77		37		39		93		21		63		36		45	—*etc.*
DECIPHERING:	T		H		E		.		G		E		N		E	—*etc.*

The message in full is: "THE GENERALITY OF CIPHERS ARE COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT TO WRITE IN PROPORTION TO THEIR INTRICACY."

As a short cut in deciphering the above, the first letter of each pair may be said directly to indicate the row, and the *figure* of the second letter the column, of the intended letter in Blair's key.

A careful consideration of this system will show that there are just *nine* substitutes possible for each letter of the *Alphabet and Key*. This variation of Blair's cipher consists then in the use of a multisubstitutional alphabet of (9x81=) 729 pairs of characters.

MORE NUTS TO CRACK

"GIVE US MORE CIPHERS!" say the fans.

So the cipher editor, who is nothing if not obliging, has gathered together this choice assortment of home grown nuts for the fans to wreak their vengeance on.

Look them over!

No finer array of nuts ever graced the boughs of any nut tree on earth.

Each particular nut is guaranteed by its producer to be first class. And the editor, who has critically inspected them all, absolutely backs up this guarantee without any mental reservation whatsoever.

So if you have any strength left after cracking the first two nuts in this article, don't put the old nut cracker away until you have tried it on these:

CIPHER No. 3.

This one is from Delbert M. Skelly, Newark, Ohio, who says it might be called a humorous cipher, although there is sense in its nonsense. Mr. Skelly says he got the idea from the cipher in Arthur P. Hankin's story, "The Sea-going Elephant," in *Argosy-Allstory* for May 2. He has entitled his cryptogram:

A TRAGEDY

The interest in the rifle shots that brought down the parachute on the One Stick left us with a payless day. That is, we of the Circle-A. The tadpole in the parachute saw more interest in the star seen by the six-gone-wrong than the rifle shots. The six-gone-wrong of the Circle-A and the tadpole all saw the star. The right-face moon and the six-gone-wrong twice fell on his head and body. The Circle-A went to the One Stick to get what we

need. Although the rifle shots hit the six-gone-wrong from the Circle-A, the twins were not hurt. The star seen by the Circle-A and caused by the rifle shots didn't get us what we need. The left-face moon seeing the One Stick and the six-gone-wrong together, swallowed the sinker and hook.

CIPHER No. 4.

Says W. B. Lava, of Chicago, Illinois: "I am offering here a cryptogram which I challenge anybody to decipher without the key. It is certainly indecipherable. This cipher was done on a typewriter, but if the fans can solve other typewriter ciphers, they certainly cannot solve this one."

5&)&(4''%?6)&(:#? 9&71$ 4''%9 :2)34&,2#!

CIPHER No. 5.

Without any hint as to its type, this excellent cipher, submitted by M. Walker, Akron, Ohio, should give you a run for your money:

EIHNE	EORSN	EOAHF	RTTNI	SOSPI	OTUIT
OEYHP	SKKLO	IDTLE	NONOH	OLWWV	AGSTI
ETKES	OVOUL	TOYDI	WNTOA	HKIOQ	OURDT

CIPHER No. 6.

A real gem of cipher wisdom is buried in this cryptogram from C. W. T. Weldon, New York City.

36-66-78-76-44-39-49-33-59-49-32-56-78-76-57-58-78-45-75-66-46-26-08-59-36-39-77-54-76-26-36-48-87-48-57-59-69-54-87-39-23-64-59-68-47-76-77-35-88-30-34-44-86-38-28-66-69-44-59-58.

CIPHER No. 7.

Here is a cipher, submitted by Rev. James Veale, D. D., South Ozone Park, Long Island, the key to which is based on the principle of the ordinary clock dial.

The message might be a very important engagement. Would you be able to keep it?

2-5-1-G-G-8-5-C-5-A-A-F-L-11-H-1-A-9-1-F-G-1-G-9-B-A-A-5-J-L-B-E-10-3-9-G-L-B-A-G-8-H-E-F-4-1-L-A-5-K-G-1-G-G-J-5-11-H-5-A-B-B-A.

THINNING OUT THE SOLVERS

That the ciphers in the more recent articles have been more difficult of solution is shown by the fact that fewer correct answers are being received to *all* the ciphers in each article.

Thus, while many succeeded in solving the No. 1 Gronsfeld, in the June 6 issue, only the following few also submitted the correct answer to the Gronsfeld No. 2 in time for their names to appear in this issue:

Frank Spalding, Wrangell, Alaska; Francis A. Gauntt, Chicago, Illinois; C. W. T. Weldon, New York, N. Y.; C. M. Eddy, Jr, Providence, Rhode Island; E W. Harlan, Chicago, Illinois; W. Walker, Akron, Ohio; F. D. Jackson, Denver, Colorado; James Olden, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada.

And the No. 6 Nihilist cipher, in June 27 Solving Cipher Secrets, stopped all of our correspondents up to date except the following, who succeeded in mastering all six:

M. E. Toevs, Bureau of Identification, Police Department, Detroit, Michigan; Francis A. Gauntt, Chicago, Illinois; James Olden, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada; L. B. Pennock, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Mrs. S. J. E. Solley, Rockport, Massachusetts.

Rusty nails
Clamshells
Fish-hooks
Gun-wounds
Campfire burns
Cuts, scratches
Blisters
Insect-bites
Poison ivy
Sunburn

Don't risk blood-poisoning

IN the summer time the dreaded scourge of *infection* creeps on its victims unawares. The camper or vacationist naturally must have his share of cuts, burns, and insect-bites. Broken bottles and clamshells infest even the nicest bathing beaches. Barbed wire and fish-hooks and poison ivy are always with us. Mosquito bites and sunburn, too, are dangerous sources of infection. Tennis, rowing and hiking cause blisters which may have extremely serious consequences.

But you need not carry a whole medicine chest full of special preparations for all these purposes. The same bottle of *Zonite* which prevents infection from knife-cut or gun-wound will soothe your sunburn and insect-bites or, as a mouthwash, will prevent colds and more serious diseases of throat, nose or gums.

Best of all, Zonite is absolutely non-poisonous. Though *far more powerful* than any dilution of carbolic acid that can be applied to the body, Zonite is safe in the hands of a child. Full directions with every package. Zonite Products Company, Postum Building, 250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

At your druggist's in bottles — 50c and $1
Slightly higher in Canada

If your druggist does not have Zonite, we will send you a bottle postpaid, on receipt of 50c.

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Zonite Products Company, Postum Building
250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Please send me free copy of the Zonite booklet or booklets checked below.

☐ Use of Antiseptics in the Home
☐ Nursery and the Baby
☐ Feminine Hygiene (D-D)

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ROMANCE

YOU often hear people refer to the "dear old days of romance"—to the time when knight-errants roamed the earth to do honor to a lady's blue eyes.

These folks say we are living in an age of realism!

An age of "realism" where the human voice is hurled across the world without wires; where the temperature of Mars is taken more than thirty millions of miles away; where tons of steel and people ride easily and safely through the air or under the sea!

An age of realism! Why, this is the most romantic of all ages!

The advertising columns are full of romance—of the romance of men who have devoted their lives to bringing new comforts, conveniences and pleasures for mankind.

Advertisements tell these stories, not with the romantic exaggeration of a jongleur, but with the calm, simple words of sincerity. Here is a firm that spent millions to develop a product that makes your baby comfortable. Here is a company that has labored fifty years to cut a single hour of toil from your day's work. Here is a man who has searched the Seven Seas to produce a new flavor for your dinner.

Romance—this age is full of it. Not just empty romance, but the true romance of achievement, of progress, of the betterment of mankind.

Advertisements tell you what the romance of business is doing for you. Read them

Thin..crispy..sugar shells *"stuft"* with pure..luscious fruit-jams.. ..nuts *and* Marmalades!.....

THE first taste convinces—Diana "Stuft" Confections are purity itself! The children can eat their fill without fear. Long ago, we originated Diana "Stuft" Confections to meet all summer conditions. These crispy sugar shells are thin as paper, "stuft" with imported nuts and fruit-jams and marmalades, made in our own plant.

All 1200 Bunte Candies measure up to the Bunte Golden Quality Creed.

Good stores everywhere carry Diana "Stuft" Confections in 2½, 4, 9 or 16 ounce air-tight jars and 2, 3 and 5 pound air-tight tidy tins. Each package contains 21 varieties. Keep some on hand at home always. In buying, say "Bunte"—that insures Golden Quality and the genuine.

BUNTE BROTHERS, Est. 1876, *World-Famous Candies*, Chicago

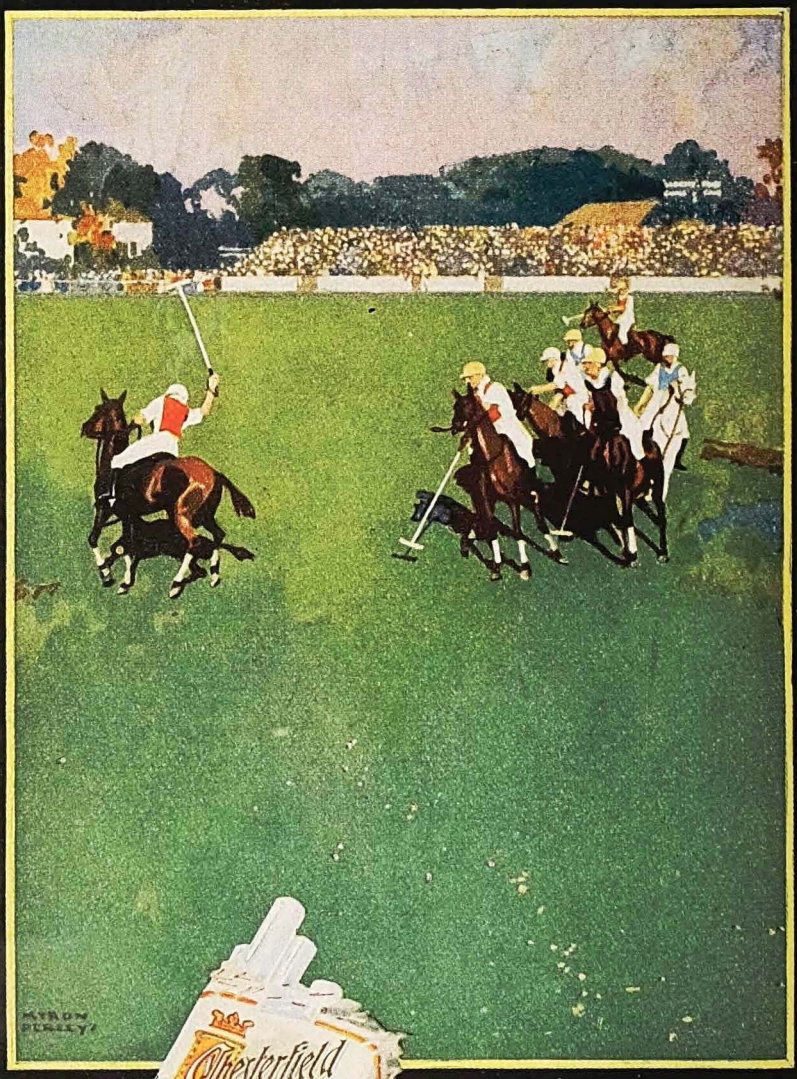
DIANA "STUFT" Confections

In Glass Jars
4½ oz. 30c; 9 oz. 50c; 16 oz. 75c

Bunte
Golden Quality
CANDIES

In Air-Tight Tins
2 lbs. $1.25; 3 lbs. $1.80; 5 lbs. $2.50

Slightly higher prices west of Rockies and far South



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