FLYNN'S

ISSUED WEEKLY

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

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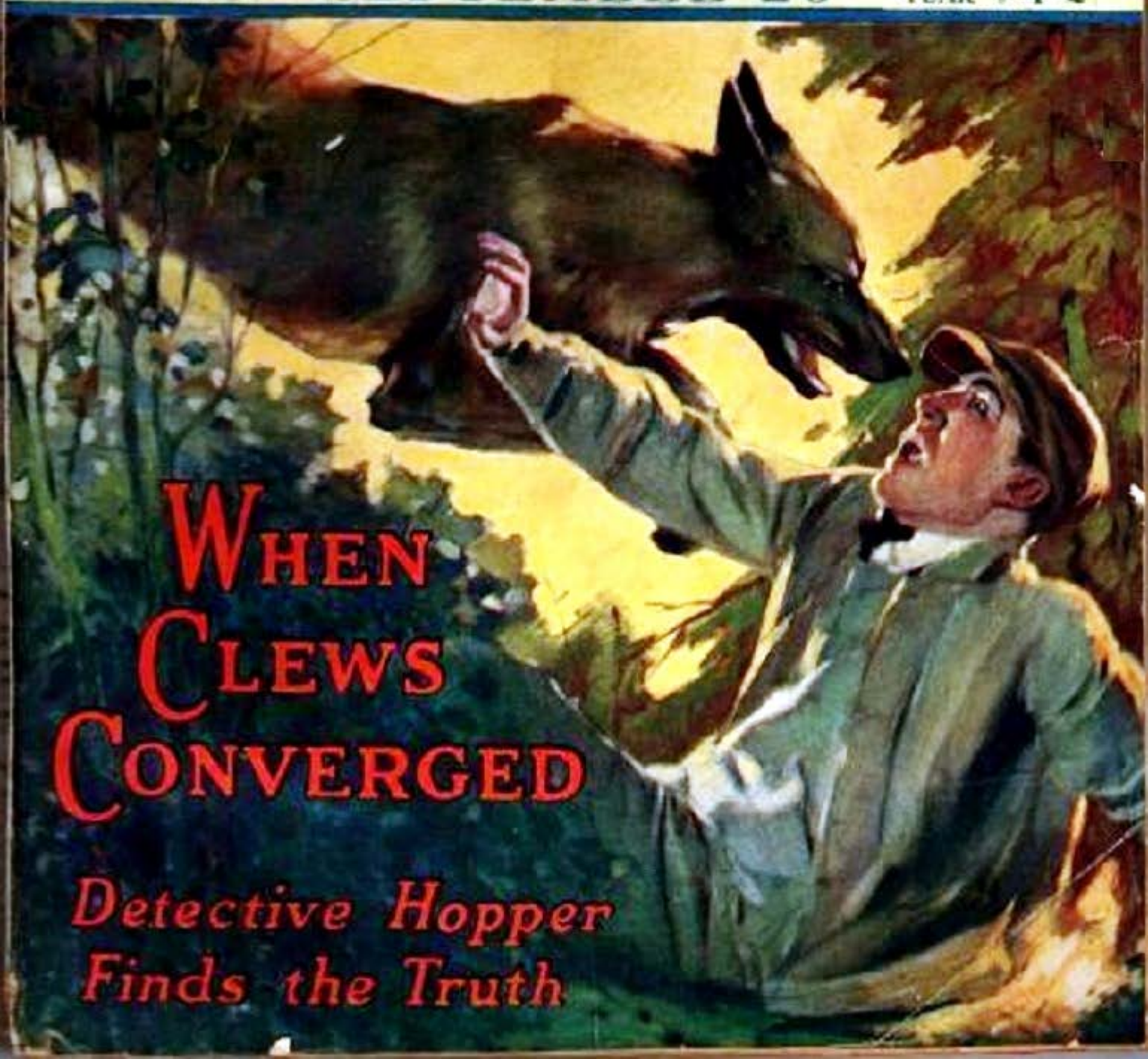

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Twenty Five Years in the Secret Service of the United States

VOLUME IX SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1925 NUMBER 6

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VOLUME IX SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1925 NUMBER 6

"A certain party is trying to frame me, and I hear you're to do the job"

WHEN CLEWS CONVERGED

By Bertrand Royal

THE CRIMINALS WERE CAUGHT BUT THE ROBBERIES CONTINUED, UNTIL THE WEALTHY MR. SMILEY EMPLOYED INSPECTOR HOPPER

INSPECTOR HOPPER is back again to unravel a tangled crime plot for FLYNN'S readers.

He is not even called to the job until the situation has become so complicated that the local forces are at bay. Several daring robberies have been committed, but each time a familiar face has been connected with them and a prisoner has been sent up the river to do his spell.

Then the biggest theft of all is reported and none of the old-timers are left to have done it. It is a strange predicament, and the victim, the prominent Mr. Smiley, is willing to spare no cost to discover the guilty man.

Inspector Hopper has to look hard for a starting point. But he is good enough at his job to take what he can and make something out of it. He does it in a startling manner in this puzzling story.

If you want to see a detective at work on a problem so difficult it keeps his galluses showing all the time watch Inspector Hopper. He has to stick to the brass tacks of it all the way through.

But how the tables turn makes this story a most interesting one. You will not want to miss knowing at which man the inspector points his finger. It will furnish you with a surprise you never expected.

The clews converge, but not until that notable gentleman, Mr. Hopper, has unraveled a mighty hard knot, one that others had given up. The inspector earns another laurel for his brow, but he earns it through his own masterful genius.

See how this remarkable sleuth makes "the clews converge."

CHAPTER I

A CENTURY FOR CROOKS

COMBO SMITH in his prime had been a second-story worker whose agile legs and arms embraced the front pillars of fashionable porches with the same eagerness that any one embraces a truly golden opportunity to gather coin of the realm honestly.

Yet, as he stood looking half wistfully at the trim colonial dwelling on the outskirts of Russmore and facing the majestic Hudson, Combo knew his doddering legs could no longer defy gravitation or aid in propelling him upward toward an open window—a window whose possibilities suggested opulence, the same as the residence and grounds radiated it.

That last "stretch" of ten years in Dannemora had worked havoc with Combo's legs, arms, and general physique, for he had spent the better part of it wheeling cement for various prison structures. Ten years is a long time when thus employed, and when added to forty years of previous repeated indiscretions while outside and several other bits in prison—always for second-story thefts—it left this little old man older than he seemed.

His legs were "gone," although they now sufficed to propel him to a new rendezvous of crime and a new sort of crime. Combo was always a right man, that is a close-mouthed crook, in prison or out. His cellmate on the ten year stretch was a much younger man and had only done two years.

Cannon-ball Jones, they called him. A sturdy sort, a good friend, since he was now giving Combo an opportunity to refill a purse which had been so flat since release from prison that Combo had taken refuge in the Russmore Rescue Home. The soup was good, but the hymns the rescuers sang were not so good. One man who came Sundays sang through his nose, and Combo thought that a real crime.

Cannon-ball Jones, his former cellmate, was a bootlegger. He was running the stuff up the Hudson on an old schooner, landing it near Russmore in a convenient cove, and Combo, because he knew Chief Hargreaves and every other Russmore cop by sight, if not by name, was to be the sentry for this present cargo.

So he shuffled on with a last lingering look of regret at the spacious mansion and that alluring window. But there was a dog, and although it was near midnight a dog's noise around a house is fatal to even an agile porch-climber.

Combo kept his rendezvous. He received one hundred dollars. The generosity of Cannon-ball Jones also was amplified by a flask of the real stuff, and Combo walked home "on air" after taking three drinks.

He went to bed in the rescue home. He woke to find himself in the stern grip of the law. He protested that he had done no wrong.

Chief of Police Martin Hargreaves stroked his walruslike mustache and smiled, as a cat smiles at a canary whose cage door it has opened. He waved the balance of Combo's stipend from Cannon-ball Jones.

"This here hundred dollars," said he. "I suppose you didn't git it from Supervisor Smiley's house."

"What on earth you talkin' about?" said the prisoner.

"That house you set down in front of about midnight," said the chief. "I suppose whilst you was studying the porch you thought nobody seen you, hey?"

"It ain't no crime to set down in front of a house, is it?" asked Combo.

"No, it hain't," admitted his captor. "But the crime of climbing a porch and taking a pocketbook containing one hundred dollars, besides all the rest of it, is what you're arrested for."

"I couldn't climb a toothpick," said Combo. "My legs is gone."

"You was walking like old man Weston when he was a young man," said Hargreaves, "when you was coming back to the rescue home after the robbery, for one of my men followed you and he had hard work to keep up."

Combo was suddenly silent. He instantly realized that he had been a victim of circumstances. He dared not "split" on Cannon-ball Jones and tell where he got that hundred dollars. He dared not even try to prove where he had been.

He was duly tried, convicted, and got twenty years for being a habitual criminal and for burglary in the second degree.

Chief Hargreaves was congratulated upon Combo's quick catch and his conviction, as well as the recovery of the one hundred dollars.

While Combo was in jail before trial Chief Hargreaves also had a trial or two of his own, professionally speaking.

Some one jimmied a window of Barclay's coal and lumber yard, crept inside, cracked the safe, took out three thousand dollars, and fled the scene.

"Old-timers done this," was the ungrammatical remark of Chief Hargreaves. "Who's in town?"

Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts, both former safe robbers, proved to be in Russmore the next night. Tip had cracked "thirty turtles" in his time, along Broadway in giddy Gotham and elsewhere. Not the sort of turtles which have diamond backs and make good soup, but the sort of turtles which contain diamonds and require "soup" to crack their shells.

Tip and Buggsy were both seen and suspected. Chief Hargreaves did not allow the news of the Barclay robbery to become known. His men shadowed the two known safe blowers. They caught them at midnight the same evening they were seen in the very act of digging up tools fashioned for "cracking turtles."

Tip and Buggsy were too stunned at the command of "Hands up!" to do aught but stare as stupidly as a pair of turtles into the muzzles of police pistols. They were "snagged." They were convicted—chiefly on their reputations, partly by the fact that the lumber yard they had selected in which to bury their tools was owned by Barclay, who had been robbed.

When they "went over the jumps," in Chief Hargreaves's office both sullen crooks refused to admit the robbery or to tell where the loot had been cached. They got twenty-five years apiece, and the chief got more congratulations and felicitations from the taxpayers.

A stick-up job roused the chief's wrath, since it was executed within a block of his office and at the very time he was questioning Tip and Buggsy. The cashier of a milk company was held up by a masked man, who blindfolded, gagged, and trussed him up and leisurely looted the office safe.

"Would you know him again?" asked the chief, when the cashier had been rescued from his dire predicament.

"I'd know one of them," said the cashier.

"I thought you said there was only one of them?"

"I only saw the one who stuck me up, blindfolded me, gagged me, and tied me," said the victim. "But when I was lying in the corner where he rolled me I heard him and the other fellow talking—for they forgot to stuff cotton in my ears."

"How did they talk?"

"One of them had a broken English accent," said the cashier.

"What kind of an accent?" asked Hargreaves.

"German or Polish."

Forthwith the chief went to the Russmore Rescue Home and dragged out Pancakes Levy and Dutch Herman, two known Western bandits. They protested. He put them

in a cell. He secreted the cashier in the corridor of the jail to listen to their talk. The cashier identified Herman's guttural tone of voice and mangled syllables of words.

Dutch Herman violently protested his innocence. Pancakes Levy likewise vowed complete ignorance of the job.

Neither would "come through" and reveal where the milk company's collections were secreted. When Chief Hargreaves became insistent, Dutch Herman took a slam at the chief's nose—and landed. It took four cops to get Dutch back into a cell, and they all needed new uniforms when he was again behind bars.

On the trial Dutch again protested that it was a frame-up. The jury, however, had slight corroboration. A clerk identified Dutch and Pancakes as the two men who had bought a bottle of milk the day before the holdup. This they admitted, saying their favorite beverage was beer, no longer to be had in Russmore or elsewhere, and they were compelled to patronize cows instead of brewers.

They got fifteen years each.

Combo, Tip, Buggsy, Dutch, and Pancakes filed out of the county jail in a forlorn group, handcuffed together and to a chain, with three deputies wearing their guns in plain view.

They collectively represented just one hundred years of penal servitude as they passed into the prison where they were to expiate their latest misdeeds.

Chief Hargreaves received congratulations, felicitations, and encomiums from Russmore citizens, now protected against future depredations by this quintette of experienced scoundrels.

CHAPTER II

A BRAWL AND A RETAINER

WITHIN a week the bouquets had become brickbats. Russmore seethed with a new sensation. Supervisor Smiley's wife was minus a necklace which her husband had given her. Its value was estimated at not less than twenty-five thousand dollars.

Mr. Smiley himself had a private conference with Chief Hargreaves and emerged from the office in what is commonly called a state of high dudgeon.

The supervisor was habitually bland, suave, plausible. He rarely lost his self-control. Impatient scribes importuned him for "news." Mr. Smiley's pudgy figure quivered, his putty nose stuck straight out in the air, and his pasty face had a pistachio color, half yellow, half green.

He had nothing to say, and he said so. Chief Hargreaves also was ruffled. His walruslike mustache bristled instead of drooping complacently, but he treated the reporters affably.

"I am only human," he admitted. "I cannot spot every crook that comes to Russmore, especially when I'm cleaning up a bad gang, getting evidence, and at the county court. That's the trouble with my job. One day I'm a wonder. The next I'm a bum."

"Did Mr. Smiley call you that?" asked one scribe.

"I will refer that question to Mr. Smiley," parried the chief. "I will not say what he said to me nor what I said to him. Naturally, he's anxious to recover his necklace."

"Do you think you can recover it?"

"In police business we don't prophesy," warily returned the chief. "The weather bureau does that. Mr. Smiley has a fine imported police dog at his house. He admitted it to me, also that he paid a thousand dollars for that animal. The city charter fixes the salary of the chief of police and of his subordinates. Maybe if we two-footed cops had four feet and hair all over us we'd get more."

Just here the chief innocently removed his hat. His head was quite guiltless of enough hair to clothe more than two paws of a police dog puppy, and the scribes laughed at the joke. They printed the interview.

Supervisor Smiley went to his lawyer, Willoughby Savage. He was very wroth.

"I want to sue this bird for holding me up to contempt and ridicule," he announced.

Attorney Savage, a mild-mannered man

as a rule, read the article and looked at his client over his single track spectacles.

"The verdict will be at least six cents damages," said he. "The only innuendo in this article is that your dog cost a fairly large sum and they belied his reputation for police sagacity. Unfortunately, the dog's reputation is not your own. But I have a suggestion."

Mr. Smiley glowered and waited as the lawyer added.

"Why not make a serious effort to recover the necklace without waiting to see if the chief of police can grow a new crop of hair before he recovers it?"

"What do you mean?"

"Hire a competent private detective."

"I'll offer a reward," said Mr. Smiley after a long bit of hard thinking.

"No competent detective works for a reward."

"I don't know any of that sort," said his client.

"There is a man over in Queen City," said Attorney Savage, "who is said to be uncommonly capable. Wait a minute. I've got his name in a scrapbook with some old newspaper clippings of county court cases."

He rummaged through the pages.

"George F. Hopper, former inspector of the Queen City detective bureau," said Mr. Savage, "is his name."

"But I haven't any clews."

"It's Hopper's business to find clews. If you had them you could follow them yourself."

The interview ended with Mr. Smiley authorizing Attorney Savage to visit Hopper, which the attorney did that very afternoon.

Hopper received him in his library, and Savage grew quite affable when he plunged into the details of the mysteriously vanished necklace.

"Before I touch on that," said he, "I want to tell you something about Hargreaves."

"Go ahead," said the detective.

"He isn't a bad old scout, but he's woefully out of date. Been chief for twenty years. He works on the principle that any crook is a suspect for any job. Now, between you and me, while I cannot personally vouch for the truth of what I'm going to say next, I can say that I was told by one of the leading attorneys in Russmore that Combo Smith was not guilty of the robbery of my client's house of one hundred dollars."

"The trial jury found him guilty," said Hopper. "Why didn't his attorney establish his innocence?"

"Foster Archibald defended him—not I," said Savage, "and out of sentiment, chiefly, for the old crook hadn't a penny. He lived at the Russmore Rescue Home, of which Archibald is a trustee. Archibald told me that his client had passed the Smiley house the night of this petty theft of one hundred dollars. But he merely sat down to rest because his legs were tired. He heard a dog yapping and kept on. He went to help some bootleggers land some liquor from a boat on the river.

"That is why Archibald couldn't prove the alibi—since Combo was then engaged in another crime, although an offence against the Federal law. Besides, the bootleggers had gone out to sea again, and Combo couldn't get a subpoena served on a former cellmate of his in Dannemora prison, who gave him the job, even if Archibald would have allowed him to try to prove the alibi."

"I see," nodded Hopper. "Then the thief who really did steal this money is still at large, eh?"

"That is what I was driving at," said Savage. "He is. Now there is no evidence whatever that this former thief is the thief that stole the necklace. But the necklace was stolen from the same place that the hundred dollars was stolen from. That's the only clew in sight."

"Would you call it a clew?" smiled Hopper.

"No, I wouldn't. But Mr. Smiley is anxious to get back that necklace. Would you care to try to recover it?"

"Let me ask you a question, counsellor."

"As many as you like."

"According to the Russmore newspapers, Mr. Smiley has a capable police dog on the premises. How could a thief enter the house, get this necklace and make off with it without attracting the dog's attention?"

"That is just what is puzzling my client, Mr. Smiley. The necklace is not usually kept at the house, but in Mrs. Smiley's safe deposit box in the Russmore National Bank. She went to town for it, brought it home, and put it in her dressing room. That was the last seen of it. No one saw any thief around the premises."

"How long was it there?"

"Mrs. Smiley doesn't know. She brought it to the house on Wednesday morning. She was going to wear it at a fashionable affair in New York that evening. She missed it first when starting to dress, late in the afternoon."

"Has she a maid?"

"Yes. But Mr. Smiley's own investigations established that the maid could not have made away with the necklace, since he was home that day and the girl never left the house. She was very frightened, of course, and although naturally suspected, neither Mr. Smiley nor Chief Hargreaves could find any trace of the stolen property anywhere about the house. They turned the whole place topsy-turvy. The girl is still working at the house."

"Tell me something else," said Hopper. "If the chief aided Mr. Smiley to search for evidence of this stolen property and clews that might trace the thief, why did they afterward quarrel, privately, as this Russmore newspaper infers?"

"All that Mr. Smiley authorized me to say, Inspector Hopper, was that he'd like to retain you, if your retainer wasn't unreasonable. I vouched for your ability to him, because I heard some of the evidence you gave in cases in county court when you were in the police department here. I hope you will take it. Not to discredit the chief particularly, but to aid my client. The necklace is worth at least twenty-five thousand. Would you care to name a figure for a retainer?"

Hopper grinned. "Not in the least. If Mr. Smiley is willing to pay a thousand dollars for a dog that can't keep a necklace from being stolen, do you think he'd object to a retainer of that sum for a man to try to recover it?"

"I know Mr. Smiley," purred Attorney Savage, "and I'll say that he will not object. In fact, if you'll go right to work I'll give you my check immediately, and Mr. Smiley can reimburse me."

CHAPTER III

SCOUTING ON A DIM TRAIL

HOPPER sat thinking after Savage had left. He looked at the check. He felt of it as if he wasn't exactly sure that he was awake. Finally he laid it aside, picked up the file of Russmore papers containing the complete account of the "crime wave" which Chief Hargreaves had surmounted, and read each article containing reports of various arrests, trials, and convictions with great care.

He was quite familiar with the processes of criminal justice, yet it seemed to him, in view of Savage's hint that Combo Smith was really innocent, that the speedy manner in which he had been indicted, tried, and convicted was rather too summary.

He noted also that the legal machinery had been no less speedy in the cases of Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts, while Dutch Herman and Pancakes Levy were *en route* to prison in exactly eight days after the holdup of the cashier of the milk company.

He began his memorandum in a way quite unique for him, since Combo Smith, being in custody at the time the necklace was taken, could have had no active personal participation in the matter he had been retained to clear up.

Query: Was Combo Smith innocent?

Answer: He was.

Proof: His lawyer knows he was. Further, Combo could not have climbed porch, entered house, and secured money without police dog arousing family.

Deduction: Then the real thief of the one hundred dollars is still at large and unsuspected.

Query: Could the real thief who stole this one hundred dollars conceivably be the same thief who stole the necklace?

Answer: It is possible, even if not probable.

Proof: The real thief had already visited same house successfully, was still at large, and had once eluded suspicion of canine police guardian.

It was not much, but it was a beginning. He worked by reason, not by conjecture nor

hypotheses. Since reasoning with him was a habit and not an occasional mental exercise, it was necessary that some point of sameness or similarity about any crime should be assumed, and then precipitated in thought, before any reasoning could take place at all.

As for the method in which this assumed thief had carried out the two jobs—assuming that he had—Hopper was not immediately concerned with that, although to recover the necklace he must eventually locate and trace the thief. There was nothing in Savage's account of the taking of the bauble that pointed specifically to any one.

So far as the facts given to Hopper went, Mrs. Smiley might have taken it, or the maid might have taken it. To assume, however, that its owner would steal it was to conjecture. Conjectures are misleading, since detectives who indulge in them are inclined to try to find evidence supporting the conjecture rather than to try to distill proof from the facts, sparse and unpromising although the facts seem to be.

Lacking specific details regarding this fourth crime, Hopper was thrown back upon the only undoubted fact which lent itself to his individual methods—the fact that four crimes had been committed in Russmore in a short time. In one of these the convicted perpetrator was undoubtedly innocent. He could see that.

In each of two others the four men accused had each specifically protested his innocence—Dutch Herman in particular carrying his protest to a length which seemed to imply that he had been goaded into temporary madness. He had even tried to assault his accuser under circumstances which could have only a very malign reaction upon him at his trial.

Neither Tip Malone nor Buggsy Watts had carried their protestations of innocence of the Barclay job that far. Yet they had both vehemently declared they knew nothing about it, and Hopper was struck by the similarity in the Barclay robbery and that of the milk company, in which both sets of prisoners had not divulged their disposition of the plunder.

None of that loot had been recovered. It was different in the case of Combo Smith, who had been arrested "with the goods," apparently.

So Hopper next reread the account of the arrest of Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts with minute care, and then went on with his memorandum, since he was forced to merely generalize in his reasoning on all four Russmore crimes.

Query: Were Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts also innocent of the Barclay robbery?

Answer: Yes.

Proof: Safe robbers do not bury their tools *after* a robbery. They abandon them or carry away the more expensive appliances.

Query: Why then did Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts go to Barclay lumber yard to dig up tools?

Answer: Because safe robbers bury tools *before a contemplated robbery,* although never near the scene of any former crime of theirs.

Deduction: Neither Tip nor Buggsy could have possibly known that Barclay had been robbed. They were intent on robbing some one else, had buried these tools before Barclay robbery, and tried to get them for their contemplated job, when arrested.

"Eureka!" muttered Hopper. "Now if that is so—here's one more step in pure reasoning that I've got to write down or admit I ought to be in Combo Smith's cell myself."

Query: Were Tip and Buggsy seen when they buried their tools?

Answer: Yes.

Query: By whom?

Answer: By the man or men who robbed Barclay, after Tip and Buggsy had planted their tools and left town.

Query: Did this man tip off police regarding Tip or Buggsy?

That was a delicate query. Hopper studied a moment and then wrote:

Answer: No.

Proof: To tip off police would be for real Barclay thief to direct attention—and hence suspicion, perhaps—to himself.

There it was again. As plain as a pikestaff. A thief or some thieves had pulled off the Barclay job who, in one specification at least, corresponded to the identical specification of the thief or thieves who had twice robbed the Smiley residence. They were also still at large, still unsuspected.

Hopper picked up the newspaper accounts again of the Barclay robbery. He reread them. He could not determine from the articles regarding the arrest or any of them regarding the trial if the safe had been blown open when Barclay had been robbed or not.

He thought on this. There was no fact that indicated the use of tools at the Smiley house on either theft. The inference of the trial jury, of course, from the arrest by Chief Hargreaves of Tip and Buggsy, was that these two worthies had committed the robbery of the Barclay office, which was in the lumber yard and near the railroad, with the usual connecting spur track.

But this inference was due to the circumstances of *location* and not to that of the *method* of the robbery. If the method of the robbery of Barclay was dissimilar to that of Smiley, then Hopper would be forced to abandon his line of reasoning, namely, that the man or men who had robbed Smiley might perhaps also be the same individuals who had robbed Barclay.

He wanted to settle that, one way or the other.

So he reached for his phone and called Chief Hargreaves at Russmore. The chief was not at his office. Hopper next called the *Sentinel,* the newspaper whose account was the most complete.

CHAPTER IV

SCOUTING SOME MORE

VIRGIL POOR, editor of the *Sentinel,* was quite cordial when Hopper mentioned his name.

"That Barclay robbery was a curious affair," said he. "Until Chief Hargreaves got the crooks we all thought it an inside job."

"How was that?" asked Hopper.

"The safe door was locked, the combination knocked off, and yet it was robbed. But, of course, when the two burglars were arrested, right there in the lumber yard, that inside job idea went overboard. Anything else I can do for you?"

"No, thank you. I was just reading over the account in your paper and wondered if the safe was blown or in what way it was opened."

Hopper hung up.

The information he had just obtained did not point to the guilt of Tip or Buggsy, in fact it pointed away from them. For both were "soup" men, lacking the finesse of the rare "box-man," who operates by manipulation of a combination. Yet, if the safe had been looted and relocked the opening of the safe must have been due to use of the combination.

That, in turn, made it needful that the thief had obtained the combination in some way, that is, if it were not really an inside job. And here again Hopper ran head on into the vagueness which shrouded the Smiley thefts. But he was both resourceful and lucky. He again scanned the *Sentinel's* account of the robbery prior to the arrest of the two men afterward convicted. It carried a photograph of the interior of the firm's office, showing the safe near by an open window, which the paper said had been "jimmied."

Through that window Hopper could discern what seemed two threads.

They lay beyond the ends of the protruding piles of sawed lumber which projected into the immediate foreground of the photograph beyond the open window. He picked up his glass and scanned the two threads. They then became a railway track.

He ran over the file of papers until he had the account of the capture of Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts. Fortunately, again, a photograph showed the location of the buried tools, and in the distance, almost indiscernible, was the office which had been robbed.

Not much, but, again, something. And anything was welcome to the detective, whose keen mind was working in the impalpable region of pure idea. In fact, he was very much gratified, as he sketched a rough diagram, to note that from a certain point outside both photographs it was possible for a man who was himself unseen to see both the place where the two old safe-blowers had buried their tools and the office window which had been jimmied open.

Hopper's eyes fairly scorched the paper on which he had drawn his diagram.

"He must have stood somewhere about here," he thought. "Now how did he come to be there—at night? This is a lumber yard. Honest men are not prowling around lumber yards at night. That was why Tip and Buggsy picked out this place to hide their tools. The lumber piles hid them or they thought the lumber did. What was the other man doing there?"

The obvious answer to that unwritten query was that the real thief was, even then, surveying the same place with a view to robbing it. Yet, somehow, since this implied the coincidence of three or more thieves being at one place by sheer chance Hopper could not rely upon it as accounting for the presence of the man who, he felt certain, had watched the burial of the burglar's unused tools.

Again he scanned the two photographs. Then he made a slight correction in the diagram.

"He wasn't in the lumber yard. He was outside it, but in the railroad yards. But Russmore isn't a junction. It only has three or four sidetracks, beside the main line tracks. It wasn't just a tramp that stood out there watching Tip and Buggsy burying their tools. For a tramp would not have had any chance to get a look at the combination of that Barclay safe. If it was not an inside job, the man that opened that safe certainly had the combination. That was why he knocked off the dial to the combination—to make it look as if a real 'soup' job was intended. Well, I'll write that down."

Assumption: Thief who robbed Barclay had knowledge of combination.

Deduction: Therefore he must have had access to office to get combination.

Qualification: An old firm like Barclay's does not leave combination of safe to be found and read by chance visitors. Hence, visitor must have learned combination, unseen and unsuspected by firm or its employees.

Query: Was thief familiar with premises?

Answer: Yes.

Proof: According to *Sentinel's* account, Barclay lost five thousand dollars, none of which has been found. Thus thief also knew enough to know when safe would contain a large sum.

That was as far, just then, as Hopper could reason on this point. He was not entirely satisfied that the Barclay thief also was the one who had robbed Smiley. The two thefts were in different parts of the town. Yet, in a way, there was another connecting link. In both cases the thief must have known of the presence of valuable property at the places robbed. And the two other ironclad specifications for this as yet unknown marauder still held good. He was still at large and still unsuspected by any one, except George F. Hopper, intent on the meager clews which both crimes afforded.

That was, in a way, an advantage for Hopper. For if the thief still thought himself unsuspected, there was a possibility that his sense of security would impel him to remain in Russmore. Of that, Hopper felt fairly certain, for the character of the three thefts, the two from Smiley's house, and the Barclay robbery, pointed strongly to the presumption that it was the work of some one who lived in or quite near Russmore.

This was further confirmed by the magnitude of the Barclay and Smiley losses, for if out-of-town thieves had committed either crime, some trace of their appearance in Russmore would probably have been noted by the always vigilant Hargreaves. In fact, it was just this circumstance which had led to the timely arrest of Tip and Buggsy and their untimely conviction.

Although these conclusions had scarcely greater substance than a spider's web, Hopper again resumed his examination of newspaper accounts concerning the third major crime, the robbery of the milk company, to see if his fragile clews would hold good in that affair.

Accordingly, he perused that story from end to end. He noted the peculiar fact that one man, masked, had first menaced the cashier. The fellow had appeared "from nowhere," according to the cashier's statement, and he had been forced to turn his back, with his face against the wall, submit to being tied up, hand and foot, under the pistol's menace, then gagged and then blindfolded.

This robbery had occurred immediately after the last driver for the company had turned in his weekly collections. The ban-

dits, therefore, knew when the cashier would have considerable money on hand.

Hopper jotted down one or two significant facts.

1. Bandits knew when large sum would be on hand with cashier.
2. Bandits knew when last driver would leave, and cashier be alone.
3. They were familiar with premises and knew where to put cashier, after blindfolding him, so that his predicament would not be noted by passers-by or customers who entered front office to buy milk.

Query: Why did they blindfold cashier?

That was something unusual in a stick-up, since when the custodian of the funds was helpless to render a vocal alarm, professional stick-up men, as a rule, do not use needless precautions before decamping with their loot.

Hopper unhesitatingly wrote his reply:

Answer: Bandit with gun feared recognition by cashier. Hence, he was a Russmore man, probably.

Query: Was there more than one man in this job?

Answer: The facts do not prove there were two.

Proof: The cashier saw but one man. He reported a conversation, but an ingenious bandit may have simulated this, purposely to deceive cashier and delude police into suspecting persons not involved in robbery.

Deduction: If bandit was alone and simulated conversation, the fact shows that he knew Dutch Herman had been in store, and imitated Herman's accent.

Further: Bandit must have known that Dutch Herman was a former notorious bandit.

If that train of reasoning could be subsequently confirmed by evidence concerning the identity of the real robber, he was *still at large and still unsuspected.* Also, so far as Hopper could see, as he critically reviewed the known facts he had set down and his conclusions upon the facts, the element of knowledge—and far more than casual knowledge—entered into all three thefts.

He accordingly continued:

Assumption: If thief knew of presence of necklace, Barclay money, and time when cashier had money in large sums in milk company's office, thief must have had intimate familiarity with all three places.

Therefore: If one man committed all these crimes, he is some man on intimate terms with Smiley's home, Barclay's office, and the milk company's routine of business.

He must also be out at night as well as abroad during daylight business hours.

Since he is still at large and unsuspected, he must come and go without incurring police surveillance.

Hence, he must have a regular occupation of some sort and follow it regularly, otherwise, if idle or dissolute, he would incur police suspicion as to means of livelihood and sources of whatever money he would expend.

Just here Hopper relaxed and lighted a cigar. For a man who had started with no clew save the ineptitude of a police dog and the erroneous conclusions of police authorities and trial juries, he had come a considerable distance on the trail of a very clever and baffling—not to say versatile—criminal.

CHAPTER V

THE TALKING PHOTOGRAPH

THE next task that confronted Hopper was to reconcile one or two of his conclusions with the assumption that the man who had stolen the Smiley necklace was honestly employed.

This was necessary, if the conclusion was correct, that one man also had held up the milk company cashier, instead of Pancakes Levy and Dutch Herman.

This man must have known Herman to simulate his broken English. But Herman, it further appeared from the *Sentinel,* was not a workingman. Pancakes and Dutch, like Combo, were inmates of the Russmore Rescue Home. That brought Combo back into the focus of Hopper's ken again temporarily.

He had no facts to show that Combo knew the unknown thief, or that Herman or Levy knew him either. The presumptions were entirely contrary to that. For, if there had been any other inmate of the Russmore Rescue Home whom either of these three former criminals had known and whom either or any of them had suspected of putting up this kind of a job and then stood by to see innocent men suffer for it—Combo, Pancakes, and Dutch would certainly have

said something of the sort when arrested, and thus another man would have been under suspicion, if not arrested, as the marauder. Nothing of that sort had occurred at all.

So Hopper put down the only reasonable fact that was consistent with his own conclusions and the accounts of the various arrests and trials.

> Thief knew Combo, Pancakes, and Dutch, but they did not know him, or at least if they did, they did not know him as a thief.

He could not follow further along that line with the material at hand. But he was immediately led by his former deductions to another and rather important fact, which he set down, lest he overlook it.

> If thief was employed, and is employed, he will continue at work until hue and cry about theft of Smiley necklace dies down, lest his leaving might direct suspicion to himself. It is quite needful that he do this to continue to avert suspicion and he will, barring some unexpected development calculated to create in him a sense of grave personal danger of arrest.

"I'm getting warmer," said Hopper to himself. "Now what would a local resident of Russmore, still at large, still unsuspected, still working, do with five thousand dollars he got from Barclay, the collections of the milk company, and the Smiley necklace? He'd plant it all and in one place. He'd never dare have it planted where he lived, lest he be suspected, watched, and detected, while visiting the plant to see if his booty was intact."

So he wrote, after more prolonged and profound thought:

> A thief as clever as this would certainly make his plant where he could get to it quick, in case he had to make a quick getaway. That means he would have to have it near where he lived or near where he worked, or both.

Automatically he was thrust back upon the same difficulties which had beset him hitherto, and this time they loomed more formidable than ever, as he started to analyze the various facts and circumstances, in order to synthesize again from the facts at hand as to what kind of an occupation this sort of a thief could possibly pursue.

Hopper began, however, doggedly and kept on. A less patient man would have tossed the memoranda out of the window. It led nowhere but to conclusions which, however sound, nevertheless were obstinate in that they as yet afforded not the slightest glimpse of the real criminal.

> 1. The thief does not work in a factory, for, if he did, his absence at time of Smiley theft or milk company robbery would have been noted.
> 2. He is not a railroad man, for if he was, he would not have access to Smiley's house, although he was undoubtedly in railroad yards if he saw Tip and Buggsy bury tools.
> 3. He is not an insurance agent, for while he might visit milk company office, Barclay's and Smiley's in that capacity, he would not be in railroad yards at midnight, or after, where he could see Buggsy and Tip, and beat them to a safe job in Barclay's.

A member of the local fire department or a police officer might come and go unsuspected, Hopper knew, yet such men are rarely capable of planning and executing a series of three major crimes, especially in a city where they are so well known that such a course of behavior would invite recognition—and with it the inevitable acute suspicion of wrongdoing.

"These negative conclusions lead nowhere," he finally observed half aloud. "I've got to get positive ones. Somewhere, I'm sure, there's a bird that fits these specifications. He's got to fit them. For if Combo is innocent of robbing Smiley once, and if Tip and Buggsy and Dutch and Pancakes are likewise innocent—there's a large size culprit in the woodpile somewhere in Russmore, and he's got to be found."

He seized the whole pile of *Sentinels* and placed them on his desk with a whimsical gesture, as if they were not merely inert pulp covered with printed symbols representing ideas, but rather as if they were vividly alive and unreasonably reticent.

"Talk to me!" sepulchrally whispered Hopper.

An almost mystic silence fell across the library, broken only by the rustling of the various copies of the newspaper, as he scanned and discarded them. It was not unlike the swish of robes of invisible phantoms passing before the mind's eye.

He came at last to the account of the milk company robbery. Instead of reasoning on such facts as the newspaper contained, Hopper amplified the scope of his reasoning, by trying now to think as the cashier must have thought and felt at the time and place of this brazen stick-up.

He sat in the chair as the cashier had sat, suddenly visualized the pistol pointed at his own head, looked down the barrel and experienced practically the same precise emotions that the poor devil in that position of trust had experienced.

Off guard, taken utterly unawares, terrorized by dire fear for his personal safety, Hopper, like the cashier, was for the moment in bond to the perceptions of mere sense, in imagination he was overwhelmed by vivid apprehension for his own personal welfare.

The numbing shock as the cashier realized that the pistol pointed at him threatened the termination of all things earthly, would practically paralyze an honest man, denuding him of all power to accurately perceive the identity of the intruder. Mortal fear would engulf any effort at recognition.

The mask itself, with its blank fabric replacing the usual contour of a human countenance, modified only by the feral eyes glaring through twin holes cut in it, would aid the awful feeling of dread.

Hopper leaped from the personality of the terror-stricken cashier into that of the man holding the gun. He glanced across the sights, he noted the collapse of the cashier—and then—

He laid down the paper after scanning the photograph on the front of it. It was the outside of the building and merely carried the legend: "Scene of Daring Hold-up!"

No human countenance adorned that picture. Merely the façade of a building, the protruding radiator of an automobile at the left, the rear end of another automobile at the right, with the license plate dimly discernible, and between them a patient horse attached to a cart.

Hopper picked up his magnifying glass and under it the whole license number was visible. Old Dobbin, just behind it, stood with his head hanging down, his nose quite close enough to eat the plate, if it had been edible.

Hopper looked down at the picture with a triumphant smile.

"Thanks, very much," said he, *sotto voce*, as if speaking to the issue of the *Sentinel* containing the picture. "If I cannot find the man that stole that Smiley necklace—without being noted on his nefarious errand and without arousing the suspicions of the canine police guardian of the Smiley home—I deserve to go hungry until I'm ravenous enough to eat that license plate, and—"

He stopped somewhat sheepishly.

His wife was standing in the door with arms akimbo, clad in an apron and a wondering look.

"Do you want the license plate boiled, stewed or fried?" she asked.

"One minute, Flora." He grasped his memorandum and wrote one brief paragraph. Then: "What time is it?" he asked.

"Half past six," said she. "Do you know you've been sitting here thinking and writing and messing around with some old newspapers for nearly eight hours? It was about eleven this forenoon when Mr. Savage bowed himself out."

He could hardly credit her words, although he had been dealing with the shadows of mere thoughts, seeking to emerge into the light of one substantial and pertinent fact which could be shown to be just that and which could not be disputed. The flow of time was unnoticed. The difficulties had been great enough to withdraw him from any notion of clocks, with their petty imitation of the revolution of the earth.

That meant nothing, since all the time in the world might not be long enough to catch a subtle thief of this sort. In fact, the longer the time that passed, the greater the uncertainty of this thief ever being apprehended.

So George F. Hopper stood looking at his wife with his fond and yet rare smile, a mixture of his high regard for her consciousness of the victory he had just wrenched from ignorance of essential clews, everything likewise dappled with wretched bungling and misinterpretation of meager

facts, such as had been at hand when the Russmore " crime wave " had been actually going on.

It had all seemed very complex. Yet it was all exceedingly simple. Link by link the frail cables of ideas had been tested. The clews *converged.*

There was one and only one possible occupation for this hypothetical thief to follow and fulfill the specifications common to all those four offenses.

He had to work both at day and at night. He had to go to a railway yard at a time when honest men were fast asleep. He had to visit them in their homes and offices when they were abroad. He could pass—and had passed—a police dog unchallenged, because of his occupation.

He could and had committed all these thefts. He had bound himself to one with invisible chains. That one crime would link him with the rest.

There could be no mistake. Of that Hopper was certain.

So he was in no hurry. But he was not going to allow the culprit too much latitude, lest he take a sudden whim to depart with his assorted loot, quite sufficient for one of his habitual mode of life to live elsewhere in comparative luxury.

Hopper went to his meal. He had barely swallowed a cup of coffee, when a peal at his doorbell sent him from his chair to see who the unexpected caller was.

It was Chief of Police Martin Hargreaves, of Russmore. That veteran of many years' service was in no particularly amiable mood, to judge by the bristling of his walruslike mustache and his curt tone, when he gave his name. Hopper had never met him personally before that moment.

CHAPTER VI

HARGREAVES GETS HUFFY

"I'M looking for a man named Hopper," said Hargreaves.

" You're looking right at him."

Hopper's reply was as brittle as the veiled insolence of the visitor, who seemed imbued with some strong, inward excitement.

" You were formerly an inspector of the detective bureau here?"

" Yes."

" Well, you don't look like a cop. I come over here to have a heart talk with a cop. I'm a cop. I ain't tossing bouquets at myself when I say that either."

" What's the big idea, chief?"

" The big idea is this: A certain party in Russmore is trying to frame me up, and I understand that you've been engaged to do the job."

" You are misinformed," said Hopper frigidly. " I never tried to frame up any one, police officer or criminal. What's more, I never expect to try to do it, either."

" I've got evidence that a frame-up is going on," returned Hargreaves obstinately. " That's why I came over here."

" Let's see it."

Hargreaves jerked a newspaper from his pocket.

" You take the Russmore *Sentinel,* don't you?" he craftily queried, looking past the detective to his library table.

" Yes. Is that the *Sentinel?"*

Hargreaves unfolded the paper and extended it.

" Hot from the press," he replied, " and I guess if you'd been me, you'd have got hot under the collar, too. I started to see you, lickety-brindle."

Hopper took the paper. The first glaring headline was like a blow between the eyes.

RUSSMORE CRIME MYSTERIES MAY BE CLEARED UP

Former Inspector George F. Hopper of the Queen City Police Department Is Investigating—Calls on *Sentinel* for Information—Chief Hargreaves Is Ignored—Is Hargreaves Slated for the Shelf?

" One moment." Hopper turned his head, calling: " Flora, my hat and coat, please!" He jerked them from her hand, flung a farewell word and started down the walk, striding like a Puss-in-Boots.

" Come on, chief!"

Hargreaves ambled slowly to where his machine was parked at the curb.

" What do you want to do?"

"Get with you in your machine and get to Russmore as fast as you can drive. Quick, man. Don't dawdle!"

"But I ain't asked you to drive to Russmore with me," expostulated Hargreaves. "I know my business, Hopper. I ain't asking any favors from you!"

"Then I'll ask one from you—for yourself. Get into that car. Step on it. Give me your badge. So far as I'm concerned, you're chief of police and you can have that job for a thousand years, if you can hold on to it, without help, that long. But if you don't do what I say—you won't hold it a week—I'll promise you that. Never mind the chin music. If you're hot under the collar, ditch the collar. Drive, man! Drive as fast as this old tub will let you. I'll get down to brass tacks with you as we go along."

His hand gripped the arm of the older man, spun him around and, with a nifty arm lock, he fairly lifted his visitor into the seat. He ran around the machine and leaped in beside him.

"Give me that tin of yours!" said George F. Hopper.

They volleyed up the avenue, whirled around the corner with a blast of the horn, waved on by the traffic officer who glimpsed Hopper's arm extended with the gleaming badge, and struck for the boulevard between the two cities. They were about twenty-one miles apart and the speedometer needle pointed at forty-five miles an hour when Hopper bent his frowning forehead on the balance of the article.

Sensational developments are expected as a result of the entrance of George F. Hopper, famous former inspector in charge of the Queen City detective bureau, into his investigation of recent Russmore crime mysteries, which the *Sentinel* ascertained to-day to be a fact.

Hopper is a go-getter. Hs is still a young man. He retired from the regular department to engage in private investigations and his success has been almost fabulous.

He does not take petty cases. For that reason his apparent casual query to-day for information from the *Sentinel* editorial office is fraught with considerable more significance than might otherwise be deemed.

It is also significant that Hopper did not approach Chief Hargreaves for the same information, according to the statements of Russmore's chief.

"Don't know the man at all," said the chief when asked if Hopper was coöperating with him.

"Have you any idea why he is making inquiries regarding crimes committed in Russmore?" the chief was asked.

"I don't know that he is."

The chief was assured that Hopper was making such inquiries, but refused to make any comment.

Following hard upon the recent "clean-up" which Chief Hargreaves made of five old-time crooks for various depredations, a new and more startling crime shocked the entire community when Supervisor Samuel Smiley's wife's necklace was stolen. It is said to be worth at least twenty-five thousand dollars.

Chief Hargreaves personally inspected the scene of the crime. He said to-day that he was not yet ready to take the public into his confidence with respect to the clews he has, nor did he intimate that he even had any trace of the thief.

No arrests have yet been made. The chief has not left Russmore, although the thief who took this necklace may have done so. The most that the chief has done has been to chat privately with Mr. Smiley. It is known that high words took place between them in the chief's office. It is believed that the chief and Mr. Smiley are at loggerheads because of the chief's inability—or refusal—to develop any trace of the whereabouts of this very valuable property or who made off with it.

It is a fact that Mr. Smiley and the chief do not speak as they pass by.

When asked to-day by the *Sentinel* if he had retained Hopper to atone for the chief's apparent attitude, Mr. Smiley referred all queries to his attorney, Willoughby Savage. He would not say that he had or had not authorized his attorney to retain Mr. Hopper. Mr. Savage could not be reached either in person or by telephone to-day before the *Sentinel* went to press.

Public feeling is uneasy. Citizens feel that if thefts of this magnitude can be committed with impunity, other criminals may come to regard Russmore as a fertile field for their operations.

Chief Hargreaves seems to regard the missing necklace as more or less of a joke. In an authorized interview day before yesterday, he scoffed at the price Mr. Smiley paid for a police dog he purchased to aid in guarding his house, and intimated that when his salary was increased by this animal's price, he might grow enough hair to compete with the dog's negligence—or words to that effect. His precise meaning is obscure.

Hopper thrust the screed under the seat cushion, remarking:

"No time for alibis now. Do you want to get the thief that stole that necklace?"

"Hopper, I told you before you insisted on getting in this car that I could take care of myself, didn't I?"

"Chief, please discard that controversial tone. Answer yes or no to my question. Do you want to arrest that thief? If you do, I'll point him out to you. I've never been in your town in my life. I loathe petty, dirty politics of the sort I've just read. I called you to-day to ask a question. I couldn't get you. So I called the *Sentinel*, as the question referred to a newspaper article it had published. The rest is conjecture, innuendo, guess work—but it may do us both vast harm. Once more—*do you want to get the thief that stole that necklace?*"

"And once more," grated Hargreaves, "I can protect myself. I can lay my hands on the man that stole that necklace any minute I want to do it."

"For the love of Mike," rasped Hopper, "then why don't you? Why do you lay yourself open to a lacing like this from a newspaper enemy when you could backfire them by the arrest?"

"You just said you never was in my town," said Hargreaves cryptically. "You mean all right, I guess, for you talk like a square shooter. But, Hopper, I've been a cop in this town for thirty years. I've been chief for fifteen. That necklace is insured. If it ain't found the insurance has got to be paid. The man that took that necklace walked straight past a police dog as big as a young bull calf and as savage as a flock of lions."

"Right!" cried Hopper. "Go on."

"And his name is Sam Smiley, the slickest, smoothest, oiliest politician in this here county. He's going to kill two birds with one shot—that is, he thinks he is. He's going to collect on that necklace from the insurance company and then ruin me by that there newspaper, of which he's a heavy stockholder. Well, we'll see who's going to be ruined!"

"You're wrong, chief. Stop this car. I know Smiley didn't steal that necklace. I know who did. I've never been here in my life.

"I wanted you to have the credit for the arrest of the real thief—for reasons I can't explain now. I've been a cop. I know what a cop is up against. I've been up against these petty politicians. That's why I quit the Queen City department. Now let me prove it to you. Do you remember a certain photograph that was published in the *Sentinel* showing the front of the milk company's office after the milk company was robbed?"

"Yes."

"Remember the auto on the right side of the foreground of that picture and that license plate—"

Hargreaves emitted a great guffaw. His derision was without bounds.

"You poor simp," he interrupted, "that license plate was on my car. Do you think I'm blind? Now, go to it. I told you I could protect myself. I don't blame you for taking Smiley's part, since you've got the job to get the necklace. Get it. But the minute Smiley makes one more crack at me—Smiley's goose is not only cooked. I'll make him eat it himself. And you can tell him from me that I said so!"

CHAPTER VII

PROVING ARCHIMEDES WRONG

CHIEF HARGREAVES was not in the least perturbed when he saw George F. Hopper clamp his lips, leap from the car, and start briskly toward the editorial office of the *Sentinel*.

He had expected Hopper to do something of that sort after the rebuff he had given to the theory that he felt Hopper was about to voice.

He did not see the detective immediately emerge, and as he was in the stream of evening Russmore theater traffic the chief drove along to headquarters, walked in after putting his car in the police garage, lit a fat cigar, and sat down, at peace with all the world. He had bearded the lion in his den and he was not averse to see a lion without a beard come out of his den and continue the battle. The town had another

newspaper. The reporter was already "on the job," although the *Sentinel's* rival paper, the *Advocate*, did not appear until next afternoon.

Chief Hargreaves was courteous. He explained to the friendly scribe that he had gone to Queen City to chat with former Inspector Hopper. Hopper had "gone up in the air," grabbed his hat and coat, made the chief drive him back to Russmore, and then had pointed "like a good bird-dog straight for the *Sentinel* office."

"What did you say to Inspector Hopper?"

"Our chat was in confidence," loftily returned Hargreaves, "but I did put a flea or two in his ear about police business in Russmore. He thought I was mistaken. He tried to show me a clew—but I showed him, instead, that if the clew was any good I was the man that robbed the milk company."

"And then?" said the expectant scribe, poising his pencil over his notebook.

"He got out of my car and started for the *Sentinel* office."

"Hot stuff—red-hot stuff. Thanks, chief. I wonder where I can find Hopper? Do you suppose he'll talk, and if he does can I print what he says?"

"I think you'll find him at the *Sentinel*. As for his talking—"

There was a rap on the door.

"Come in," called the chief.

"Good evening," Hopper replied entering. "I hope I'm not intruding, chief. I've got a prisoner here. The lad that stole the necklace. I thought you'd be glad to see him. Just lock this boy up for me until to-morrow, please."

He indicated the young man with him. He was fashionably dressed, but his hands were rough and seamed, as if with hard work, and his face was tanned despite the chalk-white tint of trepidation.

Hargreaves leaped to his feet. He, too, went chalky white. Then his pallid face took on the hue of a turkey gobbler's wattles.

"So you're going through with Smiley's frame-up, eh?"

"I don't understand you," said Hopper stiffly. "I've just made this arrest on your main street of a man whom I charge with a felony. Under the penal law of the State of New York, as a private citizen, it becomes my duty to turn him over to the nearest police officer. I charge him with the theft of a necklace of the approximate value of twenty-five thousand dollars, the lawful property of Samuel Smiley or of Mr. Smiley's wife. I don't know in which of them the formal legal title vests, but I'll give you that information to-morrow, after I can communicate with the owners."

Hargreaves grew purple with choleric wrath.

"Well, I like your nerve!" he vociferated.

"Let's stick to essentials, please," quietly rejoined Hopper. "I have formally notified you that I want you to take charge of this prisoner. Clarence Faber, I believe, his name is. Do you happen to know him?"

"Know him!" bellowed Hargreaves. "Why I've known him since he was knee-high to a grasshopper. He's my sister's boy, and a more honest one never lived. Born, bred and been in Russmore all his life, works tooth and toenail day and night."

"Right!" echoed Hopper. "Day and night is eminently correct. Now, you'll excuse me. I see a *Sentinel* newspaper reporter is waiting to talk to you. Good night, Chief Hargreaves. Here is my phone number if you want to communicate with me. I'm going home."

Hopper did. He did not wait for the irate Russmore officer to invite him to return in the police automobile. Instead, he boarded the first trolley that came along and vanished.

Hopper did not go home on a trolley. He had another vehicle in mind when he took that trolley. He kept what was in his mind strictly to himself. He had waded through a very complex and obscure situation, whose difficulty was enormously increased by the paucity of clews, although when discovered they had all converged in what now seemed to be a more unfortunate situation than Hopper had first foreseen.

Not only were Combo Smith, Tip Malone, Buggsy Watts, Pancakes Levy, and Dutch Herman quite guiltless of their various offenses—a near and dear relative of the chief was the actual criminal. That

made Hopper's task dismal as well as difficult.

He must now show, beyond all doubt, that he was right. It would be very hard on Hargreaves. The unfortunate interjection of petty politics, due to the *Sentinel's* ill-advised and premature publication of which Hargreaves had complained, had precipitated fresh complexities in which dirty linen would be washed for days to come.

Hopper was vexed, but not morose. He had not arrested Clarence Faber because he was the chief's nephew. He had not known his name five minutes before he was forced to arrest him—lest Faber decamp. Faber merely fitted every specification of Hopper's memorandum. Hopper had "nailed" him in the very nick of time, before Faber had obtained his "planted" loot.

And that was that. He still had much to do. He swung off the trolley, for in his brief stay at the *Sentinel* office he had oriented himself and knew where to go. He had known what to do in Russmore before Chief Hargreaves had come over to Queen City with an obvious chip on his shoulder.

At an alley he met a man. They shook hands. "This way, sir," said the stranger. "Mr. Poor, the *Sentinel* editor, told me just what you looked like. I'll go over the route with you."

"Thanks," said Hopper, glancing at his clothes. "I'll want a jumper and overalls, I guess."

"I think I can fix you up," said the man.

He did. After his escort had gone with him for something more than an hour, and after the detective had visited the point in the railway yards where he was absolutely sure the thief that robbed Barclay had stood, and after he also had gone into the office of the milk company and looked at it, Hopper went on, wearing the overalls, jumper and cap, directly to Smiley's residence.

It was about two o'clock in the morning when he entered the side gate, which was unlocked, and started to cross the yard.

Instantly a huge German police dog leaped upon him, bore him to the ground and held him securely, but without biting or injuring him in any way. The dog and the prostrate man lifted their voices in unison.

Supervisor Smiley came hurrying down in his futuristic pyjamas, clutching a wicked looking automatic. He spoke to the dog, who released his hold. Hopper arose. He gave his name and identity. He produced the check which Attorney Willoughby Savage had given him at his home.

He leaned over toward his client, whispering: "I've come to make an arrest." Forthwith he made it. He left. He did not discard the clothing until his prisoner was in Russmore police headquarters and he was at his own home.

"What on earth have you been doing?" gasped Flora as he slouched into the house and sank into a chair.

"My dear, I've been proving that Euclid was right when he said that a straight line—no, I'm wrong. It was Archimedes and not Euclid who said that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points."

"Yes," said Flora, "but what difference does it mean which of them said it? If the line is straight, it's straight."

"My dear, you are right, as usual. 'If it is straight.' Mr. Einstein says there's no such thing as a straight line. The equations he uses to prove it are under the memorandum I made to-day on my library table. You asked where I had been. I've been curving hither and yon. Dreadfully tired, but the lines converged all right. Call me at eight sharp. I expect visitors tomorrow morning."

CHAPTER VIII

STRAIGHT TO THE BOOTY

SUPERVISOR SMILEY, dapper, suave, placid, and pleased arrived just before nine next day, and Chief Hargreaves had no chip on his shoulder when he came, quite soon afterward.

"I'd like to have both you gentlemen hear what I have to say," began the detective, "since it clears up situations otherwise confused and obscure. My mode of work is not that of other detectives. I do not look for physical clews, but mental ones."

They nodded. They both hung on Hopper's words, Smiley as his client, Chief Hargreaves as a high-strung, but honest officer,

"The simplest way to trace an unidentified criminal," resumed Hopper, "is to take the known facts and reason on them. There is always something in a criminal's acts themselves to reveal who he is, if I am able to discern the first traces, follow those to others, and then wherever the reasoning leads. So I'll read you my memorandum, made yesterday, and you can then follow the clews I obtained. The method is impersonal. It does not reflect on Chief Hargreaves or his method of work."

He read the notes, briefly explaining some steps, until he came to where he had commanded the issues of the *Sentinel* to "talk" regarding the milk company robbery.

"I then added this," said Hopper. "because it was quite clear:

"1. Robber showed intimate familiarity with place.

"2. Also, with time of arrival of drivers with receipts.

"3. Reason: Robber could not risk discovery by a late driver any more than discovery by police.

"4. Therefore, *the last driver* had to report before robber could avoid risk of discovery from any driver.

"5. No *outside criminal* could know, positively, when last driver would be in.

"6. *Only the last driver* could know that.

"Query: Did last driver arriving on day of robbery commit this crime?

"Answer: Yes.

"Proof: Details in notes 1 to 6 above stated.

"Further proofs: (a) Last driver would not be suspected by cashier of intent to rob him. Hence, he could see a clear path. (b) Last driver would not be suspected by outsiders of intent to commit crime, either before or after crime, if not seen in the act itself. (c) To avoid recognition, therefore, last driver would assume disguise."

They hung breathlessly on each simple statement, discerning no flaws. Hopper paused, then resumed.

"Positive clew: If last driver could commit robbery in this way, he could also conceal loot. But he could *not* hide his horse and wagon and he had to come to scene of crime with horse and wagon to return empty bottles, as well as collections.

"Deduction: Last driver, being unsuspected, would not try to leave scene of crime with horse and wagon. He would remain until police came, to further avoid suspicion.

"Therefore: To identify robber, merely identify driver who drove horse and wagon *remaining at scene of crime* after police arrived."

Hopper picked up the *Sentinel*, pointing to the photograph taken after the robbery, showing horse and wagon and license plate on back of Chief Hargreaves's own machine.

"This horse and wagon identified the driver. Not the automobile license plate, chief, as you assumed when I tried to talk to you about this last night. Now let's go inside that building at the time of robbery and see what happened. It isn't hard.

"1. Cashier, sitting behind desk counting collections, could not see robber's legs. Only the mask and gun.

"2. Mask and gun were found at scene of robbery by police.

"3. No professional crook would leave *gun* behind, while fleeing with loot. He would *conceal* gun on person the same as his booty while in flight."

"That is absolutely ironclad," said Smiley. "What next?"

Hopper read again:

"4. Since last driver committed robbery he must also hide all money taken where it could not be found after arrival of police and *without leaving scene of crime.*"

"I think that is so," said the Russmore chief of police, "because since he didn't leave it to hide it, it must have been hidden there. I had a suspicion at the time, but I couldn't confirm it. I searched that building, high and low, also the last driver, my nephew, Clarence Faber."

Hopper nodded, then continued:

"5. Robber did not leave money in building nor keep it on his person. He removed it, without leaving the place himself."

"A confederate?" skeptically exclaimed Hargreaves. "But I thought your whole memorandum of all these crimes pointed to only one man!"

"A four-footed confederate," smiled Hopper, reaching under the library table for a bulky object wrapped in paper. "Many of my clews should converge in this, gentlemen."

He unwrapped a horse collar and a pair of hames fitting it, from which the traces had been unbuckled.

"If my memorandum is right, the milk robbery loot should be concealed in this. Also the necklace stolen from Mr. Smiley's house. Now, here is a rent in the collar concealed by the hames. It has been sewed up. Before I cut these threads look back at the scene of that robbery—after the robber had gotten the money. The cashier is still bound, gagged and blindfolded.

"He's lying on the floor. People are passing and repassing. Do they see anything criminal in a milk wagon driver trying to adjust the harness of his horse, standing outside the building? That's why you didn't find the money, chief—the horse and wagon stood outside the building."

He cut the threads. He inserted his fingers. Smiley's necklace came out first. Then the milk company money, held in a wad by a rubber band. Next the Barclay lumber company loot, with checks and money, tied with a string. Last of all came five brand new twenty-dollar bills issued by the Russmore National Bank.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNEXPECTED BOMB

SILENCE profound followed. Smiley was trying to restrain his jubilation, Hargreaves his grief at this mountain of proof that his sister's son was a fourfold criminal.

"I'm nearly done," said Hopper quietly. "The clews converged again last night at Mr. Smiley's house regarding the theft of this necklace. After I arrested Clarence Faber—who was pointed out to me on the street by Virgil Poor, editor of the *Sentinel*—as the driver of the wagon shown in the photograph—I went to Mr. Smiley's house wearing Faber's overalls, jumper and cap to deliver some milk.

"Not to try to prove Faber guilty of stealing the necklace, but to try to prove him innocent of it. If Faber was guilty he had to have a confederate inside Mr. Smiley's house, because Faber never went inside. Merely into the yard and to the back door of the house with his milk. In this yard was the large, powerful, and ferocious German police dog.

"If some one else than Faber came wearing his clothes, just to fool that dog, and thus get the necklace from an empty milk bottle where the maid had put it, then there was a reasonable doubt of Faber's stealing the necklace, for any other confederate of the maid's wearing Faber's familiar attire could have done the same thing. The dog was too clever to be fooled in that way. Notwithstanding Faber's clothes had his scent, the dog scented me and arrested me—rather informally."

"I guess," remarked Mr. Smiley in a silky tone, "that last piece of brainy reasoning about closes all the gates of reasonable doubt, don't it, as to who is guilty and who is not, in all these cases?"

Hargreaves exploded like gunpowder coming in contact with flame.

"Mr. Hopper, would you want me to convict your son of stealing a necklace like that on a dog's testimony? What proof is there that my nephew ever exchanged a word with Mr. Smiley's maid. Your memorandum don't show any!"

"That is correct," said Hopper evenly, "but only correct because the ramifications of this very mystifying case have not yet all been put down on my memorandum. There is proof, chief, I regret to say, that the maid did talk with your nephew."

"I want it all," stormed the chief, "before I want to see my sister's son in a prison. You'd want it all if I had done what you've done and accused your boy. I serve notice, here and now, on Mr. Smiley that this case will be fought to the bitter end, and—"

"I would rather that you serve it on him outside my library," equably returned Hopper. "I'm not finished, chief. The proof that the maid did communicate with your nephew is in a telephone message she sent him after that scurrilous article appeared in the *Sentinel* last night reflecting on your ability as chief and mentioning my name as investigating the Barclay robbery.

"You see, as a rule, your nephew never got up until late at night to go to work. He was up, wearing his best clothes, and

going to where his horse was stabled to get his booty and flee when I arrested him, without knowing his relationship to you."

It was the last straw of humiliation for the old chief. His form sagged pathetically. He knew Hopper had not yet examined the telephone records, but he also knew that such reasoning as had led straight to the loot of four thefts could not fail in this last detail. The message would certainly be found in one of the phone company's records.

Mr. Smiley broke the awkward silence by remarking:

"I think, Mr. Hopper, that you're the greatest detective who ever lived. If you've finished I'll take the necklace and go home. My lawyer tells me he gave you a check for your fee. I presume you have it."

Hopper drew the check from his vest pocket and placed it on the library table.

"I have not yet indorsed or deposited it," said he. "May I suggest that you do not leave just yet, Mr. Smiley. The clews go a bit further."

"Further?" echoed his client.

"As to motive. Our penal laws require not only proof of a crime, but, to establish that the act charged as a crime is really that, the motive must be shown for the act. It is true that the act sometimes implies the motive. Not always. So to punish any wrongdoer I must touch briefly on the motive for the maid's telephoning to Clarence Faber."

He did. He showed, succinctly, that Faber and the girl were sweethearts, contemplating marriage; that the motive for the theft of the hundred dollars for which Combo Smith had been wrongfully convicted was the same as that of the necklace—to conquer the poverty that hedged around both the milk driver and the maid, for they probably loved each other very much. He added that both the girl and youth saw other lawbreakers growing very rich and escaping punishment, but did not name who these other lawbreakers were.

"As to the necklace," continued Hopper, "I should like to say this: When Attorney Savage retained me yesterday he casually mentioned that it was worth about twenty-five thousand dollars. I based my retainer on recovering that alone, and not on the other crimes. There were three more that were correctly solved, Mr. Smiley, as you can see."

"Yes, Detective Hopper. Wonderful work, as I have said. But these other three are things in which Chief Hargreaves blundered, not I. Surely you don't expect me to pay for his mistakes, do you?"

Hopper's acid smile checked the fuming Hargreaves. Then Hopper winked at him. There is much in a wink between two experienced police officers. Chief Hargreaves suddenly became as placid as Mr. Smiley, as fully interested as that gentleman in what Hopper started to say next.

"I'm glad you take that view of things, Mr. Smiley. I will not press the point that the necklace is worth twice the amount I was told yesterday—yes, three times. My work for you is done."

"All right. Give me the necklace—"

"Not yet!" snapped Hopper. "There are still other clews. These five twenty-dollar bills, Mr. Smiley. On the trial of Combo Smith you swore you had given them to your wife. The cashier of the bank swore he had given them to you, with other money. I started with assuming Combo's innocence and that's the only way I found this necklace."

"I was mistaken, of course," said Mr. Smiley hastily, "since my maid took that money and not Combo Smith. I must have been mistaken, for I saw you take it out of the horse collar with my necklace. But what of it?"

"Combo Smith was innocent. He has suffered much."

"I'll personally ask the Governor to pardon him. You can go with me and so can Chief Hargreaves, if he will."

"That is quite fair. But who is going to pay Combo for his suffering? He's old, broken down, and a notorious crook. But he's paid for his real crimes. Who will pay him for the one somebody else committed?"

"That's up to the chief," said Smiley more testily. "Why ask me? The chief arrested him—not I."

"Quite so," grated Hopper, "but your testimony convicted him. The chief arrested him because of this evidence I've

taken from the horse collar—that is, the chief thought it was this evidence and you backed up the chief's mistaken belief. You swore to it at Combo Smith's trial. And you knew you were lying at the time."

Mr. Smiley looked as shattered as if the bomb Hopper had touched off was physical instead of mental. He carefully felt of his pudgy person to see if he were really intact and not in fragments.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST CLEW CONVERGES

"COMBO SMITH got the five new twenty dollar bills which you identified at his trial not from your house, but from Cannon-ball Jones, the rum runner, who hired Combo for sentry duty because Combo knew the chief and his men. So I was solving five crimes —not four—on your retainer. I wasn't paid to do that. Yet if I hadn't proved Combo innocent I couldn't have found this necklace, as I said. Don't you think you owe Combo something, Mr. Smiley? I think so. Here, take my retainer. Give that to Combo—with the compliments of Chief Hargreaves because of the chief's mistake—because you held out the whole truth on the chief!"

Mr. Smiley looked dazed.

"Write a check, right now, to Combo Smith's order and give it to Chief Hargreaves," thundered Hopper. "Isn't he in deep enough water owing to my work without having Combo sue him for damages?"

"But your fee?" protested Smiley.

"You don't owe me a cent! I don't take thousand dollar fees for recovering stolen necklaces worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and solving several other crimes at the same time. You said I was the best detective in the world. I feel that your high compliment has some basis of merit, although a compliment isn't usually considered an adequate fee."

Mr. Smiley wrote and handed the check to Hargreaves without an audible reply.

"Now," said Hopper, "that pays Combo for his twenty year sentence at the rate of fifty dollars a year. Let's clean this all up, right now. Tip Malone and Buggsy Watts got twenty-five years each. Give each of them a check for the same rate, amounting to twelve hundred and fifty dollars apiece. Pancakes Levy and Dutch Herman got fifteen years each. Pay them seven hundred and fifty dollars each. Otherwise they'll all sue the poor old chief—"

"Hijacking me, eh?" Smiley's face was pistachio and he trembled.

"That's the right word for a bootlegger to use," placidly admitted Hopper. "The chief was trying to stop you from running this rum. That's why he made these mistakes."

Smiley wrote the four other checks, palpitating with rage and a horrid fear. Chief Hargreaves tucked them all in his pocket, as silent as a walrus which had turned into a stone sphinx.

"Now I'll take my necklace, if you please," said Smiley.

"*Your* necklace? Do you mean *this* necklace?"

"Certainly. It's mine, isn't it? And I'll produce it on the trial of the chief's nephew. Didn't you arrest him for stealing it, with my maid as a confederate?"

Hopper's ironic smile was like a tonic to Chief Hargreaves.

"My dear Mr. Smiley," said he blandly, "you have twice complimented me on being a great detective. I have been so impressed by your kind words I have returned your retainer. I haven't been working for you at all. I've been working for the Government of these United States. If you'd smuggle rum—and you've admitted it by writing five fat checks to five men—wouldn't you smuggle a necklace?

"If you'd wipe your feet on the Constitution of the United States by running rum into Russmore, would you hesitate to defraud the government you have admitted you defy? This necklace goes to the United States customs officials for an examination and appraisal. If you bought it in this country, refer them to the seller with your proof of purchase and they'll return it to you. If you imported it, show them your receipt for the customs duties and they'll return it. But I will not, under such circumstances as I have disclosed."

Mr. Smiley blinked and tottered.

" My right to own my home or to wear my hat and call it my own," continued Hopper, " depends upon the Constitution of these United States and its laws. Otherwise I couldn't do either. Shall I refrain from mentioning your name, Mr. Smiley, when I turn in this necklace, because of your high opinion of my detective ability? All of the clews in this case finally converge in it as I hope I've made quite plain to you and the chief."

Mr. Smiley fled, wordlessly. Hopper turned to Hargreaves.

" Chief, I can't convict either that boy or the girl I arrested last night without technical proof of grand larceny. Our penal law requires rigorous proof of *legal ownership* of this necklace. I haven't got it. Go home and turn your nephew loose. I released the girl last night. Let 'em get married. They love each other. They've had their lesson. Smiley's rise to huge affluence tempted them."

" But how about the milk company robbery, the Barclay job, and stealing the hundred dollars from Smiley?" dubiously queried Hargreaves. " We both got to respect the law, you know, no matter where it hits."

" Right! Especially when a police dog respects it and can't read or write, chief. However, did his owner respect it? I was hired to find a certain necklace. I found it. I don't know who the necklace belongs to. I only know who-this other property still on my desk belongs to by hearsay, and that isn't legal proof. If you know and want to return this property to the rightful owners, that's your duty as chief of police of Russmore. But do you think I'm going to let you have my memorandum and go back to Russmore with it to solve these mysteries? Why, you haven't even yet called me a good-detective, although Mr. Smiley did!"

Hargreaves came over and gripped his hand. It was a long time before he released it. Then he murmured brokenly:

" All that wonderful work for nothing, inspector!"

Hopper smiled and tapped the necklace. The jewels seemed to grow brighter as Hargreaves look down at them.

" My fee for recovering this necklace is exactly twenty-five thousand dollars, chief. I'll get it when the government puts it up at auction, sells it to the highest bidder and deducts the legal customs duties. What's the matter with your eyesight, chief? The biggest fee I ever earned is right there—and in diamonds."

Hopper got it.

Combo, Tip, Buggsy, Pancakes, and Dutch were released. They all signed a statement that Chief Hargreaves was " the greatest detective in the world." Mr. Smiley made no objection to printing it in full in the Russmore *Sentinel,* of which he was a majority stockholder.

THE END

Summoning all his courage, he advanced steadily toward the cowled figure

FORGING KEYS TO FREEDOM

By Robert W. Sneddon

THE INQUISITION THOUGHT DA COSTA WAS SAFELY OUT OF THE WAY, BUT WHERE THERE'S A WILL—

A Story of Fact

THROUGHOUT history there have been numerous instances where the intrepidity and daring, above all the overmastering desire for freedom, of one man have set all the plans of powerful States at naught. Mr. Robert W. Sneddon has collected and arranged for FLYNN'S a series of articles dealing with these things.

Da Costa and the Inquisition is first in the series. Like it, the others will be brief and pithy. Through them all breathes the love of independence and hatred of shackles. All in all they are as interesting and inspiring as anything of the kind ever written before.

IT is only human nature that the moment a prison door closes upon a man, his first thought is of escape. The wonderful ingenuity exhibited by prisoners in making their escape from prison houses would often appear incredible were not the instances too well authenticated for doubt.

The true secret of these Houdini evasions is to be found in the length of time during which the powers of mind and body have been concentrated upon one single object, without any cause of distraction.

Take the remarkable case of Da Costa. Da Costa was a Portuguese subject who, having antagonized the government by his very liberal convictions, was imprisoned

by the Inquisition on the charge of having become a Freemason. He was kept in rigid seclusion. Week after week, month after month passed, until hope of release died.

He realized that he was doomed to life-long imprisonment, and that in order to avoid publicity the board of inquisitors was going to let the case drop and be forgotten. He had looked on the light of day for the last time.

Tools for His Plan

He had always been a man of a mechanical turn of mind, and had amused himself in earlier days by the manufacture of scientific instruments, several novelties in which had been of his invention. This knowledge he now hoped to turn to good account, and from the moment he had been thrown into his dungeon he had made every observation in his power which might help him to escape, and had discovered two or three facts which he believed would be of service to him.

The entrance to his dungeon was closed by two iron gratings and an outer wooden door, in the upper part of which was a pane of glass, the only light of his cell. There being no other window or chimney, for there was no fireplace, it followed that to escape the prisoner must pass through these three doors.

Da Costa was not long in discovering that all three were unlocked by the same key. If he could manufacture a key he would be able to reach the passage beyond, and though he had neither tools or materials, he did not despair of being able to do so.

Only, once in the passage, what should his next step be? During his numerous visits to the audience chamber for examination he had managed, partly by observation and partly by guesswork, to form a mental plan of that part of the prison of the Inquisition in which he was lodged. He had noticed that the entrance to the quarters of the Alcayde or governor was from the interior of the prison.

In his transit from dungeon to audience chamber he had noticed that this door was often open, and he deduced that it was probable that the door was left unlocked, at all events in the daytime. And he had also found out, during numerous conversations with members of the Inquisition who were trying to trap him into dangerous admissions, that the keys of the prison were taken to the Alcayde at eight o'clock in the evening. So that, if, as was probable, this door was not locked until a later hour, he might steal into the Alcayde's house and, once there, be guided by circumstances as to his next step.

This was a rough outline of his plan. The first step was to make a key to open the three doors of his dungeon. For this purpose he had to procure metal and wax; the first to provide the material for the key, the second to take an impression of the wards of the locks. To obtain the metal he began to scrape a little metal daily from the pewter dishes in which his food was served.

This was a labor which had to be done skillfully so as to avoid discovery, and he was hampered by the fact that he had soon scraped so much that it was dangerous to continue. He had, therefore, to wait till new dishes were given to him. Finally, however, after many weeks, he found he had accumulated enough metal for his purpose.

Meanwhile he had to get the wax. This he obtained by petitioning for a light, alleging that he wanted to write a full confession. For a long time he had been left alone, all his requests for an audience with the inquisitor having been refused. Nothing could be more natural than that his seclusion had brought him to a penitent state of mind.

No suspicion was aroused by his request, and light and writing materials were furnished to him. It is scarcely necessary to say that the confession, when written, was only a recapitulation of what he had already said verbally. Two important steps forward had been taken, however.

The Key Is Cast

He had secured his wax from the candle, and had written a short note to one of his Brazilian friends living in Lisbon, to be used when he succeeded in escaping beyond the walls of the Inquisition.

The next difficulty was to get sufficient heat to melt the pewter and cast the key.

This he overcame by pretending to have an attack of ague, and he begged to have a pan of charcoal to warm and dry his dungeon, which was damp. After several refusals this favor was granted, but for one day only. That day was enough. The wax gave him the impression of the size of the key, a mold was made in the earth on the floor of the dungeon, the metal was melted in his water can, and the key was cast.

In the Garb of the Alcayde

The key was only a blank one as yet. Wards had to be cut in it. He spent weeks on this task, being only able to work at dinner time, when he had the use of a knife. By covering the blank key with a coating of wax he was able to mark the portions which had to be cut away.

Luckily the metal was soft, and he one day held in his hand the finished key. Trembling with excitement that night he fitted the key to the lock, fearing that the lock migh prove too stiff to be turned by a key of such pliable metal as pewter. He was overjoyed to find that the locks, from constant use, turned freely. The doors of his dungeon were his to open when he willed.

He decided to make his attempt to escape the next evening. He was visited by his jailer at the usual hour of eight, after which he knew the keys were taken to the Alcayde. He thought it wise to let half an hour elapse before he left his dungeon, in order to lessen the risk of meeting any of the jailers in the passage.

Half an hour passed as he reckoned, and summoning up his courage he unlocked the three doors and, locking them behind him, came out into the passage. There was no one in sight, and without interruption he reached the door to the Alcayde's quarters. The door was shut. For a moment he stared at it, dumbfounded, then tried the handle.

Hs heart leaped as the door opened, and he entered the house. Here he found himself in a small hall, with doors opening into rooms to right and left. In one he heard the sound of voices, and among them plainly distinguished that of the Alcayde himself. His object in entering the house had been to find an exit less securely guarded than the rest of the prison, or, if he could, to get the keys which he knew must at this time be within the house.

After having for some moments listened at the door opposite to that from which came the sound of voices, Da Costa gently opened it and entered the room. It was apparently used as an office by the Alcayde, and had the appearance of having been recently occupied. On the table was a lamp burning dimly, and by its light Da Costa saw hanging on the wall a large bunch of keys.

To seize them and steal out of the room was the work of a moment. Once more in the hall he had a further inspiration. Hanging up was the long cloak and slouch hat of the Alcayde. He had thought that securing the keys he might find some side gate through which he might slip in the darkness, but the sight of these clothes gave him a better idea.

He would impersonate the Alcayde, who was about his height and build, and make his escape boldly through the main gate. Wrapping himself in the cloak, which effectually covered his ragged clothes, and pulling the hat down over his face, he proceeded to carry out his scheme.

He left the house, closing the door gently after him, and boldly made his way along the main corridor to the principal gate. On his way he met one of the brothers coming toward him. His first instinct was to turn and take to his heels, but, summoning up all his courage, he advanced steadily toward the cowled figure, and, to his intense relief, saw him draw to one side and salute him as he passed.

The Final Steps

When he reached the gate he walked up to the wicket, regardless of the warder on guard. The warder bowed, stepped forward and opened the wicket, closing and locking it behind him after he had passed out.

For the first time in three long years Da Costa was free to breathe the air of Heaven, untainted by a prison odor.

Free he was, but still in Lisbon, where police and Inquisition held supreme power.

His plans had been formed long before. He had the letter which he had written at the same time as his assumed confession. It was intended for an old friend, Don Filippo, and contained a brief statement that he had escaped and would be found concealed in Don Filippo's garden at twelve o'clock, and asking him to give him refuge till search was relaxed and he could find some way to leave the country.

Only one thing still worried him. During the three years of his imprisonment he had been cut from all communication with his friends. His friend might be dead, or have left Lisbon. A thousand things might have happened to stand in the way of this plan.

He reached Don Filippo's house unchallenged and found to his joy that his friend was still alive and there, but that he was entertaining friends and could not be disturbed.

Leaving his letter with the servant Da Costa concealed himself in the garden. From his position he could see the rear of the house and the brilliantly lighted windows of the room where his friend was entertaining. He had to wait patiently till two o'clock, when the last guest was gone and his friend could come safely to him. At last he heard a step on the gravel. Don Filippo had not failed him.

Da Costa was taken into the house and concealed in a secret chamber under the roof. His food was brought to him every night when the household was asleep, his presence being known only to the master of the house and the faithful servant.

The escaped prisoner was concealed six weeks in this house, during which time the police twice searched the house from top to bottom, having learned that a cloaked man had presented a letter on the night of the escape. Da Costa was undiscovered however, and at length the police, believing he had left Lisbon, ceased their quest.

It was now thought safe to leave Lisbon. Don Filippo arranged for a passage with the master of an English brig about to leave Lisbon, enlisting his sympathies for Da Costa as a victim of the Inquisition. The master promised to sail the instant his passenger set foot on deck. At night Da Costa was smuggled aboard and the ship sailed at once, landing the man concealed in the hold at Plymouth, England.

Da Costa lived to take a leading part in the revolution which severed Brazil from Portugal, and died while Minister of Brazil to England, and one of the foremost members of that fraternity, his admission into which had been the ostensible reason for his imprisonment.

ONE day last summer Vance Thompson died in Nice, France. The untimely death of the man who was perhaps America's premier detective novelist was a bitter blow to American literature.

Fortunately for his readers' pleasure Mr. Thompson had placed the manuscript of a new novel, "Mr. Guelpa on Guard," in the hands of the editor of FLYNN'S before he sailed from New York. It begins in next week's issue.

No masterpiece of criminology or no single specimen of detective fiction has ever thrilled you as will this momentous work.

William J. Flynn

"Look!" she exclaimed in tones of mingled rage and horror. "Look!"

THE JOINED STRING

By R. M. Freeman

ONLY THE WAY A PIECE OF TWINE WAS KNOTTED, THAT WAS ALL, YET INSPECTOR HICKMOTT GOT HIS MAN

MISS TRIXIE JOCELYN, of the Levity Theater—whose real name, by the way, was Jemima Briggs, was lounging in an easy-chair in her luxurious boudoir, smoking a Russian cigarette. In another armchair, on the opposite side of the fireplace, lolled Reggie Vobster, one of the lady's most recent and most persistent admirers.

He was quite good-looking, in a rather dissipated style, and was immaculately dressed from the top of his high and finely laundered collar to the shining toecaps of his patent leather boots. It would have required no exceptional perspicacity to size him up for what he was. Young man about town was writ clear in every line of him.

In fact, he lived the life of the average gilded youth, did himself extremely well, went the pace within reasonably decorous limits, and threw his money about with magnificent insouciance. Having said so much, I need scarcely add that he belonged to the leisured fraternity, and had never done a day's work in his life.

"Well, Trix, you won't come for a spin this afternoon in the motor, then?" he was saying.

"No, thanks, dear boy," she answered lazily. "Too rotten cold for me with this nipping west wind about. Besides, I'm tired. I want to rest myself for to-night."

He nodded.

"Yes; I suppose the theater and a Covent Garden hop to follow are about enough exertion for one twenty-four hours," he said. "It's understood that I call for you at the Levity with the motor and take you on—isn't it?"

"Oh, quite!" she replied. "Stage door at eleven fifteen. Don't be late."

"No fear," he answered.

Then he stood up to depart.

"Any little shopping commissions I can execute for you?" he inquired. "I'm going into Bond Street."

"Oh, are you?" she said. "Well, then, there is one thing you might do for me. Would you mind calling at Rondon & Lyder's for that diamond necklace of mine they're repairing? I want it to wear at the show to-night."

"With the greatest pleasure, of course," he answered readily.

"If you'll just wait a moment I'll scribble a line asking them to let you have the necklace," she said, drawing a writing pad on to her knee from an adjacent table. "Otherwise, as they don't know you, they might refuse. And—ah, by the way—here's another letter which I'd forgotten. You might post it for me on your way. It ought to have gone last night. It's an acknowledgment of my policy, which I got from the insurance people yesterday. I've effected one with the American and German Insurance Corporation, after all. Did I tell you?"

While thus running on in her garrulously confidential way she still continued to scribble her note to Rondon & Lyder.

He shook his head in answer to her query.

"No," he replied; "when you last mentioned the matter you had not got beyond the somewhat indefinite stage of 'thinking about it.'"

"Ah, well! Their man called here a few days ago, and I took the opportunity of fixing it up with him. Their conditions are liberal and the premium's nice and low. So as I had quite made up my mind to insure somewhere, I felt I couldn't do better. It's a new office, of course. But they've got some tip-top names of the board, I see. The Earl of Carshalton, Lord Leatherhead, Sir Wadden Marsh, and several other big pots—"

"Sounds good enough, doesn't it?" interjected Vobster.

"Good enough for me, any way," nodded the lady, as she appended her illegible scrawl of a signature to the note she was writing. Then she blotted it, folded it up, and placed it in an envelope.

"Here's the note to Rondon & Lyder," she said. "And here's the letter to the insurance office. Now don't put it in your pocket and forget to post it—there's a good boy."

"Right-o! *Ne vous dérangez pas,*" he laughed as he turned to go.

He ran lightly down the stairs, jumped into his motor, which stood waiting outside, and drove away.

II

IN something less than half an hour he was back at Trixie's flat.

"I didn't forget to post the letter," he said. "And here's your necklace."

As he spoke he handed her a small package done up in white paper and neatly tied and sealed after the manner of jewelers' parcels.

"By the bye," he added, "it's touch and go that it is your own necklace I've brought back to you, and not something of the Duchess of Bishopsford's, as it was precious near being, I can assure you."

"How's that, dear boy?" she inquired, leisurely snipping the string of the parcel with a pair of nail scissors.

"Why, the ass of a fellow in the shop gave me the wrong parcel," he explained, "and it wasn't till I was back in the motor and just moving off that one of the assistants came flying after me with the right parcel in his hand to tell me of the mistake. So we effected the needful exchange, and it was all right. But if he had been a few seconds later I should have been well on my way here with Her Grace of Bishopsford's belongings."

"What beastly carelessness! I hope the fool who made the mistake got well ragged for his idiocy," murmured Miss Jocelyn in her slangy way, as, having divested the parcel of its string, she proceeded to break the seals and undo the paper.

"Oh, I expect he did!" remarked Vobster indifferently. "May I smoke?" he inquired, taking out his cigarette case.

"Don't ask silly questions," she rejoined. "The matches are on the mantlepiece."

He lit a cigarette and sank comfortably

into an armchair, his legs crossed, his head thrown well back, his eyes fixed on the ceiling in an attitude of lazy abandon.

Presently he was aroused by a sharp exclamation from Trixie.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, sitting up. "What's the matter?"

"Look!" she ejaculated in tones of mingled rage and horror. "Look!"

He looked. In her hand lay the open cardboard box. Inside it, on a bed of pink cotton wool, there reposed no morocco jewel case, no diamond necklace, but only a length of rusty steel chain. Vobster started to his feet.

"I say!" he cried in dismayed astonishment. "What the devil's this?"

"You fool!" she broke out, gasping, and pink to the roots of her hair with excited anger.

"Fool? Me? Why?" he exclaimed in bewilderment.

"Oh, can't you see, you silly juggins!" retorted the slangy Miss Jocelyn with voluble heat. "Because you've let yourself be 'had' by an old chestnut of a trick, that's why. It's as plain as a pike staff."

"I don't quite understand. I—"

Trixie stamped her foot in impatient fury.

"Tell me, you ass," she demanded, "was the man who ran after the motor the same assistant who had served you in the shop?"

"No; he wasn't," he answered. "But—"

"Of course he wasn't!" broke in Trixie witheringly. "He hadn't anything to do with the shop. Any fool can see that. He was just a swindler, telling you the tale—oh, how can you have been so idiotic!"

"By George!" he ejaculated, the truth now brought home to him. "By George!"

"We must give information to the police at once," cried Trixie. "You had better motor me around to Scotland Yard now. Not a moment must be lost. Half a minute while I slip on a coat and hat."

She hurried from the room, but almost instantly reappeared, buttoning a long sealskin coat as she came. Two minutes later they were whirling away in the direction of the Yard.

Silence reigned awhile—a silence that, like the darkness in the land of Egypt, could be felt. Then a gleam of consolation—a little ray of sunshine, as it were—flickered athwart the otherwise black horizon of Trixie Jocelyn's thoughts.

"Good thing I took out that policy just in the nick of time," she remarked, evidently somewhat soothed by the reflection. "If the worst comes to the worse, my necklace is covered. That's one mercy."

"By Jove, yes!" assented Vobster with a sigh of relief.

And almost as he spoke the motor pulled up at its destination. After a brief interview with one of the superintendents, they were turned over to Inspector Hickmott, who was deputed to take the case in hand.

He questioned Vobster closely as to the appearance of the man who had tricked him, making an entry of the description in his notebook, which panned out as follows: Age, twenty-five to thirty. Slightly built. About middle height. Fair hair. Pallid complexion. Clean shaven. Dress: Black frock coat and vest. Dark trousers. Generally of good appearance and well spoken.

"Umph!" said the inspector, turning to Trixie. "And do you happen to have brought this dummy package with you, madam?"

"No," she answered. "I came away in such a hurry, you see. But it's at my flat. If you'll come back with us in the motor, I'll give it you."

"Thank you," replied the inspector. "I will certainly avail myself of the offer. It is possible that the package may constitute a useful clew."

"I'm sure I hope so," said Trixie. "Though I'm afraid there's nothing at all distinctive about it—only a plain little cardboard box wrapped in a sheet of ordinary white paper."

The inspector nodded.

"Well, I'd better have it, anyhow," he said in his laconic way.

They left the Yard together—Miss Jocelyn, Vobster, and Inspector Hickmott—and soon reached the lady's flat. Here the dummy package and its contents were handed to the inspector, who scrutinized them carefully. It was as Trixie had said: there was nothing distinctive about them.

The plain white paper bore no water mark. The small brown cardboard box, with

metaled corners, bore no name. The wax seal was quite smooth, having no mark of any kind upon it. The string was ordinary thin, soft twine.

But there was one point that, if it had been noticed in the first instance, would have made an observant person suspect the genuineness of the package at sight. The string was in two pieces. At one place it had been neatly joined—a petty economy to which no firm of Messrs. Rondon & Lyder's standing could conceivably have stopped. Inspector Hickmott remarked this, of course, but as a thing of retrospective interest merely. It did not strike him as likely to have any bearing on the identification of the criminal.

Before he left the flat the inspector asked Trixie a few more questions, in the course of which he elicited from her that she had recently insured her jewelry with the American and German, on a floating policy in which the necklace was scheduled at three thousand pounds. Then, having learned all that she and Vobster were able to tell him, he took his departure.

About ten days later Trixie Jocelyn called again at the Yard to see Inspector Hickmott.

"Heard anything of my necklace?" she inquired.

He shook his head.

"Not up to the present," he replied. "I have reason, however, to believe that the man who tricked Mr. Vobster is one of an expert gang who have been pretty busy lately. We've had a good many other cases of jewel thefts from ladies brought to us for investigation during the past week or two. In fact, there appears to be quite an epidemic of them."

"I hope you'll catch the beasts," said Miss Jocelyn with some venom. "I wouldn't have lost that necklace for anything."

"I expect we shall run them to earth before long," observed the inspector.

"But even if you do, what prospects are there of recovering my diamonds?" demanded Trixie. "That's what interests me most. Seeing that the brutes have now had ten clear days in which to dispose of them, it strikes me that my chance of ever setting eyes on them again is, to say the least of it, remote."

In this view Inspector Hickmott himself was disposed to concur, though his professional reticence would not allow him to make any such admission.

"We must hope for the best," he said sententiously, with a noncommittal smile.

"That's all very fine," rejoined Miss Jocelyn irritably. "The insurance people talk in that silly strain. They say it's early days yet, and that my claim against them must stand over for a bit while there still remains some reasonable hope of my getting back my necklace. Reasonable hope, indeed!

"They know as well as I do—and you, too, if you'd only admit it—that I'm about as likely to get it back as I am to fly. It's just an excuse on their part to put off the evil moment of parting. But I don't mean to stand any nonsense. Unless they send me a check pretty quick I shall set my solicitor on to them," she announced with decision.

Shortly afterward she took her departure. Inspector Hickmott sat rubbing his chin and frowning thoughtfully.

"Umph!" he said to himself. "The lady seems in a deuce of a hurry to draw her insurance money. Umph! Ah!"

He took a pinch of snuff, a habit in which he occasionally indulged at moments of deep mental absorption. Presently he put on his coat and hat and went out. His steps led him to the offices of a well known Trade Protection Agency not a hundred miles from Charing Cross. The manager was a personal acquaintance of his, and he had no difficulty in obtaining an immediate interview with that gentleman.

"What is it? What can I do for you to-day, Hickmott?" inquired the latter when they had exchanged greetings.

"I want to know if you can tell me anything about Miss Trixie Jocelyn, the Levity actress," said Inspector Hickmott, going straight to the point.

A meaning grin relaxed the other's features.

"A good deal," he replied. "We have to answer inquiries about her from some of our trade subscribers nearly every day."

"In regard to her financial position, I suppose?" queried Inspector Hickmott.

"Just that," nodded the manager.

"And her financial position is—" said the inspector interrogatively.

"Rotten," was the rejoinder. "Between ourselves, absolutely rotten. Our invariable advice to inquiries is not to trust her a yard farther than they can see her, and on no account to do business with her except for spot cash."

"Owe much money?" asked the inspector.

"My dear man, she's in debt all over the place. To my certain knowledge she is being sued by at least half a dozen of our clients at the present moment."

"Yet she must draw a big screw," said Inspector Hickmott.

"Eighty pounds a week, I believe," was the reply, "and spends double. She'll be engaging the attention of the official receiver before many months are out. You may take my word for it."

A few minutes after Inspector Hickmott bade his friend the manager good day and withdrew, looking more thoughtful than ever.

III

NEXT morning he paid another call, this time to the offices of the American and German Insurance Corporation.

Here he sent in his card to the secretary, and after a brief wait was ushered into that gentleman's presence.

The secretary, Mr. Algernon Fitzjohn by name, was a tired-looking little man about five and thirty years of age. He was very well dressed. His general cut was rather that of the society fop than of the man of business. And this impression of him was, in fact, the true one; for, with little or no commercial experience, he had been jobbed into his present berth and comfortable salary by the kindly influence of his relative, the Earl of Carshalton, who was one of the directors of the corporation.

"I want to ask you a few questions, in confidence, about a claim for three thousand pounds which Miss Trixie Jocelyn has against you in respect of a diamond necklace of which she has been robbed," began Inspector Hickmott. "I understand you are delaying payment of the claim?"

"That's so," assented Mr. Fitzjohn.

"Any particular reason?" inquired the inspector.

"I believe the board have their reasons," replied the other. "But I don't think it is my place to discuss them with you. I'm only in a subordinate position here, you know. We leave all this sort of thing to Mr. Gapstang, our managing director. You had better see him."

"Is he in?" asked Inspector Hickmott.

"Not at the moment," replied Mr. Fitzjohn. "As a matter of fact, he's taking a day off, fishing down at Bookham, where he rents a bit of water. But he's sure to be up to-morrow. If you like, I'll make an appointment for you."

"Thanks; I wish you would," said the inspector. "Shall we say eleven o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"Right-o!" nodded the uncommercial Mr. Fitzjohn, speaking after his kind.

Next morning, at the hour appointed, Inspector Hickmott called and had an interview with Mr. Gapstang. The managing director was of a very different business caliber from Mr. Fitzjohn, the secretary. The moment Inspector Hickmott set eyes on his keen, alert face, the moment he heard the brisk, if somewhat nasal tones of his crisp voice, he knew himself in the presence of a shrewd, competent man of affairs.

That his tongue had first wagged on the other side of the Herring Pond, Mr. Gapstang's accent made evident. The fact was no less apparent in his general air and demeanor. He had, in fact, all the unmistakable characteristics of the hustling, up-to-date, commercial New Yorker.

"'Morning, Inspector Hickmott! So you want to know why we're hanging up payment of Trixie Jocelyn's claim?" began the managing director, going straight to the matter in hand, like the practical person he was.

"Yes; that's precisely what I do want to know," assented the inspector.

"You're investigating the robbery, I guess?" remarked Mr. Gapstang.

The inspector nodded affirmatively.

"Wa-al," said Mr. Gapstang, "as you're a police officer, with a professional interest in the case, I don't mind telling you, inspector. Our real reason for hanging up payment of the lady's claim is that we ain't satisfied. That's the bed rock fact."

"Ah!" murmured Inspector Hickmott.

"Jes' look here now," pursued Mr. Gapstang with a knowing smile. "Here's a lady notoriously short of money, pressed by creditors, and not, by all accounts, overscrupulous. She insures a valuable necklace with us. Within forty-eight hours of her effecting the policy she sends one of her admirers to fetch her necklace from the jeweler's, and happens to select the greatest greenhorn of the lot—jes' the sort of an ass that's made to be imposed upon.

"Marvelous coincidence—he is imposed upon, and that by a trickster who evidently knew beforehand of his visit to Rondon & Lyder's and was waiting there ready for him. It's fishy, I say, inspector—darned fishy."

"Umph!" nodded Inspector Hickmott. Then, after a pause, he added: "I gather, from what you say, that you don't suspect Vobster of having been in it?"

"Candidly, I don't," was the rejoinder. "Guess he ain't got wits enough. No! You bet, if it's as I suspect, Vobster's only the cat's-paw—the innocent dupe. Of course, I may be wrong in my suspicions. I don't set up to be infallible. I allege nothing. That's not my business at this early stage of the proceedings. I jes' sit on the cash and await developments."

Inspector Hickmott went back to the Yard ruminating over what he had just heard. The fact that so shrewd a person as Mr. Gapstang had, independently, formed very much the same surmise as had already begun to take shape in his own mind struck him with a sense of marked significance. But, so far, the case against Trixie Jocelyn rested purely on suspicion. There was nothing that could be called evidence.

The whole business was, indeed, as Gapstang had said, "fishy." That was all. On the other hand, the number of jewel robberies that had lately been committed, most of them bearing a certain family likeness to one another, undoubtedly pointed to the existence of an organized gang working in the west end. And the trick which had been played on Vobster was, *per se*, quite in accordance with their methods.

The inspector had just reached this point in his ruminations and the corner of Parliament Street in his perambulating progress, when he was struck by the sound of a familiar voice, a woman's voice, close at hand. Looking up he found himself almost face to face with Miss Jocelyn. She was attended by a well dressed young man, with whom she was engaged in animated conversation.

So engrossed was she that she evidently did not see Inspector Hickmott, who turned to look after the pair as they walked on in the direction of Victoria. The young man he knew well enough by sight, though he did not know him until now as a friend of Trixie's.

It was Lord Hildebrand Southdown—a youth with a decidedly tainted reputation, who—if rumor spoke true—had some while since exhausted the patience of his family and been practically turned adrift by them.

Inspector Hickmott suddenly frowned. Something had just occurred to him. He took his notebook from the breast pocket of his coat and rapidly turned over the leaves until he came to the entry he was looking for:

> Age twenty-five to thirty. Slightly built. About middle height. Fair hair. Pallid complexion. Clean shaven.

Such was Vobster's description of the man who had tricked him. And the description almost exactly fitted Lord Hildebrand Southdown.

To be sure, there were plenty of other young men in London slightly built, of middle height, with fair hair, pallid complexions, and clean shaven. But having regard to the fact that Lord Hildebrand was evidently on intimate terms with Trixie Jocelyn, this coincidence, if coincidence it was, was decidedly curious. With his brows still contracted in a thoughtful frown the inspector returned the notebook to his pocket and proceeded on his way to the Yard.

He had not long arrived there before he was sent for by the chief superintendent.

"Look here, Hickmott," said the latter; "we've just had information of another jewel robbery—this time at Balham. And, as it has the appearance of being the work of the same gang whose operations are already engaging your attention, I want you to take it up. You had better run down there this afternoon."

"Very good, sir," replied Inspector Hickmott, taking out his notebook. "What's the address?"

"The Laburnums, Hampton Road, Balham. The lady's name is Carisbrook," said the chief superintendent, referring to a memo that lay on his blotting pad.

"I'll attend to it, sir," nodded Inspector Hickmott.

He left Victoria early in the afternoon, and, alighting at Balham station, made his way to the Laburnums.

It proved to be a largish, double-fronted house, standing well back from the road and surrounded by a good sized garden. Everything about the place was admirably kept and in apple-pie order, imparting an unmistakable air of affluence and prosperity. A trim parlormaid opened the door to Inspector Hickmott and, upon hearing his name and business, at once showed him in to Mrs. Carisbrook.

"You've come about the robbery?" she inquired, as she rose to greet her visitor.

"Yes, madam," replied the inspector. "Will you kindly furnish me with particulars?"

"It happened last evening, while we were at dinner," she said. "The thief, or thieves, got in at my bedroom window and carried off my jewel case bodily. I only discovered the loss when I went up to bed."

"Was your room disturbed at all?" asked the inspector. "I mean were there any indications of its having been ransacked in the search for your jewel case?"

"No, that's the curious part of it," answered Mrs. Carisbrook. "Nothing whatever had been disturbed. The thieves must have ascertained beforehand where I kept my jewel case, and gone straight to the shelf of the wardrobe where it always stood."

"Umph!" grunted the inspector. "You have no reason to suspect the honesty of any of your servants?" he added after a brief pause.

"Absolutely no. My maids have all been with me for long periods, and are thoroughly respectable and reliable," responded Mrs. Carisbrook with conviction.

Inspector Hickmott addressed to the lady a number of other inquiries, of an obvious character, which there is no need to detail, and finally asked permission to look over the premises—a request which was, of course, readily acceded to. Having completed his examination, and having got from Mrs. Carisbrook a full description list of her missing jewels, he prepared to take his leave.

"By the way, what do you estimate the total value of the missing articles to have been?" he asked, just before he bade her good day.

"They were valued, for insurance, at one thousand two hundred pounds," replied the lady.

"Ah! You are covered, then?" remarked the inspector.

"Mercifully yes," she replied. "I took out a policy with the American and German only the day before yesterday."

"Umph! That was lucky for you, madam," said the inspector, turning on her a curious penetrating glance of his shrewd eyes.

"Yes, wasn't it?" assented Mrs. Carisbrook. "Not that any monetary compensation can make up to me for what's been stolen," she added. "Some of the things, you see, were my poor mother's, and I wouldn't have lost them for ten times their intrinsic worth. Perhaps, however, you may recover them for me yet. I do hope so."

"We shall do our best, madam; you may rest assured of that," replied Inspector Hickmott.

IV

AT Victoria station, on his return journey, the inspector chanced to run up against Mr. Gapstang. The latter, who was in country attire, carrying in his hand a rod encased in gray waterproof and having a large wicker creel slung over his

shoulder, was evidently just back from a day's fishing.

He greeted the inspector cordially.

"Had a ripping day's sport on my water at Bookham," he said. "Jes' look here!" And, with an air of genuine pride, he raised the lid of the creel to show its contents—about a dozen nice brown trout, plump, speckled, and in high condition. "Pretty little basket of fish, eh?" exclaimed the pleased angler, surveying his spoils with pardonable satisfaction. "I guess there's not anything under the half-pound among 'em. And they don't run to whales down there, either!"

The inspector, who was something of a devotee of the gentle art himself, inspected the catch with critical interest.

"By Jove! They are nice fish. In the very pink, too. Dry fly, I suppose?" he added.

"You bet," responded Mr. Gapstang. "We don't tolerate the wet variety down at Bookham. Took the lot of 'em with a March Brown. Game little beggars they were, too. Even the smallest of 'em made a good fight for it. Do something in this line yourself, perhaps—eh, inspector?"

"Sometimes—when I get the chance, which is not often," replied Inspector Hickmott.

"Wa-al, I must give you a turn on my water one of these days," said Mr. Gapstang genially. "Ta-ta! So long. Be good."

And he jumped into a taxi and drove away. Inspector Hickmott, who preferred walking, for the sake of the exercise, proceeded on foot to the Yard.

He sat down, with his notebook before him, to enter up the record of his day in the diary which he made a point of keeping. As he did so (for the process was more or less mechanical) his thoughts were busy at work comparing Mrs. Carisbrook's case with that of Trixie Jocelyn, and taking mental stock of any common features that might point to both robberies being the work of the same gang.

So far as he could see the one common feature between them was the coincidence of both ladies having insured, and in the same office, only a day or two before the respective robberies. This circumstance, however, although in itself noticeable, could hardly, he reasoned, have any material significance, except on the supposition that both robberies had been faked by the ladies themselves for the purpose of defrauding the insurance company.

And, although this might be the explanation in one case (that of Trixie Jocelyn, as he and Mr. Gapstang had both suspected), the odds were a hundred to one against the double event.

Besides, apart from the question of mathematical probabilities, Mrs. Carisbrook had appeared to him—and he was a pretty shrewd judge of character—to be by no means the type of woman of whom swindlers are made. Her look, her manner, everything about her, in fact, had given him the impression of honesty and candor. More than that, from some inquiries he had made of various tradesmen in Balham after leaving the Laburnums, he had ascertained that the lady's husband was a man of large means, and that both he and his wife enjoyed the highest reputation in the neighborhood.

What inducement could such a woman have—even leaving moral considerations out of the case—for lending herself to a wicked and dangerous fraud?

All the same, this fact of an insurance having been effected just prior to the loss of the jewels, in both cases, was sufficiently remarkable, and Inspector Hickmott puzzled his brains over it for some time. But at length, finding himself quite unable to make anything of it, except as a curious coincidence, he dismissed it from his mind.

Having finished posting up his entries, he opened his desk to replace the diary. As he was in the act of doing so a bit of string, lying there with a cardboard box and a sheet of crumpled white paper, happened to become entangled with his sleeve link. The inspector addressed himself to the task of disengaging it. This was speedily accomplished, and he was about to toss it back into the desk when he suddenly noticed something. That something had to do with the join in the string, to which reference has already been made.

He adjusted his glasses, held the string

up to the light and examined it more closely. The join was a neat one. It was effected by that particular kind of knot which an old disciple of Isaak Walton had taught him in his boyhood to employ for attaching his gut-cast to his line. In short, it was what is alternatively known either as a weaver's or a fisherman's knot. It was in the latter name that the point lay—a fisherman's knot.

Inspector Hickmott's forehead contracted into a deep and puzzled frown. The particular circumstance that had awakened his attention was this: The American and German Corporation figured, by an odd coincidence, in both these cases he was investigating, and the managing director of that corporation was, to his certain knowledge, a keen and practised fisherman. The inspector took a large pinch of snuff and lay back in his chair in an attitude of profound reflection.

Before he went to bed that night he was at pains to communicate with various other ladies who had suffered in the recent epidemic of jewel thieving. The result of these communications was to apprise him of the fact that every one of them had lately effected a policy of insurance with the American and German. What did it mean? Inspector Hickmott lay awake half the night raking his brains for the solution of the problem. Then, at last, he thought he saw.

Shortly after ten o'clock next morning he presented himself at the offices of the insurance company. He asked for the managing director, but upon hearing that Mr. Gapstang had not yet arrived he requested to see Mr. Fitzjohn, the secretary.

The latter was looking pale and rather worried. He greeted Inspector Hickmott with a limp, weary sort of nod and inquired what he could do for him.

"I'll be quite frank with you," said the inspector bluntly. "And I should recommend you, for your own sake, to be frank with me. Tell me, now—what do you know of your managing director, Mr. Gapstang?"

"What do I know of him?" ejaculated the little secretary. "I don't think I quite understand you, inspector."

"Well, how did you first make his acquaintance?" demanded Inspector Hickmott.

"I was introduced to him by my uncle, Lord Carshalton," was the reply.

"Where did Lord Carshalton pick him up?" pressed the inspector.

"Somewhere in the city, I believe. At least, from what I understand, it would be more accurate to say that he picked up Lord Carshalton," Mr. Fitzjohn corrected himself. "I mean, it was Mr. Gapstang who made the overtures to my uncle to come on the board of his insurance company. And as it seemed rather a sound thing, with good fees attached, Lord Carshalton (who, as you perhaps know, isn't overflush) was glad to take on the job."

"Did his lordship put any money into the concern?" was Inspector Hickmott's next question.

At this Mr. Fitzjohn laughed outright.

"Good Lord, no! My uncle never has any money to put into anything," he replied. "Mr. Gapstang made him a present of a thousand qualifying shares to enable him to come on the board—. Well, Perkins, what is it?"

These last words were addressed to a clerk who at that moment entered.

Before Perkins could reply or explain, a stout, excited-looking little gentleman who was following hard on his heels pushed past him and precipitated himself into the office.

"Look here, Mr. Fitzjohn," he broke out truculently, "about that rent of mine! I've waited more than long enough, and I must decline to be put off with any further promises—"

"Our managing director is out at the moment," interjected the secretary hurriedly. "But I'll speak to him about it the moment he comes in."

"I've heard that story before," snorted the angry little landlord. "Are you going to pay me or are you not?"

"I can't do anything until Mr. Gapstang arrives," expostulated Fitzjohn. "But when he comes I'll see that he signs the check at once, and we'll send it round to you."

"You'd better, too! That's all I can say," was the reply. "Mind, I don't wait

a moment after noon to-day Unless I get the rent by then I put the bailiffs in before nightfall."

And with a threatening scowl on his red face he bounced out.

Mr. Algernon Fitzjohn wiped his perspiring brow with his pocket handkerchief and turned a woebegone countenance on Inspector Hickmott.

"That's the sort of thing I've been subjected to lately," he said, "and I don't mind telling you I'm getting about fed up with it. It's not even as though I were being paid for my job. I can't get my salary out of Gapstang—but there, I'm hanged if he shall play with me any longer. The moment he puts in an appearance I'll have an understanding with him."

Inspector Hickmott smiled a grim smile.

"Mr. Fitzjohn," he said dryly, "I'm not a betting man. Still, on the present occasion I would like to lay you a certain modest wager."

"What's that?" asked Fitzjohn.

"That Mr. Gapstang will not put in an appearance here this morning—or on any future occasion," replied Inspector Hickmott.

The inspector was right. Mr. Gapstang had already cleared out with his spoils to the tune of some fourteen thousand pounds worth of diamonds and other precious stones, the property of ladies who had been tempted by his exceptionally liberal terms to insure their jewelry with the American and German.

That corporation was, of course, merely a ramp promoted by this ingenious rascal with no other object than to get in touch with the desirable victims for his jewel-thieving operations. All ladies who lodged proposals for insurance with the corporation were required to furnish accurate particulars of their jewelry, its precise value, where they were in the habit of keeping it, and so on; and Gapstang, the insurance man, having informed himself of those interesting details, it merely remained for Gapstang, the jewel thief, to apply the knowledge which he had so acquired.

The chances are that but for Inspector Hickmott spotting the clew of the joined string and getting on the scent sooner than Gapstang had anticipated, the rogue would have made good his escape. As it was, however, he was run to earth at Liverpool, while just embarking for New York.

Subsequently he appeared in the dock at the Central Criminal Court, together with his confederate Vobster, and both gentlemen are at this present moment enjoying the hospitality of His Majesty King George V.

ON TWO SIDES OF THE LAW

THIS summer, in Old Bailey, Charles Crank Sharman, one of London's leading lawyers, made his last appearance before the famous tribunal of justice. He had just passed his seventy-fifth year and had been engaged in the practice of law since his fifteenth year, when he began as a clerk to a noted firm of English lawyers. Unusual honors had befallen the venerable solicitor.

He was decorated by the King of the Belgians in 1921 with the Albert Medal. This was in return for promoting friendly relations between Belgium and England. He had served on the Essex County Council. He was noted for his philanthropies, and was honored with a place on the West Ham Board of Guardians. His purse was always open to the needy.

He was prominent in politics, and gave liberally of his time and money to the Unionist cause. His civic and legalistic labors had been rewarded by his appointment to the bench as a stipendiary magistrate. He was a man of family. And, to cap it all, he was a devout churchman.

But ex-Magistrate Sharman's appearance in Old Bailey, where he had defended thousands accused of crime, was not to receive additional honors. He was there to plead guilty to theft before Justice Salter, who sentenced him to three years' penal servitude.

And in the sentencing of the former jurist the career of one of the few really big

criminals of modern times was abruptly cut short.

Sharman was the head of a band of international train robbers who are known to have stolen in two years upwards of ten million dollars in jewelry, stocks, bonds, and other negotiable securities. Sharman is believed to have used his honorable career at the bar as a mask for his criminal calling for at least twenty-nine years.

Sharman, who was run to earth by the unusually clever work of three Scotland Yard detectives, is believed to have at least one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars—his share of the loot—cached in some unknown safe deposit vault in a bank, either in this country or in Europe.

But the wily Sharman has an explanation for not telling where he has cached his pile. His associates in his criminal enterprises blackmailed him! A lamb biting a wolf! A mouse chasing a cat! Poor Sharman! But to his credit it must be said that he did not say that he had been forced, at the point of a revolver, to travel to this country and to Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, Manchester, and elsewhere to dispose of the loot.

Justice Salter, in sentencing Sharman, stressed that the securities stolen from mail bags on trains by the gang of which Sharman was the head, would not have been able to dispose of their loot unless they had the assistance of Sharman or a man of his standing and knowledge, and then the court added:

"They robbed the mails, and you sold the securities for them in Europe and America under false names, not hesitating to commit forgery where forgery was necessary. No one in his senses can doubt that you shared the booty. I am told that you have been blackmailed. I dare say that is quite true, because thieves often do blackmail one another. I do not desire to prolong this painful matter.

"If you had been a younger man I would have sent you to penal servitude for seven years, but, having regard to your age, the professional ruin in which you are involved, and the appeal made on your behalf, I will sentence you to penal servitude for three years and order you to pay the costs of the prosecution."

At this point Sharman gave additional proof of the cold, clear, calculating mind that had helped to earn for him the characterization of "the leading lawyer of London's East End." He leaned over to his counsel, Sir Henry Curtis Bennett, and whispered. Whereupon Sir Henry requested time in which to pay the costs, which was granted.

Sharman, a kindly looking old gentleman, who had endeared himself to the leading members of his profession by his fund of delightful stories, is believed to have started on his career of crime in 1896, when he was suspended from practice for two years for misappropriating funds from two clients.

It is believed that at this time he made practical and profitable contacts with denizens of the underworld whom he had defended at the bar. At the time of his disbarment Sharman was also adjudged bankrupt, with debts of twenty-five thousand dollars and assets of only a small fraction of that amount—three hundred and fifty dollars.

Yet suddenly the penniless bankrupt blossomed forth as a man of wealth, paid off his debts, and was discharged from bankruptcy. It was explained that friends had lent him some money which he invested profitably.

No one suspected him of criminality in those days, and in fact it wasn't until two years ago, when Inspector Cooper, of Scotland Yard, made a trip to this country to trace the source of some of the securities stolen by the Sharman gang and sold to a Buffalo brokerage concern, that suspicion was directed toward the noted lawyer.

For two years the train robberies—in each case registered mail bags were stolen—baffled the keenest minds in Scotland Yard. And while Cooper was investigating in this country and in Canada—for Sharman also disposed of some of the loot through brokerage concerns in Montreal and Toronto—Chief Inspector Gillan and Inspector Yandell, of Scotland Yard, were making a tour of financial institutions on the Continent where more of the stolen securities had been converted into cash.

Now, at none of these brokerage houses was the name of Charles Crank Sharman

known, save by repute. Frequently the detectives were told that they were barking up wrong trees, that the securities had been sold by eminent citizens, who had presented their cards and furnished other proofs of their respectability. In some instances the card of the seller of the securities was available. And in each case the *carte de visite* was that of some prominent and honored citizen of London or some other English city.

This was puzzling. But the descriptions of the various men of repute were singularly the same: a man of about seventy years of age, unquestionably a gentleman, well dressed, refined, of charming address, with a fund of agreeable stories, a ready wit, and, judging from his conversation, a wide acquaintance with worthwhile people.

Now to each of the men of standing from whom the brokerage houses bought the securities went the detectives. With whom had they exchanged business or visiting cards in recent years? Did they know any man of seventy years who answered the description of the disposer of the stolen stocks and bonds? These and similar questions the detectives put to those they visited.

And all roads led to the offices of the noted and respected East End lawyer, who, in his rôles of Mr. Martin, Mr. Baird, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Johnson, had disposed of the loot of his gang of train bandits.

With what they considered a perfect case worked up against him, the Scotland Yard men called at the pretentious home of the former magistrate.

"We are police officers," said Chief Inspector Gillan when he and his companions were shown into the spacious reception room.

"I see you are," replied Sharman, who had met them frequently in court, sometimes when he had defended prisoners they had taken.

Sharman invited the detectives into his dining room. There they apprised him of the object of their visit.

Here was an unusually talented man, trained in all the legal niceties of modern times, ready of tongue, an able advocate, and a skilled cross-examiner. All in all they couldn't have found a foxier quarry.

He resorted to all his wiles in a lengthy statement through which he hoped to confound the detectives. But his utterances only involved him all the more, even as though he had been one of the most illiterate prisoners he had defended in his long years at the bar. He could not escape his guilt.

In the course of his statement to the detectives Sharman, in his efforts to prove his honesty, recalled that he had been instrumental in recovering four hundred and fifty thousand dollars of bonds consigned in a registered mail pouch from England to Belgian bankers, and that he had gone to the investigation bureau of the post office department to aid them in their attempt to capture the gang.

All this was true. Sharman had even gone to the extent of "revealing" the names of four members concerned in this robbery, but, singularly enough, the "information" proved valueless. It led to nobody and nothing.

Sharman, when he called at the post office department to lend his "assistance" as a good citizen, was inspired, the police believe, by a desire to learn just what the authorities knew. In this he was disappointed, for nothing definite concerning the gang had been learned.

In this particular robbery the gang netted five million dollars in the theft of a single registered mail pouch *en route* from London to Antwerp.

This robbery occurred in 1923.

This was the biggest haul of the gang, who were made up, the police believe, of Frenchmen, Belgians, and Englishmen. It is surmised that they had an assistant in some high-placed official of the post office department, who tipped them off as to what to steal.

The police have given up hope of running the gang to earth with the aid of Sharman, unless he experiences a change of heart. But they are, nevertheless, hopeful of capturing the gang, and that before their aged leader dies in prison, for they do not look to this seventy-five year old, accustomed to living in luxury, to survive the three years of harsh prison life and the attendant disgrace.

At the sight of the glittering revolvers her assailants shrank back

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

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

FOLLOWING an accident in Central Park, New York, in which the hansom of Rick Hazard, wealthy clubman, almost collides with a taxi containing Detective Byrne Macarty, Hazard appropriates the unconscious Macarty's shield and undertakes to capture the notorious thief, Laurence Cadmire, Macarty is seeking. Cadmire had married Ruth Reinard, of a wealthy family, who is now dead. Ruth's beautiful sister, Isabel, seeks custody of Cadmire's small daughter, Amy.

Continued at bottom of following page

CHAPTER XXXVI

ON A NEW TRAIL

WITH two flat tires the fugitive car limped along for a few rods, then came to a halt. Macarty's machine ran by it before the brakes could take effect, and instantly Macarty had leaped to the ground and, with Rick at his heels, was running back to the halted taxi.

In his right hand he still held the service revolver.

But abruptly his pace slackened as he glanced at the front of the car. Neither fender was damaged, and nothing was wrong with the lights. He had followed a false trail.

At the sight of the gun in the detective's hand the captured chauffeur climbed out and stood beside his car, holding up his hands sullenly and awaiting his arrest with chagrin.

This story began in FLYNN'S for September 12

"All right, all right!" he growled. "You got me with the goods on for fair."

"What's all this?" shouted a patrolman, hot-footing it to the scene with drawn revolver.

"For God's sake don't shoot," snarled the captive. "I ain't got a gun. All I've got is just a couple of suit cases with some hooch. Hell, there's no sense in shooting at me like I was a mad dog just because I'm carrying a little hooch for a friend."

"Is that right?" asked the patrolman, addressing Macarty.

"Yes, I'm Byrne Macarty. This is not the fellow I was after, but as we've got him you might as well take him along to the station."

"I'll do that all right," said the patrolman. He frisked the captured chauffeur for a weapon and, finding none, he commanded, "Climb in, buddy! I guess you can drive as far as the station house on two flat tires."

"I've got to shove on," said Macarty. "I'm after a bigger bird than a peewee bootlegger."

He got into his own car, followed by Rick, who had stood by without taking any active part in the fiasco.

"Ain't that a heck of a note?" growled Macarty.

"Tough luck!" sympathized the young man. "What are you going to do now?"

"Just cruise around and see if I can pick up that car with the crumpled fender."

"Not much chance, I'm afraid," said Rick. "Look here, suppose you drop me at the next corner. I've got a hunch that it would be a good time for me to get back to that tenement where the child is being kept. I left Larry Boyle over there. Told him to just walk around and keep his eyes open. By this time he may have picked up the trail of Isabel or the little girl."

"That's a good idea," answered the detective. His voice was tinged with disgust, and yet there was a determined note in it. "You do that! I'll join you over there as soon as I can get away. For the present I have a strong impulse to put my hands on the son of a gun that lifted my shield."

Rick alighted at the next corner, picked up a taxi, and drove away to the East Side. His friend moodily directed his driver to swing over to Broadway and drive slowly northward. Extracting a big black cigar from his vest pocket he chewed on it nervously, scowling at every machine that passed in the vain hope that he might have outrun the one he was in search of while speeding after the wrong taxi.

Just as he swung past the El station at Sixty Sixth Street his eyes lighted with anger and anticipation. A few yards up the side street toward Central Park stood a black and orange car with a crumpled fender. But the same glance told him that it was empty. His quarry must have deserted the car.

He was making his get-away in another machine, or, the thought suddenly flashed into Macarty's mind, "He might be escaping by the Elevated."

As his foot touched the pavement Macarty cast an upward look, and it seemed to him that a man at the top of the staircase was traveling with unusual haste. A train had just pulled in.

In that short time it was impossible to see what he looked like. It was only a dim, hurrying figure, but the detective accepted that as a hunch and was running up the steps of the Elevated three at a time.

For a man of his heavy build he moved with astonishing speed. But as he got to the platform when the train was just about to pull out he felt sure that he saw the figure of that taxi driver with his cap down

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To obtain permission to keep the child, she turns Hazard from his pursuit and he is caught at Cadmire's rendezvous. When the injured detective, Macarty, comes to, he resumes his chase, this time also in search of his missing shield. After a lively pursuit of Cadmire in an automobile, Macarty chances upon Cadmire's secret quarters, unknown to him.

After being made prisoner, Macarty later is freed by Isabel before she goes on the forced errand to exchange Cadmire's stolen gems for the fifty thousand dollars the fence has proposed to pay. Isabel delivers the money and goes to the home of an old lady, Green Goods Annie, where Amy is being kept. But Annie refuses to give up the child, so strong is the old woman's love for her. Cadmire also is forced to come to Annie's in his efforts to plan a get-away. After he leaves in disguise, his trail is discovered by Macarty and Rick, who are now working together. The two pursue a taxi they believe contains the master crook.

over his eyes, crowding into a car up ahead.

The guard was closing the gate. Macarty seized it with a peremptory backward thrust and forced his way in. The train moved forward with a jerk.

Macarty, with his mind intent on the fugitive in the next car, started to work his way forward, but the confused movement in that direction showed him that something had happened. There was a shout of "Hold him! Hold him! He's crazy!" And immediately the officer, sensing what was going on, had unfastened the platform gate and swung himself to the trestle.

Though the train was not moving with much headway, it was a feat that required some care and skill to avoid breaking his legs.

He made it safely and saw just what he expected, the crouching figure of a man running across the trestle a car length away.

The detective reached for his gun, but before he could bring it into action the runner had slipped over the side of the elevated structure and, with apelike agility, was clambering down the steel pillar.

If there was one thing on which the officer prided himself it was that he was no quitter. If another man could do that stunt, Byrne Macarty was game to follow him.

The astonished pedestrians stopped to gape as a big, well muscled man slid and scrambled down the El structure, and as soon as his feet touched the pavement, took up the chase of a lighter and more fleet-footed chap who was darting toward the subway entrance.

Just before the fugitive ducked into that shelter Macarty had a glimpse of his profile. It was Larry Cadmire, master crook, charged with the murder of Lucille Renoir.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A RACE IN THE DARKNESS

CADMIRE had dodged inside the shelter of the subway kiosk with a backward glance, but if he had hoped that he had escaped so easily he was quickly disillusioned.

By the time the crook had reached the foot of the stairs Macarty was at the top shouting "Halt!" in a voice that resounded above the roar of the traffic.

He did not lay hands on his gun. There were too many people there, crowding up and down the stairs. The chances of hitting an innocent spectator were too great.

Besides, Macarty was determined to get that man alive. He was going to run him down and let the law take its course.

But Cadmire was already around the corner, darting like a lizard between the groups of passengers before the change booth, and without the formality of dropping a nickel in the slot he passed the turnstile by a simple and inexpensive method. Touching the barrier lightly with one hand he vaulted it as easily as a skimming swallow and the next moment was in the crowd on the narrow platform.

Unfortunately for his plans, one of the gray-coated subway guards had seen the flying leap. Instead of applauding this athletic feat his heavy face turned purple red with anger and, like a plough going through soft soil, he shoved his heavy bulk through the passengers in pursuit of this brazen nickel saver.

A sound of startled voices made the guard halt abruptly and look over his shoulder, and his fury was unbounded when he saw a second man use the same scheme to avoid paying his fare.

He was almost close enough to lay his heavy red paw on Cadmire's shoulder at that instant, but the temporary halt gave the crook the opportunity he needed.

Swift as quicksilver, Cadmire was over the edge of the platform and racing through the gloom between the tracks. The enraged subway guard saw the second trespasser run to the edge of the platform and cast one glance at the flying figure.

"Hey, youse! Keep off the tracks! It's against the rules!" bellowed the gray-coat.

But the second man had already passed him like a flying shadow, going south, and the bystanders, who had been craning their necks to see this unusual chase, burst into a chorus of derisive laughter at the guard's last remark.

"Get back there! Get back!" roared the guard indignantly. "You poor saps think it's funny! Those guys are going to get killed." And, glaring into the darkness where Cadmire and Macarty had disappeared, he growled under his breath: "I hope they do! It'll teach 'em a lesson!"

Lumbering with all the speed that his clumsiness allowed, the platform guard hastened to a phone and sent in a call to the nearest police station. In his excitement he exaggerated slightly. According to his alarm there were no less than a dozen lunatics running amuck in the subway. From his incoherent account there might have been another holdup of a subway cashier.

A few moments later a motor patrol with four or five officers was tearing toward the subway station and thence along Broadway with clanging gong. At Columbus Circle it halted while two men ran down the steps. They reappeared almost instantly shouting, "Keep on! Keep going! They've already passed this station. We'll pick 'em up at the next."

Once more the motor patrol leaped forward with a clangor of brazen alarms. The sound of its breakneck progress penetrated the gratings and told the pursuer and pursued down there in the shadows that above their heads the guardians of the law had joined in the chase. It was a stiff chase and a perilous one.

Cadmire had the advantage of lightness and speed. Also he had a head start of many yards, and in the first spurt of the race he was able to increase his lead.

The darkness, with its occasional glare of red and green signal lights, was all in his favor. He would have been happier indeed without any lights at all. But the danger of his tripping or spraining an ankle on that rough and greasy surface underfoot gave him something to worry about.

Also, he had the uneasy feeling that at any moment a bullet might come singing from the darkness behind him and bury itself in his spine. He cringed at the imagined shock of that deadly missile catching him between the shoulder blades or in the kidneys, and as he ran the crook crouched a little to make himself small and sped in a zigzag course to confuse his adversary's aim. Watching his opportunity, he leaped to one side to the express track.

The sound of Macarty's footsteps thud-thud-thudding behind him seemed as relentless as fate. Cadmire cursed once more the man who had blocked his every dash for freedom. In his desperation he vowed to take the most horrible revenge, and just as a devout man might have offered up prayers and made vows to high heaven, so Cadmire, as he fled, gasped out curses and threats directed at the merciless Macarty.

As the fugitive reached the first station he saw at a glance that there was no chance of leaping to the platform and making his escape to the street. While it was not crowded, there were altogether too many passengers gathered there for any hope of a clean get-away.

As the crook flashed by a shout of astonishment went up that sent the echoes rattling in the concrete tunnel and seemed to strike upon the fugitive's head like so many missiles. He cursed them under his breath as he sped by, feeling at that moment how bitter is the penalty of the marauder who preys upon society and finds that the hand of every man is turned against him.

A moment later a second and even more vociferous uproar told him that the platform spectators had spied the detective. And then followed the terrifying noise of the patrol wagon gong overhead, and Cadmire knew that he was lucky to have taken no chance of escape at the last station. He would have run right into the arms of the police on the surface, even if he forced his way to the exit.

But louder and more terrible than the shouts of the spectators or the clanging of the police gong was the turmoil that smote his ears as a subway train approached on another track and roared by in the opposite direction. It sounded as if all the fiends in the inferno were shrieking in his ears and hoarsely calling down a doom upon him. And even more appalling was the sudden pandemonium at his heels.

Deafened by the noise of the train that passed him he had not realized how close

was the express train that was bearing down upon him.

Cadmire could hear the clang and pounding of its wheels, the terrifying hoot of its whistle, but he dared not so much as look over his shoulder, for it seemed that the hellish din was so close upon him that in a split second he would be ground to a bloody pulp.

Mad with fear he ran, watching for an opening where he could slide through to the next track, but just as he put all his frantic strength into a leap that would carry him to one side he felt his sole skid on a greasy tie, he overbalanced, pitched forward in a heap, and instantly the blinking signal lights of the tunnel were blotted out with a blackness like that of the tomb.

Prone between the rails, inert as a sack of old rags, Cadmire lay flattened, stunned and deafened as the subway express thundered over him.

Instinctively he clung to the ground like a shellfish to a rock, desperately making himself small, as the wind of the train whirled over him like a tropical hurricane.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SOME UNDERGROUND THRILLS

AT the approach of the express train Macarty had stepped aside and braced himself against the suction of the hurtling mass as the cars thundered by. He had expected Cadmire to do the same, and even hoped that this interruption would give him a chance to slip up closer behind him before the fugitive could get a second start.

By this time he was furious enough to shoot to kill, if he got within shooting distance. But the piercing shriek of the express signal and the grinding of brakes as the train came to a stop made him realize that Cadmire had failed to get out of the way in time.

He ran forward to catch up with the express. It had made its forced stop near a local station, and the passengers on the platform were craning their necks to see what had happened.

As Macarty quickened his speed he expected at every instant to feel his foot strike a pulpy mass of flesh, but he reached the last car of the express without finding any trace of the victim. Probably Cadmire's body had been carried along under the trucks instead of being ground by the wheels.

Just as the detective reached the stalled express a local drew up at the station. Already a couple of men with electric torches were running along the tracks peering underneath for some trace of the body.

Macarty joined them, straining his eyes for some huddled, shapeless mass enveloped in tattered and blood-stained rags, all that remained of the shifty and elusive outlaw.

But as the local pulled out an excited voice from the platform cried out shrilly, "Hey, mister, there's a guy hanging on to the coupling."

Macarty started in pursuit, but it was too late. The local was under way and picking up speed. In the shadowy square that formed the rear of the last car Macarty believed he saw a dim outline that might be a man clinging to the coupling.

The truth flashed upon him. Cadmire had hugged the ties and allowed the express train to pass over him. It was not unheard of. Macarty had read of a case where a man had escaped with his life in just that manner.

Macarty spoke to the subway express guard in the crisp voice of authority. "Don't waste your time. The man you ran over is not under the train. He ducked out and is hanging on to that local just ahead. He's a notorious bandit. Larry Cadmire!"

"Cadmire! You don't say so?" The guard scratched his head and gazed stupidly at Macarty. "Well, that's what I call a miracle. Can you beat that?"

"For the love of Mike! Don't stand there gassing," barked the detective. "Let's go! I've got to nail that bird."

The two leaped into the train and Macarty immediately shoved forward to the front platform. He yanked open the door that sheltered the motorman.

"Get back into the car!" shouted the latter fiercely. "Are you crazy? You can't ride up here in front."

"Keep your shirt on," snapped Macarty. "I'm from headquarters, and the man I'm after is hanging on to the local just ahead. If you do anything to prevent my getting that crook you will have a lot to explain to the judge."

"Oh, gee! That's different!" The motorman was more than willing to accept Macarty on these conditions. He was thrilled at the idea of taking part in a man hunt, and sent the train forward as directed.

At the same moment a couple of patrolmen, attracted by the news of an accident on the subway, had rushed on to the platform.

"Wait a second," directed Macarty, and, leaning out of the cab window, he shouted: "Trail along and search the track, boys. It's Larry Cadmire. He's trying to make a get-away."

The name of the outlaw, familiar to the policemen and all newspaper readers, brought the patrolmen into the chase immediately. They plunged into the darkness, trailing along in the wake of the local, while Macarty, beside the motorman, took up the chase on the speeding train.

CHAPTER XXXIX

AT TIMES SQUARE

OVERHEAD, through the subway grating, they could hear the wild clanging of the motor patrol, which told them that the pursuit above ground had not been abandoned.

"If somebody has only had enough sense to telephone ahead to Times Square we'll nail that bird, sure as shooting!" growled the detective, and he added in brusque tones, "Catch up with that local and then stay right with it."

"I get you," answered the motorman. "Say, mister, if you land that crook do we split on the reward. I'm told there are thousands of dollars offered for him."

Macarty laughed. "You're Scotch, all right! You do as I say and you'll not be sorry for it. Believe me, I'd rather fork over every dollar of my share of the reward than to slip up now. Keep on! Keep on! What are you waiting for?"

The rear lights of the local were just ahead and Macarty was straining his eyes to make out that dim shadow in the back of the train when the express began to slow down as the motorman threw off the power and put on the brakes.

"Shove on! Shove on! What's the matter with you? I think I see that crook right now."

"Can't be helped, boss! The signal's set against us. I wouldn't run past that signal, not for the President of the United States."

Argument was useless. With all of his eagerness to capture the criminal, Macarty realized that the safety of a carload of passengers was even more important.

But he fumed nevertheless and relieved his feelings by an explosion of man-size expletives, while the signal remained set against them.

The motorman, more philosophic, having less at stake, refreshed himself with a chew of tobacco and remarked, "He can't get away. You'll pick him up at the next station."

"You bet I will," growled the detective. With hasty but expert movements he reloaded his revolver, wondering whether by good luck any of the bullets from that warm and smoking barrel had found their mark. It seemed incredible that Cadmire's good luck could run forever without a break.

Macarty had to admit that it was not luck alone that had favored the outlaw, but that Cadmire had shown astonishing resourcefulness in seizing every opportunity that presented itself.

He respected his adversary's nerve, felt that he was matching his wits and courage against the most adroit crook he had encountered in his career, but in spite of all that he wanted nothing better than to clamp the nippers on that slippery rascal's wrists.

The signal lights blinked, changed color, and the express train lurched forward, gathering headway with every yard of its plunge through the night.

But in the dazzling brilliance of the express station where they pounded to a halt Macarty was doomed to disappointment.

The local was there all right. It had not pulled out, but Cadmire was gone.

Macarty looked for some trace of excitement, some knot of curious spectators who would indicate the whereabouts of that fugitive on the express platform, but aside from the usual hurly-burly of passengers trying to crowd on to the train while other passengers were leaving there was no sign of any excitement.

Macarty seized the nearest subway guard by the arm and told him of the pursuit that was on.

The word was quickly passed along, and all the gray-coats were busy exploring every hiding place above or below the long platform.

The shrill clangor of the motor patrol made itself heard above the din, and from every entrance men in uniform came down the steps two at a time with drawn revolvers.

Immediately the crowd began milling about like terrified cattle. The trains were halted, the police were forcing their way through the crowd. There might be a riot! Gun-play! Women shrieked and men swore furiously when they found themselves swept this way and that by the panic-stricken mob.

Macarty had run to the end of the platform, where he watched out for the patrolmen who had started to run along the tracks.

Presently they appeared, panting and red-faced and accompanied by a track-walker carrying his lantern.

"Did you get him, boys? Did you pick up that son of a gun?"

"Not a trace of him!"

"Did you comb every hiding place? Are you sure he isn't back there in the dark?" Macarty's voice was strained with eagerness and bitter with disappointment, for he knew what the answer would be, "Nothing doing!"

And that was the answer that came from every patrolman, detective, and subway gray-coat who had engaged in the search.

"Nothing doing!"

Evidently Cadmire had been about two seconds ahead of the alarm. He had dropped off the local before it came to a halt, slipped among the platform crowd before the hue and cry was raised and walked calmly to freedom by one of the numerous exits from that intricate underground network of passages. From that station into Times Square, the roaring heart of the metropolis, there were so many outlets, some leading to office buildings, others to the streets, while there was also a chance of a get-away by the shuttle or the municipal subway. The crook had selected a wonderful spot for his final dash for freedom.

It must have been a matter of seconds, but in Cadmire's case a couple of seconds spelled a difference between a pinch and a get-away.

CHAPTER XL

SIX STEPS DOWN

ITH an apparent nonchalance that he was far from feeling, Larry Cadmire emerged from a subway entrance south of Forty-Second Street and kept going. He hugged the buildings as he walked, hoping to escape notice among the scattering of pedestrians.

Though the chase was close at his heels and he knew that by this time there was a turmoil of excitement and alarm in the station he had just left, the shifty crook did not lose his presence of mind.

He felt the glances that were shot at him by the passers-by and realized that his dirty clothes and his face and hands made him a conspicuous object.

He wondered if some patrolman should accost him as a vagrant would it be possible to run a bluff by flashing the shield he had torn from Dr. Pascal. Could he put up a convincing story that he was a detective who had adopted this disguise in order to land his man?

His heart contracted as a whistle shrilled from the subway exit, now some distance behind him, but he forced himself not to break into a run. Not yet! Not yet! Once he began running he knew that crowds would join in, and that his escape would be doubly hazardous.

An insinuating voice at his elbow said: "How about a nifty suit of clothes, young man? I can fix you up swell!"

Cadmire cast one startled glance at the man who had addressed him and looked into a pair of shrewd black eyes that were surrounded by the wrinkles of cunning.

"Step downstairs, mister. It don't cost you nothing to look at what I've got. I can fit you out swell. Got a classy college cut suit, just your size. Walk down six steps and save sixteen dollars."

Before the sidewalk salesman had finished Cadmire had edged past him and descended into the dingy little store that specialized in misfits, cast-offs, and workingmen's clothes. To enter it he had to plunge down six steps, and the crook felt at that moment as if a hole in the ground, where he could duck under, was the most desirable thing in the world.

An old man with shaggy gray beard and steel-rimmed spectacles got up to welcome him as he entered the gloomy shop.

The puller-in remarked: "Here's a customer for you. This gentleman is looking for a nobby suit. Treat him right, for he's a friend of mine."

"Sure, sure! I got the swellest line in New York City. And you know what that means. What you buy in this shop, I give you my word, you couldn't duplicate not in any Fifth Avenue tailors."

The sidewalk clerk was starting back to his post when Cadmire took him by the sleeve.

"Hey, wait a minute," he said. "Not so fast!" The crook had no intention of letting either man upstairs, where the excitement of the man-hunt might tip them off. He continued: "You dragged me in here, buddy, Now, you've got to stick around until I'm satisfied."

"Aw, Mr. Cohen will take care of you. I got to get back to my job."

"No, you don't. I'm going to need you and this old duck to fit me, see? Otherwise the sale's off. Get me?"

"Anything to please a customer, that's the motto of this establishment," said the old man. "You stay right here, Benny, and we'll both wait on this gentleman. I've got a gilt-edged article, all pure virgin wool. Cut by one of the highest-priced tailors on Park Avenue." He lowered his voice confidentially.

"It's a suit that was made for the Prince of Wales when he was visiting here. He couldn't take it with him when he went home because there was no room in his trunk. It was a two hundred dollar suit, and I'm going to let you wear it away for twenty-three dollars and fifty cents."

Cadmire gazed at the shapeless gray garments with their flaring lapels and diagonal pockets, feeling the shoddy cloth between his thumb and forefinger, turning back the sleeve to look at the lining, and pretending to be fascinated by the alluring prospect.

"Gee, that's one swell suit all right," he admitted. "But what I'm looking for is some clothes for my new job."

"You've got a new job? What kind of a job have you got?"

"Conductor on the street car," replied Cadmire. "I need a blue uniform for that job. But at that I might be able to buy these nifty togs to wear on my days off. I'm rushin' a swell little peach, and nothin's too good to wear when I'm steppin' out with Maggie."

CHAPTER XLI

LARRY HAS A DOUBLE

"YOU need a street car uniform! Oh, we can fix you up for the uniform, too. Benny, where's that brand new uniform we made up for that conductor who never came back to get it? There's a first-class, durable, guaranteed all-wool uniform, wears like iron, won't show the dirt, and, I give you my word, it was custom made specially to measure for a young fellow that might be your twin brother for size—ain't that so, Benny?"

"Sure, Mr. Cohen. When I first saw him I thought it was the gentleman coming back for his suit, so much of a size he is."

"What's the price?" asked Cadmire cautiously. He thought it best to haggle a little to avoid arousing suspicion, although at that moment he would have been willing to pay a hundred dollars for the uniform.

"The price? Well the price ain't so much, between friends. The man I made it for was going to pay me forty-five dollars for it. But he never turned up to claim it,

so our loss is your gain. You try it on, young feller, and if it fits you, you can take it away for twenty-six dollars and seventy-five cents. How's that?"

Cadmire was not unwilling to dicker and bargain and try on garments for the whole evening. "Twenty-six dollars and seventy-five cents is a lot of money," he observed.

"Not for a fifty-dollar uniform. I lose money by letting you have it, but I said twenty-six dollars and seventy-five cents, and I won't back out of it. Tell you what, I'll throw in a conductor's cap. Just like new it is."

At the end of a protracted session Cadmire strolled out of the basement shop wearing the uniform and cap of a street car conductor, with the usual black band for concealing the number, as is customary when the wearer is off duty.

He had made the old man happy by presenting him with the discarded workman's clothes, and in return for this benefit had been allowed to scrub himself thoroughly, removing every trace of oil and dust.

The detectives and patrolmen in the neighborhood of Times Square who were on the lookout for a bedraggled fugitive who had been chased through the subway would have passed by this conductor off duty and, unless they were familiar with Cadmire's features, they would hardly give him a second look.

After he had walked a block or two it occurred to the crook that he was in desperate need of food. The long chase had been a strain on his nerves and muscles that had left him ravenous.

He drifted into a one-arm lunch joint, ordered coffee, beef stew and pie, and carried it to a seat in the rear of the establishment.

Though he was fastidious in his tastes, an epicure when he had plenty of money and opportunity to enjoy himself, Cadmire could put up with rough fare when nothing better offered. He lingered over the substantial bowl of stew, taking his time and thinking what he would do next.

The little affair with Dr. Pascal had gone off better than he had even dared to hope. That pear-shaped diamond was once more in his possession. If that traitor had really meant to double cross him, using the oddly cut gem as part of the evidence—well, that little scheme was nicely blocked. Pascal was down for the count, perhaps bumped off.

Cadmire had the telltale diamond. At first he had planned to drop it into the river, but he now decided to plant it in some safe place. He figured out that a stone so precious was worth the risk of hanging on to, and as he fingered the broad, flattened jewel in his vest pocket the ideal hiding place occurred to him.

Strolling over to the cashier's desk he cast his eye over the display of cigars and cigarettes and inquired: "Can I buy a plug of tobacco?"

"Sure, boss! What's your favorite chew?"

Cadmire looked over the various brands.

"Did yuh ever try this? It's the tastiest eating tobacco you ever sunk a tooth in."

Cadmire selected a large thick plug and then returned to his coffee.

As he sat there idly whittling a mouthful from the slab of tobacco, he dug a large deep cavity from the plug and deftly inserted the pear-shaped diamond in this unique jewel case. With the shavings he had retailed in the hollow of his hand he plugged up the cavity and tamped it down hard and tight.

As he was finishing this delicate operation a truck driver with a mug of coffee and a hot roast beef sandwich slumped into the chair beside him.

"Hello buddy," he said genially. His face was flushed with excitement, and he was evidently anxious to get something off his chest.

"How's tricks?" responded Cadmire easily.

"Say fellah," exclaimed the truck driver, assaulting his sandwich with knife and fork. "There's somethin' doing where I come from, up around Times Square."

"Yeah? Is that so?"

"I'll say so!" The newcomer waved his fork in the air. "Why, buddy, there's about ten thousand cops buzzing around there."

"What's up? A riot?"

"You'd think so to see all the excite-

ment. A fellow I know tipped me off. The bulls have just rounded up Larry Cadmire!"

"What do you think of that?" exclaimed the man in the street car conductor's uniform, rising hastily. "Say, I'll hot-foot it over there. Maybe I can get a look at him."

CHAPTER XLII

AT ANNIE'S AGAIN

WALKING coolly away from the one-arm lunch joint, Larry Cadmire felt gay and exhilarated by the sense of danger so neatly side-stepped. He even entertained the reckless idea of strolling casually over to Times Square, mingling with the crowd of curiosity seekers, and watching how the police went about it to drag a slippery suspect from the subway, that much-wanted Larry Cadmire.

But he decided that would be trifling with fate. The joke would lose all its points if some "elbow" should recognize his features in spite of the conductor's cap and uniform and carry him off to the station house in triumph. No, it would be better not to let his sense of humor lead him into such grave danger.

Cadmire walked in the opposite direction and after traveling eastward to Third Avenue he took the El for the station nearest the tenement of Green Goods Annie.

In the miscellaneous lot of passengers the outlaw felt that he was reasonably safe, but nevertheless he made a dive for the end seat, picked up a discarded newspaper and concealed his face behind that friendly screen. He endured a moment of panic when a couple of patrolmen got on at the next station and planted themselves in the aisle before him.

Cadmire was afraid to move and afraid to look up, and was more than grateful for the newspaper that gave him a chance to keep his features out of sight.

He wondered whether the officers would begin talking about the notorious Larry Cadmire who was supposed to be at large in New York with a ten-thousand-dollar reward on his head. The fugitive had read that interesting item in the news sheets, under a very badly smudged portrait of himself.

But the husky young fellows, whose uniform brushed him as the car swayed, were talking about baseball. Babe Ruth was occupying their attention to the exclusion of all underworld characters, and Cadmire did not blame them very much.

At that moment he himself would have preferred to think of something as innocuous as sports.

Suddenly one of the patrolmen addressed him: "Say, friend, what's the score?"

Cadmire started nervously as the officer repeated the question and gave him a gentle touch on the shoulder. He could feel the man's eyes upon him. They seemed to be boring through the car conductor's cap that he wore.

But, affecting indifference, the crook drawled, "Here's the sporting section. Take a look at it for yourself." And he passed over the page containing the baseball reports without glancing up.

As the two officers were instantly engrossed in the fascinating figures the train jolted to a standstill at a station, and Cadmire seized his opportunity to slip out.

It was a couple of stations before his destination, but the crook felt that he would be happier in making his way on foot than in exchanging remarks with any more patrolmen. Pulling the visor of his cap well down over his eyes he set off through the upper East Side, losing himself in the stream of pedestrians that were taking the air, and twenty minutes later was once more in that shabby top-floor apartment.

Once between those familiar walls he threw aside the cap and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Every step of the way had been a nerve strain. Every person who had looked at him had been a possible detective. Every patrolman he had passed with such apparent indifference might see through his disguise and pounce upon him.

In spite of his assumed nonchalance, Larry Cadmire had been tortured by the knowledge that he was a murderer with a price upon his head. Now that he was hidden, for a time at least, the reaction seized him and he felt suddenly weak.

"Give me a bracer," he demanded of the

old woman as he dropped on the couch, and as he tossed off the fiery liquid he demanded, "Where is Isabel? Where's the kid?"

"They're both in the bedroom," said Annie. "Amy's asleep and Isabel is sitting beside her. I didn't dare to let her out of the house."

"I should say not," snarled Cadmire. "If I had found her gone, do you know what I would have done to you?" He glared at Green Goods Annie with menace, and continued, "I'd have wrung your skinny old neck, as sure as hell!"

"What makes you so savage, Larry? What's the idea of turning on your friends?" asked the woman plaintively.

"Friends? I'm not so sure I've got any friends," retorted Cadmire. "Here, give me another shot of hooch!"

As he drained it he laughed recklessly. "Take that fellow, Pascal, the yellow hound! Didn't he let on to be my good friend?"

"Did you see Pascal?" asked Annie.

"I did a lot more than see him. I croaked that son of a gun! He'll never snitch on me, now."

Cadmire extended his glass for more whisky, and as the fire ran through his veins the old reckless gayety returned.

"That guy tried to dust me with a blackjack, but no chance! I took it away from him and handed him a wallop that knocked him cold. Then I frisked him. It was easy! I got the diamond, and look what else I got."

With a half drunken laugh Cadmire reached under his uniform coat and unpinned the shield of Byrne Macarty.

"Boy, you're certainly slick! I've got to hand it to you," chuckled Green Goods Annie, examining the polished metal with sparkling eyes. "I've palled around with many a wise bird in my day, but I'll tell the world you've got 'em all skinned. Here's the whole police force looking for you and you walk right past them and come back with the shield of the best man they've got."

The rascally pair grinned at each other in appreciation of the rare joke on the guardians of the law. Annie brought a tumbler for herself and the two touched glasses, drinking to the everlasting confusion of all dicks, elbows, and harness bulls.

Then Cadmire's glance happened to rest on the big doll that had been left in the corner of the kitchen. It was the largest of little Amy's dolls — one that she had dressed up in blue to represent a policeman.

Cadmire staggered toward it with humorous intent, snatched up the doll policeman, whirled it around and gave it a smack on the side of the head.

"Take that you big stiff!" he said. "For two cents I'd push in your ugly mug!"

"Oh, don't be rough with the baby's playthings," protested the old woman. "She thinks that cop doll is the pick of the lot."

"I guess you're right at that. Amy's a smart little kid, all right. Here, I'll give her a surprise that will make her eyes pop out when she wakes up." And with drunken gravity Cadmire pinned the glittering shield upon the chest of the doll policeman.

"Put that in bed with her," he said. "When the kid wakes up and lamps that shield on her doll it will be worth watching."

"She'll think that Santa Claus has paid a visit ahead of time," agreed the old woman. And slipping into the next room she tucked the doll under the bed clothes beside the sleeping child.

She moved as quietly as possible. But the girl, who was sitting beside the child, her body sagging forward on the counterpane in the sleep of utter exhaustion, jerked upright with a start.

"Oh! Who is it?" exclaimed Isabel. Then, as she heard the old woman's voice, she added: "I had the most terrible dream. It was a nightmare; you know the kind that chokes your breath. I dreamed that Larry Cadmire had his fingers at my throat! I was being slowly strangled to death."

"Ssh! Cadmire's here!" whispered Annie. "Don't make any noise. Stay quiet! I'll try to keep him from asking for you."

"He's back? He went out and was able to escape the police? That man is not human. He's a devil! Oh, I'm so horribly frightened!"

"Don't worry now!" said the old woman kindly. "Just stay quiet in this room. I'll tell him you're asleep in here with little

Amy, and maybe I can get him to drink enough so that he'll drop off."

She slipped out of the bedroom, and Isabel heard their glasses clink as the pair joined in another toast, "Down with the bulls!"

CHAPTER XLIII

WORD FROM THE CABMAN

RICK HAZARD left Byrne Macarty, the detective, fuming over his chase after the wrong car. In the mind of the younger man was a feeling of growing uneasiness that he could not explain away and that he could not justify when he tried to reason it out.

The worry that preyed upon his mind was what had become of Isabel, the queenly girl with appealing dark eyes who had aroused his chivalry and then had shown such an interest in his fate when his life was threatened, only to deceive him grossly in the end.

Everything about that mysterious girl was contradictory. She looked like a lady, yet she associated with the crooks of the Acropolis Club. Her speech and manner indicated education and refinement, yet she had acted as go-between in selling the jewels that Cadmire had stolen. She had committed a crime in doing this, and, as part of the price, she had bargained for the freedom of Rick Hazard, perhaps saved his life.

But the young man felt no particular pleasure in being selected as the passing fancy of a woman of that type. What he wanted from Isabel was some proof that her character was as fine and noble as the ideal woman he had imagined her to be when first he saw her and when the music of her voice had aroused in him the desire to protect her.

But apparently she was far below his ideal, just a lovely image of gentleness and grace, but beneath the surface merely a gangster's girl.

These were the thoughts that occupied Rick's mind as he sped across town in a taxi. Whether he was in love with Isabel or whether he merely *wanted* to be he could not decide.

Meanwhile he was certain of one thing: he wanted to see her again, wanted to ask her what these contradictions meant.

Arrived at the neighborhood of Green Goods Annie's tenement he directed his chauffeur to travel about slowly. He was looking for Larry Boyle, who had been told to keep walking leisurely in that vicinity as if he were one of the old men of the quarter taking his customary evening stroll.

Presently Rick spied the heavy form and red face of the old cabby in front of a push-cart.

Leaving the taxi parked on the block, the young man sauntered up to his friend and the two went into the nearest restaurant, where they sat at a table near the window and drank coffee while keeping an eye on the suspected tenement house.

"What did you see, Larry?" asked Rick.

"Not a thing, Mr. Hazard. Nothing that helps. It is a queer feeling that those people we are lookin' for may be in one of them rooms across the street and we none the wiser."

"We've got to be patient, Larry. That girl is bound to show up in this neighborhood sooner or later to claim the child. It's up to us to stay on the job and follow her when she makes her appearance."

He told the cabby of the futile chase after the man who had laid out Dr. Pascal and escaped in a taxi.

"Which one of the gang would that be?" asked the cabby with great interest.

"It's hard to say. I can see that you don't take any stock in the story that it was a taxi driver."

"Not for a minute. It's one of the gang that had it in for Dr. Pascal. It might even be Cadmire himself," replied Larry Boyle. "From all I've read about that smooth crook it would be just like him."

The waiter brought them some greasy pastry which they had to order to have an excuse for sitting there. Boyle questioned him about the old woman and the little girl.

"You've got one swell chance askin' about a kid with dark curly hair and an old woman in this neighborhood," replied the waiter. "This section is crawlin' with kids—and they're all dark and curly headed. And old women! Say, every-

grandma and great grandma from the old country has been brought here, and most of 'em live on the East Side."

He shuffled away to take an order from a customer, muttering under his breath, "I've got them guys' numbers all right. They're immigration officers—that's it. Tryin' to get a line on some poor old woman and get her deported."

In that atmosphere of suspicion Rick and Larry Boyle had no chance to get information by asking questions. They finished their coffee and resumed their weary pounding of the pavements, and the hours dragged away without result.

Rick felt the need of confiding to some one his doubts and fears about Isabel, and the old cabby seemed shrewd and sympathetic.

"What do you think about a girl like that?" asked Rick at the end of his narrative. "Can she trail with such a gang and be any better than the rest?"

"You say she took all those chances for the sake of the baby?" asked Larry Boyle.

"Partly for *my* sake and partly for the child's," answered Rick.

"Don't kid yourself that she fell so hard for you, my lad," retorted the cabby with emphasis. "It looks to me like she was using you to get that child away from the gang. She was willing to help Cadmire out with his jewels, and by the same token she was willing to lead you by the nose; it was all for one purpose—to get her sister's little girl out of the hands of those crooks."

"Then you think that Isabel is on the level?"

"Take it from me," retorted the cabby with heat. "She's one hell of a fine woman, and straight as they make 'em! If I was a younger man, and she'd have me, I'd marry her myself, sure! That's about the strongest praise I could hand out to a woman."

Rick grinned at this tribute. "You would have been a rival to keep me awake nights," he remarked.

"You said plenty!" replied the cabby with emphasis. "Believe me, a man that understands horses can do a lot with women. And no horse was so high-strung, nervous, or skittish but what Larry Boyle could gentle it. That's me!"

The two adjourned to another coffee shop, for the neighborhood was well supplied with that substitute for the club and the barroom. Before they could order, Rick jumped up and pulled Larry Boyle after him.

"See that fellow getting out of a taxi?" he whispered. "That's Byrne Macarty, the detective I've told you about so much. And by the way he's moving it looks as if he's mad clean through. Wait here in the doorway."

The next moment Macarty almost walked into the young man. Rick had crossed his path, not saying a word, but just giving the detective a chance to speak to him in case it was safe.

Apparently it was all right to recognize him. Macarty grasped the younger man's hand and said: "Good! I'm looking for you!"

CHAPTER XLIV

THREATENED BY A MOB

BYRNE MACARTY briefly explained what had happened. In crisp words, punctuated with expletives, he told how Cadmire had led him a chase through the subway, only to slip through the network of passages at Times Square and make his get-away.

"I stayed on the job until I saw there was nothing doing," he concluded. "Then I hot-footed it over here. Have you run down that old woman with the kid? There's just a chance that Cadmire has a hiding place around here. It's natural that he would make for that cover where the kid is stowed away. Anyhow, it's the best hunch I've got."

The detective was disappointed when he learned that little Amy's hiding place had not been found. But patience is part of the equipment of every officer, and he decided to play the waiting game.

Rick led him across the street to the coffee shop, where the three took places near the window and watched the night life of that squalid block.

Apparently those immigrants worked all day and amused themselves in the streets

all night, for, late as it was, the children were playing about on the pavement and swarthy groups squatted on the doorsteps or strolled around laughing and gossiping.

Old men, who looked like grizzled pirates, discussed the affairs of the colony transplanted from the Old World, while slick young men, oiled, perfumed, and flashily dressed, were gathered in shadowy corners conversing in undertones.

There was an uncanny atmosphere hovering over the block: One felt that the silence was apt to be broken any second by the sudden staccato of revolver shots or the brazen clamor of the patrol wagon.

Abruptly Macarty leaped to his feet. His quick eye had caught a swiftly moving shadow that emerged from a dusky doorway across the street. It was a woman running, and in her arms she carried a child.

She paused for a moment looking up and down the block, then spied the taxi that Rick had kept waiting along the curb. But as she darted for it Macarty was out of the coffee shop, followed closely by Rick Hazard, while Larry Boyle panted behind them.

Just as the woman with the child reached the taxi a second woman came running from the tenement house, and as she saw the fugitive her voice rang out in shrill fury.

"Come back! You— Leave go that child!"

The street loafers surged about the two women. The stealthy quiet of the street was instantly transformed to excitement and turmoil.

"Kidnaper!" The shrill voice pierced the uproar. "Help, help! She's kidnaping my baby!"

Macarty and Rick had to fight their way through the menacing throng that had clustered about the women, and as they elbowed a passage into the crowd of excited aliens they saw that the woman clinging to the taxi with a weeping child in her arms was Isabel.

The furious hag who had confronted her, tearing at the little girl's clothes and screaming at the top of her lungs, was Green Goods Annie.

"Kidnaper! Kidnaper! Baby stealer!" The cry was echoed from tenement walls, and instantly every window was filled with craning heads and every doorway belched forth curious and angry men and women.

"Baby stealer! Grab her! Lynch her! Tear her to pieces, the—!"

It sounded as if a thousand throats were bellowing maledictions and threats. The mob was blocking the street. It was buzzing furiously like an overturned beehive.

There had been a sensational kidnaping only a few weeks before in that quarter, and at the alarm "Baby stealer!" every dark-skinned mother and father was on the alert, ready to execute justice with tooth and nail.

Isabel, white and terrified, frantically implored the taxi driver to give her protection, but the chauffeur was too bewildered and too fearful of his own skin to take any chances. He started the engine, however, but at the sound of its roar the mob pressed closer with redoubled fury.

CHAPTER XLV

HEMMED IN BY FIRE

"IT'S a swell dame from the West Side!" shrieked a raucous female voice. "She can't have no children of her own, so she sneaks over here to steal our babies!"

Isabel's quiet but obviously expensive clothing, also her aristocratic bearing, gave color to this accusation. The tenement mothers firmly believed that their children were in danger from the pampered wives of the rich, who preferred to steal babies rather than undergo the pains of childbirth.

There was a flash of steel in the crowd. Some of the dark-skinned fathers had whipped out stilettos. Women had armed themselves with shears and carving knives.

By the time Rick Hazard and Byrne Macarty had fought back the crowd and reached her side, Isabel was in peril of her life. Another minute and she would have been under foot, trampled, slashed, and torn to shreds.

But at the sight of the two glittering revolvers in the hands of her protectors the

assailants who were closest to her shrank back. Even Green Goods Annie cringed at the sight of the guns and released her grip on little Amy, backing into the crowd with a flood of foul abuse.

Rick Hazard flung open the door of the taxi and thrust Isabel and the sobbing child within. He took his place beside her, but leaned from the window to keep the muzzle of his revolver on the mob, while Macarty, on the running board beside the driver, began to clear a way for the car.

His voice boomed out with a note of authority that carried as much weight as the menace of his gun, and with howls, jeers and imprecations the alien mass of would-be lynchers gave ground.

The car ploughed its way through this welter of humanity, but it was not clear yet nor were its occupants safe. Missiles began to rain on the taxi from the windows overhead, shrieking harridans leaned over the fire escapes to hurl flowerpots, flat-irons, and heavy kitchen utensils. There was a crashing of glass as the wind shield was shattered, and the taxi driver crouched low in his seat fearful of a bullet or a well-aimed brick.

A stone crashed through the window, and Rick Hazard, throwing his body before Isabel and the child to protect them, caught a glimpse of a livid face that glared at him with bared teeth and fierce gray eyes that shot hatred from under the visor of a car conductor's cap. Rick answered with a shot.

He aimed high. Even in that moment of peril he did not want to kill these ignorant and fanatical assailants who thought they were attacking a gang of kidnapers. Instantly, as Rick fired, that face under the cap ducked and was lost in the crowd.

The next moment Macarty's revolver echoed his own shot, and the crowd surged backward in shrieking fury.

At the corner, ahead of them some of the more determined inhabitants of the quarter were heaping up a barricade of pushcarts, garbage cans, packing cases, broken furniture, anything that could be heaped together to prevent the escape of the hated "baby stealers."

It was a flimsy obstruction. A speeding car could hurtle through it like a bullet through cheese, but the crowd was still dense enough to prevent the chauffeur from making much speed.

Byrne Macarty, on the running board beside the driver, fired another shot over the heads of the mob before him, and as the mass melted away he snapped an order at the driver.

"Now step on it! Go right through that barricade!"

He had not reckoned on the craftiness of the ringleader, however. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the barrier burst into flames, the red tongues leaping twenty feet into the air and forming an insurmountable obstacle.

Some one had dashed a can of gasoline over that pile of pushcarts, crates and broken furniture, then flung a ball of flaming excelsior into its midst. It was like driving into the mouth of a furnace. The blast of intense heat caused the driver to shield his face while he jammed on the brakes.

The car jolted to a standstill. Rick leaned out of the window, gun in hand to prevent the mob closing in on them, and the hot breath from the blazing barrier made him gasp with dismay.

Before him the dancing flames illuminated the red brick tenements, the color of spurting blood in that flickering light.

From the doorways and windows he caught a glimpse of grinning malevolent faces. Once more curses and missiles began to rain down from the upper floors of the tenements.

"Put it in reverse!" shouted Macarty to the taxi driver. "Speed out of here backwards, even if you run down a dozen of this mob!"

As the driver threw the engine in the reverse Macarty heard sounds that were more like music to him than the strains of a symphony orchestra. It was the clatter of night sticks on the pavement, a shrilling of police whistles, and a fusillade of patrolmen rushing to the rescue.

Macarty leaned back and gave a decisive order to Rick Hazard. "Stay with the girl," he directed. "You're all right now!

I see that old she-devil that runs with Cadmire. I'm going to get her!"

As the taxi was met by the on-coming policemen Macarty leaped from the running board and made a swift dash for Green Goods Annie.

CHAPTER XLVI

IN ANNIE'S APARTMENT

BEFORE the patrolmen rushing from every direction the hostile mob vanished like smoke before a gale. Black figures dived into doorways and cellar entrances. It was like the scurrying of rats in a cellar when the rays of a flash light are thrown into the gloom.

Added to the noise of the policemen's night sticks and revolver shots was the shriek of motor sirens and the clang, clang, clang of the fire department.

In the wake of the firemen and police reinforcements crowds of newcomers surged into the street and had to be driven back. In all the hub-bub it is not strange that the shifty fellow in the car conductor's uniform should have lost himself in the crowd, disappearing without a trace.

Perhaps if Byrne Macarty had seen him instead of Rick Hazard, who did not know those crafty features, the outlaw's flight would have been stopped by a bullet.

But Macarty had not even caught a glimpse of Cadmire. The only face he had recognized in that bloodthirsty gang was Green Goods Annie, and as he sprang from the running board of the taxi she was just disappearing into the doorway.

Macarty leaped after her, reached the tenement hallway just in time to hear the noise of footsteps scuttling upstairs, then, sacrificing speed to silence, he followed on tiptoes. It occurred to him that if she heard no noise of pursuit the old woman would stop to breathe on the second or third landing, so he was careful to move catlike up those dark and rickety stairs.

The infrequent gas jets were turned down to a mere pin point, and at every landing Macarty saw the corridors extending in two directions and ending in pitch blackness. He halted to listen occasionally and to look for some glimmer from a doorway or the pale shadow of a light skirt that would betray the old woman's hiding place. But he saw nothing.

Footsteps were still mounting above him. But it was not until the last flight that he overtook the flying figure.

"Stop!" he barked and at the same moment reached out in the semidarkness and felt his hands close about the soft flesh of a woman's arm. There was a mouselike squeak as his prisoner tried to wrench herself loose, but the detective's grip was like iron.

"Got you this time!" he growled. And relentlessly he dragged the protesting, incoherent woman to the nearest gas jet, turned up the light and glared down into her frightened face.

With an oath he released her, thrusting her away in disgust at his own mistake. The woman was young, fresh-faced, even pretty in a pleasantlike way, and had no resemblance to Green Goods Annie.

Macarty realized that he had been tricked by one of the foxiest old women who ever had her name on the police blotter.

The chances were that Green Goods Annie had seen him take after her, and as she ducked into the doorway she had run for shelter under the stairway or perhaps slipped out by a back door to the court. By this time she might be several blocks away. He was not even sure that this was the house from which the old woman had emerged. But he was going to find out.

"Come here!" he barked at the young woman, who had backed against the wall, too frightened to move. Palefaced and wide-eyed she obeyed, advancing with trembling steps.

"What do you want of me? I've done nothing wrong!" she cried, and, drawing herself erect, she tried to assume a defiant attitude that was pathetic because of her extreme terror.

"I am not going to hurt you," growled Macarty. "I won't even take you to jail unless you refuse to answer me. But if you try to tell me any lies I'll have you put away till your hair turns white."

"What is it? What is it? I won't lie to you. What do you want to know?"

"That old woman with the child?" asked Macarty. "The one that was shouting 'kidnapper'? Where does she live? What is her name?"

"I don't know her name," replied the girl in a frightened whisper. "But she is terrible! If she learns that I've told you anything she will cut my throat."

"I won't tell her. Quick, where does she live?"

"There!" whispered the girl, and as Macarty ran to the door indicated she slipped into her own room and locked herself in.

Macarty laid his hand on the doorknob, found it locked as he expected, and put his shoulder against it with the force of his two hundred and odd pounds of bone and muscle.

The door shivered and groaned under the impact, but did not yield.

Drawing his revolver, Macarty brought its butt crashing against the panel, only to realize, as it answered with a metallic ring, that this was no flimsy wooden door, but one made of steel to resist attack.

There was no sound within the rooms, but as the detective listened there he heard the lock click in the neighboring tenement. The girl whom he had interrogated looked out timidly and whispered, "Go up on the roof, mister. You can get in by the fire escape."

With a swift gesture she indicated the ladder to the roof, and the next moment Macarty was among the chimney pots and immediately thereafter his feet were on the rungs of the fire escape. Gun in hand, he stepped into the shabby kitchen where the lights burned, showing the disorder of bottles and glasses and an upset chair, indicating hasty flight.

No one was in the kitchen. Macarty threw open the door of the poorly furnished living room, where there was no possible hiding place, thrust his revolver into the hanging garments of a clothes closet without result, then jerked open the door of the bedroom. His eyes sought the tumbled bed, with the clothes in a disordered heap. He ran to it, tore them away with one jerk, and felt that they were still warm from the late occupant.

But all that remained was a big doll, almost as large as a baby, dressed in scraps of blue cloth. It rolled out of bed and fell face down at his feet as the detective jerked off the bedclothes.

With another vigorous sweep of the arm Macarty yanked the bed into the middle of the room and at the same time held his gun to cover any one who might be lurking underneath.

But there was nothing there, not even the litter which might be expected in a cheap tenement.

As he returned to the kitchen Macarty's eyes searched for some trace of the former occupant, something that might tell him definitely whether Cadmire had been there. The only thing to indicate that a man had visited Green Goods Annie was a plug of tobacco lying under the overturned chair. Macarty dropped it into his pocket, then began a search of every drawer and cupboard for papers and other articles that might help him in his search.

There was nothing of any importance to reward him.

The birds had flown. It was unlikely they would return.

In fact there was nothing to bring them back. Evidently their valuables were lodged in some other hiding place, for presumably this was just a shelter for emergencies.

Before he walked out of the tenement Macarty noticed a key hanging alongside the hall door and slipped it into his pocket. He decided to hurry across town to Rick's apartment and question Isabel. Possibly she could give him other information about the hiding places of Cadmire and Green Goods Annie.

As he walked along the malodorous street, filled with the fumes of the extinguished bonfire, he saw it was still buzzing with excitement from the visit of the police and the fire department. Macarty felt the craving for tobacco, and remembered the plug he had picked up in the shabby kitchen.

He stood at the corner of First Avenue looking for a taxi, and as he waited there with his eyes alert for a cruising motor he absentmindedly whittled a piece off Cad-

mire's plug, slipped in between his jaws and chewed vigorously.

If he had only cut a little deeper with his penknife the detective would not have felt so disappointed with the result of that evening's work.

The blade had come very close indeed to a flat cut, pear-shaped diamond valued at forty thousand dollars.

CHAPTER XLVII

ISABEL'S THRILLING ESCAPE

THE reason for Isabel's flight from the tenement had been fear, blind unreasoning terror. When the old woman had left her at the bedside of the sleeping child, Isabel had strained her ears to hear what they were saying, that unscrupulous hag and the outlaw who had entangled her in his web of crime.

The girl had heard them drink toast after toast to the confusion of all the upholders of law and order, and as the drinkers grew riotous in their cups she was forced to listen to profanity and obscenities that chilled her blood.

She thought she had already seen Cadmire at his worst, but now as the liquor inflamed his brain he revealed unspeakable degradation. She had known him first posing as a suave and polished man of the world, and later she had seen the unmasking that showed him as a cold and conscienceless villain.

But as she sat there listening she realized that there were even lower depths to his character, that underneath his cold cynicism lurked a raging bestiality that would hesitate at no crime and stay its hand at no cruelty.

Sick with terror she crouched there beside the bed where the child lay peacefully in slumber, and as the minutes dragged on the girl's panic increased, until it seemed as if she must scream at the top of her lungs for help.

Only by forcing herself heroically to silence could she remain concealed. Apparently Cadmire had forgotten her existence for the time being, and for that she breathed a prayer of thankfulness.

Presently, after what seemed hours of suspense, Isabel heard the curses and ribald speeches sink to mumbling undertones, and when she cautiously opened the door a crack and looked into the kitchen she saw that the man had sunk into sleep with his head on the table, while the old woman opposite him was sagging in her seat.

While Isabel looked on, holding her breath fearfully, Green Goods Annie pillowed her head on her crossed arms as they rested on the table. Her mumblings ceased and her loud breathing told that she was asleep.

At that moment all other considerations were forgotten and Isabel determined to risk everything in a dash for freedom. She stole back to the bed, switched on the light to avoid colliding with some object in the dark, and carefully raised the sleeping child over her shoulder.

She thanked the kind Providence that had given her a strong, vigorous young body so that she could carry that precious weight without faltering, as, very stealthily, she opened the door to the kitchen and began to make her way on tiptoe past the sleeping crook and his companion.

The girl moved with infinite caution, and it seemed to her that she was crawling, only an inch at a time, as she was forced to pass beside that evil pair. Her skirt almost brushed their sprawling limbs as she edged across the kitchen, making for the door that led to the staircase and to freedom.

Finally her hand was on the knob of the outside door, she had unlatched it and swung it open. A strong breeze swept her face, and as Isabel shut the door behind her she fancied she heard the scraping of a chair in the kitchen.

Had the draught blowing across their faces awakened her half drunken captors? Isabel did not wait to listen for other sounds. She made a dash for the staircase, stumbled on the top step and realized with horror that if the occupants of the tenement were awake they must have heard the noise of her heels as she regained her balance.

Then she flew down flight after flight of evil-smelling stairs, the blood pounding in her ears, her breath coming in gasping sobs,

her muscles tense in the panic that had seized her.

CHAPTER XLVIII

RICK TAKES CHARGE

WHEN she was halfway to the ground floor Isabel heard an unmistakable noise of pursuit and a woman's harsh and high-pitched voice, answered by the growling curses of Cadmire. With the noise of pursuing footsteps clattering above her, the girl completed her flight down those breakneck stairs, and every leap in the dark seemed like a miracle when she achieved it without spraining an ankle or falling headlong in the darkness.

As she dashed into the street, madly searching for a car to carry her away, or a policeman to protect her from her pursuers, Isabel heard the shrieks of Green Goods Annie behind her. "Kidnaper! Kidnaper! She's stealing my baby!"

What followed afterwards was like a nightmare to the girl; the onrush of the jabbering mob, the threatening faces, the menacing blades of steel, and then Rick Hazard, who appeared as if sent from heaven to protect her.

In the shelter of the taxi, guarded by his strong arms and his ready weapon, Isabel sank in a heap, clutching the sobbing little girl to her breast and wondering whether she would ever wake up from this terrible vision of furious mobs, leaping fires, and the flash of pistol shots stabbing the night.

Somehow, she could not say how or when, she found herself leaning back on the cushions of the speeding car, with Rick's powerful arm supporting her, and the uproar of the crowd and the shrieks of Green Goods Annie just a fading memory.

Had she fainted while the motor backed its way to safety? Or had her bewildered brain simply failed to register the impression of those terrible moments? Isabel did not know. All she felt was the blessed assurance of protection as she allowed her weight to rest upon the shoulder of the young man who had once again come to her rescue.

She allowed her body to relax, her eyes closed, and in the reaction of her terror the tears stole down her pale cheeks.

"Don't cry, Isabel!" His voice was soft and gentle in her ears and she felt that he was leaning over her tenderly and wiping away her tears. "Everything will be all right now. You are safe. No one can harm you."

For answer she held the child more closely to her, as if to assure herself that her hazardous flight had not been in vain. Little Amy had once more settled down in the profound slumber of childhood. She was breathing as regularly as if nothing at all had occurred to break her slumber.

Isabel looked up into Rick's face with a pathetic attempt at a smile.

"I know everything will be all right," she said bravely. "As soon as I saw you I knew that my troubles were over, Rick."

There was a tenderness in her voice as she pronounced his name that thrilled him through and through.

She had not forgotten him! She cared for him! It could not be possible for a woman's voice to make such music with his name unless she loved him.

And then at that instant Rick forgot that he had ever had any doubts and suspicions. This exquisite woman was no gangster's girl, but a princess in distress. He was her protector and he vowed to himself that he would win her—this adorable creature! He would protect her from the underworld gang that threatened her, and also from the law that might condemn her for acts she had been forced to commit.

"Where are you taking me?" asked Isabel.

Already the car had brought them out of the congested and disreputable quarter into a neighborhood of respectability and affluence.

The taxi approached Fifth Avenue, crossed it, and sped on into the shelter of the park. Rick Hazard leaned forward to give an order to the taxi driver, then he turned to Isabel and answered her question.

"I am taking you to a place where you will be safe," he said. "I have a studio on Waverly Place, not far from Washington Square. No one will think of looking for you there."

The machine sped southward through the park and came out on Fifth Avenue at the Plaza, and a few minutes later Isabel was reclining in the dimly glowing light of Rick Hazard's studio apartment.

CHAPTER XLIX

BEATING THE GRIM REAPER

WHEN Dr. Pascal had been knocked cold by his own blackjack it appeared as if Cadmire had dealt him a death blow. Cadmire himself believed it and gloated over it.

Macarty's hasty examination a few minutes after the attack had left the detective in doubt as to whether an ambulance call would do any good, but he had ordered Mrs. Parsons, the doctor's aged housekeeper, to ring up the hospital on the chance of saving the victim.

But the old lady's nerves were completely unstrung by the shock. Instead of doing something useful, she sank into a chair beside the unconscious man, weeping convulsively.

Her limbs trembled and would not support her weight. Her hands shook so that she could not lift the receiver. She felt as helpless as a babe, and could only crouch there in the semidarkness of the office uttering little moaning cries.

Her master was dead. Her dear, kind master, who had always treated her so considerately, and had promised to care for her to the end of her days. Now he was killed! Struck down by a ruffian in his own house, and she would be thrown out into the world.

As Mrs. Parsons gave way to her grief she was startled by a faint groan from the figure huddled over the desk.

She looked up, choking back her sobs and listened. There could be no mistake. Again there was a feeble groan and a slight twitching of the limbs. Consciousness was returning, but whether it was the beginning of recovery or the signs of the death agony she could not guess.

But the renewed hope brought back her strength. Mrs. Parsons struggled to her feet, tottered to the cabinet where medicines were kept and poured out a glass of brandy with shaking hands. She forced back the head of the unconscious man, almost screaming as she encountered the blank stare of his half-opened eyes. Much of the liquor was spilled as the rim of the glass rattled against his teeth, but a portion of the fluid found its way down his throat.

The doctor coughed, gasped, and as another gulp of brandy went down he gradually pulled himself together.

His head was aching furiously. He felt as if the ceiling had crashed down upon him, and for a few moments he could only lie there moaning, while the excited housekeeper ran about frantically, bringing cold water and bandages for a compress, refilling the brandy glass, and making strange clucking noises like an agitated hen.

"Oh, thank God! Thank God! You are not dead!" she exclaimed. "That scoundrel did not kill you after all! Now I'll ring up the hospital and have a surgeon come right over. I'll send for the police, too."

"*No!*" Mrs. Parsons was astonished at the vigor of the injured man's tones. He had stiffened himself abruptly, then sank down again feebly. "Not the police," he mumbled. "Don't!" His gesture was meant to be commanding, but it was only a feeble wave of the hand.

She bent over him solicitously. "There, there now! Have some more brandy. Don't you want me to put the police on the trail of that ruffian who tried to murder you?"

"I'll settle him—myself!" replied the doctor weakly, and he continued, "Bring me—green bottle—from cabinet—top shelf!"

When she brought him the small square bottle he made her take a little brandy to steady her nerves, then she measured out a spoonful of the powerful restorative from the green bottle.

A few moments later he was able, with her assistance, to stagger to the couch, where he stretched himself with his eyes shut. He felt the strength coming back to his body, due to the potency of the brandy and the drug. Already his mind was clearing, and he remembered what had happened to him at the hands of Larry Cadmire.

Anger at this assault only seemed to add to his strength. He felt in his pockets and found that they had been turned inside out. A small roll that he carried was missing, also the pear-shaped diamond, once the property of the murdered Lucille Renoir.

Even the shield had been ripped from his vest, and Dr. Pascal ground his teeth as he thought how thoroughgoing had been the crook who had beaten him insensible and then robbed him.

Mrs. Parsons, who had left the room to bring in some cracked ice, heard him muttering and mumbling as he lay there on the couch and said to herself. "The poor lamb, he's praying. He's giving thanks to God for having spared his life." But what Dr. Pascal was muttering under his breath was: "I'll get him for that, damn him! I'll get that dirty crook where I want him and make him pay for this."

But in spite of his determination to set out on his errand of revenge, he was still too weak and shaken to leave the house.

Mrs. Parsons brought him more brandy and began to tell him once more just how it had happened. She talked in broken, unconnected phrases about the taxi driver who had forced his way past her, shoved her aside, actually dared to lay his hands upon her.

"No, that wasn't the taxi driver that shoved me aside," she corrected herself. "That was one of the other men who came in afterwards."

"Other men? Afterwards!" Dr. Pascal jerked upright, then sank down again as a sharp pain darted through his skull.

Mrs. Parsons rushed to him with more brandy. He gulped it, then demanded in agitation: "What other men were here? Who were they? What did they look like?"

From her rambling description Dr. Pascal guessed that one of the intruders was Byrne Macarty, the detective, whom he had reason to dread. The other visitor must have been that young swell who had been so neatly trapped at the Acropolis Club.

"Curse them both!" thought the doctor. "Now they are going to hound me out of here. They know where I am. They will be back again! They may have the house covered already."

He staggered into the front room, cautiously peered through the shades into the night, and looked eagerly in both directions. A burly figure that was loafing near the corner aroused his suspicions. The man did not seem to be going anywhere. "A dick!" whispered the doctor furiously.

Recklessly he took another dose of the restorative, then, warning Mrs. Parsons not to open the door to any one under any pretext, he went to his bedroom to change.

He put aside his professional garb that he assumed for the character of Dr. Anderson and dressed in serviceable well-worn tweeds and a cap. From the wall safe he took all the cash he could find and then returned to the office to slip a tiny vial and a hypodermic needle into his pocket. He had armed himself with a revolver, carrying it in a holster concealed under his armpit.

Mrs. Parsons had gone to the kitchen to make some hot coffee. He could hear the dishes rattling. With a hasty glance around to see that he had forgotten nothing, Dr. Pascal opened the window of his study which overlooked the court. It was only a few feet to the ground, and he was able to rest on the window ledge, close the window behind him, then drop lightly on his toes to the flagging.

All was dark in the court except for the faint illumination of curtained windows. The doctor crossed it, vaulted a fence with an agility that was more suggestive of a second-story worker than a respectable physician, and found himself in the courtyard of another apartment house that faced on a different street.

Ten minutes later he was safe in a taxi and traveling down town, headed for a certain hang-out he knew on the lower East Side.

CHAPTER L

THE DOCTOR BUSIES HIMSELF

AS the machine sped southward Dr. Pascal lay back against the cushions trying to suppress the groans that were forced from him by the racking of the machine over the pavements.

He realized that in his present state it

would be futile to try to run down Cadmire and punish him as he deserved. The chances were that that shifty rascal would turn the tables on him once more if Pascal should confront him in his weakened condition. All he could do was to lie low for a few hours in the hang-out, since his office was no longer a safe retreat.

The hang-out was a ruinous looking structure of rusty red brick which towered high above the East River near the Brooklyn Bridge. In its time it had served as a warehouse and had made a fortune for its owner. The latter had died, his estate had gone into litigation, and the building had suffered from neglect.

Finally it was condemned as unsafe, for great cracks showed in the foundation. Pending the settlement of the lawsuit it remained padlocked, its lower windows barred with rusty iron and its upper windows coated with dust and grime.

Standing in a shabby neighborhood swarming with aliens, it was an ideal nest for a gang of crooks, and Dr. Pascal had long ago found means to induce the watchman to supply him with a key.

There was a narrow door opening on an alley through which members of the Acropolis Club found their way from time to time, and it was for that door that Dr. Pascal was heading just then.

He dismissed the taxi at a nearby corner, slipped through the shadows of a street of tenements, and as he passed a certain dingy poolroom he heard a familiar voice: " Hey fellers, there goes Black Andy!"

Dr. Pascal waved discreetly to the knot of loafers and passed on. The wealthy old ladies who visited " Dr. Anderson " for the sake of their rundown nerves would have gasped in dismay if they had known that down near the East River their favorite specialist answered to the name of Black Andy.

Inserting a key in a weather-worn lock, which was well oiled and in good condition, Dr. Pascal entered the warehouse noiselessly, produced a pocket flash light, and found his way through a narrow corridor to a room in the interior of the building.

Here he lighted the two lamps and looked about with a sigh of satisfaction upon a comfortable living room which did not seem to belong in such desolate surroundings.

The room was large enough to accommodate a dozen people easily, and many a time the inner circle of the Acropolis Club had stretched their legs beneath the broad table, smoking, drinking, and relating their shady exploits or planning new crimes that would bring them easy money. Adjoining this room was a small laboratory where the doctor often busied himself with chemistry.

As he still felt shaken from the blow that Cadmire had given him, the doctor poured himself a stiff drink, then threw himself on the couch for a few hours' sleep. Even in his dreams the thoughts of revenge did not pass from his mind. He had visions of Larry Cadmire bound and helpless in his power, the victim of a thousand fantastic tortures.

Sometimes the much-hated Macarty and that young swell, Rick Hazard, also were present in his dreams of delicate and painful revenge, for it was Dr. Pascal's character to forgive nothing. On the contrary, he demanded payment many times over for any injury that he received.

Long after midnight he awoke refreshed, and after another bracer he picked up his flash light and left the comfortable room to find his way through the rat-infested corridors to a certain trap door leading to the cellar.

In his dreams he had planned the perfect punishment for Larry Cadmire when that enemy should be in his power, and this subterranean room was the setting for it. The doctor cautiously descended the ladderlike stairs, found himself in a vault about twelve feet square and about the same height. Its only exit was the trapdoor in the warehouse floor.

No sound could penetrate these walls, and as the man threw the rays of the flash light about the bare chamber, furnished with only a couple of stools and a ramshackle table, his heavy black brows drew together in a frown of anticipated cruelty.

It was the perfect setting for the perfect paying off of the score. Tenderly he touched the sore spot on his head where Cadmire's

blow had raised a black swelling, and he gloated in advance over the reparation he would exact for that injury.

The next thing to do was to find Larry Cadmire and get him to the hang-out on some pretext or another.

His problem, how to lay hands on Larry Cadmire, was the one which was worrying the police force at that moment. But Dr. Pascal prided himself that he was far shrewder than any bull who ever pounded the pavements, or any plainclothes men for that matter. Also his long association with the crook had given him a knowledge of Cadmire's friends and hiding places.

He knew that Green Goods Annie had taken little Amy to that tenement on the upper East Side, and it occurred to him that that would be a likely place to shadow if he wanted to find Cadmire. That the crook had a feeling of love for his child, an erratic, fitful sentiment that made him load her with presents at times, was well known to Dr. Pascal.

He decided to get in touch with his henchmen, Mike and Bimbo, the next day and find out what could be done to round up Larry Cadmire.

Meanwhile, as he still felt a little shaky and as his head was still aching, the doctor left the cellar, found his way back to his couch, and sought once more the solace of revengful dreams.

CHAPTER LI

AN ABSENT HOST

IN taking Isabel and little Amy to his studio in Waverly Place instead of to his uptown apartment, Rick Hazard had accomplished what he set out to do. He had given Byrne Macarty the slip. He had saved the girl from the humiliation of being cross-questioned by the detective who mistrusted her.

He knew that his Jap servant would not say anything about the studio, which was a retreat that the young man used when he wanted to get away from his casual acquaintances. Only a few of his intimate friends knew that he had such a place, and they visited it only on his invitation.

When Byrne Macarty left the tenement of Green Goods Annie he took a taxi to the apartment where Rick Hazard had entertained him at dinner that evening. The detective was confident that he would find Isabel there, for he had sent her away under Rick Hazard's protection, and he hoped by skillful questioning, and perhaps by a little rough tactics, to get some valuable information from the girl.

It was practically certain that she would know a few things about Cadmire that would help him pick up the trail. He was determined to get those facts by one means or another from this girl who consorted with gangsters.

As for Rick Hazard's sentimental attachment to that attractive young woman, he simply had no patience with such an infatuation. Better for the young man and for all concerned to have the little romance nipped in the bud. It would only make trouble in the end.

With such thoughts in his mind Macarty relaxed in the motor that was carrying him to Rick's uptown apartment, and at the door he persistently rang for admission.

The Jap servant, Fugi, opened presently and regarded him with a bland but impersonal smile.

Macarty explained that he had to talk to Rick Hazard that night; it was extremely important.

"I am most regret," replied Fugi. "The honorable Mr. Rick is not come in yet."

"Not here?" Macarty gasped in angry disbelief. "I guess I'll just come in and wait for him," he said, aggressively.

Fugi bowed low. He recognized that Macarty must be a good friend of his master, for they had been on such intimate terms at their little dinner.

"Please to come in, honorable sir," replied Fugi. "Make yourself at home! Honor to accept a Havana cigar." And he made an inviting gesture toward the easy-chair beside the table, adding with the Oriental equivalent of a wink: "Honor to accept some weak ginger ale." But he shoved a decanter of something very different toward the unexpected guest.

The detective accepted his invitation with an approving grunt, settling himself in

the big easy-chair to await Rick's return with the girl whom he now began to suspect of having kidnaped his friend.

But there was nothing else to do but wait. Macarty smoked a cigar, sampled the "ginger ale," came back for more, closed his eyes the better to think out the knotty problems—and when he opened them found that the morning sun was streaming through the windows and Fugi's coffee was scenting the apartment with its pleasant aroma.

"Well I'll be damned!" ejaculated Byrne Macarty. "I didn't even know that I'd been asleep. Hey boy!" he shouted. "Where's your boss? Why didn't you wake me up when he came in?"

"Very much regret! The honorable boss is no return!" replied Fugi with his impersonal smile. "Honor to accept hot coffee and ham in eggs."

While Macarty was breakfasting at Rick's uptown apartment the young man was facing an unforeseen complication.

He had turned over his bedroom to Isabel and little Amy while he camped in the studio, but the next morning the girl had tapped on his door to tell him in frightened whispers that the child was flushed and hot. Evidently the exposure and the excitement had brought on a fever.

Rick clothed himself hastily and hurried to the child's bedside, while Isabel, who had slipped into his dressing gown, eyed him with apprehension.

"I don't think it's very serious," said Rick. "What do you give to reduce a fever?"

Isabel suggested a simple remedy, and Rick hurried out to the nearest drug store, and when he returned with the little bottle Isabel had dressed and was awaiting him with fear in her eyes.

CHAPTER LII

A DANGEROUS ERRAND

"OH, I'm so terrified!" Isabel exclaimed. "If anything should happen to this child now I could never forgive myself! All I've done is just for the sake of little Amy, and now the poor child is in there tossing and glassy-eyed, and I feel that while I meant everything for the best I may have endangered her life."

Rick took her hands, that were cold and trembling with emotion, and tried to reassure the girl as he led her into the bedroom. He passed his hand gently over the forehead of the little sufferer and found that the fever had increased.

"Now, don't worry," he said. "We will fix her up with a dose of this spirits of niter, and if she doesn't get better very soon I'll run out and fetch a doctor."

The girl watched him while he prepared the medicine and administered it with an almost fatherly devotion. How gentle he was! And how dependable in every emergency! In all her experience she had never before met one who seemed to combine such qualities of rash courage and chivalry toward women and children.

The liking which she felt for him from the moment she had seen him was gradually ripening into friendship, and perhaps something more. Isabel fought against this feeling, for she felt that all her duty was bound up in the safety of the child, and until its future was assured she had no right to think of anything else.

Yet she allowed Rick to hold her hand as they sat together at little Amy's bedside, and in the pressure of his fingers she had an assurance of his sympathy and devotion that was very comforting.

As the little girl's breathing grew quieter and the fever appeared to be subsiding somewhat, Isabel released her hand with a jerk and sprang to her feet.

"Where's the kitchenette?" she asked. "The least I can do to repay your hospitality is to prepare the breakfast."

With a smile she left him, and Rick heard her putting on the coffee over the gas stove and clearing up the living room where he had slept.

As he sat there looking at the sleeping child he allowed himself to imagine that this lovely little creature was his own; his and Isabel's. In his day dream he fancied they were married, living together happily in this cosy village studio and that she was free of all the entanglements of the underworld gang with which she had become involved.

He was startled from his day dream by the click of the door and ran to the window just in time to see Isabel moving swiftly along the street. At first he thought it was a flight, then it occurred to him that the girl had found a food shortage in the pantry and was going out to buy something for breakfast.

He settled down to wait for her, a little nervous at the idea of her being alone on the street.

If he could have seen her movements after she had made her few purchases at the neighborhood store his perplexity would have increased, for this was familiar ground to Isabel. Her father's home, the Reniard Mansion, Washington Square North, was only a short distance away.

Though the house was closed, as the family had moved to their Long Island home for the summer, Isabel had a key and she decided to stop there for a few moments and get some toilet articles and clothing.

She was glad to have the opportunity to do this errand in early morning, when everything seemed so safe in the sunshine.

Not for worlds would she have entered that empty house at night, for even though it was her home it was haunted with memories of Laurence Cadmire. It was here that he had courted her sister, and she knew that he was familiar with every room and staircase of the old mansion.

In fact the reason that she did not insist on going there with little Amy instead of taking refuge in Rick's studio was that the crook might shadow the place if he knew that she occupied it.

The house looked very melancholy, with all of its furniture shrouded and its shutters closed. The air was close and oppressive. Isabel moved silently up the staircase to her own room, searched the drawers and dresser for the necessities she had come for, and prepared to leave.

As she went along the corridor her heart almost stopped beating at the sound of heavy breathing from the room next to her own. Through the half open door she could look in. And there, sprawled across the bed lay a man in profound slumber, just as he had thrown himself without undressing.

She could not see his face, but at a glance she recognized that tall, muscular figure dressed in a car conductor's uniform.

In a panic she turned to flee silently from the house where Cadmire lay sleeping. Then:

"Stop!" The cry of his heavy voice rang out in the silence of the deserted house.

And though she wanted to make a dash for the door, before Isabel could force herself to action the crook had run down the steps with astonishing fleetness and barred her escape.

TO BE CONCLUDED

When she beheld the ashen horror of her master, she let forth a terrified screech

A SELF-CONDEMNED MAN

By David Redstone

THE BROTHER OF MISSING HENRY THOMSON CHANCED INTO BRADSHIRE AND LEARNED MORE THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED

A Story of Fact

NO one knows to-day where the town of Bradshire lies. But if a trader, journeying on foot from London at the time of the unusual event to be related here, were to make Hull the goal of a straight course, he would reach Bradshire within thirty days. The houses there about the year 1790 were rude, small structures grouped within an acreage of five miles.

A large portion of the land hereabout was owned by one Jordan Smith, whose fine manor stood at the eastern edge of the town. It was a town well-known for its friendliness and hospitality to strangers that chanced to be overtaken by nightfall while on their way to Hull, or perhaps London. Strangers were not very frequent there, however, and if one did chance to pass the whole town knew of it, and where he was lodged that night.

One evening a traveler was seen to stop at the house of Jordan Smith to ask for a night's lodging there. Smith himself came to the door, greeted him courteously, and, according to the tradition of that place, offered him hospitality.

The next morning when the housekeeper came to awaken the stranger—for she had been ordered by him to do so at an early hour—he was found dead in his armchair, with his hands resting lightly as if in sleep. His face was calm; no struggle had taken place. There were no visible signs of poisoning. It was evident to those who

saw him that he had died from some natural cause.

There could have been no motive for crime in this case. Jordan Smith was known to be wealthy. It was apparent from the clothes and aspect of the stranger that he could not have had articles in his possession of such great value as to cause Smith to kill him for that reason. Then, the man was absolutely unknown to him or to any one.

What Exhumation Showed

Smith described him as a shy, reticent gentleman, a poor traveler, who had expressed the desire to be shown to his room shortly after the evening meal, begging to be excused on the ground that he had walked a long distance that day and so was very much fatigued. All that Smith knew concerning him was his name—Henry Thomson.

The following day a coroner's inquest was held. It was estimated that the body had been dead at least four hours before the housekeeper had come into the room. No marks of violence were seen. The face was not contorted, as in cases where poison had been used. Since there could have been no motive for crime—and no evidence pointed to the possibility of a crime having been committed—the coroner duly recorded the name of Henry Thomson, died on the morning of the 17th of May in the year 1791, "from natural causes of, and by, the visitation of God."

He was buried at the expense of Jordan Smith in the cemetery at Bradshire.

Not many weeks passed by but that many strange stories began to be rumored about concerning Jordan Smith. He was already looked upon with suspicion in connection with the mysterious death of the stranger. Although he had lived ten uneventful years in Bradshire, certain incidents of his past life were being revived. He had had irregularities in his family life. There were stories of his having been heavily in debt at various times in his earlier life, driven to desperate means of regaining his wealth.

Suddenly and mysteriously—no one could tell how—but he had so recovered from many precarious positions, that he soon became the wealthiest man in the region of Bradshire. Stories such as these were being whispered far and wide; dark things were spoken of concerning the present mysterious death, until one day a person came to town who had reason to believe that the dead man might possibly have been his brother.

Thereupon the body was exhumed and immediately identified from the clothes and certain marks on the head, in spite of the fact that the body had been underground for more than two months.

From certain stories that had been told concerning Smith, and from the testimony of witnesses who had been near the scene on the day of Henry Thomson's mysterious and unaccountable death, the brother pleaded with the authorities to make a reinvestigation, the result of which committed Jordan Smith to trial, accusing him of the murder of Henry Thomson of London on the night of the 17th of May, 1791.

The case was tried in a town about ten miles from Bradshire, Lord Mansfield sitting at the time.

The trial was a fascinating one from the first moment. Smith made a deep impression on all who saw him that day. He remained standing for a minute before he took his seat at the prisoner's bench—a tall, massive man, between forty and fifty, gray haired, with chin poised in haughty pride.

The Peculiar Glass Stopper

In this attitude, his eye bore the fire of the man who will not be conquered, the coldness and reserve of a noble nature, or of a fiend with supreme cunning, who was capable of personating characteristics not his own. His brows narrowed into a firm, straight line. His lips twitching with disdain, he glanced about him often, so that an unfathomable cunning might have been seen in the expression of his face.

The prosecuting counsel brought forth all the known facts of the case which, to summarize briefly, were, that Henry Thomson was a very wealthy jeweler of London on his way to Hull with a considerable amount of valuables and currency in his possession. One witness testified that on the night of

the alleged murder, about one a.m., he saw a light being carried from one end of the house toward the room where the deceased lay. Then the light being carried back again, remained obscured for a time by an object which seemed to him to have been placed against the window for that very purpose.

Smith slept in a room on the extreme north section of the house, while the housekeeper, the only person who lived there besides him, had her room on the extreme south section. The deceased was lodged that night in a room adjacent to the housekeeper's. The only other servant employed by Smith occupied a room beyond the stable some hundred and fifty feet from the house.

At the time of Smith's committal, that is, a few days after the body had been identified, the housekeeper suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, leaving no trace whatever of her whereabouts. Search was made everywhere, many persons were questioned, but no one seemed to have the faintest idea where she had gone.

Counsel for the prosecution then brought forth a peculiar glass stopper of German make whose use was alleged to be for protecting some bottled substance which was most likely to lose a great part of its virtue and strength by being exposed to the air. There was no evidence to show who had used it; the bottle to which it belonged could not be found and the ownership of it could not be laid to Smith, who claimed to have no knowledge of its existence. At the time of the inquest fully two hundred persons had come constantly in and out of the Smith household. It was quite possible that the stopper had been left by one of them.

Counsel for the defense, when the matter of poisoning was mentioned, stated that few poisons were known whose effects could be so virulent and at the same time leave no trace of distortion on the countenance of the deceased. Yet the prosecuting counsel offered proof that certain poisons did exist, manufactured somewhere in the region of the Black Forest, that had so deadly and withal so sedative a nature as to leave the face of the victim calm and placid.

This poison is said to be a powerful distillation of the seed of the wild cherry. However, the entire house had been searched thoroughly, and nothing of this nature had been discovered. Even if it could be proved that Henry Thomson had met his death in this manner, then by whose hand had the poison been administered?

II

UPON full examination of the case and the questioning of several witnesses, counsel on both sides came to the agreement that the evidence so far found was not sufficient to warrant any further inquiry or to throw the least semblance or suggestion of guilt on the part of the prisoner, and therefore that the case be dismissed from court, granting an immediate acquittal of the prisoner.

To the modern reader such a free disposal of a criminal case would seen an extraordinary piece of shabby court procedure. Those of us who have even a slight knowledge of the court practice of to-day and the restless energy of our shrewd investigators of crime would certainly agree that there was something slip-shod about this whole proceeding. Placed in the spotlight of our mature knowledge, we wonder if it would have gone well with Smith if he had not been so wealthy.

We wonder, too, why in the name of ordinary common sense they could find nothing sinister in the peculiar and mysterious disappearance of Smith's housekeeper. With a bit of systematic investigation it would seem to us that she could easily have been traced to her hiding place. Such, however, seems to have been the practice of the day, and we must accept it with tolerance.

Lord Mansfield, consenting to the proposal of both lawyers, arose to make the formal statement of acquittal when Jordan Smith, all this time silent and disdainful, got up to address the court, demanding the right to be heard. Pride and victory shone from his eyes. The right to speak was given.

Why should Smith, at this moment, desire to address the court when his innocence already was obvious to all who were pre-

sent? If he were innocent was it necessary for him to make himself appear doubly so? If he were in fact guilty, what possible good could come to him in trying to impress an audience with his egotism, vanity and self-esteem?

Smith Makes a Speech

But it is in the nature of certain men whose vanity too often arouses them to superfluous action. So Smith, convinced that there was not a single person in the assembly who had the least suspicion of him in connection with the mysterious death of Thomson, proceeded to arouse the pity of all for the wrong that had been done him.

He said then that it was his right, if he chose, to show not merely that the evidence was insufficient to convict him of a crime of which he was altogether guiltless, but to establish his innocence absolutely and conclusively to the complete satisfaction of himself and all those present. How could he bear to return to his home and to his friends with the stain of suspicion still upon him—to meet forever the distrustful eyes of his fellow-townsmen?

He reiterated all the facts set up by his counsel, adding that he know nothing of the poison mentioned, and that if Henry Thomson had in fact possessed valuables, he might have been waylaid and robbed weeks previous to his arrival in Bradshire, for such happenings had been frequent in this vicinity of late.

What the witness had said concerning the moving light in his house on the night of the unfortunate death was true, but he had been ill at the time and so took medicines nightly. Such was his object at that hour, and the medicine closet stood near to the window in the central portion of the house.

His voice, at first reflective and ponderous, was now becoming more and more emphatic. Again and again he said there could not have been a motive for him to commit a crime so heartless, so extravagant.

And now he had something to disclose. The disappearance of his housekeeper may have aroused the suspicion of the court. He then went on to tell how he had had her removed for a time to her own family at the time these proceedings began, for fear that she might be tampered with illegally. But he had arranged that she come here at the moment of the trial so that he could call upon her to establish his innocence at the last. She was at present staying at an inn nearby. Smith demanded that she be summoned so that her testimony might be heard.

These words seemed so artless and sincere that the court and counsel and all who were there sympathized with the accused man, exonerating him in their minds from all guilt. The general feeling was being expressed by the prosecuting lawyer, but Smith was insistent until, finally, the housekeeper was brought into the court room.

She was a simple, calm-voiced woman, and spoke clearly and unfalteringly. Her story corresponded in every detail to all the previous testimony. When asked whether she had ever seen the glass stopper she answered that she had not. The prosecuting counsel inquired again:

"Now, examine this object closely and carefully. Are you quite certain you have never seen it before?"

"I have never seen it."

"You were the first person to see the body of the deceased. Tell me, you did not think the body looked in any manner peculiar?"

"He looked as if he were asleep."

Till No Doubt Remained

"Did you know that the prisoner was ill at the time of Henry Thomson's death? If so, tell us, did you know the nature of his illness?"

"I knew Mr. Smith had not been feeling well for some time, but I did not know just what was wrong."

"Did you know whether Mr. Smith got up to take his medicine on that night also?"

"Yes."

"Where was this medicine kept?"

"In a closet near the central window, on the right hand side of the house."

"If this door were opened, would it cover the entire space of the window near it?"

"I think so."

At this moment a slight gasp was heard near the prisoner's bench. Those who turned to look saw the face of Jordan Smith

grow deadly gray with fear and numerous moist drops were lodged in every pore of his forehead. The examination went on, for neither witness nor interrogator noticed this.

"Does this door make any noise when it is opened?"

"No, it does not."

"How do you know? Have you ever opened it yourself?"

"No."

"Why? Have you never kept the key?"

"Never."

"Who does?"

"Mr. Smith, always."

In answering this question the witness turned a glance towards the prisoner's bench. When she beheld the ashen horror on the countenance of her master she let forth a terrified scream and fainted away on the witness stand. The mystery of the cabinet had at last dawned upon her unsuspecting mind when she beheld for the first time the foul abyss of evil in the face of her master, Jordan Smith.

By this time the prisoner was shaking in every limb; he could make no utterance for the paralyzing dread in his heart.

While several of the court officers were helping to revive the woman a number of the sheriff's men came rushing into the court room. Two of them ran to the prisoner in order to prevent his escape, while the others came up to prosecutor bearing a bag which they deposited on the desk.

Then a solicitor who was among them proceeded to explain what had been done.

When he had heard the prisoner tell of the medicine closet it occurred to him that though a minute search had been made, no such door had been found to exist in the precise position mentioned. Immediately he called together a few of the sheriff's men, procured horses, armed each of the men with heavy instruments and chisels, and made off as fast as they could go. They found the position of the secret door and quickly succeeded in forcing it open. There was a large opening in the wall about three feet square, but there was not a single article in it.

They did not give up, however, but began at once to break down the entire wall in hope that another closet remained concealed near to this one. They had worked only a few minutes where somewhere a secret latch became unhinged, revealing a still smaller opening in which was contained the articles which they had brought here in this bag.

The solicitor then opened up the bag, drawing from it many valuable jewels, engraved ornaments and watches. Among these was also a large package of notes of the Bank of England. When the solicitor put in his hand for the last time he drew forth a strange translucent bottle and upon putting the stopper into it found that it fitted exactly.

Not a doubt remained as to the crime and the criminal, and the prisoner, silent and pale, was taken and locked into a cell below.

Thus it was that Jordan Smith, while insisting upon his innocence when he already had been acquitted of a crime, succeeded at last in placing the hangman's noose around his neck.

The kiss he took from her lips was soft, negligent, and weary

FREDONIA'S LAST CASE

By Raymond S. Spears

THE GIRL AGENT OF THE CARCAJOUS SHEATHED HER CLAWS IN VELVET, AND CADONE NEVER FELT THEIR SHARPNESS

ONE day a messenger boy, Pan Gorley, was carrying two hundred and eighty-seven thousand dollars in negotiable securities from Lingster, Inc., to the National Furs Bank down Nassau, when just below Fulton Street two slithering young men darted from among the thronging bystanders and, having given the messenger a stunning whack with a knuckle-glove, filled with fine shot, seized the carrying case and made their get-away, while yet Pan was sagging to his knees. A stenographer screamed, but the bandits were instantly lost to view in the throng.

The Tryone Bonding Company, as a matter of routine, notified Manager Drenn of Carcajou Investigations, Inc., suggesting nothing at all. Drenn would know, of course, exactly what to do. The incident might have been merely a case of bandit luck, picking a messenger known to be a broker's headed toward the broker's bank.

On the other hand, big time workers against other people's portable properties would hardly take a mere chance. A tip over the telephone, or a wave of a hand might readily give an inside office tip to the watchful worker without. And in this case there had been a telephone call.

Among the Lingster, Inc., employees, as Manager Jonas Shipkin pointed out, Herbert Cadone might, perhaps, be studied, as unusually bright and possibly questionable. Shipkin hated to believe any of his boys could tie into a gang of holdups, he said, but at the same time there was Cadone. Manager Drenn himself looked the staff over, and Cadone was unmistakably

one who should be shadowed for a time, at least.

The young man dressed rather extravagantly from hat to shoes. He wore a pale, conspicuous suit of clothes, a bright hat, showed an unusual ring and sported a grass-green fresh water pearl as a stickpin. A swift survey of his night life revealed only too convincing evidence of his gayety and recklessness.

He was Mrs. Rennsley's preferred dancing partner. He was difficult to keep track of, disappearing most unexpectedly to the confusion of those assigned to trail him through his varied activities.

Bored, *blasé,* given to minutes of oblivious day-dreaming, Cadone surely had something on his mind. Miss Colese, of the Carcajous, found him a bit difficult to become acquainted with, for he was almost indifferent to pretty young women. But her own dancing won his favorable attention at last, and carrying her home in a taxi he revealed a rather definite disgust with life and a weariness of experience strange in a man so young.

"Well, I'm about through with it all," he declared frankly. "What's the use? The sticks—new scenes for me!"

"Bet you don't!" Miss Colese laughed at him. "How'd you live out yonder?"

"Oh, I've tended to that," he replied enigmatically. "I was born lucky."

She inferred that he had all he needed. She suggested the propriety of looking up his speculations, if any, and, sure enough by an oversight it had not been told to Drenn that Cadone had been permitted an investment account with the Edward Snashaw Brokerage Co.

Upon examining this account, it was found that Cadone had brought in, within a year, forty-five thousand dollars, which he invested in preferred stocks and bonds, carrying a margin of twenty thousand dollars on sixty thousand dollars' market value of well chosen securities, and the rest bought outright. No explanation was offered for the new money, which was checked in from three different banks on Cadone's own signature. The banks revealed deposits of some checks and a good deal of cash, the origin of which was exceedingly obscure.

"Reckon you've struck a true lead, Miss Colese," Drenn observed. "Keep at it. You're covered at Wallaby's as one of their buyers."

But Cadone dallied along a month, offering no revelations. Then one night when a theater and midnight supper had engrossed them, as they arrived at her home, he turned to her and inquired:

"By the way, do you like this detective work? I mean shadowing people, trying to inveigle them into exposing their crimes?"

"*What!*" she gasped.

"Please don't be surprised!" he urged. "I've wondered, sometimes, how it would seem to be tutored in the arts of shadowing and inveigling by a master of them all, Drenn of the Carcajous? You must have an interesting, exciting life, don't you? Your victims sometimes become violent, when they suspect you?"

"My victims—really, I don't quite get you!" she caught her breath.

"But you're not a buyer in the Frederick Wallaby Stores," he assured her. "And you are an operative for the Carcajous. I was in hopes you'd tell me all about it. I might even become your side partner, you know. What have you tied onto me so far, anyhow?"

II

SHE could not escape his gentle mockery. He seemed infinitely wise on this night. She wondered if he were, after all, a master criminal who played with fires, tempering the very metals with which he worked, fooling every one. Despite her several years of active experience, somehow he was completely right about her.

She recalled the evening on which he had suddenly fallen for her, becoming attentive and interested, where heretofore he had been quite indifferent. How had he learned the truth?

"Really, you must possess unusual sources of information—to suspect I'm a detective!" she laughed lightly.

"Your language is not sufficiently strong," he remonstrated. "I do not suspect

it; I know; the operator *Plumage*, alias No. 63—"

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it, I suppose—" she sighed—"naturally, you've now no interest in me—harboring that kind of notion!"

"Oh, on the contrary, you're much more interesting," he declared. "I merely did not wish to associate with you on a false basis. I could not bear the thought of having you misapprehend my own limitations—and breadths."

"How very honest!" she tried to meet his mockery.

"Indeed? You flatter me! I have my failings. I dare not include deceit of so charming a partner among them, however. We each have our own standards, of course."

"You criticise me, suggesting I'm a spy set to watch you?" she asked.

"Oh, not at all! I merely live up to my own ideals. You are useful, you perform valiant service in your way."

He pleaded the privilege of a kiss, a good night cap he called it. Rather dubiously she snipped him a reluctant privilege. She, or the Carcajous, had somehow fallen down in their attempt at secrecy. She noted, however, that his tone, his expression did not quite coincide with the look in his eyes. He was slender, of good figure, pale and thin-cheeked. His gray eyes were alight in varied moods.

He was on this evening in a teasing, playful humor, but at heart in a disconsolate mood. She suspected a certain dejection of weariness, as though the game had grown tiresome.

"Well," he remarked in parting, "I suppose now I'll have to take on a dark-olive-skinned beauty, in view of the failure of a charming, vivacious blonde to inveigle me into complete confession of whatever crimes I'm supposed to have committed. I have, of course, a general idea of the suspicions you harbor against me, but the actual charges?"

She hung her head. He was, indeed, attractive. He had given her a number of good times. She had found his courtesy and good nature difficult to resist. In her experience he was novel in an amusing, rather carelessly exuberant way. Now he stood revealed in an entirely different light from any which had showered upon him as he danced, sat in the shadows of a theater or supped, dined, or drove a good rented car through crowded nights. Her beguiling had been wholly in vain, she was sure, and it hurt.

"My dear," he remonstrated with her. "Has my fair play destroyed our relationship? Truly, you do not mean I should go on deceiving you?"

"But I thought I was, so nicely!" she choked.

"Did it mean so much to you? You are in no way to blame," he assured her. "Please tell Drenn that—I'll assure him of it myself. The last thing we should do is deceive ourselves—you and I. Don't you see, I desire in my human relationships to establish and maintain a perfect degree of honesty?

"I'll tell you this: Shipin told me to pack the securities, two hundred and eighty-seven thousand dollars' worth, to send to the bank for our account; he and I checked them; the hour was eleven thirty-two o'clock—so noted on the day-book; Gorley took the bag to depart. He did not know, of course, what the bag contained — it was locked. Lingster arrived some time before, say at ten fifty-five o'clock.

"He spoke to Shipkin, and I suppose ordered the transfer of the bonds and stocks to the bank for hypothecation. That, I assure you, is the extent of my knowledge."

"Oh, no it isn't!" she retorted quickly. "You claim to know I'm a Carcajou."

"Surely, is not the fact flattering to you?" he asked. "Doesn't it mean anything to you that I ascertained a fact so deeply hidden about you? Your recognition of the unique character of my green-pearly pin awakened in me a great deal of hope. You must have come from the upper Mississippi Valley to know about green pearls.

"When I divined that, I soon learned you were from Muscatine, Iowa. We have two accounts from Muscatine, you do not know. Through this connection I ascertained that my dear friend, Fredonia Co-

lese, has been for seven years a most talented operator for the Carcajous. They are proud of you, my dear, in Muscatine. To me the information was humiliating beyond any words of mine to express. Good-by!"

Thus he took his departure. Miss Colese caught her breath. She had been finding her duty in irksome conflict with her emotions. Despite a certain furtiveness of expression in Cadone's eyes as he looked at her, she had found him literally charming. She had told Drenn as much.

She now summoned her chief to tell of her evening, with its dénouement, with Cadone's cab number for later checking over.

"He said *good-by?*" Drenn inquired, and then told her to sleep well. For himself, he immediately notified the night manager of Carcajou headquarters to go pick up immediately the close-tailing of Herbert Cadone.

Cadone rolled away in the taxi, going up through Central Park and circling over to Broadway, returning down town on Riverside Drive—hours of looking the old town over once more. He swung down at dawn to breakfast in a Forty-Second Street restaurant.

Thence he went to his boarding house, reappeared in fifteen minutes and took a train for Buffalo, where he went to the office of the local Carcajou branch and introduced himself to the office girl just when a shadow from the Metropolitan headquarters was telling the Buffalo superintendent who the visitor was.

"I'm Herbert Cadone," he told the local head. "I see the Carcajous have a man after me. Better go through my suit cases, money belt and other stuff now. Probably we can get family rates by traveling together to Duluth, or anyhow, workers rates by steamer.

"I have six thousand seven hundred and eighty-six dollars and fifty-four cents with me now, and no negotiable or other securities. You've run me out of town. I don't care to be arrested on suspicion. If I am, I have a reputation to protect, anything you may wish to believe to the contrary."

"Why—er—how do you know—"

"None of your business, how or what I know," Cadone interrupted. "I'm on my way West. I worked for Lingster, Inc., nine years, and the first blanked thing that came along they tied a label on me. I had permission to open a stock account. Any other business of mine was private, none of your affairs. I resigned; my letter's in the office mail to-day.

"If you're going to take me back, now's your time. If you have any charges to make against me, you and your bonding company make them—only remember this: When you are through having stated your case, I begin. I go into the civil courts, showing my cards. I don't show them beforehand. You haven't a shred, a shadow of evidence against me. Tell Drenn what I say. Tell him Operator 39 is on the job."

"Eh—what!"

Herbert Cadone was told he was as free as air. Till the goods were on him, he would remain that free. He took the lake steamer to Duluth, and went on to the Yellowstone Park, having purchased a light roadster at St. Paul, loaded a camp outfit into the bustle and camped along the way. Having entered the north side of the park, seven days later he emerged through Jackson's Hole, and having paused a week at Rawlins, he drove eastward to Cheyenne.

He had lived all his life in New York born, bred, grown through boyhood and public schools into business, arriving finally at the covert, insinuating and overwhelming destruction of the edifice he had been making. Discovery that he was suspected of complicity in the crime had broken something in his soul.

True, he was a mixer, jovial, debonair; he danced with pretty women, flirted, perhaps more than he ought, and kept secret his own personal affairs. How well he knew the game stacked against him was clearly shown by the impudent confidence with which he met the tightening of the purse net of Carcajou detective operations. He showed them all their own cards.

His own, he told them, would be shown only at the proper time, to suit his occasion or need. If he could prove he was on the level, surely one hundred thousand dollars would be scant balm for a reputa-

tion ruined by false arrest under questionable accusation.

On his arrival in Cheyenne, he supposed he was on his way back to Broadway. For the first time in his life he had taken a real vacation. This was all novel to him; prairies, Rocky Mountains, the Mississippi Basin, the Dakotan bad lands, and even glimpses of unmistakable desert out beyond Laramie had come to his eyes. He had stopped his car to look at strange deer, and recognized them as antelope.

He would not have suspected four or five thousand miles of indiscriminating automobile highway adventure offered so much to a man whose idea of the ocean had been gained at Coney Island and Long Branch, of the country at Long Island house weekends, and of life on the main stem and by streets out from Broadway at Forty-Second Street.

Indeed, despairing retrospect had accompanied him even up the magnificent waters of the several lakes: Erie, Huron and Superior. Only when he was suddenly conscious of being alone, where he looked in every direction, with perhaps the horizon fifty or sixty miles distant, had he discovered the absence without explanation of every sign of human habitation.

Beneath his eyes were some eight or ten thousand square miles of the earth's surface, and no house, no human—nothing but grass, bad land and illimitable spaciousness. A great content soothed and calmed him. Life would never again be the same after seeing the waning glory of the sunset which now ensued while the skies and earth made him forget his shame.

III

WHEN he saw near the Busy Corner in Cheyenne, Wyoming, a café called the Wild Bunch, he chose it as an eating place. He had hardly seated himself, where he could watch the picturesque passers-by, plainsmen in their raiment or real estate sellers in theirs, tourists and natives, he was unprepared to see enter none other than Fredonia Colese, the clever operator of the Carcajous. She caused him to color then turn quite pale. She left no doubt in his mind, for she instantly crossed to his table to sit opposite, facing him.

Without a word she removed her gloves and touched her face here and there with practiced artistic skill. She ordered a regular dinner imperturbably, and when the waiter had departed she announced to Cadone:

"Drenn sent me here to meet you."

"What—how did he know—"

"Possibly it's our turn to know your affairs as well as you know ours," she smiled. "Of course, everywhere you went you left a trail. When you started into the Yellowstone, you inquired about the other side and the route to Rawlins. Keeping track of you was perfectly easy, much easier out in the open places than in Chicago, New York or San Francisco, even."

"They supposed you would be able to line me up, obtain my confession and inveigle me back without the formalities of extradition, I suppose," he remarked.

"Yes, if any one could," she admitted pleasantly.

"All right," he nodded; "do your stuff."

Both laughed and ate their dinners, which he insisted on paying for.

"You knew I'd be lonesome," he sighed. "You took advantage of it. Especially of the fact that my last memory of the metropolis would be of the evening with you."

"Of course; my chief claim to talent, you know."

They strolled around to the book and curio store without knowing exactly whither they were bound. He bought her a string of Indian wampum, against her protests, and six books about old days in the West, life of Wild Bill, of Calamity Jane, of The Hole-in-the-Wall Gang and the like.

"Is that your taste in literature?" she inquired.

"Surely. now," he replied earnestly, "having won the endless attention and the endless pursuit of the Carcajous, I may as well profit by the example of the Wild and Woolly, you know. I had hoped to hide out for all time, living on my loot, swag, or whatever it is I'm supposed to be living on. I see now I've a short life, but merry, in prospect. Accordingly—"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"How much of it do you mean?" she demanded.

"I express my exact feelings," he replied.

"We wondered were you going back to New York?" she asked.

"I did intend to, but not now." He shook his head. "I'm through. I hoped I should be able to return to find work. Of course, I'm under a cloud."

"Couldn't you remove it?" she asked quietly.

He hesitated. When he had reviewed the circumstances he shook his head.

"Impossible," he said. "The purple shadow of suspicion is easier to cast than withdraw. At that, you would not be here, if Drenn and his hounds didn't believe me guilty."

"True," she assented. "You have refused to explain."

"And you have assumed I am guilty till I prove myself innocent," he retorted. "I happen to be a native born American."

She gave him a quick, startled glance. A matinée movie drew his attention so they went in to see Queens of Despair, which happened to be showing. The tempting refuge awaiting beach combers in the South Seas did not at all please the young woman. Cadone obviously was only too interested in the dancing, the varied attractions and the struggle of the hero to escape the octopus tentacles of discouragement and cloying wickedness.

They dined together in the evening, after which he suggested a ride out to the tourists' camp ground, where automobile vagabonds of every State smoked over open fires and pitched their tents in the high prairies.

"You're going to camp here to-night?" she inquired.

"No," he replied. "I've taken a room indefinitely in town."

"Why indefinitely?" she asked.

"I wished to be here as long as you are," he replied seriously.

She burst into a light laughter.

"And I'm to be here as long as you are, I suppose," she commented.

"I could ask nothing better," he chuckled. "I'll open an account in a bank, perhaps buy a few shares in the local bucketshop and play the board. Naturally, I'd be running away with money, in order to gamble in stocks. You could report my bad habits. I wonder if Cheyenne hasn't an old-fashioned dance hall, too, for the edification of tourists? I'll find out. That'll be something else again. And bootleggers—"

"I believe you are making sport of your own weaknesses," she observed flatly. "Pretending you are pretending to be bad. As a matter of fact, you are—"

"A loose and wanton fugitive, as yet unindicted," he filled in. "Is that your idea?"

"Well, why not?"

"Or even why!" he shrugged his shoulders.

"You might save a lot of trouble by returning, telling the truth and having it over with," she suggested. "Of course, inside men who tip off bandits when to strike are worse because of treachery than those who are the actual stick-ups."

"And much more difficult to tie a tag on, too," he added.

"Oh, but crime never pays," she assured him. "The world is not large enough for a man to escape."

"Unless he goes to Guatemala, or sundry wild lands as yet not covered by extradition treaties."

"You've looked it up?"

"Oh, not especially; the information is bandied around in table conversation, popular fiction and even in news reports about the activities of eminent getawayists."

IV

HE was good as his word. He settled down to entertain the young woman who had frankly admitted she was in Cheyenne to rope him. No least sign of weariness or perturbation escaped him. He did remove after three or four days from the hotel to a boarding house, which was exactly across the street from the house of Superintendent Craig of the Carcajous, where she was to stay during her wait in Cheyenne. The case was to be conducted on the highest, open plane.

Long rides out over the prairies, picnics on the high, bare buttes and Rocky Mountain foothills, and dances, pictures and, even presently, calls on casual acquaintances who did not at all understand their anomalous relationship. Craig, old detective that he was, watched the process with amusement. Always something new springs up in this business of rounding up criminals.

Good as his word, Cadone played the board in the local stockbroker's, and as he knew certain of the securities, obtaining plenty of information from several Wall Street pages, he readily more than doubled the one thousand dollars which he put down on a twenty per cent margin, for he bought and sold on slight gains and recessions. Often Miss Colese accompanied him to the board room, where he told her his several reasons for making his varied purchases and sales.

"You were quite successful in New York, too," she observed.

"Yes, if any one ever gave me credit for it," he admitted sourly.

"But none of your accounts explained the gains which permitted you to hide some two hundred thousand dollars away somewhere," she observed.

"No?" he smiled. "Then you must have been remiss in your examination of my strictly personal affairs?"

"Not that we know anything about," she replied with some exasperation, adding: "If you'd only give us the straight of it! How easy it would be to clear yourself!"

"Then you'd go out of my life!" he replied unexpectedly. "Not in a hundred years—no, indeed!"

"Suppose I start for home to-morrow?"

"This'd be a lonely old world for me!" he sighed.

"I think I shall report you are impossible—and go," she said. "You are having entirely too good a time."

"If I might suggest it—" he looked away from her—"I'd be glad to roll as far east as Omaha or even Chicago. There are plenty of towns all the way. I'd drop you at the hotel, take you up in the morning, and this would facilitate your departure—and ease the strain on my—"

"On your conscience?" she asked with some malice.

"Oh, no! After nine years in a broker's office, how could I have such a trite and old-fashioned spiritual entity as a conscience?"

"You might at least indicate you're afraid of—of my influence over you!" She clicked her teeth. "Think how it hurts my professional pride—your cool assumption that I have failed utterly, fallen down on my job."

"Pride goeth before a fall," he reminded her. "The triumph of invincibleness was in your eyes when you tied to me in those hectic days before I found strength to flee from you."

"You had your nerve in Buffalo," she laughed shortly, "but your bluff was good. They were going to arrest you at the railroad or steamer dock, only your going to the superintendent with the suggestion of a suit for false arrest, and your letter of resignation made even Drenn hesitate. We read your letter. I learned it by heart:

"DEAR MR. LINGSTER:

"Kindly accept my resignation as your outside man. I should not for the world trouble you longer with my presence. The atmosphere of the office is for the first time stifling.

"May I express my appreciation of the many things I learned from you and my regret that I overstayed the limit of your trust and affection?

"Sincerely yours,

"HERBERT CADONE."

They were rolling westward up the long prairie grade toward Laramie when she quoted the letter, verbatim. He made no comment, turning the car around where they could see eastward into the immeasurable slopes of the Basin of the Mississippi River. She waited in vain for him to speak; ten minutes, half an hour, nearly an hour, while the descending sun behind them reflected in windows fifteen, thirty, perhaps sixty miles distant.

"You were badly hurt, Cadone," she observed at last. "The evidence against you was conclusive, you know."

"Well, why didn't you get busy then?" he inquired.

"There was just one missing link," she

admitted. "Perhaps I should say you had a good chain, with some missing links, and we had a weak gap in our own forging. I suppose you know that?"

"Of course—if I happen to be innocent," he replied rather bitterly.

"If you'd only explain your telephone message after you checked up the list of securities and four minutes before the hold-up."

"My telephone message?" he looked at her.

"Yes, the one to Pastell drug store—that morning."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"My offer remains good," he remarked after a time. "The ride down the South Fork of the Platte is interesting, or we could go to Denver and go East on the O-L-D trail. The pleasure of the journey would be somewhat mitigated by your strictly business attitude. Yet even that attention has compensations, you know—professional companionship in a way."

"I think you are positively insulting!" she declared angrily.

"You aren't—of course!" he slumped a little behind the steering wheel. "I can be only highly flattered at having you pay me such an honor—"

She glared at him, shuddered, colored and turned away. Her own humiliation at his angry accusation, but revealed the depths of his own feeling of regret or shame, whatever he was obliged to endure.

"I'll go with you—any way you think would be most interesting; the Lincoln, O-L-D, Yellowstone, Black Arrow, Buffalo Blood—any of the trails!" she exclaimed suddenly.

"You'd take that chance—with a crook?" he inquired.

"With you—yes," she replied.

"Suppose we start to-morrow," he planned. "Tell Craig we'll go South to Longmont, then Denver, then Trinidad. You have Carcajou representatives in each of those places. Then eastward along the Santa Fe trail down the Arkansas River. I've often wished I could see that adventurous land. The villages, according to the trail logs, are every twelve or fifteen miles apart. You can telephone each night—"

"You are considerate!" she interjected.

"And, of course, it's an open road. Another car could follow us."

"Really, you leave absolutely nothing for us to think about!" she said with some sarcasm, and something in quite a different tone, too.

"On the way I may have something to tell you," he explained. "You have read of and probably known professionally, of fugitives who circled wide, hurrying in hopeless flight, merely to breathe deeply of free air—knowing how surely they must expiate their sins, or another's!"

"Oh, yes!" breathlessly.

"I am prolonging my ecstasy to fill my memory against much desolation," he smiled, as though he might mean a good deal more than he said.

V

HE was good to his word. They rolled southward, looking at the barrier wall of the Rockies. A short run following a late start brought them to Longmont, where he left her at the hotel, and went himself to camp in the fine tourists' park. In the morning they went on to Denver, and stopped to leave word with the Carcajou superintendent, Reynall, who studied frankly the quizzical Herbert Cadone.

Fountain, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, La Junta—called "Hony," locally—skipping Trinidad by cutting across to the Arkansas valley followed. By easy stages of seven or eight score miles a day, they approached Kansas City. They sometimes lunched at the wayside, picnicking; sometimes they stopped in restaurants—cafés—and in towns where they spent the nights, she would suggest a motion picture or even a stroll along the streets, as though the long miles together had not wearied her of his presence. As for him, he struggled to forget that all this must come to an end.

At Kansas City, where they came to the brink of the Missouri River valley, he stopped at the urban line.

"I suppose you wouldn't care to go on any further?" he asked. "Omaha is up the road from here."

"You haven't told me yet," she reminded him. "The Carcajous never quit, you know."

"You're going to stay with me?" he asked, too eagerly.

"I did not say I should," she replied. "But the Carcajous. I'll receive orders here."

After dining together that evening, they went to a picture. They strolled across the State line into Missouri. They tarried despite a long day. When in the late evening they came to the Blackford Hotel, she said:

"I'll see you in the morning, anyhow. Come to breakfast, won't you? This may be our last meal together, you know."

He nodded, to go dumbly on his way to his own nearly sleepless night. In the morning, when he came down to the office of the Missouri House, where he stopped, bearing his suit case, he knew he was under surveillance. Somewhere among the several men in the lobby was a shadow whose presence he felt with an odd, shuddery and repulsive prickle of his skin. Giving no sign he checked out and went to the Blackbird, where in a few minutes he was joined by Miss Colese.

"You are quite dejected," she told him.

"Yes, because you had so little faith in your charm as to have me watched despite my engagement here with you this morning."

"I had you watched!" She looked at him puzzled.

He instantly laughed, his mood changing. His hunger was equal to four Ozark mountain pig chops, than which no sweeter meat was ever grown. She, too, was hungry, but her mood was not as gay as his. The Carcajous were watching her, too. No wonder he was happy!

"You'll be relieved if I'm withdrawn from this case!" she declared.

"My thought was not exactly that," he retorted. "I am merely rejoicing in the indication that even Manager Drenn has his doubts."

"What do you mean?"

Again he laughed inexplicably. Yet he was nervous when he awaited her at the big office building in which the Carcajous had their Kansas City headquarters. She came to the curb with her nose in the air and her eyes bright.

"I don't suppose you care to go east of the Missouri?" she inquired.

"Not alone," he replied promptly. "If I could be assured of being handicapped by your eyes, disturbed by your presence and kept fugitive in your watchfulness, I might."

"Either by Omaha or down the Missouri to St. Louis then," she hinted.

"Suits me," he nodded. "Suppose we go down the Missouri?"

"I'd love to," she assented. "You don't mind if I tell—"

"Certainly not. Anything to help you professionally!"

"Anything but telling me what I seek to know!" she retorted.

"But when I tell, the case will be closed," he replied, as she went to where a man was watchfully waiting with an eye emergent at a tall granite column.

Down the Missouri valley they left the prairies to roll through clearings and woodland crested hills. The open vastness was replaced by the close-in prettiness. Across the dusty roadway they saw ahead a bright pale blue snake six feet long like a living crystal flashing as it darted in the sunshine. They heard forest birds calling. The land was sweet and charming. At a river side town, where he came to pick her up at the hotel in the morning, he hesitated to go on his way.

"Heavy thunderstorms have made the dirt roads toward St. Louis pretty muddy," he explained. "But if we crossed the river here, took the State Fair Road and went through by Hannibal, on the Mississippi, the road would be much better. That is, unless you must go to St. Louis."

In answer she handed him a slip of paper which he read:

COLESE, K. C.,
Carcajous:
Inveigle him to Chicago, if feasible.
DRENN.

"Certainly!" he bowed to her. "I'm an easy victim of your wiles, you know."

"I know." She shrugged her shoulders, setting her teeth.

At noon, when they spread a basket lunch under a wayside oak, with the broad Missouri bottoms behind them, she sat tailorwise eating sandwiches, drinking hot bottled coffee and studying him.

"In some respects," she remarked, "you are entirely too easy. In others, you are quite impossible."

"I'm sorry," he admitted.

"Really—I believe you are laughing at me."

"Would you have me weep?"

"You ought to—in this predicament!"

To this he made no answer. The subject was not broached again until they were circling around Hannibal reviewing the relics and memories of the humorist, Mark Twain. The Mississippi was quite beautiful. They could but feel the significance of crossing this great river. On the west side was the romance of adventure, on the other the sordid realization of their actual relationship. Neither was at all satisfied.

Fredonia Colese had maintained her poise excellently. The professional exigencies had given her the most wonderful view of a thousand miles of prairies, mountain ranges, and now the charm of the Ozarks, the richness of the Missouri and Mississippi Bottoms—all leading to Chicago.

At no time had they lacked for conversation. Long silences did not mean they had exhausted their mutual interests, but merely the strange communion by which kindred minds discern topics beyond all discourse of the tongue or sign language. She was a detective bent upon ransacking the corridors of his conscience and memory, to destroy him.

His confidence or bravado had led him to play this game openly, according to the rules. The environs of Chicago were only too soon reached. In South Chicago, on the Lincoln Highway again, she desired a telephone privilege.

Her voice was close to tears when she emerged.

"They told me I've had my picnic," she revealed. "Now I'm to show results."

"Suppose you inveigle me to New York?" he inquired.

"Why—would you? But you said—the West!"

"The West is not unattainable from New York," he smiled. "All roads lead West from North River—the Hudson."

VI

WITHOUT a word she reoccupied the seat beside him and he let in the clutch to head into Indiana by way of Gary. The roads were too good for him to find excuse to tarry in their condition. He managed nicely, however, to forget to fill with gas, to overheat the motor, to dilly-dally along, making only six or seven score miles a day, when the concrete offered three hundred miles to ordinary driving.

The Carcajou operator did not fail to remark his lack of diligence. And she excused those not quite involuntary slips on his part when by chance he came in possession of her hand, to hold it, and at last in the dusk beside the highway, with the Metropolis just down the line, he confessed to her, not the crime of standing in on a highway robbery, but that no matter what she was doing to him he loved her even though his affection was impossible and hopeless.

The kiss he took from her lips was soft, negligent and weary. She hated, while she rejoiced in the opportunities of this case.

"Yet after all, I've failed!" she sighed. "I suppose every one has his weakness as I have mine. Oh, you've been perfectly lovely! I can't believe what we know you did."

"As long as you can't believe it," he chuckled, "I don't care what you testify."

With that he went on his way with her along the line. He turned up one of the by-way thoroughfares, however. She started, but asked no questions. They wound along a fine country road in Westchester. In the bright moonlight they came to a wonderful knoll, with a considerable acreage around it. It stood silent and dark. He stopped to look at this estate, lovely bungalow and splendid grounds.

"What do you think of it?" he inquired.

"Beautiful!" She sat up. "Oh, wouldn't you like to live there?"

"I'd thought of it," he replied. "It's

mine. Only you folks drove me away, you know."

"Yours! Then that's where you put the money!"

"Yes—which I made in real estate," he replied. "I didn't have to tell Lingster, obtain his written permission to speculate in real estate."

"Will you forgive me—that last suspicion?" she begged him.

"I'd forgive you anything," he replied.

"Who sent that telephone message?" she insisted.

"I don't know," he replied. "I didn't know one had been sent till you told me."

"Why—then it must have been—oh, he nearly got away with it! I mean Shipkin—the manager!"

"Poor devil!" Cadone shook his head. "He's married—three children."

"But he'd let *you* be accused!" Her venom was protective.

"I know—at that I could afford it," he answered. "I mean if you cared to close this case and make it your last with the Carcajous. We could live here, you see—and tour again, summers, or winters for that matter. It was Shipkin told me about you. He needed the money—sick wife—operations—daughter in college.

"I was sorry for him—I owed him a lot for education, for he's wise, you know. If you'll let me, I'll see him to-night. He's probably nearly crazy. Best hearted man you ever knew. I'm rich and can take care of him."

"You'd do that?" she asked.

"Sure! Why not? He broke me in right, when I was a kid, new and foolish. He taught me the rules of the game. When he broke them—I'd never had a chance to pay him back. Oh, it hurt! Every dollar I ever had is noted in my books. Shipkin told me to keep the record straight—it might be useful. When his turn came to need me, naturally, I was all there."

"The case is closed," she repeated. "My last case—too-o-o-o!"

SPOTTED FROM THE AIR

CRIMINALS now have their eyes on the commercial development of the airplane, and it will not be long until a ship, machine gun, and trained pilots will be a necessary part of every up-to-date police department.

Just recently an Oklahoma bank was held up and robbed by four men who drove to a near-by field, leaped into their plane, and soared away, while a posse swarmed about on the ground. In St. Louis a notorious gunman went to a flying school and became an aviator, and his plane was used by his gang to make their get-aways.

Officers of the law are beginning to look toward the sky for help, too, in trailing hunted men. The advantages of pursuit from above are innumerable.

On July 22, two desperate bandits shot and killed Deputy Sheriff William Barnes at Nilwood, Illinois, and disappeared into the woods. A dozen posses were organized and the pursuit was on. But the bandits were hard fellows to catch. They stole an automobile and drove it until it was wrecked against a telephone pole, then they pressed forward on foot.

The pursuers had almost despaired of making the capture when an airplane was sent from Springfield and began circling steadily about the area in which the men were known to be hiding. The bandits saw the plane and sensed that they were being trailed from above. They redoubled their efforts to escape.

Two days after the crime was committed the pilot of the plane sighted his quarry cutting across a cornfield. He notified the authorities by means of signals and the men were captured near Carlinville, Illinois, by two deputies.

Thus was the airplane, first developed by the war, used in making an arrest that might have taken weeks of constant pursuit.

Many police departments of large cities are studying the air now, and a new theory of pursuit may be developed along with the present era of fast motor cars, high-powered weapons and gas bombs.

There Bagley sat calmly eating his breakfast

ACCORDING TO THE BOOK

By Roy W. Hinds

IT WAS NELSE'S FIRST REAL JOB, AND HE HEEDED ADVICE, BUT HE DID SOMETHING ON HIS OWN HOOK, ALSO

IT was a crude job. The condition of the office pointed to the presence there of a strong man who knew little about the finer aspects of stealing. After he'd won his fight with the paymaster, who now lay dead on the floor, the slayer had employed a sledge hammer and a crowbar to get into the safe.

Considerable noise must have attended the job in the paymaster's office—the violent fight, the attack on the safe—but the office building stood apart from the mill, which claimed the chief attention of the night watchman. The watchman was probably making his rounds in the mill at the time. That couldn't be learned definitely, because none knew exactly when the crime was committed.

Discovery did not come until eight o'clock in the morning, when the assistant paymaster let himself in. The office was across the hall from the other offices, and it was locked. All the doors of the office building were locked. The slayer had evidently entered through a window and departed in the same way, pulling the window down after him, so there was no outward sign of the crime to draw the attention of the night watchman when he walked around the building on his subsequent rounds.

It developed that the night watchman had not been in the habit of entering the office building. He simply walked around it from time to time, tried the doors and gave it a casual looking over. There hadn't been a robbery in Warnertown in twelve years, and the night watchman had come to think of his duties as being nothing more nor

less than the duties of a fire marshal. He had quite an area to cover, the big lumber mill, the yard containing huge piles of lumber, and the space where stood the little office building. And, furthermore, what was there to steal around the mill or the office either?

If it hadn't been for the murder, only two or three persons in Warnertown would ever have learned that the paymaster, lulled into carelessness by the absence of robberies, occasionally got the money for the pay roll from the bank on the afternoon preceding pay day and that the money lay in the safe overnight. The paymaster and his assistant liked to get to work on the envelopes promptly at eight o'clock on the morning of pay day.

The bank did not open until nine. Had the paymaster been a vigilant and careful man in all respects, he could easily have made arrangements with the bank to get the money at eight. But he hadn't bothered about that. He or his assistant drew it out during banking hours of the previous day, and some of the envelopes had been made up before night.

All had vanished, the envelopes already made up as well as the money waiting to be counted out and put up—a total of eight thousand and sixty dollars and a few odd cents.

The two officers in Warnertown—Paddy Miles, marshal, and young Nelse Overton, deputy sheriff, were soon on the job.

"I telephoned the sheriff at Blaineville," the assistant paymaster told Nelse. "He said he'd be right over."

This was all right. Nelse's first thought was that he should do that at once, though Nelse couldn't help wishing that he'd be permitted to take charge of this case. Life in Warnertown—in all of Blaine County for that matter—had been a humdrum business for an enterprising young deputy sheriff like Nelse Overton. Nelse's star glistened with newness—he'd had it about two weeks—and he still felt rather self-conscious when introduced to strangers as the new deputy sheriff.

Nelse Overton was shocked by the crime. The paymaster had been a good friend of his. For a minute or so he was a man gazing on the body of a friend, and then he became an officer. The voice of the paymaster's assistant, Asa Rowles, sounded at Nelse's side, telling Nelse about the sheriff having been notified.

"Yes—sure," Nelse rejoined. "That was the thing to do. Said he'd be right over, eh? Where's Paddy Miles?"

"He just came down the hill."

The deputy sheriff left instructions that nothing in the office was to be touched, and then stepped outside to meet the marshal. They went in and viewed the body together. Almost the whole town was in the mill yard by this time. Nelse deferred a few minutes to Paddy Miles, who was considerably older as a man and as an officer—and then he saw that Paddy didn't know exactly what to do.

Nelse went outside and called for volunteers. He wanted three or four automobiles, men and guns. He got a ready response.

"Do you think it was Bagley?" some one asked Nelse.

"It probably was," he said. "Anyhow, we want to begin searching." He deputized three citizens, and put each one of them at the head of a posse. "You fellows scatter out among the hills," he said. "I'll wait here for the sheriff—he ought to be here any minute now. Then I'll probably take a crew out myself."

It was only twelve miles from Blaineville, the county seat, to Warnertown. The sheriff came before the last of the posses had started. He approved Nelse's action. The coroner had come with the sheriff.

An hour or so before noon Nelse Overton finished the business of inspection in the paymaster's office. He and the sheriff had discussed every possible bit of evidence. The sheriff, who'd come on the ground with a fixed idea, formed when he listened to a story of what had happened over the telephone, clung to that idea.

"Bagley's the man," he announced. "Except for the killing, it's the way Bagley does things. Look at what he done in that store over at Fisherville a month back. Almost the same thing, only he didn't kill the storekeeper. He tied him up, and then ripped the safe to pieces, just like this one.

But the paymaster here was a little too much for Bagley. He couldn't handle him like he did that old storekeeper, so he knocked him cold with a piece of pipe or something like that—hit him harder'n he meant to maybe — anyway, he killed him. Leaving the killing out—it's Bagley's work through and through. Well, it's time we fetched him in. Now, Nelse, you'd better—"

"I'm not so sure Bagley's the man," Nelse interrupted. "It never seemed to be Bagley's way to come into the towns. Oh, I know he's an outlaw and all that, sheriff—and he'd done about all the dirty work there's been done in this county in six months—but I don't think we ought to get set on Bagley, and maybe let the real man get a jump on us."

"Now, see here, Nelse," the sheriff returned, a trifle unpleasantly, for he was impatient with those who disagreed, "don't fiddle around on this case. It's the first real job you've had in your township here. This 'll be a real job—to bring Bagley in for this thing. Not like hunting bootleggers. Bagley 'll shoot, and he'll shoot to kill, and every officer in the county's got to hunt for him.

"Posses 're out now, but it's officers' work —getting Bagley. I want him brought in by an officer. I know you been reading detective books, and you're a man with ideas, but the job here is to get Bagley. Don't let your imagination run off and fiddle around on something else while Bagley's getting away. Get Bagley."

There was a sarcastic note in the sheriff's reference to detective books. Nelse had ventured a few ideas while they were looking the office over, but the sheriff hadn't thought much of them. He'd slighted Nelse's ideas, in fact, and a man is likely to keep most of his thoughts to himself after a rebuff like that. The sheriff, the whole town, talked Bagley. Nelse thought it probably was Bagley's work, but he wanted to keep his mind open. He'd read somewhere that a detective should do that.

He was a little touchy on the subject of detective books. He'd been "kidded" a lot about reading them. Clyde Hackett, who, it was generally understood, got his livelihood out of a gambling game he ran in his rooms over the Blenner hardware store, and who had a gift for biting sarcasm, always called Nelse "Sherlock Holmes." That hurt Nelse.

These two men instinctively disliked each other. The professional gambler, a smooth individual of middle age, never let slip an opportunity to "kid" the young deputy and his glistening star. Nelse could never think of an answer to Hackett's witticisms until some hours after they were uttered, when, smarting still, he thought of biting comebacks.

Nelse had been tipped off by his superiors at the county seat to shut his eyes to lights from Clyde Hackett's windows and deafen his ears to the click of poker chips. Clyde Hackett's game had been winked at for a year or more in Warnertown. Some of the most prominent citizens in town liked to play poker there. The dead paymaster had been a frequent player in Hackett's poker game. It was a quiet game of big stakes.

Clyde Hackett was a thorn in the side of Nelse Overton, a source of constant irritation. Hackett was usually loafing along Main Street in daytime, and delivered his shots as Nelse walked up and down the street. Hackett called him "Sherlock," but he always put a friendly air on the thing, and was never insulting. Nelse concealed the fact that Hackett got his goat, and that isn't easy to do day after day. And still a man who breaks under ridicule, one who shows his temper, lets himself in for more, as Nelse knew.

And now the sheriff, Nelse's superior officer, took the detective books lightly. Nelse Overton still had the shyness of youth, and it is the way of youth to keep ideas back when one thinks they will be scoffed. And what a ridiculous position Nelse Overton's ideas would place him in if they didn't turn out to be right.

"Get Bagley," the sheriff repeated as Nelse, his feelings hurt, stood silent, thinking.

"All right, sheriff—I'll get him," Nelse promised.

"And Nelse," the sheriff assured him, "I like you, and I think you'll make a good officer. I'm going to put every deputy in

the county on this case. We'll search the hills, and some of us will bring Bagley in. But this crime was committed in your territory. It's your job. I'm going to let you say where you'd like to hunt for Bagley."

"Well," Nelse said quickly, grateful for that much, anyhow, "I'd like to go into the Boxwood Hills."

"Just what I thought you'd say—the Boxwood Hills. That's the toughest and the wildest spot in the county, and that's where Bagley's been hanging out, I do believe. All right—take a couple of men along and comb the Boxwood Hills. And, Nelse," the sheriff added, "I've heard stories about the folks here joshing you—they do that with young officers, you know, and you're about the youngest deputy this county's ever seen. Listen here, Nelse—all that joshing will stop if you get Bagley."

II

A CURL of smoke rising above the treetops down in the glen caught Nelse Overton's eye. He had driven his small car within a mile of this spot. The two men searching the Boxwood Hills with Nelse had gone off in different directions. This was the second day of the hunt for Bagley, and it was yet early in the morning. The curl of smoke meant a breakfast fire. He looked at it and meditated. Then he decided to go down into the glen alone.

Perhaps twenty minutes later Nelse Overton found himself looking through the trees at a man eating breakfast. Behind the man and his fire was the mouth of a cave. This cave pierced the wall of a cliff. One by one various signs impressed themselves on the deputy sheriff. He saw evidences that this spot was a permanent camp—and he was certain that he now had in front of him Bagley, the outlaw.

The man certainly fitted a description of Bagley. He was sitting on a box and eating off a larger box, yet even in that position Nelse could see that he was a tall man with powerful shoulders. He had a red beard, too, and a nose that had been broken. There was no doubt about it. The man was Bagley—and Nelse Overton realized that he had a job on his hands.

Of course, he could have killed Bagley without any trouble the moment he laid eyes on him. He could kill him now. He had only to take aim and fire, and Bagley would never know what had hit him. Nelse had numerous reasons for thinking Bagley would kill him on sight. A glint of sunlight flashed off an object lying on the box among the breakfast dishes. It was a pistol, close to Bagley's hand. There was another pistol in Bagley's holster on his hip. Bagley was ready for business.

This was the first time Nelse Overton had ever laid eyes on the outlaw. Bagley had evaded capture about six months. His lawlessness had consisted of holdups and robberies, if he wasn't guilty of the paymaster's death at Warnertown.

It was likely that he was guilty of that. A man couldn't follow Bagley's way of life long without finding it necessary to commit murder. And still Nelse wondered why Bagley, if he'd got the eight thousand dollars out of the lumber company's safe hadn't left the county. He could have gone a long ways off with that much money, and he might have known that he'd be hunted with a vim for murder.

Bagley had started out as a bootlegger. The officers had chased him around, and he'd had several fights with them. They made it so hot for Bagley that he gave up peddling whisky and went in for robbery. He was a daring, stubborn man, and he clung to Blaine County, even though he must have known that each crime simply goaded the officers into searching for him all the harder. If he'd had any sense at all he'd have pulled his freight long ago, especially after he added murder to his misdoings.

But there Bagley sat, still in Blaine County, calmly eating his breakfast. He might have known that every officer in the county was searching for him.

Nelse wanted to get Bagley alive. He didn't want even to wound him. And he wanted to get him alone. If he did that he'd no longer be joshed about taking his job so seriously. Clyde Hackett's sarcastic "Sherlock Holmes" would fall flat. An officer had only to do one good job to silence ridicule. The face of Hackett, always fresh-

ly shaved, kept appearing in the consciousness of the deputy sheriff—Hackett, whose most friendly remarks seemed to veil a sneer—a man who lived off others.

A professional gambler was a leech, in the opinion of Nelse Overton, and he had lost respect for the prosecuting attorney's office at Blaineville. Pressure had been brought to bear there to keep the law off Hackett. Prominent citizens liked to sit in Hackett's game, and they'd taken measures to keep an industrious officer from making a raid. Well, Nelse Overton had a chance to silence the sneering jibes of Clyde Hackett. Certainly Hackett had Nelse Overton's goat when he'd stop to think of him in a situation like this.

The thing to do, of course, was to get the drop on Bagley before he finished eating and got to his feet. Bagley presented a profile view to the deputy sheriff, which accounts for the distinctness with which Nelse saw the flattened nose. He'd have to get closer to Bagley.

Nelse crept forward, a step at a time, and he chose the ground on which to put his feet. There must be no snapping twigs. He had a pistol in each hand. He moved in a direction first to get squarely behind the outlaw.

But Bagley must have detected some movement among the trees out of the tail of his eye. He came onto his feet, facing toward Nelse Overton, and with a pistol in each hand. He couldn't see Nelse, who was behind a tree. Bagley sprang for shelter, too, but before he could get to the rock Nelse sang out:

"Stand, or I'll kill you!"

Bagley was in the open. A good dozen paces stood between him and the rock. It would be suicide to run for it. Bagley had the instinct of the fighter and the hunted man, and he knew that he was temporarily at a disadvantage. He halted, glaring toward Nelse Overton.

"Drop those guns!" Nelse commanded.

He had the drop on Bagley, and he let Bagley see one of his pistols. Bagley also saw part of Nelse's face. The outlaw fired. The bullet whizzed past Nelse's ear. Nelse fired, but Bagley wasn't touched. Nelse shot again just before Bagley disappeared behind the rock. And then the game of strategy began.

The deputy darted from tree to tree, seeking to circle the rock. Bagley couldn't fire without exposing a hand and he couldn't take aim without exposing part of his face. And neither could Nelse Overton. Nelse watched the rock, its corners, and its top. He no longer had an idea of capturing Bagley without at least wounding him. He intended to shoot at the first sign of the fugitive.

III

IN this fashion, darting from tree to tree, Nelse circled so that he saw at various times all sides of the rock. He got no glimpse of Bagley. He had an idea that Bagley was going around the rock in such a way as always to keep out of sight. So he wasn't prepared when Bagley pounced on him from behind a tree.

Bagley had simply used the rock for shelter until he could back into the woods, and there he waited for Nelse Overton to come within reach—waited always at an advantage.

He was a heavy man, Bagley was—fifty pounds heavier than the deputy sheriff. They went down, the deputy on the bottom. One of Nelse's pistols clattered out of reach, but he held to the other, and fought like a wild cat. Bagley had put one of his pistols in its holster, and with that free hand he twisted Nelse's wrist until he dropped the second gun. Bagley kicked it away with his boot. The deputy was unarmed now, but he fought just the same.

He knew more about the science of fighting than Bagley. He proved that when he struck the pulse in one of Bagley's wrists with a fierce, sharp blow, struck with his knuckles in such way as produce momentary paralysis in Bagley's hand. The hand went limp, and Bagley's pistol dropped. Nelse clawed at Bagley's holster, striving for the outlaw's other pistol, now that the one he had dropped had rolled out of reach. In the struggle for the last of the four pistols that, too, was knocked away—and they went at it, man to man.

Each man seemed to realize that his chief

danger lay in the other obtaining one of the pistols. The nearest gun was six feet away. Bagley had no doubt as to his physical superiority, and he was content to fight it out in that fashion. Nelse Overton was afraid to get closer to the pistols, for Bagley, on top, could reach the gun first.

So the fight edged farther and farther from the guns.

They smashed each other with their fists, but quarters were too close for much damage in that respect. They rolled completely over two or three times, but Bagley always came out on top. Nelse fought with his fists, his nails, his teeth and his boots, but did no great damage. The outlaw held on, waiting for a chance to deliver a smashing blow with his fist. If he got that in, Nelse Overton would be paralyzed.

A lot happened in a few seconds, enough to smear with crimson the faces of both men and to tear their shirts into strips. Suddenly Bagley realized that he was weakening. A series of short-arm jabs in the abdomen and ribs, none of which had seemed serious, had a cumulative effect. Bagley knew nothing about the science of in-fighting, by which the trained pugilist wears down his antagonist.

Nelse Overton wasn't a pugilist, but he had studied and practiced boxing. He kept jabbing away. Bagley's breath came shorter and shorter. He struck tremendous blows, but they landed on Nelse's arms, shoulders and the side of his head. Nelse kept the vital contacts covered. Bagley helped to wear himself out, and he howled with rage and pain when his fist, missing the target, struck a sharp rock embedded in the ground.

Nelse got a sweeping, upperhanded shot at Bagley's chin then, and he took it. The bigger man was stunned. Nelse rolled out from underneath, clung to Bagley, and beat him into submission.

He sat on the ground beside the helpless outlaw, getting his breath and thinking about tying him up, when his two comrades put in an appearance, having heard the shots.

The capture of Bagley was an accomplished fact.

They secured the prisoner, and then began a systematic hunt for the money stolen from the lumber company safe. They failed to find a sign of it. Bagley doggedly denied having the money, and just as doggedly he insisted he knew nothing about it—that he hadn't heard until this moment of the murder and robbery. They tried all sorts of ways to trap him, but they failed. It was almost noon when they gave up the hunt for the loot.

They marched their prisoner to the automobile a mile away. They were a good sixty miles from the county jail at Blaineville, and the roads were terrible. The officers conferred.

"My idea," said Nelse Overton, "is to go round by Cableton. That will make the trip forty miles farther, if we go over the Sunset Trail from Cableton to Blaineville—but it's only ten miles or so from here to Cableton. We can telegraph from there and get instructions maybe. We can stay there for the night, too. There's a good strong jail for Bagley in Cableton. And we can start out from there fresh—in the morning."

That seemed a good idea—anything to avoid the road back through the Boxwood Hills and across the county to Warnertown and Blaineville. Cableton was over the line in another county, but there they could get onto the paved automobile road. It was about a hundred miles from Cableton to Blaineville by the automobile road, and only seventy by the mountain roads, but the hundred miles could be made much quicker and easier than the seventy.

A surprise awaited Nelse Overton in Cableton. It came when he and his brother officers appeared at the Cable County jail to ask safekeeping overnight for their prisoner. The sheriff of Cable County informed them that the loot from the Warnertown safe had been found that very morning at the edge of Cableton. It was in an old suit case, the eight thousand dollars, hidden under a small bridge—hidden, so it would seem, in a perfectly safe place. Small boys, relentless prowlers, had found the suit case—pulled it into the light of day from a place which would never be discovered by any one hunting for it. It was an accident. The suit case was locked. The boys smashed the lock, and fell back from the contents in amazement.

The police, counting the money, found that the amount and the denominations of the bills tallied with the description of the money stolen from the Warnertown safe. A more detailed description of the money was obtained by telegraph, as the bank cashier in Warnertown still had the slip which the paymaster had presented and which designated the denominations of the bills he wanted for the pay roll. It was the lumber company's money, beyond question. It was now in a Cableton bank.

The Blaine County officers and the Cable officers talked it over. The theory was advanced that Bagley, the outlaw, had come down out of the hills and hidden the money at the edge of Cableton until such time as he was ready to make his flight. He intended probably to go through Cableton, and the money would be handy for him there.

But Nelse Overton did not accept this idea. He hastened down town, and in a telephone booth he talked over long distance to the sheriff and prosecutor of his own county. Then he and his brother officers took a trip out to where the money had been found. It was under a bridge along a secluded road leading off the Sunset Trail, about a quarter mile off the main highway.

Nelse Overton's head buzzed with curious ideas. He went right back into town and talked again with his superiors over the telephone. Along toward evening he held a third telephone conversation with Blaineville, and this time he won the reluctant consent of his superiors to some suggestion he offered.

"We might not start back for two or three days," Nelse announced.

IV

NELSE OVERTON sat in the office of the Cable County jail on the morning following Bagley's capture. City detectives and policemen wandered in and out of the jail office, and some of them stopped to chat with the young detective. He seemed rather proud of himself, for he had brought in his man, and a morning newspaper had made quite a story of it. It had drama, the story had—the little town of Warnertown, the character of the prisoner, the murder and robbery, the man hunts, the capture. Nelse had given a lengthy interview, and he was now giving even a longer one to a reporter for an evening paper. A policeman standing behind the reporter shook his head at Nelse, and after a time got him to one side.

"Just a friendly tip," he said. "I see by the morning paper that you're making a trip across the hills with your prisoner. The other officers have gone back, eh—on the train. Well, I wouldn't talk much more to the reporters. That fellow you're taking back might have friends in town—and they might meet you out on the road. See what I mean?"

But Nelse smiled. He thanked the policeman. The latter shrugged his shoulders and turned away. He said to another policeman:

"That rube deputy talks too much. He ain't never had his name in the paper, I expect, and this is a big chance. He's making the best of it. Even telling that reporter he's going to take the money back with the prisoner. Wants to be a hero in his home town."

And a full and complete story appeared in an afternoon paper. Certain officers in Cableton let out a howl. The story told of the deputy's intention to transport both his prisoner and the recovered loot over the mountain road to Warnertown and Blaineville—and the deputy was to travel alone!

Despite numerous friendly tips, Nelse Overton set out with his prisoner, bright and early next morning. Nelse sat at the wheel of his small open car—Bagley, handcuffed and legironed, beside him. Under the cushion of the rear seat was a satchel stuffed full, yet rather light in weight. It certainly seemed a hazardous venture. Some of the city officers voiced their disapproval of Nelse's methods. Others said nothing, and wondered how it would all come out.

If things went smoothly, Nelse Overton should arrive in Blaineville with his prisoner about two o'clock in the afternoon. But things did not go smoothly.

A high powered automobile of the roadster type preceded Nelse Overton along the mountain road by about half an hour. This

car contained three men, and they were a trifle crowded in the one seat. They were citified fellows.

"How about the prisoner?" one of these men inquired. "Shall we turn him loose?"

"No. We'll handcuff him to something, so he'll be there when that rube dick comes to. Let the dick take him on in. The money won't make so much difference if that prisoner isn't lost. There's no connection then between us and that Warnertown business. We simply went after the money that Bagley stole originally—see? That town wants the prisoner—and they'll forget about this after they send him to the 'sliding platform.'"

The other men shuddered at this reference to the gallows.

"That's right," one of them conceded. "Quicker they swing him, better it 'll be for us."

Eighteen miles out on the mountain road two of these men lurked behind a bowlder. The third sat in the car, which had been driven out of sight among the trees. The prospective victim of the holdup, who'd be knocked insensible, wouldn't get a glimpse of the automobile and the man in it.

Nelse Overton's little car climbed slowly up the steep grade, at the top of which was the bowlder behind which two men lurked. The bandits had tied handkerchiefs over the lower part of their faces. Both came up to the car on the driver's side. Nelse Overton didn't have a chance. Had he stepped on the gas, they had only to halt him with a bullet, and he couldn't develop power enough on that grade to dash out of harm's way. The bandits had Nelse covered. They didn't worry about the prisoner.

Nelse obeyed the commands that rattled at him. He got out of the car, hands over head. He was disarmed. His back was to the car, and so were the backs of the bandits. One shifted his pistol so that he held it by the barrel. The man's arm flashed upward, but that blow never fell.

A bullet from the car broke his arm. The pistol dropped to the road. The other bandit was restrained from firing by the prisoner's voice: "Drop that gun or I'll kill you!"

Numerous things happened speedily then. Another automobile climbed the grade, and in it were the two Blaine County officers who had been with Nelse Overton in the Boxwood Hills. They hadn't returned home at all. Another man peered, frightened, from among the trees—saw the situation, and fled, but he started a moment too late. Nelse Overton had seen him. Nelse started in pursuit. The other officers took care of the two bandits.

The holdup men studied the "prisoner." It wasn't Bagley at all. At the edge of Cableton Bagley had been transferred to another automobile and this detective, dressed for his part, had taken Bagley's place beside the deputy. Bagley had been taken back to the Cableton jail. And furthermore, the money had been sent out of Cableton by express the day previously. The bandits knew all this, or suspected something like it, the moment they discovered they were trapped.

It wasn't long before Nelse Overton returned to the road with the third prisoner—and that man was Clyde Hackett, the Warnertown gambler. Nelse, in pursuing Hackett, also had seen the roadster.

V

"I NEVER thought Bagley did it," Nelse Overton told the prosecuting attorney after all his prisoners had been landed in the Blaine County jail. "Bagley wouldn't have any way of knowing that the paymaster at the mill handled the money that way. Bagley never came into the towns. He played crossroad stores and places like that. I figured it was somebody who knew the paymaster's habits. I thought of Clyde Hackett, but at that time I didn't feel like mentioning his name.

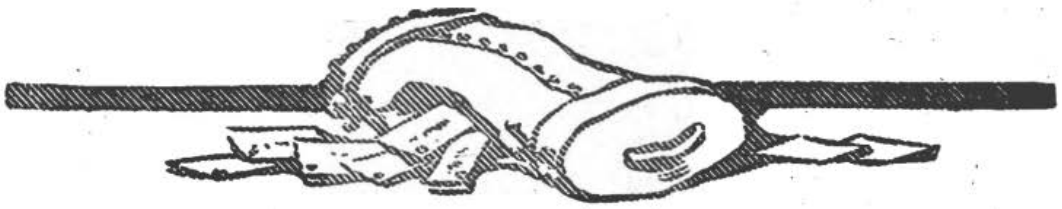
"I saw that roadster in front of Peeler's drug store that afternoon. That car and the two men in it—well, they've been in my mind ever since the paymaster was killed." Nelse didn't say that he told the sheriff about this, but the sheriff had made light of it.

"Well," he went on, "I went out and got Bagley, like I was told to do—and then

when I found out about the money being found in Cableton, I thought maybe there'd be a chance to draw the murderers out of their hole by making them think they could get the money back. I've read of things like that in detective books—how it's a good scheme to bait a crook, especially with money that he's stolen and then lost. It was all according to the book."

Nelse smiled. Guess he wouldn't he laughed at now for reading detective books. The prosecuting attorney nodded approvingly and said:

"It isn't the strongest case in the world—the murder case—but it will do. They're guilty all right—Hackett and those two fellows—and they kicked that office to pieces to make it look like one of Bagley's jobs. We've got them pretty well linked up. That car and those two men were seen in Warnertown on the afternoon of the murder. And they hooked themselves up when they went after you, thinking you had the money they'd stolen and then lost. And Hackett fixed himself by joining them in Cableton and going out with them. A foolish thing for him to do, but I suppose it looked easy, and Hackett thought he could keep out of sight. Well, Nelse, it's a good piece of work. You cleaned up the murder, and you got Bagley, too. If I were you I'd go on reading those detective books."



AN ORPHAN FORTUNE

ON the 18th of April, 1893, a Philadelphia real estate dealer, accompanied by two friends, made a trip to Washington which uncovered one of the greatest mysteries that has ever confronted secret service officials in this country.

Visiting the Secretary of the Treasury the real estate man, Timothy F. Nealis, informed him that he had in his possession several hundred thousand dollars worth of bonds, specimen bank notes, plates and dies, and other government property which the Treasury officials did not know existed. At the statement Nealis and his friends made the Secretary of the Treasury was astounded.

No branch of our government is more closely guarded than the Treasury Department. Every transaction that takes place there is carefully recorded, and the records are checked over each day to make sure that there have been no mistakes or false entries made. At the end of each day every bond or document that is in the custody of the Treasury Department must be accounted for.

The plates and dies from which money or bonds are printed are, if such a thing is possible, even more closely guarded. Because of their nature they would be worth a fortune to the criminal. No precaution is considered too great to make sure that they do not get into the hands of counterfeiters.

After they have been used, all the plates and dies, except the master die, are destroyed in the presence of Treasury officials by melting. The master dies are locked away in the Treasury vaults and are kept inaccessible to all but a few of the highest Treasury officials.

These are a few of the measures that are taken to safeguard the money and bonds which the government issues. In addition to this all of the resources of the secret service are constantly being used to uncover and prevent any attempts to imitate them.

To one who knows of these precautions and safeguards it would seem impossible for any one to get around them without being detected. Yet when Timothy F. Nealis made the statement that he had securities worth almost half a million dollars, together with a quantity of other materials, the Treasury officials knew nothing of them. The statements of the Philadelphia real estate man seemed incredible. But he had the bonds, papers, and other things with him.

As he laid them out on the desk in front of him they were mute proof that somewhere in that great machine which safeguarded the country's money there had been a break—that some one had found a loophole through which a fortune had been withdrawn without any one knowing it. Mr. Carlisle, then Secretary of Treasury, took charge of the securities and dies personally after hearing the story Mr. Nealis told.

The secretary was much surprised that such a collection of valuable government possessions had by any chance fallen into private hands, and as soon as his visitors had left he called in Chief Drummond, of the Secret Service Division, and stated the facts to him, with instructions to investigate the whole matter.

Using the information furnished by Mr. Nealis the government agents were soon able to uncover the remaining facts in the case. The story of the strange manner in which this fortune in securities disappeared without any record having been made of it, how it was almost thrown away as rubbish and then casually given away to a man who kept it for months before he learned of its value make the secret service report one of the most remarkable documents in the government files.

In addition to being a real estate dealer, Timothy Nealis occupied his spare moments by collecting rare coins, stamps, annd other curios. His hobby was well known to his friends, who from time to time sent him any odd papers and documents they came across.

More than a year before his trip to Washington, Nealis received from a friend who is in the safe business a bundle of stuff which had been found in a secondhand safe bought in Washington, District of Columbia. At the time of the sale this safe was locked, but the auctioneer promised to give the combination or key to the person buying it. This he failed to do, and after waiting for a considerable time the purchaser broke open the safe and found in it the materials which later figured in the mystery.

The owner had no idea of the value of his find and did not stop to examine it carefully. Seeing at a glance that there were specimens of United States currency in the collection, and knowing the fondness of Mr. Nealis for coins, stamps and curios in general, he mentioned the find to him and promised to give him the material after he had held it for six or eight months to determine if any inquiries from the former owner were made.

The materials were bundled up and thrown carelessly into a drawer of an office desk where they lay for six months, several times in danger of being thrown out as rubbish when the desk was cleaned. In that bundle so carelessly tossed about were three hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollars' worth of District of Columbia bonds, receipts and private papers of the Columbia Bank Note Company, specimen bank notes ranging in value from five hundred dollars to ten cents, plates and dies for the printing of stamps and stamped envelopes, a number of first mortgage gold bonds of the Southern Maryland Railroad Company, private Congressional reports of the Committee on Financial Affairs to the Treasurer of the United States, autograph letters of the Secretary of the Treasury, and much other valuable government material.

The property by rights belonged to the government, and yet the Treasury had no knowledge of its existence. For six months the bundle lay there unclaimed. Then the purchaser of the safe concluded the papers were worthless and gave them to Mr. Nealis. The collector looked them over and took out the only things that looked to him as if they had any value—the originally approved designs of the fractional and national currency, extending up to five hundred dollar bills. The rest of the papers he tied up and put away until he would have time to inspect them more carefully.

It was not until eight months afterward that he got them out again. The first articles he looked at were the bonds. It was not until he had carefully read the body of one of these documents that he realized their value. They proved to be the collateral for a current or running loan of the District of Columbia, known as 3.65 per cent bonds. As he looked over more of the documents he saw that he had a fortune in front of him.

In the heart of almost every man there has at some time been born the wish that he might wake up some morning and find that in some miraculous manner a large sum of money had come into his possession. Many are the dreams of travel and exploration that have been mapped out for just such an occasion, but for the average man there has been only the wish and the dreams.

By a whim of fate Nealis now found himself in a position stranger than anything he had ever imagined. Wealth was in his grasp. There was nothing to prevent him from taking the bonds and using them for himself. But his sense of honesty proved stronger than the temptation, and he decided the only thing to do was turn the bonds over to the government. Accompanied by ex-Sheriff Wright and another friend he went to Washington and there turned over the stuff to the Secretary of the Treasury.

These were the facts furnished to the secret service men on which they based their investigations. On examining the documents they found that the bonds were all printed by the Columbia Bank Note Company, of Washington, District of Columbia, which formerly did the government engraving and printing. The plates from which these bonds were printed were the property of the District of Columbia, but they were in the possession of the bank note company.

Ten years before the company had advertised the sale at auction of their effects. A committee had been appointed by Acting Secretary H. F. French to attend the sale and take any steps necessary to protect the interests of the government. By an agreement with the company the bonds, plates, and other property in which the government was interested were reserved from the sale. Three years later another committee was appointed and instructed to obtain from the Columbia Bank Note Company these plates and others.

On the 10th of June, 1885, the committee reported to the secretary that the plates had been destroyed in their presence that day by being melted. In 1874 William A. Richardson, Secretary of the Treasury, contracted with the bank note company to print a quantity of United States notes and fractional currency. The designs had been sent to the company in pencil form. It was the original bank notes printed from these designs and presented for approval, together with the bonds and other materials that had fallen into the hands of Mr. Nealis.

The safe in which the valuables were found had been the property of John F. Olmstead, formerly president of the bank note company. In an interview which a secret service operative had with him little information was obtained. The safe containing the valuables, together with another one, had not been sold at the auction of the company's effects. Instead they were held until the year before, when they were disposed of for ninety dollars each by a well known firm of Washington auctioneers.

When Mr. Olmstead was informed that bonds, *et cetera*, had been found in one of the safes he was amazed. "If you had not told me of the finding of these things I would have said that all such work of the Columbian Bank Note Company, bonds, notes, materials, *et cetera*, had all been previously turned over to the Treasury Department or included in the destruction of June, 1885," he told the operative.

"I did not know that either of the safes sold by the Washington auctioneers for me contained any such property, and have no knowledge of the existence of any more," he said. He was unable to explain how the papers, *et cetera*, came to be in the safe, and all of the investigations of the government agents failed to disclose any one who could shed any light on the mystery. The bonds and plates were later destroyed, but the manner in which they originally were lost is still unknown.

Dr. Hailey fired and the man in the mask sank slowly.

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

CHAPTER XLIII

LORD BORRODEAN SPEAKS

DR. HAILEY counted that moment among the most humiliating of his life. He had come to Maidstone Abbey to extract a confession which, he believed, would be the means of rescuing Bob Barling from terrible danger. He had taken this course, too, without consulting Biles, because he foresaw that the latter's hesitation to arrest a man in Lord Borrodean's position without evidence of the most conclusive kind, must bring about prolonged and possibly fatal delay. And he had failed.

He did not doubt his failure from the moment at which he perceived that his accusations had lost interest for the individual against whom they were leveled. That, perhaps, is the supreme proof of innocence. Bewilderment and self-reproach laid hold of his spirit.

He wondered whether or not he should go away at once and leave to the police the task of probing further Lord Borrodean's connection with the mystery. However deeply they probed, it was certain that they would not find the evidence of guilt which, in his blindness, he had supposed must be immediately forthcoming.

Lord Borrodean's voice roused him from this bitter reflection.

"I have made up my mind," the old man declared in sorrowful tones, "that I cannot longer keep to myself the terrible secret which oppresses me. So far as I can see, in face of this overwhelming catastrophe, all promises are void."

This story began in FLYNN'S for September 5

He was speaking more to himself than to his visitor. His eyes had a far-away look and the expression of anxiety on his face was intensified. He came to where the doctor was sitting and stood before him.

"What I am about to tell you," he said, "will place the safety of many people in your hands. I can only pray God that you will use the knowledge with discretion."

His features were quite calm now and his bearing had resumed its native dignity. He remained a few seconds and then returned to his own chair. He leaned forward grasping one of the arms of it with his uninjured hand.

"The fact is," he declared, "that my son Michael was not killed. His great knowledge of the Russian language and of Russian customs and ways of life saved him. He escaped from his prison and at the present moment is living in disguise in Petersburg, conducting a wide organization, the object of which is to snatch as many as possible of their victims from the hands of the Bolshevists. He has some employment in connection with the National Theater."

He paused a moment; then he added:

"Happily, there is almost no limit to the cupidity of some of these people. Provided the price can be paid, salvation is procurable in a considerable number of instances."

His hands moved restlessly, opening and closing on the massive arm of the chair.

"I should explain, perhaps," he continued, "that my son's dear wife was one of the earliest victims of the Revolution. They killed her as they killed so many others, in secret, regardless of the fact that, as the wife of an Englishman, she was no longer one of their own people.

"You will understand now, I think, why he has undertaken this work and why he is pursuing it with the most complete contempt for its dangers. I need not tell you that if his identity were suspected for a single moment, he would pay instant forfeit with his life."

He paused again. Dr. Hailey inclined his head.

"There is no doubt on that score," he said.

Lord Borrodean passed his hand across his brow in a gesture of infinite weariness.

"I have been acting during the past two years," he said, "as the chief organizer of the work in this country, and because of the terrible danger threatening my boy and his friends in Russia, I have left no stone unturned to secure and maintain the most absolute secrecy in regard to all my actions. No precaution I can say honestly, which human wit has been able to suggest, has ever been neglected."

He rose and began to pace the room with restless steps.

"I made up my mind, in the first instance, as soon as I got into communication with my boy that I must have help in carrying on the work. My own knowledge of Russia and Russian affairs is but trifling. After long consideration, I decided, for reasons with which I need not trouble you just now, to approach the Countess Olva Vorloff—she's my son's late wife's first cousin."

There was a strange huskiness in his voice as he pronounced that name. He seemed, too, to pause for a moment.

"I made her my confidante in everything—she only. The others have enjoyed at most but half-knowledge. That was a part of my system of defense against the espionage of which, sooner or later, we were bound to become the object. But I met her very seldom and never in public—never even in London.

"It was arranged that all conferences should take place in the garage at Moorfields and that we should each travel there separately in our own cars very late at night. Moreover, the cars used for this purpose were registered under assumed names and kept in public garages. There were, of course, flaws even in that scheme, but it served us well until this fearful trouble occurred."

CHAPTER XLIV

MARKED FOR A VICTIM

HE paused in his pacing of the floor and swung round toward the doctor:

"Our agent, Danatoff, always met us at Moorfields," he declared. "He retained a room permanently at the High Court Hotel and was

known there as a merchant with big interests in Poland. He traveled between London and Warsaw at frequent intervals and he had rooms also in one of the principal hotels in that city.

"He had orders, when he reached London, to walk up Bond Street between noon and half past twelve o'clock and on the days his return might be expected the Countess Olva always visited that street. They met, thus, quite openly and casually. Sometimes they spoke to one another, but, more often merely bowed. But it was arranged that a meeting at Moorfields should always take place on the night following these encounters.

"The countess used to summon me by telephone and invariably employed a public call office for this purpose. We had, further, an arrangement in which Danatoff shared, that if we happened to meet at any time and did not wish to recognize each other, we should glance down for a moment before passing. These, Dr. Hailey, are only a few of the precautions it took for the preservation of my beloved boy."

Lord Borrodean resumed his seat and covered his face with his hand. The doctor watched him with a growing sense of uneasiness. This disclosure explained much; but it raised new doubts and new anxieties. A feeling that he dared not wait here much longer, while the sands, in all probability, were running out swiftly elsewhere for Bob and perhaps for Olva, too, caused him to shift uneasily in his chair. The old man glanced up in quick comprehension.

"I am sorry to detain you so long," he apologized, "but it seemed necessary to make this explanation in view of what has occurred since. The rest is soon told. On Monday last at one o'clock in the afternoon, or thereabouts, I received the message to come to Moorfields.

"I arrived there, I think, about three A. M., and drove up the main carriageway to the house. I had only my side lamps on, as I always avoided the use of headlights for fear of attracting attention, but nevertheless I got a clear view of the yard as I entered it—"

His voice fell to a whisper and it seemed to the doctor that he shuddered.

"The yard was quite empty of vehicles. Yet Olva Vorloff was standing there with blood streaming down her face, and a pistol in her hand. The moment that she saw my car appear, she raised the weapon and began to fire at me."

He sprang up again, as the terrible recollection flooded his mind.

"At first," he cried, in tones suddenly grown strident, "I scarcely realized what had occurred; but the crash of the breaking glass and the screech of the bullets past my ears soon brought enlightenment. I flung the door open and threw myself out into the shadows which surrounded the vehicle. And just then a strange thing happened. The girl seemed to totter forward. She fell full length on the tiles of the yard and the pistol fell out of her hand with a clatter.

"I jumped to her side and saw that she had fainted. There was a big wound on the side of her head and she was bleeding freely. I tried to lift her up, when suddenly another bullet came whizzing past my ear. I glanced up and saw a man standing at the edge of the shrubbery with a pistol in his hand.

"I distinctly saw the gleam of the barrel in the moonlight. I realized, then, the nature of the trap into which I had been lured. My only thought was for my son. I relinquished the girl and made a dash for the avenue, and as I did so, he shot at me again. The bullet struck my left shoulder, just above the joint.

"He fired several times, but failed to inflict any other wounds, nor did he pursue me further than the front of the house. Happily, when I reached the main road, a market wagon was passing on its way to London. A few minutes after I had entered it, a big car, traveling at a tremendous speed, passed us going in the same direction.

"I can say honestly that I scarcely noticed the pain of my wound during the terrible hours which followed. My one anxiety was to assure myself that the man who had attempted to assassinate me was not Danatoff—for in that case I realized that all hope for my dear son must be abandoned.

"I left the wagon at the High Court Hotel and entered that building. A very

sleepy night porter answered my summons and, I fancy, took me for some late reveler returning to his room. At any rate, he asked no questions. I mounted the stairs and went straight to Danatoff's bedroom. To my horror, the door was standing ajar. He had gone— At that moment, a kind of frenzy overcame me, because I searched the room from floor to ceiling."

Lord Borrodean's voice broke as he said this, and Dr. Hailey saw that his eyes were moist. But his proud lips did not falter.

"I closed the bedroom door and left the hotel soon after that," he concluded, "and drove to the garage where Danatoff kept his car. The car had not been taken out. Then I drove to Jermyn Street and—let me confess it—gave myself up to despair."

CHAPTER XLV

SHARING A SECRET

DR. HAILEY had listened to this recital in silence; and, even now, when it was finished, he found himself at such a complete loss to understand it that he would gladly have postponed further discussion until he had had an opportunity of collecting his thoughts. But already the chill of early afternoon was in the air. He rose to his feet and walked to the window, gazing vacantly over the meadows.

"You are quite clear in your own mind," he asked after a few minutes, "that the Countess Olva was awaiting your coming?"

"I have not the slightest doubt on that score. She stood facing the avenue, with her weapon ready for instant use."

The doctor turned and remained with his back to the window.

"It is just possible, however, is it not, that she may have expected another car with another occupant?"

"The only other car would have been Danatoff's and, as you know, she had already succeeded in killing him. God knows, I have tried to resist it, but the conclusion is inevitable that she has played the traitor. That shoe lace is the final, most convincing proof of all."

Dr. Hailey took a pinch of snuff.

"There," he said, "I venture to disagree with you. If the murderer had known the significance of the shoe lace, he would scarcely have left the broken end of it lying in the yard."

He spoke very deliberately, but Lord Borrodean was not convinced.

"That," he declared, "might apply to a person acting calmly. But this girl was laboring under fearful excitement. Even during the few moments I was able to observe her, I saw that her eyes were wild and her features distorted." He broke off, and then added:

"Moreover, the fact that you have been able to read the cipher proves that some one in possession of that secret must have unwittingly afforded you a clew to it. Even Danatoff was ignorant of its exact nature and no one, so far as I know, has ever been able to discover it unaided. Olva Vorloff invented the cipher. She alone shared the secret with me."

CHAPTER XLVI

WHO KILLED DANATOFF?

BEFORE he left Maidstone Abbey, Dr. Hailey did what he could to ease Lord Borrodean's anxieties. He felt great pity for the old man whose love of his son had become something nearly approaching to a mania. It was terrible to think that all the elaborate precautions he had taken had been unavailing.

He gave him an account of the progress so far made in the elucidation of the case, and supplied, in so doing, a few rags of evidence tending to the conclusion that the secret of the cipher might still remain inviolate. That hope was strengthened somewhat by the fact that Lord Borrodean's precautions had not been confined to England, but had extended also to Warsaw.

As he drove away from the Abbey, however, the doctor experienced a sharp reaction from this rather forced optimism. So far as he could see, no real progress of any kind had been achieved. On the contrary, the investigation had come to one of those blank walls which are the bane of the detective's life. With danger increasing every

hour and the possible sources of information becoming fewer and progressively less hopeful, the outlook was black indeed.

He had an empty compartment in the train and lay back with closed eyes in the attitude which experience had taught him was most favorable to the accurate working of his mind. Once again, he tried to reconstruct the scene of the murder, in the light of fresh evidence. There could be no doubt now that the car in which Lord Borrodean reached Moorfields—the car in which Danatoff's body was found—had brought no other actor to the scene of the tragedy. Any idea that Tsarov had traveled in it might be dismissed once for all.

How then had Tsarov traveled? How had Danatoff traveled? The investigations carried out by Biles and himself had been quite thorough enough to make it practically certain that only three cars took part in the night's work—Lord Borrodean's car, the Hillman coupé which belonged to Olva Vorloff, and the car which had been in collision with the Hillman coupé.

Danatoff had undoubtedly traveled in one or the other of those last two vehicles, because the hour of the murdered man's visit to South Street made it absolutely certain that he had not reached Wycombe by train.

He opened his eyes suddenly and sat erect. Could it be that Danatoff had traveled in the Hillman coupé with Olva? She had left a message for him in which she might have made an appointment with him near the garage in Hammersmith, where she kept her car. Had she killed him actually in the vehicle?

But no. That was impossible. There were no footmarks except her own, anywhere near the Hillman. The damp surface of the by-way was a witness which could be trusted implicitly in this respect.

In that case, Danatoff must have traveled in the third car with Tsarov and his accomplice—the man who had pursued Olva through the wood and wounded her. In other words, he must have been seated in the car while the chase of the girl by the accomplice was going on, because no one except the accomplice had left the vehicle while it remained in the byway.

He took out his pocketbook and glanced again at the drawings he had made when he visited Moorfields with Biles. It followed that Olva could not have struck the fatal blow until the accomplice returned to the car and drove it up to the house. But before he did that, this fellow shot at and wounded Lord Borrodean, while the latter was bending over the prostrate figure of the girl.

So that Olva had no opportunity of striking at Danatoff until after her own encounter with Lord Borrodean.

He exclaimed aloud. After her own encounter with Lord Borrodean, as he now knew, she had been lying in a fainting condition, bleeding freely from a severe wound in the head. *In such a state she could not have injured a mouse.*

He drew a sharp breath. And yet, there was the knife with its telltale monogram. Olva must have brought that weapon with her from South Street— Unless, indeed—

He started forward suddenly and a new look of horror crept into his eyes—

From Charing Cross he drove straight to Harley Street, but no message of any kind awaited him there. Evidently the inquiries of the police had proved fruitless. He rang up Scotland Yard and asked for Biles.

"Has anything happened?"

"Nothing. All my inquiries have failed completely."

"And Barling?"

"No, he has not returned."

The detective's voice sounded weary and anxious. Dr. Hailey thought that the readers of fiction, who pass easily from incident to incident of the crime that are described for their amusement, have no idea of the days and even weeks which, in real life, so often elapse between one event and another.

The long, exhausting process of search, so essential if reliable conclusions are to be reached, finds little place in these attractive narratives. Nor are the failures, those dismal negations of effort accorded, as a rule, more than a casual reference.

He glanced at his watch. It was half past four. He summoned his butler and told him to wrap up Danatoff's shoes, which he had brought with him from Wycombe,

and then call him a cab. Ten minutes later, he was entering the shop of Messrs. Penn & Bricklayer, Shoemakers.

CHAPTER XLVII

"THOMAS SMITH, ESQ."

THE last-named partner of this illustrious firm received him. He asked if it would be possible to have a few minutes' conversation in private and was at once conducted into an office which lacked nothing in the way of comfort. Mr. Bricklayer opened a box of cigars.

"Thank you, I don't smoke."

Dr. Hailey began to untie his parcel. He withdrew one of the shoes and handed it to his companion.

"This is your manufacture, is it not?" he asked in his gentlest tones.

"Undoubtedly."

Mr. Bricklayer balanced the shoe in his hand, with the satisfaction of a good craftsman who is not afraid to test the quality of his own work.

"For whom did you make it?"

The shoemaker raised his eyebrows. He treated his visitor to a glance which would have done credit to a Harley Street specialist repudiating unwarranted curiosity about his patients.

"I do not think," he said in slow tones, "that it is exactly my business to answer such a question."

He was a lean man, with blue eyes and rather hawklike features. Obstinacy dwelt with him. The doctor bowed.

"Of course not," he apologized. "But this is an exceptional case. I am a medical man and these shoes have been given me by the police for a reason which I cannot at present divulge; but which has a bearing on a recent crime. I thought that, as you made them, you might be able to throw some light on the identity of their owner."

He rose as he spoke and prepared to go. Mr. Bricklayer raised a cautious hand. Mention of the police had exercised on him the effect which it exercises on so many people in this country.

"I should have to consult my fitter," he declared evasively.

The doctor thought a moment. Then he said:

"I will take you into my confidence to this extent," he declared. "You are now holding in your hand the shoe which was removed from the murdered body of the Russian who was found stabbed in the garage at Moorfields near Wycombe."

The shoemaker's face paled perceptibly.

"The Moorfields Mystery," he exclaimed in awestruck tones.

"Exactly. Let me further remind you that you are Lord Borrodean's shoemakers and that he is the owner of Moorfields."

Mr. Bricklayer's breathing became disturbed.

"You do not suggest—" he gasped.

"No; I rang you up this morning in Lord Borrodean's name and ordered a fresh pair of shoes and thus obtained the information I wanted. But I have learned since then that I was mistaken in thinking that these are his shoes."

He watched the man's face narrowly as he made this disclosure. It was obvious that Mr. Bricklayer was becoming greatly frightened and that his fear was overwhelming his natural obstinacy. He played his last card.

"The police, you see, have reason to believe that the shoes did not belong to Danatoff, the murdered man, and the question naturally arises how, if this is correct, were they obtained by him. Did he, for example, get them through the agency of one of your employees—"

Dr. Hailey spoke these last words in stern tones. His face wore an accusing look, which was excellently simulated. He raised his eyeglass and fixed it in his eye with much deliberation. The shoemaker wilted visibly.

"That is impossible," he stammered; "quite impossible, I do assure you."

"And yet, there are the facts."

Mr. Bricklayer glanced anxiously about him. He moved his hands as though already he felt the cold steel of the handcuffs on his wrists. To be implicated in a murder—

"Wait a moment," he said in hoarse tones.

He left the room with the shoe in his

hand. Ten minutes later he came back carrying a pair of lasts. He fitted one of them into the shoe to demonstrate that it undoubtedly belonged to it—a demonstration which was convincing, no doubt, to a craftsman such as himself, but which left the doctor quite cold.

"You see?"

Dr. Hailey nodded. He opened his snuff-box and took a pinch with much deliberation.

"The name on the last," Mr. Bricklayer said, "is Thomas Smith, Esq., and the address, 25a Queen Elizabeth's Mansions, S. W."

CHAPTER XLVIII

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

DR. HAILEY told his cabman to take him to that address. He paid him off and entered the palatial flats with brisk step. He was transported at once to the first floor as he requested.

"Fourth door on the left," the liftman told him crisply, "at the end of the corridor."

He rang the bell and the door was opened at once by a very smartly dressed maid-servant.

"Is Mr. Smith at home?" he asked.

The girl smirked rather insolently.

"This is Miss Beryl Lestrange's flat," she said with a sidelong glance. The doctor restrained a start and stood his ground.

"I am aware of that," he declared in stern tones. "But I have come to see Mr. Smith. I have an appointment with him which is very important—"

He watched the effect of his words. The maid evidently was not accustomed to such callers.

"You had better come in and wait," she declared. "He and Miss Lestrange will be back soon." She added: "I was just going out when you came," and her voice told him that she also had an appointment and did not wish to break it.

"I can wait alone," he said.

She conducted him along a richly carpeted corridor and opened a door at the end of it. As the interior of the room beyond was revealed, he was unable to restrain a gasp of astonishment.

It was, without exception, the most remarkable room he had ever set eyes on—and the most interesting. The mural decorations alone would have held him fascinated—those tremendous silhouettes flung on the dead white walls, as by the hands of some giant. They were strange, bizarre, in a sense horrible; yet they were the work of a genius. Even the frightful mingling of the faces, human faces and the faces of satyrs, possessed a quality of wonder which held his imagination in thrall.

And the furniture was in keeping with the decoration. Undated, almost indescribable, it yet belonged both to comfort and utility in spite of the riot of new colors which it displayed. He glanced about him in a kind of awe. The whole effect was strange and in a vague way, menacing; it expressed a quality of the mind at once stern and ruthless and dreadful—

He sat down on a great sofa, the coverings of which were slashed with streaks of flame-colored velvet. His eyes traveled from the wrought-iron fireplace to the brickwork which surrounded it and furnished a mantelshelf above. The shelf was covered with small objects, the large number and very nature of which seemed to obscure them, and he crossed the floor to examine them.

And then suddenly he bent forward with a swift gesture. He picked up one of the curios and held it in hands, which became immediately unsteady.

It was the handle of a dagger from which the blade had been broken away.

He turned it over and drew his breath in a gasp. The handle was decorated with the identical V and the identical coronet which he had seen on the knife blade taken from Danatoff's heart.

He slipped this damning piece of evidence into his pocket. At the same moment he heard the noise of a door being shut and then the sound of voices, a man's and a woman's, in the hall of the flat. He stood listening with bated breath. The thumping of his own heart sounded loudly in his ears.

But whoever the new arrivals might be,

they did not immediately come to the room in which he awaited them. The sound of their voices grew faint again and he thought he heard a door being shut.

Probably the maid who had admitted him had gone out already. In that case it might be some considerable time before they became aware of his presence. He wondered if he should open the door and announce himself.

But the discovery which he had just made caused him to hesitate about embarking on such a course. It was true he was armed, but he could form no idea of the resources or number of his adversaries. He moved toward the door in the hope of obtaining some further knowledge.

And suddenly the silence was pierced by a cry of terror and dismay which seemed to sound the very depth of human agony.

He sprang to the door and flung it open.

The cry was repeated, this time in feebler accents. It came from a room further along the corridor, the door of which was shut. He rushed to it and turned the handle. The door resisted his effort. He shouted, but there was no reply.

He sprang back and hurled himself against the door. But in vain. Then he ran to the front door of the flat and opened it. He passed out and hurried along the corridor to the lift. He rang the bell, but for some reason the cage was delayed below stairs. He sprang down to the entrance hall and shouted to the porter to come to his assistance.

"God knows," he cried, "there is some horrible business afoot— Murder—"

The man stared at him and then, seeing that he was in terrible earnest, followed him to the lift. The servant who had opened the door of the flat to him was standing some distance away from the cage talking to a man in a brown overcoat. He called to her and she joined them with scared, anxious face. They went up and then ran along the corridor in a body.

The door of the flat had been closed. The girl opened it and they broke in. Dr. Hailey cried out in consternation. The room which he had tried to enter five minutes before was revealed to him now, empty and deserted.

His companions looked at him with amazement, in which suspicion was mingled. The porter declared:

"There ain't nobody 'ere," in tones which suggested that, in all probability, he and his friends were the victims of some ruse.

Dr. Hailey brushed past them and strode into the room where he had waited in the first instance. It was empty also. Then he went from door to door, while the group of servants stood together just inside the front entrance watching him. The flat was deserted. He turned to the porter.

"Is there any other way of leaving the building?"

The man pointed a laconic finger toward the corridor.

"There's the fire escape out there," he said in tones which betrayed the doubts he felt about his questioner's sanity.

Dr. Hailey rushed out and turned in the direction indicated. He saw the circular staircase clearly outlined against the lights of an opposite window. He sprang toward it and flung open the glass door which separated it from the corridor. He descended three steps at a time, so that the iron railing and footpieces trembled under his weight. He came to the ground just within the main courtyard of the block, at a spot where the lighting was rather defective.

Nevertheless, he was in time to see a big car glide away toward the public street.

He ran out to look for a cab, but the street was deserted.

CHAPTER XLIX

"HE WHOSE EYES GLARED"

HE found a cab and drove straight to the Vorloff's house in South Street.

Sophie Ivanovna, the countess's maid, admitted him. She told him that her mistress was very unwell and that she must ask permission before taking him upstairs. She left him standing in the hall, while she went to carry his message.

She returned and announced in her broken English that the countess would see him. He followed her across the rich car-

pet and up the stairs, and was immediately ushered into the drawing-room—one of those overgrown apartments so characteristic of Mayfair, which seem to be in process of swallowing all the other rooms in the house.

The countess sat huddled in a big chair by the fire. In the rather dim light she looked like some ancient bird, too old for flight, which has crept to a dim corner to eke out its last days. She scarcely turned her head until he was beside her.

"I am sorry, my dear lady" he said, "to inflict this visit on you. But I am one of those who are trying to find your daughter and have thought that you might be ready to help me."

The old woman looked up, revealing her haggard, careworn face.

"Dr. Hailey?" she asked simply.

"Yes."

She nodded her head as though his coming was not unexpected.

"I have heard," she declared. "It is good of you." Then, for a moment, her eyes seemed to lighten up. "There is no word—nothing?" she demanded in piteous tones.

"There is, perhaps, a very little—an idea."

The countess sighed. "So they have said to me before, your police inspector, Sophie, Peter Nikolaiovitch all—but you do not find my poor little Olva—"

She indicated a chair and Dr. Hailey sat down. He fixed his eyeglass in his eye and then leaned forward toward her. He took the hilt of the dagger from his pocket and held it out for her inspection.

"Tell me about it," he said in tones which he managed to control with a great effort.

She took the wrought silver in her hand and then turned fearful eyes toward him.

"*Mon Dieu*, it is the poignard of my husband, the Count Vorloff, which hangs always in the hall by the door."

"In the entrance hall?"

"Yes."

"You have not missed it before—?"

She shook her head. "In these days I have not looked—"

He closed his eyes, as if to hide from her the process of his mind. In the terrible moments of his drive to the house, a new vision of the case had come to him. He bent close to the old woman and spoke in a voice of deep earnestness.

"Tell me, countess," he asked, "was your daughter at any time afraid—very much afraid—of a man with strange, glaring eyes, named Tsarov?"

It was as though he had stabbed her to the heart. She shrank from him, an object of pity and dismay.

"Ah, no, it is not true," she cried wildly. "He is dead. I have known."

Her eyes were wide with terror.

"He is not dead. I have reason to fear that at this moment the Countess Olva is in his power."

The mother uttered a low cry, like that of an animal wounded to death. She buried her old face in her hands and he saw that her body trembled. He had the impression of age attempting feebly to shelter itself from a hostile world. All that had been her life was withered to ashes and yet she lived.

"I believe," he said gently, "that it was to escape from that man that your daughter left home, in the first instance—because he possessed the terrible power to read all the secrets of her thoughts and because, at that moment, she was the guardian of a secret on which the lives of her friends depended."

He paused, watching the effect on her of his carefully chosen words, but she did not raise her head. He let his eyeglass fall from his eye.

"You see, this man Tsarov had called on her earlier that day, just when she knew that a fresh, and still more dangerous secret was about to be told her. She had to escape, lest she should hear the new secret and then perhaps be forced to betray it—"

He paused again and this time he had his reward. The countess raised her eyes to his face.

"It is true," she said simply. He thought that, in a remote way, she was thanking him.

"You were aware, then, that Tsarov had called?"

"Ah, no, no." She shook her head quickly. "I have known nothing of this.

But the past—the past—I have known all of that."

She broke off and then turned toward him. Her expression was sorrowful.

"Listen," she cried in low tones; "your England gives herself now to the occult, to spiritualism and hypnotism and the rest. It was so also in my country in the year before the war, when our world lived as yet and we might look beyond into the years— At that time, women talked less of their frocks, and more of their souls—"

She paused. Her hands were twitching. He bowed his head.

"So I have heard," he declared.

"Not all," she went on, "but of those who were my friends, very many."

A deep sigh interrupted her. Then she put out her thin hand and grasped Dr. Hailey's wrist.

"My little Olva was but eleven years, yet she was old for her years. She was not well and the doctors could not cure her. One day the Princess Michael came to us and told me that I must take her to a new doctor who would cure her for certain—Dr. Tsarov."

She pronounced that name in accents so low that he could scarcely hear her. She added:

"He whose eyes glare."

CHAPTER L

A HYPNOTIST'S POWER

SHE released his wrist and spread out her hands in a gesture which at once excused and condemned.

"After that, I have no strength left."

"And your daughter?"

"Ah, it is terrible! You do not know her, but I will tell you. She is so full of gentleness. Dr. Tsarov has told me himself that she is the most easy to hypnotize of any child he has ever treated. There is not resistance, as in the others. He has told me also it will be so good a cure—"

She bowed her head.

"We have gone to see him every day and sometimes two times in a day and we have spent, I know not what money. At last my husband will not allow that it may continue."

Her voice had risen slightly as she spoke. It grew harsh as she went on to describe the scenes which had taken place between herself and Count Vorloff in consequence of his order that she should not again visit Dr. Tsarov.

"*Mon Dieu,*" she cried. "If he had but known that I had no strength at all to refuse the command which Dr. Tsarov gave me!"

She paused again. Dr. Hailey drew a deep breath.

"You went back?" he asked.

"So!" Again she gripped his wrist. "Listen! He has compelled my poor Olva to tell him that her father, the Count Vorloff, will very soon make an application to the police against him. It was a secret that not I, even would tell—"

She looked up in his face with haunted eyes.

"You know what it meant, perhaps, when a nobleman of the Old Russia acted so?" she asked. She did not wait for him to reply, but added, in tones the anguish of which chilled him:

"And then the punishment of the good God came to me. There was one night when my poor child is standing in the bedroom of my husband and myself with a pistol loaded in her hands—so."

She extended her thin arm in front of her.

"I have jumped up. But she sleeps, will you believe, with her eyes wide open?"

The room became silent, so that Dr. Hailey could distinctly hear a man's footstep on the stair without. The footsteps passed and then returned. The horror of that terrible moment, it seemed, would haunt this woman's memory, seared as it was with horrors, till the very end.

For her husband, after he had disarmed the sleeping child, had gone out, there and then, and wreaked his vengeance personally on the ruffian whose influence had grown to such hideous proportions. And when he returned, he had refused to have further dealings of any sort with the wife he suspected of having betrayed him.

The countess revealed this last tragedy

in faltering sentences broken by long periods of silence. She did not once relax the fixity of her posture, which gave the impression that her body had been turned to stone.

"After that Olva was taken from me and sent to a school."

"And Dr. Tsarov?"

"I do not know." She shuddered. "When the revolution came, it was he who has denounced my husband to the *Tcheka* of which he is become an agent. Olva has not known; but I know."

Dr. Hailey rose.

"I thank you, dear countess," he said. He raised her poor fingers to his lips. "With God's help, we shall yet succeed," he added enigmatically.

She raised her head as though to challenge him.

"My Olva has not killed this man?" she cried.

"I am quite certain that she has not killed him."

CHAPTER LI

IN THE LIMOUSINE

DR. HAILEY left the Countess Vorloff in her drawing-room. When he glanced back at her from the door of the room, she had resumed her huddled, crouching attitude, a posture without hope and without help. He felt himself chill at the spectacle, as life chills at the spectacle of death.

He closed the door very carefully behind him and stood a moment irresolute on the threshold. The house was strangely silent. He strained his ears, but could hear no sound of any kind.

He descended the stairs to the landing between the floors. He remained here a moment, looking out under the heavy curtains of the window. Then he came to the entrance hall. He moved swiftly over the thick carpet to the door and then suddenly knelt down and switched on the tiny electric lamp he always carried. He moved the spot of light over the heavy pile.

"Ah!"

He bent closer, so that his face nearly touched the carpet. He had found what he sought. A stain, faintly outlined on the dark red fabric. It was situated quite close to the dining room door and a rug had been partially drawn over it.

He stood up and looked about him with inquiring eyes. Then he moved to the staircase.

He mounted the stairs to the landing again and very carefully raised the window. Just under it was a low roof running back from the house toward an outbuilding, the form of which was clearly silhouetted against a street lamp. He raised the window a little further, and put his head out.

The roof came right up to the house and was joined to its wall. It covered, evidently, a passage communicating with the outbuilding. He withdrew his head and stood listening again, as though he expected to hear some sound of sinister meaning. But the house was absolutely quiet.

With a quick movement, he pushed the window further up. He climbed on to the sill and very slowly and carefully lowered himself out of it till his feet touched the roof below. In this position he could still look down on the dimly-lighted hall. He raised his hand and softly drew the window shut behind him—leaving, however, a sufficient gap to permit of his reopening it, should he be compelled to return the same way.

Then he crouched down and waited under the shadow of the wall until his eyes should grow accustomed to the darkness. It was a chill night, with the promise of fog in the air, that indefinable harshness and smokiness which seems to dry the throat at every breath. The flat, leaded surface of the passageway, damp with deposited moisture, reflected dully the lights in the mews beyond.

He listened again, but heard nothing except the distant sound of the traffic in the surrounding streets. He arose and moved very cautiously along the roof, stepping as softly as a cat in spite of his considerable weight. After a few moments he turned and looked back at the house. There was a light in one window only and that window was thickly blinded. He went forward again and came to the outbuilding.

As he had anticipated, this was a coach-house converted into a garage. There were long, corrugated glass windows in the roof, which had certainly not been there in the old days. On the other hand, the loft above the stable retained its early shape and appearance.

A gutter ran between the two sections of the building. He reached up to it and gradually hoisted himself from the roof of the communicating way. He advanced across the gutter until he came to within a few feet of the end of it. Then he crouched down again and peered out into the mews below.

The mews was empty. It was but a small yard with stables on one side and a high wall on the other. He waited until he had assured himself that he was not observed and then dropped down from his position to the ground. A moment later he had reached the doors of the coach-house.

He tried them. They were unlocked. He entered the garage and drew the door shut behind him. Then he groped his way forward in the darkness until his hands encountered the bonnet of a car.

He touched the button of his electric torch, and flashed it on the vehicle. It was a Daimler limousine of the largest size. He saw with astonishment that the blinds of all the windows were drawn. He moved round to one of the doors, the polished handle of which reflected the beam of light. He opened it and glanced inside. Lying heaped on the wide floor of the car were a number of magnificent sable rugs—a relic, doubtless, of the Vorloffs' Petersburg days. He lifted one of these, the better to examine it.

And then he started back, gasping and pale with horror.

CHAPTER LII

A WOMAN'S HAND

EMERGING from the dark folds of the fur and white with the waxen whiteness of death, was a woman's hand.

The exquisitely manicured nails shone in the light. A diamond ring on one of the fingers gleamed urgently. Dr. Hailey reached in and touched the hand. It was cold.

He pulled away the rugs surrounding it. And then, a cry broke from his lips.

Looking up at him with wide open, sightless eyes was the girl whom he had last seen, pistol in hand, threatening him in his room at the Red Lion Hotel at Wycombe, the girl whose personal courage had won his admiration, even in that extremity.

He bent over her dead face, gazing at it with eyes into which the tears had started, in spite of him. She had lost nothing of her loveliness. Indeed, the fingers of Death had smoothed away from her features all the hard lines which so greatly marred them during her lifetime, only the sweetness and gentleness were left.

He drew the covering away from her body and exclaimed afresh at what he saw. Then he pulled the rugs back into position, so that she was again completely enshrouded. He stood leaning up against the wall of the garage as though sudden faintness had come upon him.

And just then the sound of footfalls approaching came to him from the direction of the house. He sprang to the door of the car and stood listening with bated breath. The footsteps drew nearer—a man's, heavy and measured. He extinguished his torch and climbed into the vehicle, closing the door silently behind him. He threw himself down beside the pile of rugs, drawing the topmost of these over him in such a way as not to uncover the dead girl's body.

The handle of a door at the back of the garage was turned sharply and the next instant he heard the click of a switch. The heavy footsteps moved across the stone floor to the outer doors leading into the mews. These were unlocked and thrown wide open, so that they creaked on their hinges. Then the man returned and climbed into the driver's seat of the car.

There was a faint sound of the releasing of brakes and the big vehicle began to move, gliding out softly into the yard. It stopped just beyond the doors and its driver descended again. The doctor heard him lock up the garage. A moment later the hum of passing traffic told him that they had entered a street.

His position was greatly uncomfortable; yet he dared not change it without risking the success of the whole desperate enterprise. If he failed now— But, hard on the heels of that thought came another, which chilled his hopes and his heart. Was it probable that a ruthlessness which had not spared the lovely girl, whose body lay beside him, would spare any other human creature from whose knowledge danger was to be apprehended?

The sound of the traffic increased suddenly to that subdued roaring which characterizes London's main arteries. This was Regent or Oxford Street or Piccadilly—Probably not the latter, since the sound was immediately hushed again. The splendid car glided forward at a swifter pace than it had hitherto attained.

Dr. Hailey contrived to move the rug away from his eyes. He looked up and saw that the interior of the car was completely shrouded in darkness. The blinds were a more efficient means of concealment than he had dared believe they would be. His limbs ached, so that he felt he could no longer endure the pain of them. He raised himself on his elbow, and looked up.

The blinds screening the driver from the interior of the vehicle were also drawn. With infinite care, he moved to a sitting posture and then contrived to lean back against the seat of the car. He was safe from detection, unless the fellow pulled up and opened the door. He came close to one of the side windows and peered out round the edge of the blind. He was just in time to recognize the dim outline of the Church in St. John's Wood.

The car turned into Finchley Road, and went out to Golders Green. Could it be that they were bound once more for Wycombe? But no! The vehicle ran straight on through Finchley and Barnet to the Great North Road. It mounted the incline to Potter's Bar at a pace which the doctor judged could not be less than forty miles an hour. Ten minutes later, on the lonely stretch between that village and Hatfield, the speed was at least ten miles an hour greater.

He wondered to what part of the country they were traveling. And then, the questions which still remained unanswered in his mind, assailed him once more. He closed his eyes and tried to give himself to their solution, in spite of the immense weariness which assailed him.

Half an hour later, he was sunk in profound sleep.

CHAPTER LIII

THE DRIVER ESCAPES

DR. HAILEY awoke with a start. There was a sound of shouting; then the car seemed to bump over an obstacle. He peered out and was just in time to see a man's face go past the window—the face of a policeman.

The car bounded forward, as though its driver had opened his throttle to the very widest possible extent. The doctor crept up to the seat of the vehicle and mounted it, after satisfying himself that the blinds were still drawn. He looked out of the back window.

In the distance he could see a light on the road, which appeared to move slightly, though he couldn't be sure about this. The car lurched round a sharp bend of the road and flung him down again on the floor; the pace now seemed to be terrific. He heard another vehicle go by and its passing was swift as a flash.

Evidently they had run into one of the police patrols which are a regular feature of the North Road at night—and which, doubtless, had received orders from Scotland Yard to search all outgoing cars. He felt a new horror at the thought that the obstacle they had passed over was probably a human body—

He gathered himself up and peered out again. He recognized the hotel at Welwyn. So he had only been asleep for a few minutes. The pace of the car slackened a little as it mounted the steep hill above the Garden Suburb. Then it sped away again over the rolling uplands which stretch as far as Baldock.

The police would certainly communicate with all the stations to the North, though it might take them some time to do this. The patrol had been posted, he thought,

about a mile on the London side of Welwyn, but doubtless they had bicycles; so that in another hour at the latest, the road in front of the car would be blocked.

That thought had scarcely flashed across his mind when he felt the brakes of the vehicle being strongly applied. A moment later, it had come to a standstill. He covered himself with his rug, though not before his hand had closed on the pistol.

An intense desire to bring this hideous experience to an end forthwith assailed him. But, in that case, he must relinquished his only hope of reaching Bob Barling—and so, perhaps, rob his friend of his sole chance of salvation.

He heard another vehicle, evidently a heavy one, approaching from the direction of Baldock. It drew up and a gruff voice demanded what was the matter.

"Sorry to trouble you, but here's a half a quid if you'll lend me a hand with the engine. She's got stuck up somehow—"

The voice was clear and sounded well-bred. There was a shuffling noise and then a stifled exclamation. The doctor sprang up, but the voices continued. He ventured to peer out and saw a big wagon with dim lights. He saw also two figures standing close together. One of them had his hands above his head.

Suddenly they separated and he heard some one climbing to the driving seat of the car. A moment later, the wagon began to move backward. Its light swung round in a semi-circle. Then he caught a glimpse of its tail lamp. He heard it go lurching away into the darkness.

He sprang out of the car. As he did so, the man who had been seated in front leaped from the driver's seat and went rushing off into the woods which flanked the road. The doctor stood a moment, pistol in hand, wondering what he should do. The fellow evidently was panic-stricken at this fresh threat to his life, and it would be a mere waste of time to go in pursuit of him. Far away, he could still distinguish the rear lamp of the wagon. As he watched, it disappeared suddenly from view.

He sprang into the driver's seat of the car and set the engine running. He let in the clutch and the beautiful mechanism glided forward. He gave full throttle and then switched up the headlights which had been turned down. A minute later he saw the wagon again, with its ungainly pile of goods, toiling in front of him. He sounded his horn and observed it draw to the side.

He drove on across the empty land for another two miles, to a place where the road begins to descend to the valley. Then he slackened pace until he reached a byway running at right angles to the main thoroughfare.

He drove into this, and quickly descended, leaving the big car with only its sidelamps burning. Before he abandoned it he rearranged the rugs, reverently, over the body of the dead girl. Then he inspected the front of the car with his electric lamp.

He came back to the main road and took up a position behind a clump of briars, with a little coppice behind him. The full moon was struggling with heavy clouds and a chill wind was blowing. The place seemed extraordinarily wild and deserted. A heavy silence, broken now and then by the hooting of owls and by the sound of the wind among distant trees, possessed it.

He glanced at his watch and saw that it was half past ten. Then a blaze of misty-white light, which stood up like a pillar in the sky, warned him that a big car was approaching from Baldock. It came sweeping into view, dazzling him.

He moved behind the bush until it had gone past, leaving inky blackness behind it. A moment later, he heard it baying like a great dog, as it rounded a bend above. Then, two small, blinking lights, shining from the same direction, warned him that the wagon was approaching.

CHAPTER LIV

BEFORE THE CHASE ENDED

IT came down the incline slowly and heavily. He crouched down and attempted to obtain a glimpse of its driver as it went by, but the cab was shrouded in darkness. He sprang out and, as the tail lamp showed, seized hold of the first available projection.

He grasped this and swung himself up, easily scaling the low side of the vehicle. He found himself, a moment later, among a heaving mass of packages, most of which seemed to contain large articles of furniture. He crouched down among them, trying to find a position in which he would be sheltered from prying eyes.

The wagon entered Baldock and passed through without incident, though he saw that the local police station was brightly illuminated and that a constable was standing on the doorstep.

No doubt they were making ready to scour the country, since the wanted car should have reached the town long before this. He reflected that, soon enough, the terrified wagoner would make his way to one of the villages and raise the alarm. Their present mode of travel could not avail them much longer.

They drove through several low-lying villages in which coils of mist lay on the roadway. Then the doctor recognized the frontage of the George at Buckden, a hostelry where he had often put up on his northward journeyings and which always delighted him afresh with its old-world air of comfort and repose. The wagon slackened speed. He moved from his position and dropped quietly down into the road.

He rang the bell of the Inn, and when he was admitted, asked to see the proprietor.

"Ah, Dr. Hailey!" that good man cried. He advanced with outstretched hand and smiling face and added, "Your car is there, I suppose?"

He moved to the door to summon his garageman as he spoke, but the doctor raised a warning hand. He came and whispered in the hotelkeeper's ear, causing that worthy's face to undergo a startling change of expression.

"Can you do it?" Dr. Hailey asked.

"Yes—for you—"

He led the way to the yard. His man, who had been summoned from the back of the house, opened one of the lockups and disclosed a small closed car.

"Excellent! Is she full up with gas?"

"I think so. I have only been as far as Huntingdon to-day?"

Dr. Hailey got in and started the engine. A moment later, he was on the North Road again; the little car seemed to be full of life and carried him gayly behind its big, bright lights. Two miles beyond the village, he came on the wagon, drawn close into the side of the road. He passed it slowly, scrutinizing it as he did so. It was empty and deserted.

He stopped and descended and looked into the cab and among the crates and packages. Then he reëntered his car and drove on at the fastest speed of which the little vehicle was capable. The memory of Dick Turpin, riding this very road on his gallant Black Bess, flashed across his mind.

Barnaby Moor and Stanmore were passed in that way and yet he had had no sight of his missing quarry. It was probable that a big car had been secured at the last raid and that it was being driven at its top speed. With a thrill of fear, he asked himself what fate had befallen the hapless occupants.

Leaving dispossessed drivers on the highway, with so many villages near at hand, was a method which could not be pursued indefinitely—and which the man he was pursuing would certainly not follow from any lack of murderous instinct. He swept through the narrow, empty streets of Grantham and so on toward Newark. And then, suddenly, he uttered an exclamation. In front of him he could see the red lamps of a level crossing, with the smaller tail-lamp of a car just beneath them.

A train ran through, belching fire as it went; the red lamps swung away. A moment later, he was bumping over the rails with the car which he had seen in the distance, about a furlong in front of him.

His headlights revealed the fact that it was an open car of the less expensive type. He could see the driver's back quite distinctly. There were no passengers. He slackened pace a little, so as to avoid passing the vehicle, and presently allowed himself to fall well behind. The width of this splendid road, and its comparative straightness, made it easy to keep the quarry steadily in view.

They reached Doncaster at 3 A.M., but the car in front did not slow down. It

swept along the famous race course at forty miles an hour and went past the policeman on duty in the center of the town at the same pace. Dr. Hailey wondered if the driver had realized that he was being followed.

The next moment he saw the car swerve to the side and disappear in a side street. He attempted to imitate that daring feat, but his own little vehicle was not equal to it. The wheels skidded on the smooth stone sets of the tramline and he was hurled sidewise against the wall.

CHAPTER LV

AS DARKNESS FELL

WHEN he jumped out and inspected it, he found that the car was heavily damaged. The nearside back wheel had been wrenched out of the true, and was wedged against the side panels. He stood gazing at it with an expression of bitter regret.

The policeman he had just passed approached him, and asked if he had injured himself. Then he told him the address of the nearest garage. The doctor slipped a coin into his hand and strode off in the direction indicated. He saw the illuminated sign and was about to enter within its radius, when two men appeared from the open gateway of the yard. He heard a voice declare:

"I shall probably not want her till after midday, as I have some business in the morning. You say the Danus Hotel."

It was the voice he had heard on the road between Welwyn and Baldock.

He drew into the shadow of one of the houses and waited. The speaker moved off across the street and dived into an opening opposite. He followed him at a long distance and saw him turn across the main highway by which they had entered the town. He passed the hotel and took the road which, a finger-board declared, led to the railway station.

Dr. Hailey reached the station a few minutes later and glanced at one of the timetables posted up on the walls. He saw that a main line express from London to Newcastle was due in about ten minutes. There was another train from the North also due, but he thought that he might disregard this.

He took a ticket to Newcastle and then approached the platform cautiously, looking up and down before he emerged from the shelter of the booking office. A tall man was standing a short distance away, apparently gazing down at the line. The doctor withdrew from the station and strolled down the empty street and then back again.

Far off, he could now hear the roar of the approaching train. He waited until it was about to enter the station and then again walked on to the platform. He was just in time to see the man he was following begin to mount the footbridge to the "down" line.

The train thundered in and drew up with much grinding of brakes. Small clouds of steam rose from under the sleeping cars, all the windows of which were closely drawn. He crossed the bridge and came down to the platform. An official glanced at his ticket.

"First-class carriages at the back of the train," he directed crisply.

The carriages were brightly lighted. He opened the door of the first one he came to, which was empty. He got in and switched out the lights. The train stopped at York, but he had small anxiety that the man he was following would descend from the train there. Had this been his destination, he would have continued his journey by car. He assured himself that that idea was correct and then closed his eyes. He slept until the train began to slow down at its destination.

It was half past six o'clock. He sat back from the window to await the passing of his quarry along the platform. The man, however, did not come. He descended quickly and was just in time to see him disappearing into the vestibule of the Station Hotel. He followed, but when he reached the vestibule he found it empty. He walked to the office, where a timid-looking clerk was busy making entries in a large book.

A printed form lay on the desk beside him. It had been filled up only a moment before, because the undried ink shone in

the lamplight. Dr. Hailey asked for a bedroom. When the clerk was getting his key, he observed that the last visitor had gone to No. 44. His own number was 47.

"Any luggage, sir?"

"No."

The man eyed him with some surprise, but offered no further comment. He went upstairs to his room. He located No. 44 and stood a moment listening at the door. He heard the unmistakable sound of some one throwing himself down on a spring mattress.

He entered his own room and seated himself in an armchair. The desire to sleep was now overpowering, yet he must not sleep. He rang the bell and, when his summons was answered, asked if it would be possible to obtain some tea. After that, he ordered a bath. When he had breakfasted, he rang up a doctor in the town whom he knew and invited him to come down to the hotel as soon as possible. Then he wrote two telegrams to Biles.

The first was addressed to Scotland Yard and he sent it off at once. The second was addressed to the Central Hotel, Newcastle, and contained only the words "direction as transmitting office." He put it in an envelope on the outside of which he inscribed the words, "Please hand to a police constable at once—very urgent."

Just after darkness had fallen, he drove out of Newcastle in the car which his friend had obtained for him. Right ahead, going very fast on the wide North Road, the tail lamp of another vehicle winked back at him maliciously.

CHAPTER LVI

AT THE RISING OF THE MOON

THE chase continued through Morpeth to Alnwick. Dr. Hailey had not used his headlights the whole way and on several occasions had had narrow escapes. He drove through the ancient Bondgate at a pace which earned him the unfavorable attention of a policeman standing near it. The man shouted.

Dr. Hailey turned and threw toward him the second telegram, which he had addressed to Biles at Newcastle. A moment later, he was climbing one of the steepest hills it had ever been his lot to encounter. But still the red lamp beckoned from the height above him.

He bent forward and switched out all his own lights. They crossed Alnwick Moor and came to the clump of trees which marks the summit of it. And then, suddenly, the red gleam was extinguished. Dr. Hailey quickened his pace and saw it, a moment later, far below, going down into the mists of the wide valley of the Aln. Then he saw it swerve to the right and grow steadily brighter. The car had stopped.

He applied his brakes and drew into the side of the road.. The night was very dark, but that strange glimmer which belongs to the northern heights in clear weather when the moon is about to rise, enabled him to walk down the road quickly. The red light swung round and then became stationary again, and he heard the click of a field gate being shut. The car moved slowly away to the left. He advanced to the gate and opened it. As he did so, he saw the lights of the car discover the walls of a house. A few minutes later they were extinguished. The thud of heavy doors being closed came to his ears.

He crept forward and came to the wall. He did not dare to use his lamp, and so he groped along the rough stone with his hands until he reached the doors. He percussed them lightly with his fingers. They were thick and solid as the walls themselves. A terrible sense of helplessness overcame him.

He stood back from the wall, wondering what to do. And at that moment, the edge of the moon appeared above the ridge which he had just descended. The silver light beamed in generous tide through the pine woods, revealing a new world of exquisite and enchanting loveliness.

He gasped with wonder. Above him, rising grim and dark, were the battlements of a strong tower on which, it seemed, watchmen, armed and accoutered, kept their vigil. The tremendous sweep of the vale lay white and misty before him.

He knew those figures. Others, exactly like them, stood on the battlements of Aln-

wick Castle, further down the valley, splendid and thrilling relics of the border warfare between Percy and Douglas. They had been fashioned for this very moonlight, out of the good Cheviot stone, so that, when Scottish raiders approached from the north or west, they might find the walls manned and ready to receive them.

This was one of the outpost towers of the great Earls of Northumberland, a unit of that ring which hedged about their central stronghold. The consummate daring of choosing such a place—and breaking into it—warned him anew of the magnitude of the task he had undertaken. He moved slowly round the walls searching for any possible loophole by which to effect an entry.

As he came to the end of this tour, the moon rose clear of the tall pines. By her light, he saw the dim façade of a great house in the valley below and the huge massif of the Cheviots rising like some heaped-up shadow to the deep sky. A strange exhilaration was in the air, as if, in this solitude, the old world lingers by night with all its romance and ecstasy. He seemed to hear the marching of armed men on these heaths, or the winding of horns, as some mighty hunt swept up the valley at his feet.

"Help! Help!"

The words rang clear and shrill in the silence, the frantic cry of a woman in direst need. It was followed by a swift, scuffling sound, and then the silence swallowed all its echoes. Dr. Hailey felt the perspiration break out on his brow. He started forward, so that his hands touched the walls.

The sound had come from a point immediately over the place where he was standing. There was a narrow slit in the wall there, a window designed to enable an archer to discharge his arrows without making himself a target at the same time. He staggered back to obtain a better view of it, and, as he did so, exclaimed aloud. The slit had been filled up, but not so completely as to prevent a faint glimmer of light escaping from the room beyond. He strained his eyes to detect any possible means of reaching it.

There was no possible means. He made a second inspection of the tower, straining his eyes to obtain a view of those portions of the wall which were thrown into shadow by the moon. He took his electric lamp from his pocket and touched the switch. Then he strode forward and came to the rain-pipe which his light had revealed.

His heart quickened as he observed that it had been recently attached. He grasped it in his two hands and threw his whole weight on it, testing its strength. It resisted his weight. Then he glanced upward to the pale sky and experienced a sense of shrinking which, for a moment, nearly unmanned him.

The next instant he had bent down and was removing his shoes. He took his watch out of his pocket and his snuffbox, and laid them in the shoes. Then he tore up some of the loose turf which flanked the wall, and filled his pockets with the loose earth lying below it.

And after that, he began to climb. He was able to get his fingers between the pipe and the wall and thus secure a good grip. But, for all that, he realized within a moment of the beginning of his effort, that success could not reward him. Strong man as he was, his weight must defeat his strength long before those giddy heights were attained.

Yet he struggled on, because there was nothing else that he could attempt.

And then, suddenly, a cry of amazement escaped him.

His hands had come to a sharp bend in the pipe, as though it curved away from some opening in the wall. Was it possible that the shadows had hid from him some unsuspected means of entry? His fingers encountered a ledge and he drew himself painfully up to it. And then, a fresh exclamation of wonder broke from his lips.

Before him was a window which, at some recent period, had been set in the wall of the tower—possibly to enable it to be used for some modern purpose. The glass, in the deep shadow, had reflected no gleam of light, and so had been invisible from the ground below. He put his hands under the sash and it moved easily to their pressure. He raised it gently to a height sufficient to enable him to enter.

Next moment, his foot rested on a solid stone. He felt for his lamp and set it alight.

He was standing in a stairway which, he could see, wound spirally up from the ground. He listened, but heard no sound. He began to ascend the steps which, his lamp showed him, had been carefully renovated. The worn hollows in the ancient stone were filled with concrete. He came to a door and halted beside it.

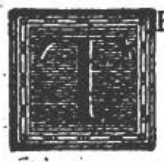
He judged that this must be the first floor of the tower. He lifted the flimsy-looking latch and opened it. To his amazement, the door communicated with nothing but empty air. His lamp, when he flashed it downward, shone on the glass screen of a car standing far below—the car he had seen pass through the outer doors. So the tower was partly fallen into decay! That, no doubt, explained the renovation work which had recently been carried out.

He continued his ascent, and then, suddenly, crouched down against the wall of the staircase.

The sound of hurrying footsteps had come to him so clearly and distinctly that he told himself his presence in the tower had been discovered and that his foes were rushing to assail him.

CHAPTER LVII

THE FACES IN THE TOWER



HE sound ceased as abruptly as it had begun. Then he heard a voice, which seemed to come from close beside him, say:

"Why not admit that you have failed miserably?"

The tones were strangely mocking, but they carried a sinister significance as well—as though the speaker mocked, as a prelude to terrible action.

Another voice answered him—the voice he had heard in the house in Hampstead, but strangely weak and piteous now. The Russian language, he thought, lends itself to the expression of the emotions.

Where were these voices coming from? He moved a step farther up the stairs and had his answer. The staircase ended abruptly. Right opposite to the end of it, but separated by an empty space, was a room, the inner wall of which seemed to consist of loosely set beams of wood, some of which had been torn away.

Light was streaming from between the beams. He understood now why the door below had led only into vacancy. The tower, as originally designed, had possessed two rooms on each floor, communicating with two separate staircases and intercommunicating with one another.

He leaned forward, straining to obtain a view of the interior of the room. A spectacle strange and moving and terrible was revealed to his gaze.

Standing in the center of the floor was a tall man, whom he recognized instantly as the individual he had pursued from London. The man's face was toward him, but he was now wearing a black mask over his eyes. He held a pistol in his hands and was pointing it at some one whom the doctor could not see.

At his feet, her golden hair in wild disorder about her shoulders, Olva Vorloff knelt in an attitude of supplication. But it was not this spectacle which chilled his blood and filled him with new horror as he gazed upon it. It was the face of Tsarov, seen through another gap in the boarding.

Dr. Hailey was sufficiently familiar with the linaments of Death. He had witnessed most of the expressions, good and bad, with which human creatures take their last leave of this world. But not before had he beheld this living, glaring death which leered and grinned at him across the emptiness of the night.

He watched the man, fascinated and appalled. His lips were moving quickly, but they emitted no sound. His eyes held their wild expression, but the wildness was not malice any longer, but white fear.

The man in the mask inclined his head toward the girl at his feet.

"Danatoff," he demanded, "carried a secret message—other than the cipher which I found in the safe in his room at the High Court Hotel, or that document which the police state they cut from the lining of his coat; am I right?"

His tones were cold and threatening. The doctor strained his ears to catch Olva's reply. It came in tones barely audible.

"He may have done—"

The man in the mask stamped his foot.

"It is certain that he did. I have seen the cipher which the police found—read it, too. It is a mere sham—a bait for fools." He paused and then demanded: "Where was the real message hidden?"

His voice cracked like a pistol. The girl shrunk away from him and uttered a moaning cry. And then Dr. Hailey, who had moved his position a little, felt his blood run cold. Another opening in the boarding of the partition had revealed to him the cause of her terror and anguish. He saw Bob Barling straining wildly against the ropes which bound him to one of the wooden pillars supporting the roof of the tower.

The young fellow was still dressed in the Pierrot costume he had worn at the Albert Hall ball; but it was torn and ragged now and begrimed with dust. His hair was in great disorder and straggled across his brow. His unshaven face seemed to have grown terribly wan and wasted.

"Will you answer me?"

The man in the mask raised his pistol again and pointed it at Bob. At the same moment, Tsarov took a step forward and spoke in Russian, hoarsely and with great effort. The masked man cut him short.

"You have had your opportunity," he declared in terrible tones, "and you failed."

Bob Barling cried:

"For God's sake, Olva, tell him nothing—nothing. He is bluffing you, because he is not sure himself."

There was a moment of tense silence and then the man in the mask spoke again.

"So," he said, "that is your reading of the situation, is it, my young friend?"

"It is."

Bob's eyes, Dr. Hailey observed, with a thrill of admiration and wonder, were quite calm. He thought that even the scoundrel in the mask was impressed by their clear gaze. He dropped his bantering tone immediately and made a gesture in the direction of his unhappy accomplice.

"Tsarov," he declared, "does not apparently share your optimism and I warn you that he has a more extensive knowledge of my character than you possess. He has failed me only in one point after serving me well in many, whereas your influence over this woman has all but ruined my enterprise. Yet he fears what he fears."

He took a step back as he spoke and then addressed the girl:

"For the last time, will you tell me where that secret message is hidden?" Olva sprang to her feet. She rushed to Bob and stood with her body outstretched before his body. Her proud, beautiful face was raised in splendid defiance.

A shot rang out.

There was a scream of anguish and Dr. Hailey saw Tsarov throw up his hands and pitch forward on the floor of the room. A faint coil of smoke came from the barrel of the masked man's pistol. He raised his shoulders in a gesture of utter contempt.

The color ebbed away from the girl's face. She sank down to her knees.

"I will tell you—"

Dr. Hailey took careful aim, but he hesitated even now to pull the trigger, because the distance and the arrangement of the boarding made accurate shooting a matter of supreme difficulty. He heard Olva's piteous voice declare that the real message had been carried in the metal points of Danatoff's shoe laces.

The masked man received the news with a cry of delighted astonishment. He bent and removed one of his own shoes, while the shrinking girl watched him with terrified eyes. He glanced at it and nodded significantly.

"So," he said, "it will be unnecessary for me to return to London after all."

His voice rose clear above the moanings of Tsarov, who still lived. He appeared to hesitate a moment. Then again he raised his arm. Olva uttered a terrible, despairing cry—

Dr. Hailey fired.

The man in the mask remained standing, so that the doctor told himself he had missed his aim. And then, slowly, as though his muscles relinquished their power only by degrees, he sank down. The pistol fell from his hand with a clatter on the floor.

The doctor waited for a moment to assure himself that he had indeed achieved his purpose. Then he rushed down from his position of vantage and crossed the bottom

of the tower to begin the ascent of the stairway on the opposite side.

CHAPTER LVIII

BENEATH THE MASK

A MOMENT later he burst into the room. Olva lay at Bob's feet in a dead faint. Close beside her the man in the mask sat, with his back against the wall and his hands pressed to his body. There was a stain of blood on the floor beside him.

Dr. Hailey began to tug at the knots with which Bob was bound. He released him and turned his attention to the girl, who had begun to revive. He saw now that her hands were secured behind her back. He unbound them and chafed her swollen wrists. She sat up and looked wildly about her.

"Oh, no, no," she cried in the same piteous tones she had used when pleading with her captor a few moments before. Bob put his arms about her and drew her close to him. But her courage was not shaken. She rose to her feet.

At the same moment the doctor snatched the mask from the face of the wounded man. She turned and saw his face and uttered a cry of horror.

"*Peter Nikolaiovitch!*"

She stood gazing at this servant in whom she had placed complete trust with eyes that were infinitely reproachful. His own eyes met hers in cold hostility.

Dr. Hailey, who had satisfied himself that the wound was not mortal, stood up and came to her side.

"The man," he declared in his gentle tones, "who murdered Danatoff at your home in South Street and then took his body in your mother's car to Moorfields. The man who tried to shoot you as you ran through the wood—"

A groan interrupted him. He crossed the floor to where Tsarov was lying and knelt down beside that unhappy wretch. He opened the man's waistcoat and shirt and, as he did so, his eyes became grave. Tsarov saw that look and understood.

"I am dying, is it not so?" he whispered.

The doctor made no reply. He rose up and returned to Olva and Bob.

"There is nothing here, I suppose," he asked, "that we can give him?"

"Nothing" said Bob. "They have kept us without food since we arrived. That scoundrel—"

Olva glanced at him. She left them and went to Tsarov's side. They saw her raise his head on her arm. Dr. Hailey fixed his eyeglass in his eye and felt for his snuffbox. Then he remembered that he had left it behind him on the ground outside the tower.

"I don't understand," Bob said, "how Danatoff can have been murdered at South Street, because I saw him leave the house a few minutes after he entered it."

"My dear friend, you saw Peter Nikolaiovitch leave in the hat and cloak of the man he had just murdered."

Dr. Hailey started. They heard the sound of voices outside the tower.

"It must be Biles," he exclaimed. "I sent him a wire from Newcastle early this morning and another from Alnwick."

He handed his pistol to Bob.

"Keep him covered," he directed, pointing to Peter, "while I go downstairs and admit him."

CHAPTER LIX

CHEATING THE LAW

BILES had the Alnwick policeman who had picked up Dr. Hailey's note with him. They had experienced no difficulty, because the constable had seen the cars take the moor road. At the only crossroad the tracks of the two vehicles had been plainly marked and had led them to the doctor's empty car. They entered the tower and Dr. Hailey led the way up the narrow staircase.

"What does it all mean?" the detective queried in bewilderment.

"That you will see, my dear Biles, for yourself."

The doctor opened the door and stood aside to allow the detective to enter. As he did so the latter uttered a cry of amazement. He remained gazing at the strange spectacle with incredulous eyes.

Olva was still bending over Tsarov and her hand was laid on his brow. She raised her other hand in mute warning. Dr. Hailey came quickly to her side.

"He's just going, I'm afraid," she said softly.

Tsarov's face was calm now and his terrible eyes were closed. His lips moved as though he was trying to speak, but they emitted no sound.

"Has he said anything?"

"Only that it was my love of Bob which defeated him. I think he meant it as a kind of tribute."

The girl's beautiful, dreamy eyes were mist-clouded.

"I see."

Dr. Hailey put his finger on the dying man's pulse. He could barely feel it. Biles came and stood looking down at a scene the meaning of which was still completely hidden from him. The Alnwick constable, true to his type, remained on guard at the door of the room. They heard a screech owl fly past the tower with dismal crying. Then the last faint tinge of life ebbed gently away. Olva shut her eyes and turned from the body.

"He was murdered," Dr. Hailey told Biles, "half an hour ago by the man who is lying over there."

"What! Peter Nikolaiovitch?"

"Yes."

He took a handkerchief from his pocket and spread it over Tsarov's dead face. Then he rose to his feet. Bob, he saw, had not for an instant taken his eyes from the Russian. He stood, a wild, disheveled figure in his garish rags with the pistol cocked ready in his hand. Olva had come beside him and was leaning on his shoulder, sad-eyed and weary.

The doctor turned to Biles and told him briefly what had happened since they parted at the Red Lion at Wycombe. He spoke in low tones, quickly.

"Lord Borrodean's story, in conjunction with our own investigations, made it absolutely certain, of course, that the Countess Olva had not killed Danatoff. They made it certain, too, that the murdered man had traveled to Wycombe with his murderer."

He paused. He could see that Peter Nikolaiovitch was following his words with close attention. The Russian's sullen eyes were fixed on Biles's face.

"Good God!" the detective ejaculated.

"The idea that Danatoff would travel willingly with any stranger to such a rendezvous was absurd, of course." He continued: "His orders from Lord Borrodean on that subject were too emphatic. The conclusion appeared to me to be irresistible that a corpse and not a living man had been brought down from London in the third motor car."

"What, then, of the knife bearing the Vorloff monogram?"

Dr. Hailey raised his eyeglass to his eye and inserted it with deliberation:

"That, my dear Biles, was the clew which unlocked the riddle. My inquiries began from that starting point. They were complete when I found the bloodstain on the hall carpet at South Street and the covered way leading from the house to the garage. I knew then that the man whom Bob saw returning to the High Court Hotel on the night of the murder was not Danatoff, as he supposed, but Danatoff's murderer, Peter Nikolaiovitch, the only person who had free access to the Vorloffs' house—to the knife."

"*My God, he's swallowed something!*"

Bob's cry rang out in the silence. In an instant Dr. Hailey was at the wounded man's side. Peter Nikolaiovitch received him with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders.

"Too late, my dear doctor," he said in cool tones.

Biles exclaimed: "We can get him down to Alnwick to a doctor. My car is there."

"I fancy I have about ten minutes left me. If you think it worth while," replied the wounded man.

Again the broad shoulders were raised and dropped. A cynical smile curled the thin lips. Peter Nikolaiovitch moved on his elbow and then, for a moment, seemed to suffer a pang of distress. Dr. Hailey turned to the detective and shook his head.

"It is useless, I think," he declared laconically.

Suddenly the Russian sat up. The blood surged to his cheeks.

CHAPTER LX

INTO THE DEPTHS

"MON Dieu," Peter Nikolaiovitch exclaimed, "I have deserved success! You shall hear." His eyes swept Dr. Hailey's eyes. "You know much, but you do not know all. Listen, in spite of all the cares and precautions of milord Borrodean and milady, I—I alone—discovered the secret of their meetings with Danatoff at the house at Wycombe. When Danatoff returned from Warsaw this week I went to his room at the High Court Hotel while he was out and searched it. But I found only a locked safe." He moved uneasily again.

"I have read in the papers," he continued, "that Tsarov was the robber at the hotel. They did not know of my robbery on the day before. Tsarov always was my servant—like the woman, Beryl Lestrange.

"Because I had heard about his influence with the Countess Vorloff and milady Olva in the old days in Petersburg I sent to Russia for him when I entered the Vorloff house. He was useful. He took for me the houses in Hampstead and this place—and other places. And when the time came I meant that he should be more useful still."

He paused and his cheeks became dusky.

"This affair of Danatoff was very urgent. When I came from the hotel I made up my mind to drag from milady Olva all her secrets and I ordered Tsarov to come to South Street and attempt to reassert his old influence over her."

Dr. Hailey took a step forward because the flush in the man's face had deepened. But Peter Nikolaiovitch waved him back.

"Not yet!" he cried. He drew a deep breath and passed his hand across his brow.

"But already, I confess it, I had made a mistake—the first. Danatoff discovered that his room had been searched. He was afraid and so came to South Street to see milady and give her the cipher in case an attack should be made on him that night on his way to Wycombe. Alas! it was Sophie Ivanovna who opened the door to him. She told him that milady had gone to Brook Street to a dance.

"Milady went away to Wycombe that night and left a letter with me for Danatoff. I opened it and read it and knew that my chance had come. I was ready when he stood on the step of the door. Then I opened the door and he came in. I struck. He fell without uttering a sound and the handle of the knife snapped off as he fell."

His voice failed. They glanced at one another in horror at the coolness of the man upon the very threshold of death.

"I took his keys and his hat and cloak and drove back to the hotel. In the safe was a message written in cipher—that and nothing else. The idea flashed across my brain that the key to the cipher was already on its way to Wycombe in the custody of milady, who must have had it from Danatoff at the ball in Brook Street.

"His coming to South Street had been but a ruse to throw the enemy, who had tried already that day to rob him, off the scent. I rushed back to South Street and lifted the body in my arms and carried it along the passage to the garage. I threw it into the car and drove out at once on the road to Wycombe. But milady drew her car across the road to bar my way."

His face had become livid. Its expression changed suddenly and he writhed in agony. Then his muscles relaxed again and he lay still breathing with difficulty. Dr. Hailey heard Olva tell Bob that she had supposed it was Tsarov who was pursuing her when she drew her coupé across the road and again when she fired at the car in the yard at Moorfields.

"You had better not speak any more," he warned. "The rest of the story is known to us and you are only exhausting yourself."

Peter Nikolaiovitch lay back and closed his eyes. In a moment he recovered.

"It is not known to you," he cried, "except the affair with Lord Borrodean at Moorfields. By good fortune milady failed to recognize her friend. She supposed Tsarov had followed her up to the house to kill her. When I saw her shooting, I knew that she could not have given away to him

the key of the cipher. I tried to kill him, but he escaped me. So I brought up my car and changed my shoes with Danatoff that it might seem he had been alive at the house, and then picked her up from the ground where she lay and put her into the car.

"As I did that, I broke one of the windows by accident. I put Danatoff's body in Lord Borrodean's car, where you found it. We drove back quickly to Hampstead where Tsarov awaited me. I left her there, still in a faint, with him and returned to South Street. It was but five o'clock and not even Sophie Ivanovna knew that I had been away—"

He appeared to have revived a little. His eyes shone eagerly now as though he was recounting a story of heroic and worthy deeds. Suddenly, however, his face became overshadowed. He declared:

"It was then that I made the second mistake. I listened to Tsarov when I should have acted on the plan I had formed already, myself. You see, I had not found anything, not a scrap of paper even, in Milady Olva's possession. Nor had Tsarov himself, whom I sent to the hotel again that morning to make yet another search, been more successful. It was necessary to force the lips of milady. But Tsarov's influence was not equal to the task."

A grim look came into his eyes.

"For me, there is but one force—you have seen. But Tsarov was a good talker. He explained his failure to exercise his old influence by saying that milady's love of M. Barling had changed her spirit. 'So,' he said, 'let us show her her bethrothed in the arms of a woman of the town. Then she will speak.'"

Peter Nikolaiovitch turned to Olva, who was clinging to Bob with an expression on her face of deepening horror.

"You know what you know. He was right, my doctor of psychology, and also he was wrong. It is not so easy to kill the love of a woman. But it is easy to use it. Because M. Barling was unfaithful, you yielded only the secret of the purse; but when his life was threatened—ah!"

A fresh spasm seized him. His voice grew loud and strident.

"It was that business of the Albert Hall which ruined everything," he cried. "When M. Barling was trapped, I gave the order to take him and milady up here at once. Had that been done, there would have been no secrets afterwards. But Tsarov begged for but six hours' delay in which to make his great experiment. 'You shall possess all their secrets,' he promised, 'before I have started with them on my journey to Northumberland."

Suddenly, before they guessed what he was about, Peter Nikolaiovitch stood up.

"I am betrayed!" he shouted. "Beryl, Tsarov—all have betrayed me. But I shall kill—all—all—"

Dr. Hailey sprang forward and seized him, but with a swift movement of his body he tore himself free. Next moment he had sprung to the boarding at the side of the room. He hurled himself against the crazy planks.

There was a sound of ripping, tearing wood as the feeble structure gave way under his assault. Then silence. Then a dull, sickening thud came from the bottom of the tower a hundred feet below.

CHAPTER LXI

THE READING OF THE CIPHER

DR. HAILEY took a pinch of snuff.

"My dear Biles," he said, "the Countess Olva, in running away from South Street, was doing the only thing which she could do, if she was to keep faith with those who trusted her. She has not told me as yet, but I have no doubt at all that she meant to confess everything to Lord Borrodean and ask his protection against Tsarov.

"If that plan had been successful, she would have accompanied him to Maidstone Abbey for a time. From what Lord Borrodean told me, I quite realize that she could not have made such a confession to Danatoff; and she dared not meet Danatoff until she had confessed and was safe."

They were seated in a private room of the Swan Hotel at Alnwick. The detective inclined his head. An immense admiration for his friend shone in his eyes.

"But why not wait for the man at South Street and go down to Wycombe with him?" he asked eagerly.

"Because Tsarov had threatened to return that night. As I read the situation, the girl was obsessed by so lively a fear of that strange creature, that she would have gone to the ends of the earth to avoid him. Moreover, she could not take the really terrible risk of his meeting Danatoff and so, perhaps, penetrating the secret from another direction.

He added after a moment:

"The fact is that Peter Nikolaiovitch was coming to the end of his resources. These murders of his accomplices—Beryl and Tsarov and the way in which he incriminated Tsarov to the police a few days ago, show how fearful he was of being exposed by them. It is the old story. They knew too much."

Dr. Hailey was fingering his beloved snuffbox. He helped himself to a pinch.

The door of the room opened and Bob Barling, temporarily accommodated with a suit of the landlord's clothes, entered the room.

"Thank God, Olva is not yet down," he said fervently. "I advised her last night to spend the whole day in bed."

He came to the fireplace and lit a cigarette. His face was rather haggard, but his eyes had recovered something of their mirth.

"What sort of dope do you suppose it was," he asked the doctor, "which that fellow took last night?"

"I don't know. Possibly the same kind as poor Beryl Lestrange administered to you at the Albert Hall— How long, by the way, did the effects of it last?"

"Goodness knows. I remember the ball and nothing after that until I woke up, feeling like nothing on earth, in that infernal tower. I was in the room below, mad with thirst; nobody came near me for hours—"

He broke off and seemed to shake the terrible memory from him.

"There is one thing I do want enlightenment about!" he exclaimed after a moment, "and that is the cipher. I have been looking at the bit of paper you gave me last night and I can't for the life of me, make head or tail of it."

Dr. Hailey smiled.

"It's simple enough," he declared.

He rose and crossed the room, and took a sheet of paper from the writing desk. He brought it back to the table and sat down with it in front of him.

"It so happens," he said, "that there are twenty-six letters in the alphabet. That is exactly half the number of cards in a pack. Danatoff's purse contained thirteen coins, which again is half the number of letters in the alphabet. Suppose now, we write down the numbers up to 52 in double columns, thus:

1	27
2	28
3	29
4	30
5	31
6	32
7	33
8	34
9	35
10	36
11	37
12	38
13	39
14	40
15	41
16	42
17	43
18	44
19	45
20	46
21	47
22	48
23	49
24	50
25	51
26	52

"And suppose we take the thirteen coins and look at the dates on them."

"Ah!" Bob's eyes sparkled.

"The dates are—" He consulted his notebook. "1901, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1911, 1912, 1915, 1917, 1919, 1920, 1922, and 1923. We can ignore the 19's, and take only the actual years—1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, and 23.

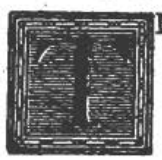
"Now suppose we strike these numbers from our first column of figures—we shall be left, shall we not, with thirteen numbers? That is not a complete alphabet. But, if we go further and strike out the corresponding figures in the second column, then we

shall have twenty-six numbers left—enough to make an alphabet. In this way:

	~~1~~	—	~~27~~	
A	2	—	28	N
B	3	—	29	O
	~~4~~	—	~~30~~	
C	5	—	31	P
	~~6~~	—	~~32~~	
D	7	—	33	Q
	~~8~~	—	~~34~~	
	~~9~~	—	~~35~~	
E	10	—	36	R
	~~11~~	—	~~37~~	
	~~12~~	—	~~38~~	
F	13	—	39	S
G	14	—	40	T
	~~15~~	—	~~41~~	
H	16	—	42	U
	~~17~~	—	~~43~~	
I	18	—	44	V
	~~19~~	—	~~45~~	
	~~20~~	—	~~46~~	
J	21	—	47	W
	~~22~~	—	~~48~~	
	~~23~~	—	~~49~~	
K	24	—	50	X
L	25	—	51	Y
M	26	—	52	Z

CHAPTER LXII

CHURCH BELLS AND EVENING



HE doctor then took the strip of paper he had extracted from the shoe lace at Wycombe and spread it out. He scored out the numbers which he had scored out on his columns and then wrote above the remaining numbers the letters to which they corresponded.

"So," he said, "here is the message as I first deciphered it."

V				E	R				Y	U
44	~~4~~	~~17~~	~~20~~	10	36	~~38~~	~~9~~	~~1~~	51	42
			R				G	E	N	
~~4~~	~~17~~	~~20~~	36	~~11~~	~~15~~	~~17~~	14	10	28	
			T			O	R			
~~11~~	~~35~~	~~49~~	40	~~8~~	~~17~~	29	36	~~17~~	~~1~~	
	M	A				Y	D			
~~38~~	26	2	~~6~~	~~27~~	~~17~~	51	7	~~4~~	~~17~~	~~20~~
E	N		O	U	N					C
10	28	~~20~~	29	42	28	~~41~~	~~1~~	~~8~~	~~15~~	5 ~~6~~
E				B	O					
10	~~4~~	~~17~~	~~20~~	3	29	~~23~~	~~15~~	~~11~~	~~4~~	~~17~~
	R	R						O		
~~20~~	36	36	~~41~~	~~34~~	~~8~~	~~25~~	~~20~~	29		
	D				E	A	N			
~~48~~	7	~~22~~	~~1~~	~~17~~	10	2	28			

"'Very urgent, or may denounce, Borrodean.' My mistake lay in failing to realize that there is a comma between the word 'denounce,' and the signature of the message. Here is the whole message as I have since deciphered it from the other slips which Inspector Biles took from the shoe laces Peter Nikolaiovitch was wearing—that is to say, from the laces of the shoes he stole from Danatoff's body."

The doctor opened his notebook and read:

"Highness awaits ship. Five hundred each DRIVA, NOBOLSKY. Skipper. Very urgent, or may denounce, Borrodean."

Bob gazed at the words in fascinated silence. The names were those of men in authority in Russia, as he knew. Had Peter Nikolaiovitch obtained them, there must have been a terrible vengeance. Probably, too, hundreds of lesser people were involved.

"Who is Borrodean?" he asked.

"Lord Borrodean's son."

"And 'his highness'?"

"I don't know."

Dr. Hailey pointed to another entry in his book: "That is the translation of the message found in Danatoff's coat," he said, "which, I fancy, is also the message which Peter Nikolaiovitch found in the safe at the High Court Hotel."

Bob read:

Operations must cease. No hope. Enemy too strong. Careful."

"That is a fake, of course?"

"Yes. It didn't take the Russian long to discover that after he had obtained the secret of the purse."

They became silent. Dr. Hailey took more snuff.

"Lord Borrodean told me," he said, "that Danatoff had rooms in a hotel in Warsaw. A shoemaker in that city acted as the agent. When a messenger came from Russia, he called on this man and left his shoes. They were then forwarded, in the ordinary way, to Danatoff at the hotel. Thus, no meetings ever took place.

"The purse of coins was brought in small Russian money to a cafè where one of the waiters, an agent of Borrodean's, received it. He handed to Danatoff, as change, thirteen Polish coins of the same date; English

coins were substituted when the poor fellow set out for London. Thus, or so it was hoped, no suspicion could possibly be aroused. But all plans are liable to fail sometimes—"

Bob turned to him, when he finished speaking, with eyes full of admiration and wonder:

"How did you ever manage to read the cipher yourself?" he asked.

To his surprise, he saw the doctor's face become gloomy.

"I read it because that poor young lady who accompanied you to the Albert Hall supplied me with the key by attempting to steal it. As I told you, she flung the coins on the floor after I had seen her making notes of their numbers.

"And at the same time, she stole my copy of the first cipher. After that it was merely a case of putting two and two together— since the only figures on a coin are the date of it." He paused and sighed. "Nevertheless, that task took me many hours, because of the difficulty of the double thirteen."

"The double thirteen?"

"I mean the fact that each of the thirteen numbers on the coins canceled out two figures—a figure in both columns."

Dr. Hailey screwed his eyeglass firmly into his eye:

"You knew Beryl Lestrange?" he asked in slow tones.

"A little. I used to dance with her sometimes. Nobody knew anything more than that. She rang me up and said that she could help me to find Olva. I am never a very careful person and I was mad with anxiety." He added, "She had my costume ready for me when I reached her house in Hampstead."

His voice trailed away. Dr. Hailey sat looking vacantly before him. His eyeglass descended.

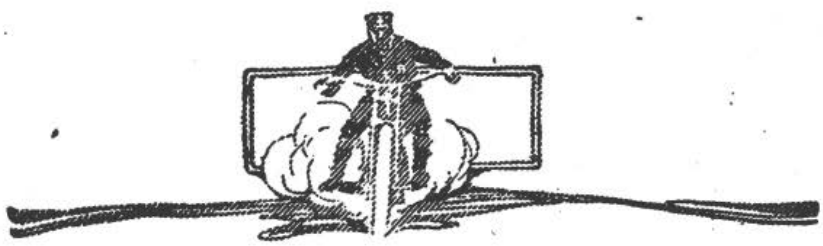
And just then the bells of the churches in this exquisite old town began to ring for Evensong.

There was a light step in the corridor without and the door opened.

It was Olva.

Bob rose and went to meet her.

THE END



Watch for a series of Short Stories featuring Dr. Eustace Hailey soon to appear in FLYNN'S

I was startled to see a prisoner inside the cage in his underwear

COMIC OPERA JAILS

By Joseph Fulling Fishman

A WANDERING PRISON INSPECTOR TELLS OF MANY A HUMOROUS INCIDENT IN LIFE BEHIND THE BARS

A Story of Fact

"SHA'FF," called a prisoner in one of the small county jails of South Carolina, "don't yo'all think hit's just about time Ah was gittin' mah spring plowin' done?"

"Ah reckon so, Pete," responded the sheriff, and then jokingly, "Guess yo'all 'lowin' to plant co'n agin, huh?"

"Wal," Pete drawled, "Ah ain't sayin' Ah ain't, an' they ain't no revenooers a goin' to git me this time, either, 'cause Ah got a place they ain't none o' them can git to."

"How long yo'all reckon it'll take to do you' plowin'?" the sheriff inquired.

"Wal, 'bout two or three weeks to git things into shape" responded Pete, after thinking for a moment or two. "If Ah left to-night Ah could git back 'bout the fu'st o' the month."

"All right, Pete," said the sheriff, "yo'all light out to-night and git back soon's ever yo' kin."

So Pete "lit out" that same night, completed his spring plowing, and returned to jail promptly on the first of the following month to finish out his sentence of ninety days, not counting the time he had been away. Of course he brought the sheriff back a gallon of moonshine fresh from the still. But it was in no sense graft or bribery.

The sheriff had acted out of a sense of good fellowship alone, and even had he known that Pete would return empty

handed he would have done exactly the same thing. The sheriff had no uneasiness whatsoever about his prisoner returning. He had given his promise and that was sufficient, as the sense of honor among the "hill billies" makes breaking a promise the most heinous of crimes, alongside of which shooting a "revenooer" or two is but a mild misdemeanor.

Hobnobbing With the Sheriff

This practice of allowing prisoners to go home during intervals of their supposed confinement in jail exists to a considerable extent in the smaller jails of the United States. Do not get the idea that it is done secretly, and that it is something which the jailer, who in the smaller counties is also sheriff, would not want to have generally known. Far from it. In many cases the sheriff uses it as a campaign issue to insure his reëlection. In his political speeches he will tell the voters that, if he is elected, no man need have his "craps sp'iled" for lack of attention merely because he happens to be serving a jail sentence for making moonshine.

And this is no stage comic opera. It is life's own, being played to-day in various mountainous districts of these United States. In these districts the population of entire counties is divided into three classes: those who make moonshine, those who drink it, and those who do both. Each is naturally very tolerant of the shortcomings of the other. Indeed I have come across more than one official of the "co't," such as a sheriff or bailiff, who has himself been a moonshiner or liquor runner.

But such facts were never brought forward by his political opponents as reasons for his disqualification. It may be all right in a large city for the pot to refer in uncomplimentary terms to the complexion of the kettle, but in a smaller community, where everyone knows you, it is, as Mawruss Perlmutter would say, "something else again."

In these communities the moonshiner, despite half a dozen jail terms, is received everywhere as a social equal. While a "prisoner" he "sets in" with the sheriff and his family at meal times, gets exactly the same food, plays around with the sheriff's children, maybe takes a walk to town to "git hisself a plug o' chewin'," and generally conducts himself as a temporary member of the sheriff's household.

When the sheriff goes to the Saturday night "box supper" he is just as likely as not to take his prisoners along, and it doesn't worry him a bit if one of them is missing for a day or two undergoing repairs, following a claim by some one, overcome with the pure joy of living, that he could lick any man in the county. He knows that he will show up in due course and will expect to have the time he was away added to his sentence.

These moonshiners are of course Federal prisoners, and the Government has tried for years to break up the practice of permitting them to go and come as they pleased while they were supposed to be serving jail sentences. When I was Inspector of Prisons for the Federal Government I used to "swoop down" unexpectedly on the sheriffs of these counties and check up on the list of United States prisoners supposed to be in jail. I once made such a visit to the jail at Jackson, Kentucky.

"Out Because He's Innott"

Jackson is in "Bloody Breathitt" county, the scene of the Curtis-Jett feuds. The jailer was an old mountaineer by the name of Allen, nicknamed "Smoky" by the prisoners. The list showed forty prisoners undergoing sentence, and I found the forty everywhere—that is, everywhere but in the jail. They were lolling around the jail yard, lounging in front of the town hotel, sitting in the court room regaling themselves with the spicy details of others about to join their ranks, and enjoying themselves generally in the way peculiar to the "hill billy." Smoky was standing in the jail yard. I approached him and inquired why it was that the Federal prisoners were not in jail where they belonged. He looked me over meditatively:

"Ah ain't seein' as how the guv'mint's got any kick," he drawled, "bein' as they's a guard with a gun watchin' 'em."

"But where is he?" I inquired. "These men are all over town. Where is the guard?"

"He's yander on the other side of the jail," came the surprising explanation.

"But," I argued, as tactfully as possible, "if he's on the other side of the jail how can he watch the men on this side. I know you mountaineers are supposed to have good eyesight, but I don't think you can see through three or four stone walls and around corners.

Smoky eyed me sadly, slowly turned the problem over in his deliberate mind, spat a mouthful of tobacco juice out on the grass, carefully wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and delivered himself of just four words:

"Wal, this one kin."

Unlike a certain well advertised product, the explanation failed to satisfy. I told Smoky that unless the prisoners were kept in jail they would be removed to another county and he would lose the income for their board which he received from the government. Just as he gave me his promise a "prisoner" who had been lounging around the yard strolled up to him and said:

"Lemme have the key, Smoky."

Smoky handed him *the key to the jail.* The man walked over to it, unlocked the door, let himself in, locked it after him, and in a few minutes appeared at a second floor window and threw the key down to Smoky, who nonchalantly picked it up as though nothing at all unusual had happened.

This habit of the jailer being a "good fellow" with the prisoners is not always confined to the smaller towns. I have seen it on several occasions in cities. An amazing incident of the kind occurred in one of the large cities of the West. Having heard the jailer was permitting two or three of his favorites to wander around the city as they wished, I had the jail watched until I was sure one of them had left.

Then, after having an official of the United States Marshal's office pick him up and hold him in the "cage" at the Federal Building, I went to the jail to "check up," without, however, telling the jailer what I had done. The wandering prisoner was a local politician named Innott. Being something of a musician he had been nicknamed "Bugles." After talking to the jailer for a short time about different matters I told him I wanted to speak to Innott. He gave me a startled look, said "Wait a minute," and disappeared. He returned in a few minutes with a prisoner, saying "This is Innott." Of course I differed with him, and when I explained that Innott was in the cage at the marshal's office his face registered an interesting mixture of amazement and dismay.

The action of the sheriff in permitting his friend Bugles to roam around outside the jail leaked out following the investigation. The newspapers on the opposite side of the political fence played it up in various ways in an endeavor to make campaign capital out of it, the sheriff of course being severely criticised for his favoritism. But in a few days the coincidence of the prisoner's name began to appeal to the newspaper men's sense of humor and the affair became more of a practical joke than anything else. A prisoner sent this anonymous contribution to one of the local columnists:

Our jail presents a curious case;
If fifty men are in the place
And there is added one new face
There'd still be fifty in it.

For Sheriff Clancy's very slick
At modernized arithmetic,
He's shown us how to do the trick
With Mr. "Bugles" Innott.

This Innott is the sheriff's pet,
Conviction doesn't make him fret,
He hasn't been in jail as yet
And never will be in it.

For "Bugles" knows what he's about,
And this is sure; without a doubt.
He's in it soft because he's out,
And out because he's Innott.

II

MANY curious and amusing situations are presented by our comic opera jails. Once when I was making an investigation of the jails of West Virginia a prisoner complained bitterly that he had caught a bad cold through being forced by the jailer to remain out in the rain all night. He said that the jailer had given him permission to return to his home for a few hours—no uncommon thing at all in these

small institutions — and that he had promised to return promptly at ten o'clock. He didn't arrive until eleven, after the jailer had retired.

He rang the bell, but the jailer refused to come down and let him in. He kept insisting that the train had been late and that his failure to arrive on time had been due to no fault of his own. The institution was about three miles outside the town, a cold rain was falling, and he was soaked to the skin.

The Jailer's Revenge

He thought of the nice warm jail, and determined to get in at all costs. So he walked about a half mile down the road, procured a crowbar which some workmen were using in building a culvert, came back to the jail, pried two of the flimsy bars apart, raised the window and crawled through. "And then," he said bitterly, "what you t'ink 'Snakes' (the jailer) done?"

I professed ignorance.

"I tell you what he done," he went on. "He hearn the noise and come down and when he seen what I done he makes me crawl back t'rough de winder and out in de rain agin, and I hadda walk t'ree miles to town to git a flop, and I ketches a bad cold, and when I tells Snakes about it he gives me hell fer wakin' him up and says he's sorry it wasn't snowin', and when I got my time in I'm gonna see de county c'mishn'rs an' see if they stan' fer a poor con. being treated dat way."

Several other prisoners had gathered around us to listen to the conversation. "Yeh, Snakes is hard-boiled all right," one of them spoke up. "He did something like that to that Jew fellow who went out last January; what was his name?"

"Goldstein," suggested another.

"Yeh, that's the one. Goldie was going out on the nineteenth, but Snakes took five days away from him for soaking Blooch when he caught him playing with marked cards. That made his time out on the twenty-fourth. Goldie said he was going to make a kick on the place, about the chow and everything, soon's he got out, so Snakes had it in for him. So when the big snow came on the twenty-second Snakes told Goldie he was giving him back two days of the time he lost, which would make him out on the twenty-second, and he turned him out in the snow.

"Goldie sure put in one kick, said he'd been a bad actor and deserved to lose five days, and that his time wasn't up until the twenty-fifth, and that Snakes didn't have no right to turn him out. But Snakes showed him the rule where he could take away or give back any time he wanted, not exceeding five days a month, so there wasn't anything for Goldie to do but to hit the grit. He sure was one mad baby."

In these small jails the officials often have very curious ideas of cleanliness. In a recent survey of the jails of Maryland I found that some of them had no bathing or washing facilities whatever. This condition is not by any means peculiar to Maryland; it exists in many States. The attempt of the officials to justify this lack have always amused me, and I have made it a point to ask the reasons for it. The prize answer was given by the deputy sheriff at Centreville, Maryland, who informed me quite seriously that there was absolutely no necessity for bathing equipment, as all the prisoners were short time men who never stayed more than two or three months.

Prearranged Conviction

The comic opera features of these backwoods counties are not always confined to the jails and jailers. Often the roots go back to the other county officials, and they are as likely as not to reach even the county judge, who might be assumed to be a person of some dignity. Going through a jail deep in the recesses of Oklahoma upon one occasion, I was startled to see a prisoner inside the cage in his underwear. Inquiry of the jailer, a typical back county countryman, brought forth the following story:

This prisoner was a member of a gang of tramps which had been loitering around the county seat for some time. There had been a series of petty thefts, so the sheriff arrested this gang and brought its members to trial. He acted more upon suspicion than anything else, as he had decidedly lit-

tle evidence. The local judge, whose house was among those robbed, was a comical looking Irishman by the name of Fogarty. When the prisoners came to trial they had no counsel to defend them, so the judge assigned a lifelong friend of his, one Charley Evans, to protect their interests.

After the evidence was in, Charley, who was very conscientious, arose and began an impassioned speech about the innocence of his clients, contending quite truthfully that the evidence was entirely insufficient to convict. He had barely got started when Judge Fogarty motioned to him to come up to the bench. He leaned over and drawled:

"You can finish that speech, Charley, but I'm going to convict them."

Charley was amazed. He knew that the judge ordinarily was inclined to be very fair, erring if at all on the side of leniency. It struck him that some kind of a joke was being played on him.

"You don't really mean that, judge?" he whispered.

Judge Fogarty shook his head obstinately. "That's exactly what I mean, Charley, I'm goin' to convict them."

"But, judge," protested Charley, "the evidence against them is so slight it's ridiculous."

The Judge's Pants

"That may be, Charley," the judge responded, "and you're entitled to finish that speech if you want to, but I'm going to convict them."

Charley was now thoroughly nettled. "But why, judge?" he inquired. "You admit yourself there isn't any evidence. Won't you tell me why?"

Judge Fogarty nodded in the direction of one of the defendants. "Charley," he said bitterly, "you see that beetle-browed scoundrel next the end, the one they call 'Hungry Joe'?"

Charley nodded.

"Well," went on the judge vindictively, "that rascal has my pants on."

The prisoners went to jail and Judge Fogarty immediately appeared and demanded his trousers back. The jailer bitterly protested, contending that it was not in keeping with the dignity of his institution for prisoners to be running around without any trousers on. But the judge insisted, so there was nothing else for the jailer to do. Under a county ordinance the jailer could put in a requisition for clothing for any prisoner whose attire transgressed the bounds of custom, providing that the prisoner himself did not have any money with which to purchase it.

Such Time as He Can Spare

This the jailer did immediately after the judge's departure with the highly prized trousers. But the ordinance also provided that such requisitions had to be approved by the county judge. When, therefore, the requisition came before Judge Fogarty for approval, he purposely withheld action for five or six days before consenting to O. K. the requisition. It was during this interval that I happened to visit the jail.

There were only about ten prisoners in the jail at this particular time, and as can be imagined they "kidded" Hungry Joe unmercifully about his seminude condition. One of them immediately began to indulge in the jail sport of writing jingles. He handed me the following before I left:

I've been around the "stirs" a bit
And I've seen lots of "vics"
'And some were soft as hominy
And some were hard as bricks,

And some were dressed in rags or worse,
And some, like Gungha Din,
Had only skin and bone to show
Where clothing should have been,

And many more were minus socks,
And some were minus shoes,
And some had suits that wind and rain
Had given many hues.

But not till Hungry Joe arrived
Had I by any chance
E'er cast my lamp on yegg or tramp
Who hadn't any pants.

When Hungry Joe a stealing goes
In future, you can bet,
He'll pick the things he takes with care,
And not what he can get.

Now my advice to him would be
('Twill save him future pains)
To limit his activities
To parasols and canes.

The lack of adequate supervision in the comic opera jail belt often has startling

consequences. In cases where the jailer is engaged in other occupations "on the side," he gives to his institution only such time as he can actually spare. In many instances this is practically none at all. Very often indeed he will not go near the jail for two or three days at a time, but will give full charge to a "trusty." I have been in many jails where such a prisoner would go to town to buy food, cook and serve it to the other prisoners, enforce discipline and generally "run things" as though he himself were the jailer.

Applejack Plays It Safe

In one of these "hoosegows" was a negro prisoner known as "Applejack," who was serving a term of three months for petty theft. Like so many small jails, it was of flimsy construction, and Applejack was not in a week before he found his way to the outside through a large, unused sewerage pipe from which he had removed a grating. The jailer had a farm several miles from town, on which he spent most of his time. His wife served the meals, the last one about four thirty in the afternoon. A prisoner going out at night, therefore, would not be likely to be missed until the following morning.

Applejack, who had some native shrewdness, looked at this situation from all angles, and decided that here indeed was an opportunity to lay in a supply of other people's goods and chattels with the minimum of danger to himself. So each night he would let himself out of the jail after the town had gone to bed, which was about ten o'clock, and return again at one or two in the morning. The citizens began to complain of petty thefts and to look for the culprit. But as Applejack had shrewdly figured out, they never thought of looking into the jail. A jailed thief, like a dead Indian, was looked upon as perfectly harmless.

At the end of three or four weeks Applejack had accumulated a not insignificant quantity of clothing and silverware, not to mention a miscellaneous assortment of bric-a-brac and various odds and ends. These he hid in a closet in the jail which was used to store disinfectant, extra blankets and other jail paraphernalia. He had intended to carry this loot away after he was released by crawling back into the jail several times and removing on each occasion as much as he could carry.

He did succeed in carrying away the majority of it when another prisoner "squealed" on him and he was caught. He was indicted and convicted on two counts, one being for "breaking and entering into the jail of the aforesaid county and removing therefrom various articles of jewelry and wearing apparel hereinbefore listed." So the sewer pipe was closed and Applejack went back for a considerably longer stay.

The so-called "trusties" whom many of these small county jailers leave in charge during their absence, are not always, as can well be imagined, particularly faithful to their trust. Some of them conduct a thriving trade in liquor and narcotics with the other prisoners. Some go even further, and I recall one bootlegger who looked upon his enforced confinement as a mere incident which should not be allowed to interfere with business. This financial genius constructed a neat little distilling plant in his cell, making the coil or worm, such as is used by distillers, out of tin cups cut into strips and soldered together.

Raw materials were procured and the finished product sold each day when he went to town to procure the jail supplies. He carried the bottles attached to a belt around his waist under his overcoat. Business continued good until one day the jailer happened to run across him in town. The day was warm and the prisoner was perspiring freely, but he still wore his overcoat. Even an indifferent jailer could see that something was wrong and the liquidation of the liquid business followed immediately after.

Of course, it would be "a great life" for the prisoners if all the jails were conducted in this high spirit of easy good fellowship, but the ends of justice would hardly be served. However, among the thousands of tragedies represented by the management of the jails in the country, the occasional *opéra bouffe* staged by some local "sha'ff" is indeed a comic relief.

The panel slid open, disclosing a pair of almond-shaped eyes, which stared curiously at him

LOUDER THAN WORDS

By Alexander Morrison

CLEWS SPEAK, AND SPEAK LOUDLY; BUT ONLY THE DEAF AND DUMB QUEG UNDERSTANDS THEIR STORY

"THIS Ming vase will do very nicely. We will have it sent, please," said the older of the two men.

But the salesman did not seem to hear these words, so the customer touched him on the shoulder impatiently. Then the clerk's somewhat pale face flushed and he became obsequiously alert. As he took down the address the second customer, who had not spoken at all, drew a card from his pocket and placed it with the vase.

"You—you are Mr. Queg, the deaf and dumb detective?" questioned the clerk when he absently read the name on the card. "Ah, then let me explain my—my inattention and agitation, sir. I am the Mr. Tabor of Tabor and Stone. When you entered I had just left my partner's room, dazed by what I had seen. He is lying there, dead—"

"Naturally you were upset. Is there anything we can do?" asked Ruff, the man who had selected the vase, in a solicitous if perfunctory tone.

"That is what I was coming to. If you would step this way."

He led them through the apparently haphazard clutter of antique furniture and display cases filled with curios to a door in the rear of the shop. Ruff and Queg followed, both anxious to do what they could, of course, but anticipating a mere formality of sympathy and a speedy departure to their work again. Yet when Tabor opened a door in the narrow hall their purpose abruptly altered.

It was a small, cheerless looking bedroom with a single window looking out upon a

small yard of rusty grass. In sharp relief against this glare an elderly man in a bath robe sat upon the edge of the bed, facing the doorway, his hands resting upon his pyjama clad knees.

Erect, unnaturally stiff and motionless he sat, his face contorted into an expression which was half gloating, half sneering, but it was the lifeless, empty expression of a man whose soul had left its body.

Glancing swiftly about the room, Queg noted the severely practical furniture, a built-in bookcase, a table, the iron bed, and a huge chair drawn up before the empty fireplace, while everywhere, flung about in confusion, were scattered boxes, papers, books, and a miscellany of small curios and antiques similar to those in the cases in the shop. It was obviously the result of a frantic and thorough search.

"You had just discovered this—had not touched anything?" questioned Ruff, taking verbal command.

"No—that is, very little. I scarcely needed to touch him—to see that he was dead. I started to look about a little to see what had been taken, but had only opened that drawer where he keeps his papers when the buzzer announced some one had entered the shop—you gentlemen, as it proved."

As he spoke Queg studied his face inquisitively. He was a small, slight man about thirty-five years of age, though a network of lines about his eyes, large and widely separated, would have deceived a less observing man in adding at least ten years to this estimate.

His forehead was now wrinkled into a frown of agitation, and his eyes were dull with the vacant groping of one who scarcely realizes all that is taking place around him; his hands and tapering white fingers were continually in motion, although the gestures they made were meaningless and random for the most part.

When he ceased speaking, Queg began to move about the room, hence Ruff withheld any further questions until his partner should be watching to read the answers from Mr. Tabor's lips. A superficial examination of the body showed no wound, but Queg did not seem curious about this, studying only its general position, observing that the feet did not touch the floor, and that the left slipper was on its foot, the right lying about halfway between the bed and the chair. Toward this latter he then directed his search.

It was a solid, uncomfortable looking antique, its seat too low and near the floor, its solid arms and back a delicately tangled mass of carved Japanese dragons whose eyes were composed of different colored stones which gave them a curiously alive appearance.

"A valueless piece," commented Tabor as Queg's eyes glanced away from it to the body for a second.

A small safe in the darkest corner of the room next caught his attention, but Tabor reached it first, swinging open the door eagerly to disclose it was empty.

"What did he keep there?" questioned Ruff at a nod from Queg.

"I don't know exactly," answered Tabor hesitantly. "I have never seen the inside of it before, but he said this room contained something of immense value, all his wealth, and I presume it must have been in here. I begged him often to put it in a vault, but now what I feared has happened." His gesture seemed to indicate the confusion as a proof of robbery.

"Then your partner—Mr. Stone, I suppose?—lived here?"

"Yes, we all three do."

"Who is the third?"

"Tim Slater, our assistant. He—" Tabor paused, and a strange expression of uncertainty flashed across his face before he added, "He stayed here except over the week ends, when he went home—out of the city."

"Then he is here now?"

"No, he left last night to attend an auction sale this morning. He often acts as our purchasing agent, especially for Oriental pieces which Mr. Stone has taught him to appreciate, and has been quite a success. He will return this afternoon."

"How long has he worked at this business with you?"

"About six months only, but he has proved faithful, honest, and a good business man, I assure you. Mr. Stone especially

approved of him." Tabor's tone was convincing and earnest.

II

AT this point Queg interrupted with a note to his partner, instructing him to call a doctor and summon this man Slater from the auction sale while Tabor and Queg began a search of the other rooms. Tabor at once obeyed Ruff's command, leading Queg across the hall to a room of similar size and outlook to the one they had just left.

" This is my room, sir."

Queg nodded from the doorway swiftly surveying its more luxurious appointments, which expressed both a good taste and comfort wholly lacking in Mr. Stone's chamber. Further down the hall on the same side was a bathroom, while opposite this was the small, dingy room used by Mr. Slater. Into this Queg advanced, while Tabor stood just inside the doorway.

A narrow closet disclosed a rather shabby suit of clothes hung negligently from a hook and a worn pair of shoes on the floor; the drawer of the table beside which Tabor stood showed a clutter of writing materials and odds and ends, but nothing of any value. Several books lay on the table, mostly treatises on Chinese and Japanese art or its historical periods, and between them Queg found a leather wallet, delicately tooled in an intricate design of conventional flowers. This he held out to Tabor.

" Why, it's Mr. Stone's wallet," the latter answered his mute question. " He always carried it on his person with notes and papers in it." Tabor paused as if waiting for Queg to make some reply, then abruptly added, " But of course Slater can explain why it is here. No doubt Stone gave it to him for some reason."

Queg nodded, his face expressionless and calm as he wrote a question.

" Oh, yes, there is a door opening from the yard into a back street. You want to look there, I suppose?"

Tabor started toward a door at the end of the hall, but Queg pushed him aside and examined the lock before Tabor could touch its knob. The latch proved insecure and might easily be opened from the outside. In the yard Queg hastily but thoroughly searched the small plot of ground, but it was too dry to retain any foot prints.

A gravel path, another foil to incriminating marks, led to the rear gate, which was of solid wood and contained a modern latch which did not extend through to the other side. As Queg was examining this, Ruff rejoined them.

" The doctor will be here immediately. Slater did not attend the auction," he said briefly, then turned to examine the yard.

Receiving this news calmly, Queg was about to leave the door when he noticed a sliding panel near its top and stretched out his hand to open it. But before his fingers touched it the panel slid open, disclosing a pair of almond-shaped eyes which stared back at him curiously from the street side of the door. Quickly Queg opened the door wide, disclosing a Chinese in a neat serge suit.

" Mr. Stone will see me?" asked the latter with a bow.

" No, he cannot see you to-day, Charlie," answered Tabor readily.

Again the Oriental bowed and swiftly walked away, while Queg smiled to himself, not attempting to stop him.

" That's Charlie, another collector, who often visits Mr. Stone," explained Tabor, just as Ruff came forward eagerly, extending a tiny vial marked " Poison."

" It was right under that window!" He pointed to the one which lighted Slater's room.

" Don't, I beg you, gentlemen," exclaimed Tabor earnestly. " I can see you suspect him, but this is all circumstantial, easily explained, I'm sure."

He would have said more, but a buzzing from the shop interrupted his plea and they turned back to greet the doctor, a brisk young man who shook Queg's hand with obvious admiration before proceeding to examine the corpse. His first scrutiny confirmed Queg's surmise as to the time of death, but could not find any apparent cause for it.

Again he bent over the body, which now lay on its side on the bed, but it was Queg who pointed to a tiny discolored area at the

roots of the hair. In a moment the doctor straightened and spoke.

"A case of poison of some quick acting sort, administered at the base of the brain by a needle-like instrument. Death was instantaneous."

"Murder, then?" asked Ruff.

"Undoubtedly!"

"By some such poison as came in this?" Ruff handed him the empty vial.

"Prussic acid in some compound, yes," answered the doctor after smelling of it.

Tabor gasped audibly, and his hands trembled as he turned away to hide his emotion. But Queg calmly nodded and wrote an instruction for Ruff, who dismissed the doctor after requesting him to make his reports and remove the body for an autopsy, then asked Tabor to assist them in examining the scattered papers and checking up of all known articles in the room.

III

"YOU must go. Remember, when Slater returns all must seem as usual, nothing to arouse his suspicions before we have questioned him."

Reluctantly Tabor departed to wait on his customer, as Ruff insisted. It was late afternoon and the first time Ruff and Queg had been left alone for more than a moment, such as when Tabor had telephoned for lunch from a delicatessen, and now Ruff hoped for some word of enlightenment. The body had been removed, the room put somewhat in order, while Queg had showed a surprising interest in the notes and papers scattered about, reading each slowly and carefully.

"You think Slater is guilty?" asked Ruff when they were alone.

"Obviously," responded Queg's shorthand notes. "A valued, personal wallet in his room, a vial of poison outside his window, and he did not go where he was sent—to the auction. Oh, obviously he is guilty. Have you guessed the motive?"

"No, but I suppose you will want me to question him as to that?"

"Again, oh obviously!"

This reiteration drew Ruff's eyes to his partner's face in doubt of his sincerity, but the latter's expression was quite bland and serious. Nevertheless, Ruff remembered the maxim "Mistrust the obvious" and began to speculate again about the Chinese at the gate. With that slide in the door it was quite possible with a cane or hook to raise the latch from the street and get into the yard—yet nothing seemed to indicate this had been done, and the incriminating clews were so obvious.

He smiled at his own bewilderment and began to read the general outline of questions Queg had written for him to ask Slater. While he was going over these for a second time, Tabor called from the doorway.

"This is Tim Slater, who has just returned, gentlemen. Tim, these gentlemen know Mr. Stone and will talk with you until my customer goes."

While the young man hesitated uncertainly at this general introduction, Queg noted his almost sullen expression, drooping shoulders and shy manner. At first glance he was far from the model young man he had been led to expect by Tabor's praise, but a second scrutiny showed a determined mouth and chin, with a hint of animation in his eyes, a keenness easily overlooked and hidden by this too unassuming appearance.

"Come in, Mr. Slater. We are sorry Mr. Stone is not here, but do tell us about him. He has been well and happy of late?" began Ruff.

"Quite." His voice was crisp and firm in contrast to his bearing.

"No doubt its been a great help to shift off some of his burden of work to your shoulders. I believe you were at an auction for him to-day?"

"Yes."

"Pick up anything interesting?"

After a slight hesitation, Slater nodded and half smiled. "I got what I was after."

"By the way, did any one visit Mr. Stone here yesterday, personally I mean?"

"A man, yes."

"Was it Mr. Bower, by chance?" Ruff invented this name in hopes of learning the real one by subterfuge.

"I doubt it. I left before he did," answered Slater almost sharply.

"Could you describe him?"

"No, except that he was Chinese."

"And was Mr. Stone—"

"Look here," interrupted Slater suddenly. "Are you trying to accuse me of killing him?"

"Killing him? Why nothing has been said about—"

"Do you take me for a fool? Don't you suppose I can see something is wrong?"

"But why—murder?" snapped Ruff with blunt insinuation.

"Why not, from the looks of the room, the safe open and empty, from the fact of his absence and the scared look on Tabor's face?"

Ruff said nothing until he received a sign from Queg, who began to write. Quickly Ruff explained his partner's handicaps and method of carrying on a conversation by writing his questions, then stood near Queg where he could read his words and thus understand the ensuing dialogue.

Briefly the latter outlined the murder and showed no surprise at Slater's apparent lack of emotion, although his drooping lids hid any message Queg might have read in his eyes.

"Tell me about your relations with Mr. Stone," commanded Queg's note.

"He was kind, patient, taught me about antiques and helped me a lot—in a way."

"A slow, old-fashioned way, you mean?" Queg had been able to make this shrewd guess by his study of the scattered documents.

"Yes, I'm grateful and all that, owe him a lot, but you seem to understand how it was. He just sat in that chair all day and opposed any changes or progress. Why, he wouldn't let Mr. Tabor modernize the shop or make things attractive to increase sales at all—said he'd succeeded pretty well the way things were, and all that sort of talk. He even preached against making too much money—all well enough for him."

Slater checked himself with a flush, but Queg's eyes had wandered to the antique chair and did not seem to notice his distress. Mentally, Queg pictured the old man sitting there, fingering the carved dragons, dreaming contentedly in his own little world. Noting this look Slater began again.

"His favorite spot—he'd sit there by the hour. Yet it's uncomfortable and not much of a chair, not even a real antique, and ugly enough with those colored glass eyes that came with it."

"Do you recognize this?" Queg suddenly produced the wallet.

"Of course. Another pet of his."

"We found it in your room!"

Slater appeared startled for an instant, but quickly passed it off with—"I suppose he left it there for me. He always said I was to have it as a keepsake, and that he would tell me its real value some day."

"Then it was valuable?"

"No, it's just a novelty he designed and had made."

"And did you ever see this before?" Queg extended the poison vial.

"Never."

"Nor throw it out of your window?"

"No!" His tone showed a rising resentment as the meaning of these questions grew more apparent to him. "Look here, are you insinuating?"

"You were not at the auction sale. Where were you?" interrupted Queg's written question.

A quick and obvious retort sprang to Slater's lips, but he stifled it, closing his mouth into a thin line.

"Answer; where were you last night and this morning?" commanded Ruff as Queg motioned for him to continue the inquiry.

"You would not believe me if I told you, and I can't prove it," retorted Slater. "Evidently you have already condemned me with suspicions, so it doesn't matter."

"Doesn't matter? You tell us or—"

"I repeat, I refuse to tell what will not be believed and has no connection with this at all. Oh, you can't browbeat me. I'll fight. I'm not a penniless outcast, or won't be long. I'll borrow on what Mr. Stone left me, hire men who can see clear."

"Mr. Stone left you just two legacies, that wallet and that chair," cut in Ruff.

"That's a lie! He swore he'd take care of my future," shouted Slater wildly, losing control of himself at this apparently clumsy trap. "I know the very day he made his will, and he wouldn't have tricked me that way, I know."

His ire suddenly wilted as Ruff showed him a copy of the will they had found among the papers.

"The very date—and yet why should he have deceived me? He knew how much I depended upon it, knew I'd have done anything for him." His voice broke unsteadily.

"Now will you tell the truth?"

"I followed the Chinaman—and lost him."

"Why?"

"Because I was suspicious. He had come often, always leaving Mr. Stone upset, worried and silent."

"And after you lost this mysterious Chinaman?" prompted Ruff, obviously skeptical.

"I followed a personal instruction from Mr. Stone which has nothing to do with this and is nobody's affair but his."

"Come, come. Don't be pettishly stubborn, young man. You'll have to explain this some time—to a jury."

Slater did not answer, and Queg suddenly arose, walked over to stand before the chair as if to question its mute dragons. He may have received an answer, for abruptly he nodded, sat down in it and bent over one arm as he wrote a line for Ruff and another note which he did not show his partner.

"Think it over, talk with Tabor about it, and make up your mind to tell the truth," quoted Ruff from his instructions. "Remember, he knows all the facts, helped to find those clews of your guilt."

With this admonition they left the room, Queg slipping his last note unobtrusively into Slater's hand, and, after advising Tabor to reason with his assistant, left the shop just as dusk merged into night.

IV

"DEATH by poison, subtly injected; a troublesome Chinaman, an Oriental chair and wallet—quite significantly Oriental in flavor, eh? On the other hand, these perfectly orthodox clews, the not unusual complication of a will, and the obstinate young man who thinks too highly of his own abilities—these are quite Occidental. Kipling says the East and West shall never meet, yet they do—crowding each other in the same chair."

Queg's words, together with the speculations they had aroused, milled around in Ruff's mind as they waited in the darkness of the narrow hall. As soon as they had turned the corner after leaving the shop Queg had led the way back to the rear gate, which he had carefully left unlatched, and stealthily slipped into the house again unnoticed. Here they had remained hidden until Tabor and Slater went out for supper, when Queg had written this brief but puzzling comment, then motioned for silence.

When the two men returned from their meal the detectives hid behind a counter in the shop until the former entered Mr. Stone's room, then crept down the hall into the opposite room from which they could watch without danger of being seen, for upon this carefully arranged interview Queg had set his hopes for clearing up certain details that still puzzled him.

At first the two men talked about business matters, Tabor doing most of the talking as he paced restlessly up and down the room, Slater listening from the chair before the fireplace.

"Tell me the details of Mr. Stone's death," the latter broke in at last. "I know those blundering idiots suspect me because of the so-called clews, but tell me more about it."

"Well, you must admit they do *seem* convincing," answered Tabor slowly, then proceeded to recount what he had heard and seen.

"What about this Chinaman? What did he want?"

"How should I know? He came to see Stone—"

"Of course, but I saw you call him back and talk to him. You seemed surprised and —well, pleased at something he said, too."

Tabor stopped his pacing suddenly and frowned for an instant before replying. "Oh, that was about a sale he had made. As to what he wanted, I can guess it was that chair which he's been wishing to buy for some time. I told Stone it was a good chance to make a penny on the junk, but he sentimentally refused and would give no reason for keeping it."

"I can sell it quick enough, now that it's mine, though I don't see why that was all he left me. You know he had promised to set me up in business, and for all his eccentricities I thought he meant it, didn't you?"

"Certainly. Perhaps he intended you to start the antique business on these two legacies, the sort of shoe string he had used years ago to obtain his fortune!" said Tabor sarcastically. "He always was an opinionated fool. He never would modernize or keep up with the times. Why look at this hovel of a shop!

"He had money hidden away, boasted openly of his fortune, yet would not let me spend a cent to increase it. If I only knew where it was now—" He broke off angrily as Slater turned about in the chair to stare at him, aroused from his own resentment by Tabor's remarks. It was the first time the latter had ever spoken anything but praise of his partner.

"Agreed he did not countenance your plans," said Slater, "still it was his money that supported us and the business, so we have no right, I suppose, to—"

"No right to complain—when I depended solely on him for my pittance, knowing I might have made a fortune for both of us with his clientele and a few shrewd business methods?"

"Then you intend to do these things now that—that he is gone?"

"Of course, once I get the capital."

"Didn't he leave that to you?"

"The business, yes, but not what I deserved or expected with which to run it. If I could get hold of that—"

"Oh, then, his death really is a release for you. I see."

Tabor stopped again to stare at the young man and bite his lips for having spoken so freely. A gleam of suspicion crossed his face but vanished again instantly.

"Of course we will have to go on as before, for awhile. You will stay and put in a share into the business? How much do you think you can raise?"

"By the way," Slater interrupted irrelevantly, "you were with those men when they found all the clews against me?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

Slater leaned back in the chair and stared up at the ceiling for a moment, then muttered as if unaware his words could be heard, "Yes, they might have been planted easily enough by an interested party—a guilty man who was on the spot. It would be a clever way to shield himself."

V

HE lapsed into silence again, but his words had affected Tabor strangely. His eyes widened, gleamed with an evil purpose as he stealthily approached the chair in which Slater sat. Stretching out his hand toward its back he rested his fingers lightly on the tail of one of the carved dragons, a finger poised above a cavity made by its ornamental fluke. Thus he waited for Slater to speak again.

But Slater did not speak. At that moment a chair was violently overturned somewhere outside the room, and both men jumped. In that instant of surprise and fear Queg, who had kicked over the chair on purpose, saw Slater spring to his feet just as Tabor's finger descended into that hole. He leaped into the room, a revolver in his hand pointed straight at Tabor.

Ruff followed, and for one dramatic instant Tabor, still standing by the chair, stared back at them in ghastly surprise; then he stiffened, made two quick movements with his hands and fell to the floor before Queg could reach him. With an oath and a gasped confession he shuddered and died.

After the shock of this dénouement had passed Queg beckoned to Ruff and Slater, who followed his words as he wrote, "He was the murderer of Stone and almost of you too, Slater. The chair holds the secret of both attempts. Those last words I instructed you to repeat made him suspect you had learned the truth, and he would have killed you as he did his benefactor. Look."

Queg placed one hand on the chair as Tabor had done, pointing with the other to the mouth of a carved dragon on the front side. His finger pressed into the cavity and a needle-like point sprang from the mouth of the dragon for an instant, then drew back as quickly as it had come.

"It was dipped in poison and, you see, struck just about where the head or neck of a man would rest when seated in the chair. He used the charge meant for Slater on his own wrist. I doubt if Stone knew of the existence of this weapon, but I presume the Chinaman did and so coveted the chair. Probably he was the one who explained it to Tabor, that jealous, covetous blackguard.

"This little demonstration was a risk I had to take to learn the secret I had suspected, but could not prove. You followed my instructions well, Slater."

"But I do not understand yet! I had begun to suspect Tabor myself, but how did you know the way Stone was killed?" asked the latter in bewilderment.

"The position of the body was too stiff for one sitting on a bed, and obviously the slipper on the floor half way between the bed and the chair supplied the link. Tabor had dragged or carried the body there for some reason, probably to avert suspicion from the chair. The mechanism I suspected but could not prove very well, as I could not find the proper control of it."

"Then Tabor did get Mr. Stone's wealth, whatever it was?"

Queg shook his head in an uncertain negative.

"Then where is it? Certainly my legacy of a wallet and a chair—"

Queg suddenly smiled as he took the wallet from his pocket, opened it, stared at the delicate design, then looked up, all doubt cleared from his face.

"But they are his fortune!" he wrote. "See this proverb tooled into the leather—'To fools and unbelievers, jewels are as colored glass.' Now I see it is the key. Those stones in the chair were of glass, but now are real jewels, negotiable, valuable, and yet hidden by their very obviousness from Tabor's greed. Stone has given them to you, all the while flaunting them before the man whose duplicity he must have discovered."

"And those clews?" asked Ruff.

"Ah, the clews; they too were so obvious, so carefully placed, yet made me suspect Tabor from the start. Did you not see we arrived too soon for him to cover his tracks? He asked our help, knowing it would appear suspicious if he waited too long. And did you notice the finger marks on the safe door? No? He tried to cover them, to blur them by his handling the door before I reached it and could see them. Clever, but too late.

"Did I not find the wallet after I had already glanced at the books on the table so could see they had been rearranged while my back was turned; and, finally, do you think I overlooked that vial? No, he placed it there under the window after I had looked over the ground. Don't you see, in each case Tabor was unobtrusively present to plant his clews and to defend Slater loudly—after he was certain we must suspect this man. No, he was not clever enough! Greed, like murder, will out, and clews can speak louder than words—sometimes!"

"HORATIO" AT THE STATION HOUSE

ENCOMPASSING that slice of New York City which includes Greenwich Village, a fringe of old Chelsea and the Hudson River water front, the Charles Street precinct boasts of many fascinating and unusual personages. Veteran detectives of that station still tell with gales of laughter of "drunken John Mulvaney," and his inseparable companion, likewise a willing slave of Bacchus, "Horatio," the goat.

Mulvaney and Horatio infested the Charles Street precinct in the more joyous days before prohibition and were star entertainers in many a back room on Saturday night. How Mulvaney and Horatio ever formed their remarkable acquaintance, is an inscrutable mystery, and who was the first to lead Horatio on the wide path of inebriacy is another point of conjecture.

During his soberer moments, Mulvaney worked as a hatch tender in a stevedore gang on the docks, where he gained sufficient funds for his and Horatio's all-night orgies in the Greenwich Street saloons. Standing at the bar, Mulvaney would proudly tell of his talented companion, while Horatio, on the end of a long rope leash, reclining on the sawdust floor, assiduously lapped beer from a large pannikin supplied him by his master. Good-natured barkeepers placed them in the back room to sleep off the effects of their all-night sprees, and morning found them headed for the docks, both weak and wan.

With prohibition came a new class of bartenders, hard-hearted, bellicose gentlemen, who refused Mulvaney and Horatio admittance to the back rooms after a night's carousal. Cast upon the unfriendly streets of Greenwich Village, man and goat staggered into shadowy corners to sleep. Patrolmen making their rounds would roughly drag them to the station house, where the lieutenant would solemnly enter them as "John Mulvaney and goat, Horatio, intox."

This process was repeated a number of times, Mulvaney and Horatio being released by a complaisant magistrate, Mulvaney suffering a slight fine. But judicial measures and advice did not sway the erring couple.

A dozing lieutenant was aroused into action one hot night by the agitation of the precinct custodian, who paced up and down the room, eying his superior anxiously. Turning at last in passionate appeal to the lieutenant, he said: "Mulvaney and that there goat of his is in the jail back there, lieutenant, and the other prisoners is shouting and says they can't sleep for the goat. They've woke up the reserves upstairs with their yellin'."

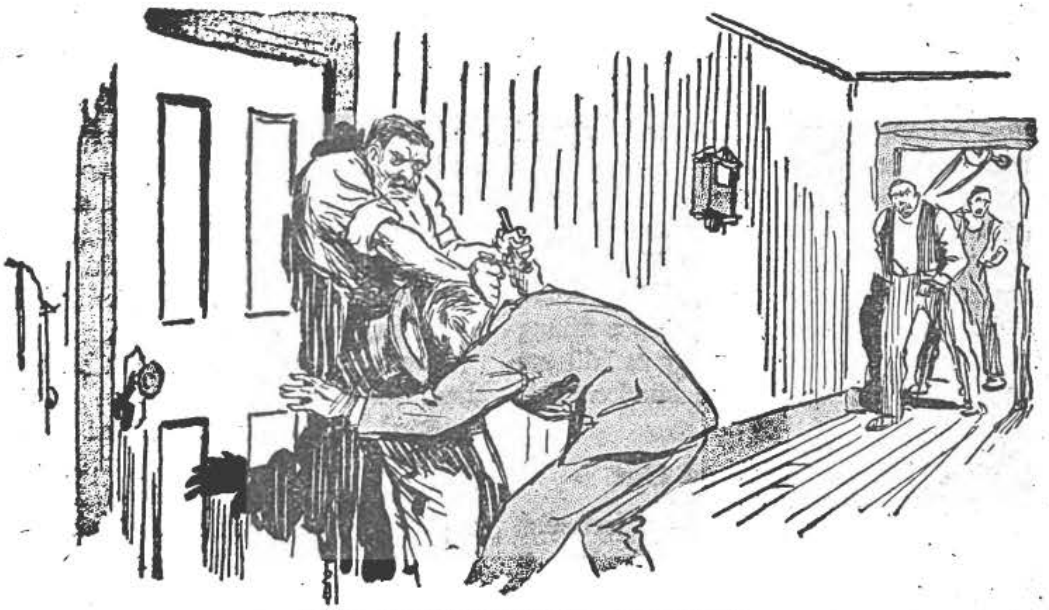
Scanning the blotter entries made by the officer on the preceding tour, the lieutenant read: "Mulvaney and goat, Horatio, intox."

"Leave 'em there until morning, Barney!" he ordered the custodian, and resumed his nap. Strident shouts and laments issued from the jail when the order was transmitted to the prisoners by the flustered custodian. A sleepy, half dressed sergeant on reserve poked his head out of the door leading to the dormitory.

"The men can't sleep, lieutenant, that goat and them warhoops is too much for 'em," said the sergeant, and retreated toward his bed.

"Barney," said the lieutenant, and gulped while he looked around him frantically, "take that Mulvaney and that there goat Horatio, an' give 'em the air!"

Weakly protesting his rights as a citizen, Mulvaney and his pet were dragged past the desk by the adamantine Barney. The big doors banged dully behind them, and a deep, unruffled peace settled over the station house.



Down came that dirk like a flash of light

MY PAL, O'GRADY

By Captain James W. Higgins

Chief of Detectives, Buffalo, New York

THE LIFELONG FRIEND OF DETECTIVE THOMAS O'GRADY RECOUNTS THE HIGH-LIGHTS OF HIS COMRADE'S METEORIC CAREER

A Story of Fact

THE story of one of America's most brilliant detectives, told by the late sleuth's lifelong friend, is continued here with the second installment. Previously Captain Higgins described the earlier experiences of Detective Thomas O'Grady, of Buffalo. At that time he and O'Grady were testing their shiny spurs. But already O'Grady's remarkable memory was kept continually busy cataloguing grim faces, which were destined again and again to bob up before him in stirring episodes. Black Hand gangs also were rampant in their depredations. But behind it all loomed one sinister personality O'Grady ever was searching for.

CHAPTER X

TRAILING THE "OILY" CROOKS

IF Paolo Guglielmi, the shoemaker, when visited by the sly and artful agent of the Black Hand who had made the first demand for one hundred dollars, had carried out his first impulse to stab the fellow with his shoeknife, he would have saved three other lives then and there, as well as endless work and complications. For this plot was complex. It had "wheels within wheels," as the saying is.

Guglielmi admitted that he had been on the brink of stabbing his "tormentor," as he called him, during our chat with him.

"Well, why didn't you?" bluntly asked O'Grady.

"He, too, was armed with a dagger. We would have fought to the death. If I was

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killed, my family would be penniless and without my support. If I killed him, I would be arrested for murder, and my family without a penny. If found guilty, I should still be killed.

"For how could I prove he had threatened me, when no one was there but us? If the police learned he was a Black Hand agent and I was set free, the society would still hunt me down and kill me for killing him, the same as they will try to kill me now for not paying the one hundred dollars."

A Threat Carried Out

We told him that the police department would protect him and never to pay a penny or his name would go into "the red book" for easy marks and he would again be "shaken down."

Working to ferret out these plotters was worse than trying to locate a needle in a haystack "somewhere in Kansas." One of our chief difficulties was that we never had more than a slight inkling of the real scope of the operations being carried on; another that the department was even then being imposed on by a crafty villain, pretending to be also threatened by terrorists. I mentioned awhile back that a saloonkeeper had received a threatening letter and we had maintained a special police guard at his place for six months continuously.

This was Frank Guarino, who kept a saloon at 280 Terrace Street, of whom more, hereafter.

At the same time—or shortly after—the shoemaker received the personal visit and then the threatening letter, for sending which Punfola had been arrested. Domenico Bellissimo, a wealthy contractor and butcher, whose business and home was at 140 Canal Street, also had received two letters demanding six hundred dollars and threatening to blow up his place if he did not pay it.

With the greatest caution news of this threat also was sent to the police, lest spies learn that Bellissimo was "informing." Our feet were "hot," as we say in police business. Day and night we haunted "the hooks," seeking some trace of the man who had not followed the monkey into the station house. He had left town, for not a sign of him was to be found.

We hid out and watched Bellissimo's place, as well as the shoemaker's residence. Bellissimo did a big business, and trying to pick out a suspect from his endless customers was very hard. We finally hit on two men, each of whom would frequently pass the place, stop, turn around and then go in and buy a bit of meat.

However, suspicion was not proof. And then, when on another police detail, the expected "blow-off" came one November morning about two o'clock, with a horrid roar that shattered windows for blocks, crashed in the front of Bellissimo's store and threw himself, wife and children out of the bed.

Miraculously the explosion killed no one and the family's injuries were slight. The whole community was terrified. Four men had been seen running away from the explosion. We had accurate descriptions and even the identities of this quartet. But, again, we were "up against it." Our informants dared not appear to testify to what they had seen, lest summary vengeance be meted out to them as well. Bellissimo hadn't seen the bombers.

I wanted to arrest the scoundrels anyway.

"No, chief," said O'Grady to me, "we'll arrest four guys that's got nothing to do with this, but resemble those four men. Give them plenty of rope. We'll get 'em yet, no matter how long it takes."

We Close In

A strange way to do police business. Perhaps. But it was a case of meeting this low murderous cunning with superior craftiness. This precious quartet couldn't fool O'Grady, but he wanted them to think they could—so he could fool them.

We took the four others in. They were remanded and finally discharged for lack of proof. But while this was going on, O'Grady's fertile, magical mind was working on a real clew—not this time a Sunday school text, nor a square match, nor a monkey.

The clew this time was a can of olive oil, or rather two cans of it, each carried by

Pietro Carriulo and Giuseppe D'Amica on their visits to various merchants.

O'Grady went into a disguise. He was an adept at it. Not so much the costume, as the way he could step out of his ordinary personality and assume one as different from his own as night is from day.

He lurched as if " half-shot " into a store one day just as Carriulo came in to talk to a timid merchant, who, by the way, had already come to us in a frenzy of fear before even getting a threatening letter and begged to be protected. The merchant didn't know O'Grady. Not one man or woman in the Italian quarter or the whole city could have known him. He heard a bit of conversation or gossip, after the olive oil sale had been made, about the " society."

That wasn't a crime either, but we had a " hook up," since both Carriulo and D'Amica were accustomed to stop in front of Bellissimo's butcher shop, look around, then go in and make a small purchase. O'Grady lurched out, left " the hooks " after being arrested for " public intoxication " and was in his cell at the police station before any one " got wise " to him. Then he changed his clothes in the cell, washed up and came to headquarters.

" If we let that olive oil can fool us," he growled, " then we're a couple of oil cans ourselves."

Then and there he tossed his mind ahead of things, as he could do when he had to catch a crook.

" Carriulo and D'Amica are going around and feeling out merchants," said he. " If they betray timidity, then they get threatening letters."

We proved that up to the hilt after months of hard, ceaseless work by locating two other Italians with whom this pair met at night. They were Oracio Battaglia and Vincenze Cirrito. Neither of them worked. Both were always in ample funds. We shadowed them while they mailed some letters. Then we arranged with the Federal authorities to have any box opened before the mail was taken in and examined for addresses.

One night we watched Battaglia and Cirrito mail some letters at Main and Seneca Streets. We had the box opened. We scanned these letters—they were lying on top of the rest—and made a memorandum of the addresses. As O'Grady had foreseen, they were all to Italians.

Next morning an ashy-faced chap crooked a forefinger at us as we lolled past his place. He didn't know we had come there for his signal, if he had pluck enough to give it. It was one of our informants of the identity of the men responsible for the Bellissimo outrage, the same merchant whom O'Grady had visited when disguised and in whose place he had listened to Carriulo gossip about " the society."

He showed us the letter. It was one of those on our memorandum of the night before. Then we closed in on that quartet and landed them behind the bars. Judge Murphy, in police court, was skeptical. O'Grady stood up and said:

" Your honor, if there is one reputable Italian citizen in this city who will come forward and vouch for the honesty of these four men—or any one of them—we'll drop this case and ask their discharge."

The challenge was not accepted. Murphy committed them to await the action of the grand jury. I cite this incident because of Murphy's action in another case which afterward arose. But O'Grady told me in strict confidence what the judge's hesitancy signified that identical morning. In a way, there was another " oil can " in these Black Hand cases, as will be later seen.

CHAPTER XI

FLOWERS BY THE WAYSIDE

STILL intent on catching the shadowy figure that came and went like a ghost—the man that would not follow that monkey into the station house when its owner did—O'Grady and I determined to look for him in New York when we made another trip to that city on our vacation.

While hunting him around Buffalo, as well as other crooks—for we were always swamped with work—we had another series of interesting identifications.

We "mugged" and arrested Jack McCarthy, who years before, in 1893, with two associates had tunneled for a whole city block under buildings and a street in Los Angeles to get at a bank vault. The scheme succeeded in that they dynamited two of the three safes. McCarthy was working on the third safe when his two aids fled and he was arrested. He received ten years in San Quentin prison, served the time and came out. He was leaning against a bank near Main and Niagara Streets in Buffalo when we identified and arrested him, thinking, of course, that another job of the same sort was about to be pulled off.

A Worthless Check Man

McCarthy told us a strange story. I set it down for what it is worth as his own statement.

"You got me wrong. I never tried to rob a bank of its money."

We laughed. "Just for the excitement," suggested O'Grady.

"No. You see, a certain Los Angeles politician had a lot of notes in that bank and he was about to go blooey. Hadn't a dime to pay them off with. So he hired me to get those notes, but not to touch a dime of the money in the bank. I got the other two lads and we went to it. Now, we cracked two safes, but the notes wasn't in them. The money was all over the floor. So I started to work on the third safe. That was why I was caught.

"I played square, for this politician played square with me. I had ten grand in my mitt before we stuck a spade in the ground for that tunnel. And after I was grabbed I stood pat. That was the bargain. I kept it. The politician went blooey, got a bit himself and we often laughed over the failure to get those notes while in San Quentin together."

We turned him loose and warned him out of town next day, after all headquarters men had a chance to "mugg" him. Later on, Chief of Detectives Welch of Portland, Oregon, told us McCarthy's story was quite true.

When we picked up Donald Walk, a lad who made a specialty of laying down worthless checks at various hotels, likewise by his "mugg," we found he had a string around his neck. O'Grady found that another string hung down from this one and at the lower end of the second string was a lovely diamond ring.

"Where did you steal this?" he asked the prisoner.

"It was a present from my sweetheart," said he. "By the way, can I telegraph her I'm in trouble?"

"Sure you can. Write your telegram." Walk did. O'Grady took it. We put him in a cell and outside my pal showed the message to me. I whistled. He sent it off. That night, in Detroit, a famous vaudeville star went before the curtain of the theater where she was playing and announced she was "ill with a cold." Next morning she was in Buffalo police headquarters and we took her to see Walk. That night Walk ate the best dinner that Buffalo could afford, O'Grady and I were trying to catch a score of kisses that the actress blew us from the lips of her charming fingers—using our hats to hold them—and she had the ring and was back in Detroit keeping her theatrical engagement the next night. I call that fast work even for a vaudeville headliner.

Another Dead Ringer

We had another "mugg" case when we spied three New York pickpockets at Main and Seneca Streets one day. They were Andy Buckley, Charles Johnson and Joey Kennedy. They tried to split up on us and Dago Mike, a man recently released from Elmira who knew us both for detectives, tried to help us. The result was a knock-down and drag-out fight which stopped traffic in the street intersection at one of Buffalo's busiest corners. We got them all and took them in. Chief Regan brought in every precinct detective to headquarters to "mugg" them and then ran them out of town.

When the Knights of St. John had a convention and a parade one day, we saw another face on Main Street. We turned to each other saying simultaneously: "Irish Hays." He was a noted pickpocket. We were tired of running in these thieves

before they had time to operate and see them warned out of town, and we never could get them committed as vagrants, for they always had money.

So we trailed this fellow, expecting to catch him working in the crowd along the pavement. But he didn't. At Main and Eagle Streets he stopped and shook hands with a policeman in uniform. We stopped, much mystified. We let him go on and then asked the cop who the man was. He was a very prominent Buffalo business man, one we had never happened to personally meet, but who we knew well by reputation. He was also a " dead ringer " for the crook.

We Meet Joe Petrosino

When we went to New York that year, we went to Brooklyn where there was then a separate detective bureau. It has long since been consolidated with the one in Manhattan. When we came to the Bertillon room, a man who had been arrested for pocket picking was being measured. When he turned his head, simultaneously we looked at each other and said: " Irish Hays." This time we were right.

We told the Brooklyn detectives that Irish was wanted in Mobile, Alabama. The funniest thing about this story is that if the Brooklyn police also had had the prominent Buffalo business man in that Bertillon room, neither they nor we could have told the two men apart by merely looking at them. And all these years the honest man has never dreamed of his marvelous resemblance to the pickpocket.

We went over next day to the New York detective bureau and had a conference with Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, the world-renowned Italian detective. We were still on the track of that mysterious and slippery " monkey-man," as we finally termed him.

We gave Petrosino his description. He conferred with his best men. The man was not in New York, so far as they knew. We discussed the difficulties of the Black Hand cases.

" There *is* a society," said Petrosino emphatically. " We, too, have serious difficulties with them. Some of them are in Italy, some here. They go back and forth. I am now working on a difficult case where a murder has been committed. When you leave, I will give you the photograph of the man I am looking for. If he is in Buffalo, you can assist me in locating him. I am not sure that he is connected with this murder, but I am sure that he is an international agent, high in the secret conferences of the Cammora, abroad as well as here."

Lieutenant Petrosino also told us how he was working out details of a plan to cooperate with high police officials of the Italian government and intended to personally visit Italy when he could be spared from New York, to look over criminals there and have some Italian detective come to this country for a visit—all with the idea of stamping out the terrorists at their fountain head.

We decided to have a look around New York for our " monkey-man," and Detective Sanguinetti was detailed to accompany us. We found no trace of him. The next night there was a carnival at Coney Island and we three went down there to have a look through the crowd, for thieves always go where crowds are thickest.

Annie Puts Up a Fight

We partook in the general revelry in spite of our more serious mission. It was great fun and the crowd was tremendous. We found ourselves almost unable to move on South Street and stepped into an ice cream parlor to get out of the press.

Two women were throwing confetti. O'Grady threw a handful in one woman's face, reaching around to do it. She turned to look at us. We both said together: " Annie Sullivan."

She was a notorious pickpocket and thief and we had her circulars in Buffalo even then, saying she was wanted. We arrested her and turned her over to Detective Sanguinetti. Sanguinetti, shortly after, tried to turn her over again to us, for Annie was an ample lady, built on generous lines and with a temper half wildcat and half rattlesnake.

What a fight she did put up! She tried to turn O'Grady and me inside out and up-

side down and then some. It took ten patrolmen to get Annie into the wagon, three sat on her shoulders and the rest tried to plough a path through that crowd for the wagon to get to the police station.

All three of us were scratched, our hats smashed, our clothing ripped and torn. O'Grady's collar was reduced to a buttonhole, and he never tried to find his necktie at all.

CHAPTER XII

ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

WE had another chat with Petrosino. He failed to get the photo of the man he wanted us to look at before we left for Buffalo. He promised to assist us in our search and we assured him that we would act in his behalf in Buffalo, should the need arise. The time came when we could and did.

The summer of 1907, Petrosino sent his right-hand man from Brooklyn, Detective Antonio Vachrio, then in command of the Black Hand squad in that part of New York City, to Buffalo. He conferred with Inspector Taylor, and O'Grady and I were summoned. Vachrio said Petrosino wanted information regarding a certain Italian and began to describe him.

"He's about thirty-two or thirty-three years old, is as strong as seven average men, has the build of an athlete, is handsome, wears his mustache turned up at the ends—"

"—and his name is Vincenzo Geraci," said O'Grady. "Want to look at him?"

"Without his looking at me—yes," said Vachrio, "for according to Lieutenant Petrosino, his operations are international and he is one of the most trusted of the Cammora now in this country."

"Well, he started off in this town like a piker," said O'Grady. "On April 12, 1905, a very pretty Italian girl ran into the Seneca Street police station out of breath and dropped into a chair. She begged to be locked up and sent to some institution. She made the same request in court the next morning to Judge Van Natter. I was in court with another case. I talked to her in her native tongue. She told me how she had been persuaded to run away from Brooklyn with a very handsome man. Their money ran out.

"This man then took her to an Italian saloon and told her to go out on the street and bring him ten dollars that night or he would cut her head off. That was why she ran to the police station. Judge Van Natter told me to get this man. I got him within an hour on Canal Street, inquiring for this girl. We gave him six months in the Erie County Pen. Here's his mugg after he was shaved and clipped."

He went to a rack of photographs and produced it. Vachrio nodded. "That is the man," said he. "Lieutenant Petrosino knows that he is highly connected abroad in this blackmailing society. We have endless difficulties with such men here and Lieutenant Petrosino, some day, will go to Italy and coöperate with the Italian police there in an effort to stamp them out, both overseas and in this country."

O'Grady took Vachrio to a tailor shop at Seneca and Main Streets, where Geraci was working. I got the Italian where he could be seen by both of them. He afterward ran a saloon at Washington Street. Then he opened up a fencing school for fashionable Buffalo people. He had a wrist of steel and a blade that was invincible. O'Grady afterward arrested him on a charge of being a fugitive from justice. He was taken back to Brooklyn in a Black Hand murder case, and given to Lieutenant Petrosino. Geraci then turned informer and one of the gang there got the electric chair, another a life sentence and a third twenty years.

Finding Buffalo too hot for him, Vincenzo Geraci went to Chicago. In 1909 Lieutenant Petrosino went to Palermo, Italy, to carry out his plan to stamp out the Black Hand there. Shortly after his arrival, he was fatally shot down one night in a public square.

Following Petrosino's murder, Geraci was taken into custody by the Chicago police, during the international investigation of that assassination which followed. He was released and about a year later again arrested, charged with being in a

Black Hand plot in that city to extort fifty thousand dollars from a physician named Cutrera.

Right on the heels of Vachrio's visit, we were again summoned to a conference with Chief Regan and Inspector Taylor, shown two Black Hand letters which had been sent to the Buffalo Pitts Company, a manufacturing concern turning out farm implements. The first read:

> MR. PITTS COMPANY:
> Dear Sir—The Black Hand Society has decided to call on this excellent company for the sum of ten thousand dollars. Take the boat at the foot of Ferry Street for Fort Erie. Turn to right on road to cemetery and church. In the corner of the cemetery are two big trees and between the trees are two big stones, one on top of the other. The top stone is painted black. Put the money under the stones in three days. We will watch the police. With pleasure, we remain,
> Yours truly,
> THE BLACK HAND.

No attention had been paid to the letter by the firm getting it. In three days they received the second, reading:

> Put the money in the place mentioned by the night of the 16th or your plant will be exploded.

That was different. This blackmailing letter was not sent to a firm of Italian-Americans, but to native born Americans. They asked us what we thought of it.

O'Grady Names His Man

We told them that the letter meant business. Since Fort Erie was across the international boundary and in Canada, the jurisdiction of the Buffalo police department ended at the middle of Niagara River.

"Go get those fellows that wrote that letter," said Chief Regan.

We went out. Fully four hundred thousand people then comprised the city's population. It was the old story—difficulties, obscurities, the subtle but murderous blackmailers always out of sight. And no clew but the letters. O'Grady didn't say a word for three blocks. Then he turned away from the district known as "the hooks."

"I know one of the gang that 'll come for this coin, provided it is planted where they want it put," said he.

"Not that bird that beat it away in the motor boat that night—our monkey-man," I replied, "although he beat it into Canada, too."

"No," said O'Grady. "The man that will come for this coin is an educated Italian, Frank Guarino, who keeps the saloon at 280 Terrace."

"But we've had a police guard there for six months to protect him," I observed.

Back to the Cemetery

"Sure. That's his alibi. He fixed it up a long while ago. But he'll go to those stones or we're a couple of cans of olive oil and not cops at all. And he'll come in the daytime and not at night. If he came at night, the Canadian police might nail him and turn him over to us after extradition. So we won't go to the Canadian police at all. We'll have this firm draw ten thousand dollars out of the bank, hand it to us, we'll plant it under the rocks and mount guard over it until he comes for it. Then we'll nail him and nail him right."

We struck a snag, for the firm didn't want to take chances with such a sum in actual hard cash. O'Grady pointed out that through some avenue the hidden blackmailers had knowledge of the firm's bank balance, and if this was not done, the "plant" would be a waste of time.

They did go through the motions of drawing out the money. But they did not give it to us. So we procured some stage money and made the plant at the place named, while we mounted guard. We both went to Fort Erie by a roundabout route. It was a long vigil, a day following the night after hiding the money. We had no food and no water. Finally toward sundown, O'Grady insisted that we must have something to eat and I wasn't hard to persuade, since we had often stood fruitless vigils on cases of this sort.

I went out of the cemetery and to the nearest hotel. To my great chagrin, when quite near the building, I encountered Frank Guarino and Laborio di Martia, both very prominent Italian-Americans of Buffalo.

"Hello, Higgins," he said. "What brings you to Fort Erie?"

"My day off. Brought over my sweetheart. Excuse me. She's waiting for me."

I had to keep on to the hotel. I didn't dare look back at them. I was thunderstruck to see how accurately O'Grady had called the turn on Guarino, and I hated to leave him alone in that cemetery, with darkness falling and both these suave men walking toward it.

One of them had a pail of mulberries and the other some wild flowers, for this was in July. I had to return to the cemetery by a roundabout route. I crawled into the trees that fringed the place, in the dim twilight. Then very cautiously I made my way on my stomach through the tall grass toward the place where the two stones were located in a gully.

Evading International Law

A big snake stuck his head up, stared at me and then glided away. I didn't dare try to kill the reptile, lest I disturb the two men whom I was sure were in that cemetery by now. I was afraid that the snake also had a mate. But I wriggled along after awhile, until I was where I could pull apart the grass and look down into that gully.

My elation at seeing Guarino lifting up the top stone was much less when I could discern no sign of O'Grady. I had a chill. If they had found him—or if some of their gang had found him—the chances were that my pal might, before now, have a stiletto between his ribs. It is the Black Hand way. And these two men certainly knew that the sum they had demanded had been taken from the bank by the firm they had threatened, for if that factory was blown up it would take many times ten thousand dollars to replace it.

Di Martia lifted up the lower stone. Guarino thrust his hand down and lifted the "plant." The stage money had been put into a box. They looked at it, but didn't open it.

I could have come out and arrested them then and there, if it had not been stage money. But their act was not criminal—not on the Canadian side of the line, since the threatening letter had been mailed and received in Buffalo. Talk about clever crooks. These two birds knew how to outmaneuver the criminal law, even if they had to use international boundaries as a means to carry out their vile ends.

They walked out of the cemetery in the dusk. Still no sign of O'Grady; my apprehension increased. Then, off to my left, as I stood up and looked around—still holding the sandwiches—a monument suddenly moved.

O'Grady twitched off the sheet he had been hiding under while sitting on an ancient headstone and walked over to me.

"Gimme a sandwich," said he. "Now let's go. Got to beat that pair of birds to the ferry."

We did. We hid out on the boat. Midway of the river we emerged. We were again on United States soil. O'Grady smiled down at Guarino and Di Martia as they started to open the package.

We placed them under arrest and took them to headquarters, telling Chief Regan the story. We locked them up and next day took them before Judge Murphy.

Judge Murphy Sets Them Free

And here we met up with another "oil can." We had a hot legal fight. Chief Regan was a witness to the explanation these two men made of their presence at the place where this money was to be left. Their alibi was the mulberries they had picked, the roses and the fact that Guarino claimed to have received a letter telling him to put money in that same spot—months before. He swore he had merely invited Di Martia to look at the place out of curiosity.

Use of that stage money also hurt our case. If it had been real money, there would have been no loophole through which Judge Murphy could have set them free. But he did. There was one awful row. Chief Regan wrote Murphy a letter so hot that he never dared reveal its contents.

The other "oil can" was politics. Murphy was charged by Chief Regan with trying to win this sort of votes for his candidacy, as he was up for reëlection the

coming fall. But O'Grady again had vindicated his wonderful ability to get a clew out of nowhere. He never failed while we worked together, except that we missed fire on that one skulker who stood outside the station house after the arrest of the monkey.

A Thief in the Navy

We parted company that summer, for I wanted to go into the uniformed department in order to become eligible for a captaincy. O'Grady afterward worked with Lazsewski, Ryan, Barrett, Kennedy and other headquarters men, always with conspicuous success. He scored heavily in many Black Hand cases. Once he nailed his man while eating, and in his trunk was almost enough explosive to blow up a battleship. That was a debonair scoundrel named Samuel Corovo, who politely asked permission to use his fingerbowl and napkin after O'Grady put the gun on him while he was eating.

This was a most important arrest, for Corovo had letters from other Black Hand men in Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Baltimore. A bad gang was cleared up through this capture and O'Grady won unstinted praise from the detectives of both other cities, as well as encomiums from the Buffalo department.

He got Salvatore Lupa, another murderous terrorist also wanted elsewhere and incidentally broke up a gang of terrorists by that arrest, which made and circulated bad money, solving two mysteries at one time.

Then he pulled off an arrest which crowned him king of the quick-thinkers and of those who could use anything for a clew and make it lead to a crook. It reads like romance, but is strictly true.

While the United States battleship Georgia lay in Havana harbor one February, with officers and crew looking forward to pay day and shore leave, Edward Valentine Lee, the paymaster's clerk, vanished with forty-six thousand dollars in hard cash. Lee had been pilfering for some time and covering it up by false bookkeeping.

Discovery was near and he could not replace about twenty-five hundred he already had taken. On the theory that he might as well "hang for a sheep as a lamb," Lee made off with every nickel. He seemed to dissolve. Not a trace could be had of his whereabouts. Secret service detectives, the heads of great private agencies, the police of every large city, Scotland Yard and the French, German and Italian sleuths were all notified. All in vain.

Many months after this, O'Grady one day noticed a bell-hop who seemed to be pretty flush with money at a Buffalo hotel. The bell-hop remarked: "There's a live one here — a wealthy Englishman. Paid me ten bucks to carry his suit case."

O'Grady started to look this guest up. He had just left the hotel and gone to Toronto. Some weeks later a Toronto girl was jilted by a man who had lavished attentions and much money on her. They were to be married. She discovered that he carried a magazine pistol. She asked why. He didn't want to tell her. She insisted on knowing. Then he admitted that he was a defaulter for a large sum and had sworn never to be taken alive. He said he would kill any officer who tried to arrest him.

The girl scouted the story, but the man disappeared when she told her brother. He notified the Canadian authorities who, in turn, notified the United States Secret Service operatives. Two of these, Frank L. Garbarino and Pasquale Pigniola, were rushed from Washington to Canada. The bird had flown, and all they could learn was that he had come to Buffalo.

The Tip Gave the Clew

They hurried to Buffalo, and O'Grady was put on the case. They described the man. O'Grady left the office and went out. Within two hours from that time he approached the traffic officer at West Chippewa and Delaware Streets.

"Do me a favor," said O'Grady, displaying his shield.

The officer saluted. "Anything you say, sir."

"There will be a car coming down the street—a flossy auto—in a few minutes. Just give it the traffic signal to stop. Here's the number."

The officer did. The chauffeur of the costly auto pulled up.

O'Grady was in the street. He stepped back, as if afraid he would be hit. Next instant he popped into that machine and handcuffed the man for whom all the government agents and policemen had been searching in vain. In a trice he had the loaded magazine pistol out of his prisoner's pocket and transferred to his own.

There was a hand bag in the auto. O'Grady brought it to headquarters with his prisoner, who was Edward Valentine Lee. He still had about eight hundred dollars on his person, and there was exactly twenty-five thousand dollars and two more magazine pistols in that suit case, as well as about two hundred rounds of pistol ammunition. Lee never allowed the suit case to leave him.

"I thought I'd just grab this boob on the street to keep him from doing any shooting," said O'Grady.

"But how did you get him?" chorused the other officers.

"It was a cinch. He was here last March, giving out ten-dollar tips to men who carried that suit case. It must have had something in it. That something had to be coin. He spent it like water. That showed he was a crook, for honest men carry letters of credit instead of satchels full of money, and he posed as an Englishman. What Englishman visiting here pulls a bone like that? They're very conservative."

He told them how Lee had bought an auto in Buffalo and gone out of town in it while O'Grady was watching the trains.

"But I had the American license number," said he. "He went, after stealing this coin, from Havana to Atlanta, registering there as W. D. Carmichael. He went to Philadelphia and registered under the same name. He used that name here the first time, but this time he switched to Evans.

"He blew Buffalo last March, went to Toronto, put up at the King Edward Hotel, and rented the royal suite which the Prince of Wales occupied when he was there. He kept on to Montreal, and took the car to London when he sailed for that city. He remained there some time, fooled Scotland Yard, then came back to Montreal and then to Toronto. I was expecting him to cross the border any day, but I've been pretty busy and he got in on me yesterday without my knowing it."

He had sent the bell hop on scout. The bell hop located the chap. O'Grady also located him through his baggage, which had been sent by train—which every one overlooked except O'Grady, since he traveled in his costly auto. The man was out of the hotel when O'Grady arrived. The bell hop said: "It's the same Englishman." Then O'Grady laid his trap with the traffic officer and caught him.

They all took off their hats to O'Grady for that catch. His first clew to the capture of this celebrated absconder, sought all over the world, was that big tip to a bell hop. Lee could fool Scotland Yard and other detectives watching for him in every port of the civilized world—but not the lad who started life as a freight handler and within nine years was riding with the present King of England in his private car!

CHAPTER XIII

POISON, PISTOLS AND PONIARDS

IN 1913 O'Grady retired from the regular police department to establish a detective agency of his own. From the first he met with remarkable success. Among his principal operatives were Charles Silverberg, Thomas J. Fogarty, Jack Monichi, and a girl named Jean Slater. His brother, Edward, now a Buffalo police officer, also got his start in the same agency.

For a little more than six years his clever, but always conscientious work was the acme of perfection. No mystery that he handled remained unsolved. One of the most sensational, dramatic and bitterly fought cases was the trial and conviction of Mrs. Cynthia Buffum, a resident of the Hart farm near Little Valley, Cattaraugus County, for the poisoning of her husband, Willis Buffum, on July 7, 1913. Mrs. Buffum was thirty-nine, at the time, and her husband fifty-two.

The authorities were without a clew. Buffum had passed away under suspicious circumstances, the balance of the entire family of four children were stricken by mysterious symptoms, and two of them also died. Norris, a boy of about five, died before his father. Laura, a girl of ten, died after her father.

After the husband's death, Mrs. Buffum was seen much in company of a handsome young farm hand named Ernest Frahm. As Frahm had been a visitor at the Buffum home before the death of the husband, nothing was thought of this at the time.

Confession By Artifice

The first note of suspicion came from Dr. M. L. Hillsman, the family physician, who noted that Laura's symptoms were almost identical with those of her dead father, who had been a heavy drinker. Dr. Hillsman had attributed the husband's death largely to his alcoholic excesses; but when Laura exhibited the same symptoms, he communicated privately with District Attorney G. W. Cole, of Salamanca, and this official obtained a court order to have the body of Buffum exhumed and examined.

The result was that large quantities of arsenic were found in the body, and as Laura also exhibited traces of arsenical poison—and was at the point of death—the district attorney retained O'Grady to secure evidence of how this arsenic was administered, and by whom. O'Grady started to work, posing as a young sport.

With another operative of his agency, he cultivated the acquaintance of Mrs. Buffum. With Jean Slater, who was installed as a nurse, and who carefully ministered to Laura, the sick girl, the attachment of Mrs. Buffum for Frahm was first disclosed.

This was the pivotal point in the case—the motive for an effort to poison the whole family. By dint of clever subterfuges, O'Grady induced Mrs. Buffum to get out of Little Valley prior to the inquiry and thus prevented her from communicating with Frahm, except through him. The climax of the case came when Mrs. Buffum telegraphed Frahm and then wrote him, asking that he "deny everything," and when O'Grady produced a reply wire which he had written himself, supposed to come from Frahm, in which Frahm said pathetically that "mother is dying, and I have told all."

Whereupon, Mrs. Buffum confessed twice, the second time in the presence of the district attorney. The arsenic, it was found—whose source until then had been an impenetrable mystery — had been obtained from a bottle used years before by Mrs. Buffum's brother, Jim, a horse trader, for doctoring animals.

The death of Laura, after Mrs. Buffum's arrest, was another corroborative link in the proof which supported her confession. On the trial, her attorney denounced O'Grady and demanded that the confession be excluded, as it had been procured through fraud. This was refused by the trial judge and the confession went to the jury.

Mrs. Buffum was sentenced to death after a verdict of guilty and taken to Auburn prison to be electrocuted in March, 1914. On February 6, 1915, the Court of Appeals reversed the conviction in an opinion written by Justice Bartlett, although two justices of that body dissented. In the opinion the justice pointed out that while the confession was obtained by an artifice, because Mrs. Buffum never suspected that O'Grady was a detective at the time she made the first confession, the expedient was not only legitimate, but necessary, since proof could not be obtained in any other way, of her actual guilt.

Mrs. Buffum Pleads Guilty

The reversal of the conviction was based on the same principal that figured in the famous Roland B. Molineaux case some fifteen years before. The evidence of the death of Laura was improperly permitted to be heard by the jury, thus practically putting Mrs. Buffum on trial for two crimes instead of one.

Public opinion in Cattaraugus County was so highly inflamed against the accused woman that her second trial was heard before Justice Pound and a jury in Buffalo, which is in Erie County. A hard fight was made a second time to exclude the confession. Justice Pound admitted it, citing the

approval of the justices of the court of appeals in their decision.

When this was read to the jury a second time, its revolting character was so manifest that after an all-night conference, Mrs. Buffum's attorneys arranged to have her plead guilty to the charge of murder in the second degree. She was then sent to prison for a period of from twenty years to life, which sentence she is at present serving.

Frahm was not tried, as it appeared that he knew nothing of the vicious means of Mrs. Buffum to get rid of her family. He had promised to marry her, but wanted to " take along the children " after Willis Buffum's death.

With the seal of approval of the highest court in the State on the methods employed to bring this woman to justice, O'Grady continued his work as before his enthusiasm never abating.

O'Grady Hits a Hot Trail

It was his good fortune to be retained a second time about three years later by the authorities of the same county in another murder case, and with the help of Operatives Silverberg, Fogarty, and Monichi, he was able to send another criminal to the electric chair under circumstances far from ordinary.

The circumstances were these:

On the morning of July 12, 1917, an unknown Italian lounging near a section house on the railroad near Franklinville, in Cattaraugus County, accosted William E. Dunbar, the foreman of the section gang, and asked for a " lift " on the hand car when the foreman and two other men started out to go to a distant point to begin work. Dunbar was a kindly man and told the stranger that he would be glad to oblige him.

This stranger got on the car and sat down. When the car had gone a short distance the grade became steep, and Dunbar asked the young man to help propel it. The Italian refused. Dunbar then told him he would have to get off the car.

Without a word of warning, the fellow whipped out a revolver, shot the foreman dead, menaced the other two men with his weapon until they were completely cowed into promises never to testify against him, then fled.

The two men put the body on the hand car and took it back to the foreman's home. The authorities were at first skeptical as to a stranger having committed the murder. O'Grady was sent for. Former District Attorney Cole, of the previous case, was now a justice. O'Grady started to work. He had merely a more or less incoherent verbal description of the murderer and a knowledge of his nationality.

He started out and visited a number of drinking dens and dives in various localities, looking for any one who knew such a man. Finally he struck a scent of a man who had left Olean for Franklinville. The description was so accurate that he decided the man must be one he formerly had known in Buffalo.

So back to Buffalo he went. By dint of hard work and a bit of luck, he ran into another clew that Giovanni Ferraro, a former saloonkeeper of Dante Place, had been to Olean. He hunted until he found a photograph of Ferraro, and then returned to the eyewitnesses of the crime.

He was hugely gratified when they unhesitatingly identified the picture as that of the murderer. Then the chase began. Like a human bloodhound, he clung to the cold scent of the fleeing murderer, tracing him first to Olean, then to Galeton, then to Scranton, then to Pittsburgh and on to Philadelphia. Once he was within an hour of catching his man.

" This Is a Bad Man "

But at Philadelphia the scent went cold, and try as he would, O'Grady could not warm it up again. Leaving his best men searching for the murderer, he hurried back to Buffalo to " frisk the hooks," his old stamping ground for years, in the hope that Ferraro might have " back tracked " to his former haunts. Still, no trace of the murderer. He got out some circulars, posting the notice of five hundred dollars' reward the county offered for the arrest of the fugitive and returned to Philadelphia for another search.

While there he visited police headquarters and asked the aid of the department detec-

tives. It was promised. O'Grady gave them circulars with Ferraro's description and photograph. Then he said:

"Boys, this is a bad man. If you go after him, always go in pairs. Whatever you do, don't go alone. He is tricky and he knows I'm after him. He'll get any one of you that tries to arrest him single-handed. Please be careful for the sake of your relatives and friends."

At this time there was a police rule in Philadelphia that the man making the actual arrest, no matter if working with a partner, was entitled to all the reward for apprehending a fugitive. He could keep it all or split it—but the reward was his.

Knowing this, Detective Ralph Mullins, a very capable young officer of the Quaker City force—and as nervy and self-reliant a man as ever wore a badge—said nothing, but determined to capture Ferraro, if he could, and alone so that he could have the entire reward.

Ferraro Strikes Like a Snake

While O'Grady and his men went back to Western New York to search that section and also Pennsylvania cities for the fugitive, Mullins went out "on his own." He visited the Italian quarter without success. Then he happened to come on a factory where many of that nationality were employed making shoes.

Mullins was a very close reasoner. He figured out that if Ferraro had been traveling the way that O'Grady said that he had, and was cut off from friends who might aid him with money owing to the close pursuit, that he might, perhaps, have had to go to work.

So Mullins went into this factory. He went to the superintendent and showed him the photograph on the circular O'Grady had printed. To Mullins's great joy, the fellow was working in the factory at that very time and on a machine not a hundred feet from him, under the alias of Rosso.

He strolled casually into the shop and saw that the fugitive's back was toward him. He walked along with the superintendent as if inspecting machinery and stopped behind his man. Ferraro turned around. Mullins was much like O'Grady and myself when we began detective work. He didn't look like a police officer at all.

"You're under arrest," said Mullins, putting his gun on the fugitive. Ferraro looked mildly at him.

"For what?" said he.

"For a felony. The chief will give you the details. Put up your hands and walk out into the hall or you're a dead man."

Ferraro complied. In the hall, Mullins backed him against the wall with the pistol jammed against his stomach, bent over slightly and leaned forward to pass his free left hand around the fugitive's body, to see if he had a pistol or weapon. He found none. His own gun was slightly out of direct range of the prisoner's body as he started to straighten up.

As quick as a flash the wily Italian struck. All of the time he had a Sicilian dagger up his sleeve. It worked on a spring. With his hands apparently poised harmlessly above his head, Ferraro had merely waited his chance, while Mullins lowered his eyes as his head bent forward.

The spring holding the weapon automatically released when his hands went up, the deadly weapon slipped up his sleeve as noiselessly as a viper moves in water, until the hilt of the cruel blade was in his murderous palm.

A Verdict of "Manslaughter"

Down came that dirk like a flash of light. The point struck into the neck of the young detective just at the junction of the carotid artery and the juglar vein, on the left side, and, with a slithering slash that almost completely beheaded the detective—stifling even his death gurgle—it swung around to meet the spine on the other side.

In his death agony the detective discharged his pistol. The bullet sped harmlessly into the wall behind the murderer, who leaped to liberty through the door, running like a deer.

The superintendent had seen this, but it all took place so quickly that he did not have an instant to voice an alarm to Mullins. However, the roar of rage the superintendent voiced woke the whole shop. He leaped for the pistol of the dead police officer on the floor shouting to the men in

the shop who streamed after him and they, too, jumped across the body of the detective, running like mad behind the superintendent.

They cornered Ferraro within less than two blocks. At bay, with the dead detective's pistol, he was held until the police came up and with difficulty saved him from a righteously infuriated mob of a thousand men, clamoring for vengeance against the wanton and vile deed.

He was indicted and tried. I do not know how that man ever escaped the death penalty. But he did. And one morning O'Grady, his fine face white with anger, showed me the verdict of "manslaughter" and the sentence of imprisonment for life which was meted out to him.

O'Grady Keeps His Word

"Chief," said he in a voice trembling with rage, although he used my old familiar nickname—for he always insisted that I would some day be chief of police of Buffalo—"isn't that a terrible miscarriage of justice? This bird first killed a man who tried to do him a favor. He next killed a fine young police detective. And they give him life. Believe me, I'm going to give that fellow death. He's got it coming—not once, but twice."

That was my old pal, O'Grady. And he kept his word. He took the first train for Little Valley and held a conference with the district attorney. They went to Albany and asked the Governor for a requisition on the Governor of Pennsylvania for the body of Giovanni Ferraro, to be tried for murder in the first degree for the killing of William Dunbar.

They got it. The Governor of Pennsylvania honored it. And then O'Grady went and handcuffed Ferraro to his own wrist, brought him back to Little Valley and he was tried before Justice Cole, who had been district attorney in the Buffum case.

On March 30, 1919, after the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree, as charged in the indictment," Justice Cole said:

"Stand up, Ferraro." The prisoner arose.

A profound hush fell over the room. It is always a solemn thing to hear a man or woman sentenced to die for a crime, no matter how merited the sentence is.

"Ferraro," said Justice Cole, "there is nothing that the court can say to you that can afford you any consolation at this time. You have been convicted of the most terrible crime that a human being can commit. The jury has reached the conclusion that you are guilty of murder in the first degree.

"I do not see how it could have found any other verdict. The only thing that the court can do is to impose sentence according to law. You are sentenced to be confined in Sing Sing Prison at Ossining until the week beginning Monday, May 13, and in that week to be put to death in the manner provided by law."

That was at two o'clock in the afternoon. At three fifteen the prisoner was on his way to the death cell. The appeal by his attorney automatically stayed the execution until the following year. The Court of Appeals again upheld the conviction—thus vindicating O'Grady's work officially a second time. He was finally sentenced to die March 20, 1920. On March 19 this bloodthirsty scoundrel was told that Governor Smith had denied him executive clemency, although the sentence of Antonio Verrino, another prisoner scheduled to go to the electric chair on the same day, was commuted to life imprisonment.

To the Chair, Handcuffed

Then ensued a terrific scene. When Keeper O'Toole went to take the condemned men out for exercise in the tiny yard adjoining the death house, Ferraro sprang at him like a tiger and struck with a poinard in precisely the same manner that he had stabbed Detective Mullins, when arrested in Philadelphia.

O'Toole's instinctive jerk backward made this double murderer miss a triple homicide, for the dirk struck his face just below his eye. As O'Toole tried to summon help, Ferraro stabbed him again in the neck. Michael McCarthy, another keeper, hastened to his assistance. Ferraro turned on McCarthy and cut off one of the fingers of his hand in a vicious slashing stroke. Both

wounded keepers finally got the man down and held him until aid could be brought.

He was badly beaten by the guards and put into an isolation cell in the death house under double guard, until the first moment when he could be legally electrocuted. The pandemonium made the prison authorities suspect that a general plan was afoot for all the condemned men to escape and elaborate precautions were taken to guard against it. These proved to be groundless fears and needless precautions, for Ferraro was alone in his attempt to slay both keepers.

He had made that dirk from a spoon, sharpening it with magnificent secrecy for months by rubbing it against the iron of his cot bed. He had rigged a substitute for a spring from part of his suspenders, with which to hang the weapon securely in his sleeve and never once was he suspected.

This was further proof of the warning O'Grady gave in Philadelphia. He always knew what he was talking about. Lest readers think I am inclined to be unduly eulogistic regarding his magnificent mind, the mainspring of his brilliant achievements, I have set down these facts about Ferraro with considerable detail. They are facts. Not eulogies.

Here is the last fact about Ferraro. He was the first and only prisoner to go to the electric chair handcuffed. That handcuff was on him night and day after the assault until he was strapped in the chair. It was only taken off then because the keeper wearing it would have died with him, unless it was removed before the electric current carried out the law's decree.

CHAPTER XIV

ON HIS MENTAL TOES

ONE achievement of O'Grady's which earned him the deathless gratitude of the entire Buffalo police department before he left it was the magical manner in which he led the chase for John Maruszewski, alias Jack Simons, for the double shooting of Patrolman Schaefer, of the Buffalo force, and a prisoner, Frank Kozusch, in a revolver battle at Weaver and Dingens Streets, Buffalo.

Maruszewski was a Pole. Kozusch was a warm friend of his, and Maruszewski resented Schaefer's arrest. In shooting the officer Maruszewski also killed his friend. For twelve hours his whereabouts was a blank. Then O'Grady and Lazsewski trapped him in a house in Cheektowaga, a village outside Buffalo.

Other officers were summoned there in an automobile. Three went in first, O'Grady leading, notwithstanding they knew the murderer had a gun. O'Grady found him asleep and identified him by pulling back his upper lip to expose his defective teeth before the man woke. The wounded officer identified him and died. Maruszewski was electrocuted.

On Christmas day, 1918, O'Grady again was retained by the Cattaraugus County authorities to locate and arrest Otto Dahl, wanted for the killing of George Senchaw of Salamanca on the 12th of November of the same year. Here was another cold trail, and not a clew could the authorities disclose. O'Grady had the man in custody on New Year's day.

He unearthed some effects which Dahl had in a garret in a house where he had roomed. They had been overlooked. Among them were a number of tender missives from a girl in Jersey City, New Jersey. O'Grady went there and watched her mail. He found she was getting letters from Dahl, but from exactly what point he was unable to learn.

Knowing Dahl was a laborer, O'Grady got into jumper and overalls and visited a labor agency in the same town. Here he got track of Dahl. He followed him to Baltimore, then to Washington, then to Richmond, Virginia. From there he traced him to Wheeling, thence to Huntingdon, and finally to Logan, West Virginia. There were coal mines in this town.

O'Grady could not get any trace of Dahl's leaving there, so he went to the principal mine and made inquiries. They thought the man was in the big mine. O'Grady went into it. He frisked that coal mine for hours. A mile from the entrance he found his man, arrested him, and brought him back. Dahl got twenty years, as the killing was done during a brawl and

Senchaw died from a blow on the head inflicted by Dahl.

Yet these various pursuits and the employment of "rule-of-thumb" methods to apprehend a prisoner in no wise tarnished the brilliant, fast-working mind of my former pal. He could and did think with the speed of a lightning bolt. And more than once in Buffalo he rendered signal assistance to the regular department.

I well recall how his timely assistance put a police prelude to an orgy of picking pockets in April, 1917. In one day a number of widely separated but very deft thefts from persons were made, and the regular police department was at its wits' end to round up the culprits.

Four Crooks Are Nailed

Among complaints that came in were those of one man who lost three hundred dollars, another eighty-five dollars, another twenty-nine dollars, another twenty-five dollars, and so on. All that each person had was taken. The day before these thefts O'Grady was walking into a bank at Main and Seneca Streets when he saw a face which was like lifting the curtain of a memory closed down for years. He stopped and swung around, looking in at the window so the man would not get a flash of his own face.

"Edward F. Quinn, alias Mike the Owl," he said to himself. "Well, well. I wish the chief (myself) was with me. That mugg was one among the lessons we recited to each other long before we were promoted and made headquarters men."

O'Grady was right, as usual. Mike the Owl was there in the flesh, fifteen years older than when the photograph we had cut out was used, but still the same smooth, suave crook.

And with him were three other men. O'Grady "mugged" each of them in turn. They were George Hall, alias "Germantown Whitey," also of New York, where Mike the Owl hailed from; Big Bill Barrett, likewise from giddy Gotham, and George Murphy, alias "the Umbrella Kid," of Philadelphia.

"Strange how four such misrepresentative citizens should be wandering around with nobody to pick 'em up," O'Grady said to himself. "Well, I'm in business for myself now and these crooks are meat for the regular headquarters men. Still, I'll have a look at them."

The quartette paid no attention to the smooth-faced innocent-looking man. O'Grady was still boyish in heart and looked it. The four thieves waited until another man came out of the bank and then trailed him. O'Grady discreetly followed the five men. The man from the bank stopped to pay a bill, then started to board a Main Street car for Kenmore. O'Grady got on and paid his fare. He watched the four adepts work. They jostled the man.

Then one of them gave him a shove by the shoulders. They worked him back so that they surrounded him. O'Grady looked out of the car. Former Detective Sergeant Pat Devine, former thief-taker at the Exchange Street station, was on the sidewalk. O'Grady signaled him. Another railroad detective also got on. O'Grady and the others arrested the four crooks.

The man they were about to "pluck" was J. S. Parkhill, of the Parkhill and Hart Laundry Company, and he had just two thousand four hundred and eighty-five dollars in cash remaining in his clothes after paying that bill before he got on the car.

The prisoners were taken to Chief Regan at headquarters. No one could find their muggs. O'Grady found one of them in a file of the year 1902, which was the first and last time Mike the Owl had been arrested in Buffalo.

Scandal Follows Scandal

Regan paraded them before every precinct detective and all the headquarters men. They were all flush with money. They hired a clever lawyer and gave him a liberal fee. He succeeded in getting them off with an admonition from the court to "leave town at once." Even the Pinkerton detectives came to look them over.

Next day the orgy of picking pockets I mentioned before broke loose. But that wasn't all by any means. After the "panning" the city judge got from critical newspapers for freeing this superb quartette of thievish experts, Mike the Owl

" fell " in Rochester in October following. He had been previously arrested in that city for stealing a diamond stud from an aged man in 1910 and the man's daughter made the arrest, single-handed. When Mike the Owl again " fell " he knew he was in for it, for the police of that city immediately sent to Buffalo for the record of the April arrest and the four new " muggs " made before they were released.

Again Mike retained a capable lawyer. He was represented as being in the last stages of consumption. He got off. A fresh scandal broke loose and raged like a tornado in Rochester. One newspaper cornered the then district attorney and filed certain pointed questions with him. He wrote out replies and then tore them up. The incident had a marked effect on the city elections—all because of O'Grady's fast and extremely helpful work the previous April.

From the Meagerest Description

His identifications of the three men he had never seen were as positive as they were of Mike the Owl. He called their names and aliases offhand when he took them before Chief Regan. That was one result of the way we went " to school " to each other, as I have already told. His memory never failed him in a pinch—and he could recognize a photograph often from a rather meager description, which is a rare and very difficult feat of identification.

This last statement sounds as if I were again eulogizing my dead friend. Judge it by this next episode in his career.

On the 28th of March, 1919, shortly after I was made chief of police of Buffalo, George H. Moessinger, treasurer of the Kurtzman Piano Company, was struck down unconscious by unidentified thugs and robbed of the company's pay roll of nearly four thousand dollars. The robbers made a clean get-away.

I put every available man I could spare to work on this case. Attorneys for the piano company also retained O'Grady, and thus we came together and worked together like in old times.

We got a lucky break at the beginning. Leonard Unger, a young taxicab driver, after reading of this robbery in the papers, came to my office and told me how he had been hired by one man to wait at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventh Street —not far from the robbery—to take two other men away. He said one of these men, who arrived later, carried a bag.

I got busy with my men. So did O'Grady, in his own peculiar way. He slipped down to the scene of the robbery and then to the scene of the get-away. I got out a file of pictures with Inspector Ryan, and presently Unger's finger spotted the photograph of Joseph de Pasquale.

" That's the man that hired my car and asked me to wait for the other two men," said he. He was so sure about it that I sent for Pasquale and detectives brought him in. He was lined up with other prisoners and Unger again identified him.

Then O'Grady came back. " Can you remember what either of these men looked like?" he asked.

Unger said one was a slender, nervous young chap, the other a heavier built man. That was all.

Next day in marched O'Grady. Handcuffed to him was Steven Caputo, whom he had identified from that description, meager as it was, routed him out of bed to arrest him, and spent four hours getting a confession from him.

There was no necessity for Unger to also identify him, although he did it, unhesitatingly and positively as he had done Pasquale, who wouldn't open his mouth at all about the affair.

Before the Train Passed Over

O'Grady and I went with Caputo and recovered eight hundred dollars of the proceeds of the robbery, which we found in an ash can in an alley back of a house in Prospect Street, where Caputo lived. The money was in an old newspaper, with the bank teller's notations of amounts, just as it had been taken from the treasurer by the thugs.

O'Grady and one of my men got the other chap. He was known as " Mike the Greek," and was nailed in St. Louis. He still had most of the money—the lion's share, by the way, and the company lost only a few dollars. Between us we cleaned

up the case in record time, gave the thugs a jolt in prison, and my reputation as chief of police grew much brighter than it might have appeared, thanks to O'Grady's uncanny ability to do what I said—identify a man from a very meager description and then locate and arrest him.

Let me again cite another case of his where his wonderful mind worked almost as unerringly, although in a somewhat different way.

About four o'clock in the morning of the 18th of July, 1918, the engineer of a freight train about four miles west of Batavia suddenly spied a figure on the tracks, lying prone across the rails. He brought his train to a quick stop. The body of an aged man had been laid there by some one, for he was already dead. His head was crushed in. The intention, of course, was to have the train pass over the body to make it appear that the train had killed the old man.

Reasoning From the Facts

Near by the crew also found a piece of lead pipe with a bloodstain, and also saw that the head had been crushed with repeated blows. The authorities were notified. The coroner took charge. A search was made of the locality. A watch was found. The dead man had neither watch nor money on his person. So it was assumed he had been robbed and the thieves, in their haste to get out of sight of the train—for the body was not yet cold when discovered—had dropped the watch.

The authorities sent for O'Grady. His reputation was so well known by this time that he was accounted invincible. It is both a good thing and a handicap for a detective to have this sort of reputation. Good because it brings him business, a handicap because many detectives fall down on cases after one or two notable successes. Not so with O'Grady. He never fell down on one. And that was why I acclaim him as a marvel.

The first thing he did was to carefully look at the body. Then at the clothing, and last of all the watch and pipe. That was all the evidence. Not much, I am sure, to build up the capture of a murderer.

But O'Grady always had something to start with, as I have been at some pains to try to show thus far in my story. As so often before, he studied the corpse and the gruesome exhibits in silence for awhile. Then he said:

"The bird that worked that bludgeon must have been a sharpshooter."

"Why so?" asked some official.

"Because," said O'Grady, "he could always hit a poor old man like this chap was before he became a corpse in the same precise spot with the pipe and still not get much hair or blood on it. Look at it yourselves."

They did. He was right. It hadn't occurred to them to note that the pipe had no hair adhering to it and was only slightly stained with what seemed to be dried blood. O'Grady tossed it aside.

"The murderer never hit him once—with that," said he. "It was something else, and he had some reason for taking it away with him. Funny."

Then he pointed to the watch.

"Was this in his pockets when he was found?"

He was told it was near the body, but not on it.

"That old man never carried a watch like that in his life," said he. "Look at it. Size ten, as the jewels rate them. A little thing. And this is an old man. If he had any kind of a watch it would be at least an old-timer, and certainly not smaller than size sixteen. No, I'm sure that isn't a clew to the motive, although it may be one to the murderer. Look; no chain on the watch. What does that signify?"

Nobody seemed to know.

"I'll Do That Little Thing"

"Why, the bird that carried this watch didn't wear a chain on it," said O'Grady with his flashing speed. "That means he carried it loose in his pocket. And if the dead man didn't carry it, then the man that hit him over the head with something that wasn't an iron pipe—hit him hard enough to cave in his skull in three or four places—was hitting pretty hard, wasn't he? Up on his toes, I'll say.

"And that's why that small watch was

there. The murderer wore it. It bounced out of his pocket when he kept hammering the life out of his victim. He didn't miss it until after he'd put the body on the tracks to make it look like a train ran over it—and by then he was too far away to dare to come back to get it."

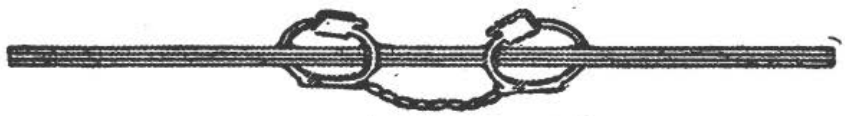
They were awed. It was like the Sherlock Holmes fiction stories, this magical and continuous deduction, scoring a bull's eye every time. Only this grisly corpse was a fact and no fiction. The law made it needful that this murderer should be found and punished. These officals knew they never could find him. What O'Grady had said made it look as if he could find him.

"Get him," said the district attorney, "and with the evidence that will convict him."

"I'll do that little thing," said my pal, O'Grady. And he did. He started right there. And the way he worked was one of the prettiest solutions to an otherwise insoluble murder mystery that has ever graced the records of a criminal court.

Not a clew, bear in mind, but what he had shown. But that mattered little to this splendid, conscientious young man. He could always follow out a crime. My wonder and admiration for him grows with every day of my own experience as chief of detectives, for at the time we worked together I was too close to him, in a way, to really appreciate his genius.

TO BE CONTINUED



VIGIL OF THE LAW

NOT long ago in India a certain English traveler carrying some bags of money found himself overtaken by nightfall. He decided to put up at a native police station which, as he thought, was the best place of safety. The inspector granted him this protection and prepared a cot for him. Before retiring, the traveler was advised to hide his money under his pillow.

He had not been in bed very long when he heard the police official planning his murder! The inspector was directing his subofficers to prepare a grave for their intended victim, and he himself was to take care of the rest when he returned from his evening meal.

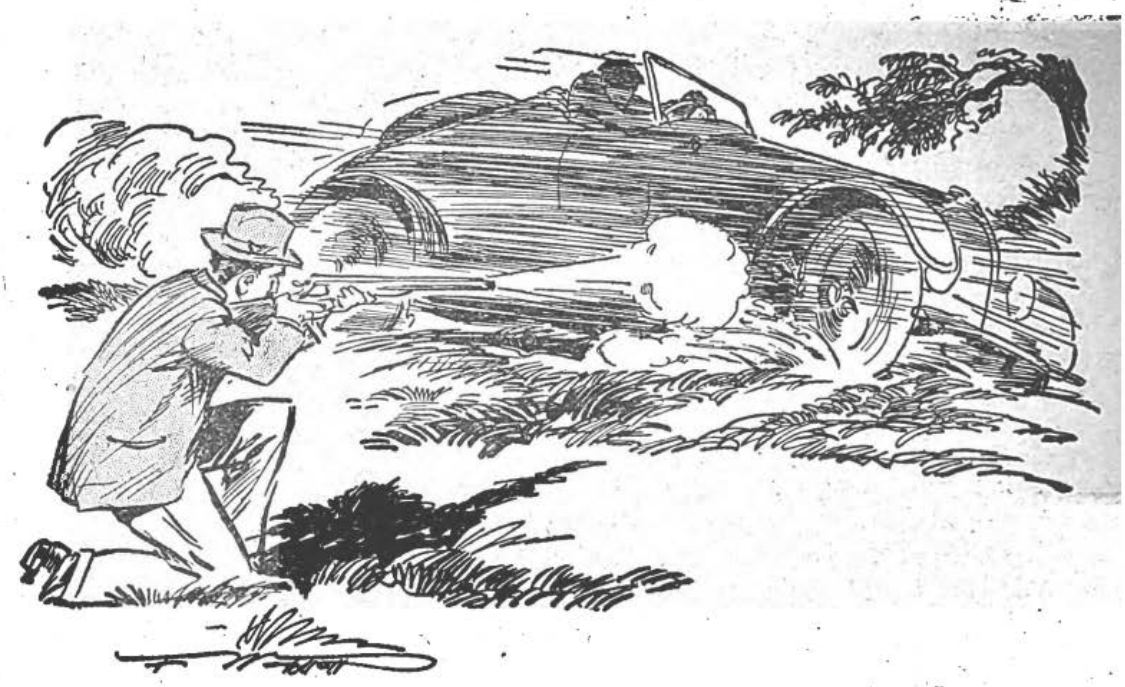
All the men thereupon left. When he was quite certain that no one was in sight, the traveler who had feigned sleep all this time, clambered out of his precarious bed, took his money bags and got up into the topmost branch of a neighboring, heavily foliaged tree. Then a curious thing happened.

The inspector returned alone, and finding all his officers out, probably digging the grave as he had ordered, and his money bird flown, he troubled himself no more about it, but laid himself down in the cot on which the traveler had rested and fell asleep.

When his subordinates returned, they decided to dispatch the traveler without waiting for their chief's return. It was quite dark, and they did not discover until after the fatal blow had been struck, that they had made a grave mistake!

Recovering from their surprise, they soon adapted themselves to the circumstances and proceeded to bury their chief officer in the grave which they had intended for the traveler. This was a curious trick of fate!

But the man in the tree waited until some English officials passed, to whom he revealed the singular events that he had vaguely seen from his perch. The treacherous police force suffered the severe penalty for their crime.



He fired both barrels at the tires and the car lurched nearer the ditch

THE VANISHING CAR

By Roland Johnson

THE VILLAGERS OF SMILING FACES LEARN OF A SIDE-SHOW SPECTACLE THE PORTMAN'S CIRCUS FAILED TO ANNOUNCE

THERE was much excitement in the old world village of Smiling Faces—and knots of women and men congregated on the village green beneath the shade of the old elms to discuss with assumed indifference the startling events of the previous forty-eight hours.

Down the road came a great Vauxhall racing car—and drew up with brakes grinding, in a swirl of dust, outside the Waggoner's Arms. Men in the street turned, faces peered through the bow windows of the inn, as the driver dismounted hurriedly and pushed goggles up to his forehead.

"The Motor Cracksman!" went around like the murmur of wind in the rushes. Yokels gaped; they had dreamed of the Motor Cracksman, talked of the Motor Cracksman, searched for the Motor Cracksman until their slow wits were tuned to nothing else.

A plainclothes policeman approached the driver of the car, who was standing impatiently on the curb.

"Superintendent Malcolm, sir?"

The driver looked up sharply and nodded. The other, without delay, showed the way into the bar parlor and requested the apple-cheeked landlord to see that they were not disturbed.

"Well," said Malcolm, as he sipped a whisky and water, "I came down as quickly as I could. Any further news? You'd better tell me the whole yarn."

The other began eagerly.

"It's the Motor Cracksman right enough. There's no doubt about that. Colonel Digby of the Hall was the first; he missed his Napier car from his garage

the night before last at 10 P. M. Then Mr. Arbuthnot, of the Grange, reported to me by telephone the mysterious disappearance of his Daimler at about 11 P. M. In the early hours of the morning, Mr. Williamson of the Priory lost his Sunbeam, and some time before 8 A. M. Anthony Stanfield —you know, the millionaire— rang up in the deuce of a temper to say that his garage had been cleared—lock-stock-and-barrel. Gas, spares, oil and tires; a Rolls Royce, an Hispano Suiza and Bentley, nothing remained!"

"Seems to be going the whole hog," muttered Malcolm. "That man's a wizard. Seven in a night! He's asking for trouble. He couldn't have taken them away by himself; he must work in a gang. Now then, have you any theories?"

"Not much. The Cracksman's making a tour of this district, that's all. At this rate, there won't be a good-looking car within miles!"

"You think he's not yet finished?"

"I don't know whether he's finished or not," replied the other cautiously. "But if he's still here, there are not more than six cars left which are worth his while to steal. There are three cars at Pemberton's place, Ford Lodge, and two at the Manor House. Parsons has a nice Renault as well."

Superintendent Malcolm rose from his chair and crossed to the window. Looking out onto the dusty street, he saw a constant stream of traffic—large cars and small cars, lorries and vans—passing on the old Roman road between London and Birkenhead—Watling Street.

"This must be the last escapade of the Motor Cracksman," he said slowly. "Every precaution has been taken. It has been an expensive business to organize his capture, but if he is in the trap, his day is over. Judging from his previous methods, he makes a clean sweep of a district before moving on. From information received, we have reason to believe that all the stolen vehicles are taken to London. They must go either by road or rail. Rail is out of the question, for the Railway Police have been on the look-out for some time. The alternative is the sole possibility. Already there are two hundred men on the look-out. Every by path and main road is guarded. A description of the cars is in the possession of each man."

"You mean that if he is still in this district he cannot escape?" asked the plain-clothes man.

"No, he's hemmed in on every side. With Smiling Faces as a center, there is a circle of five miles' radius which is a hard and fast barrier. Nothing obvious, no uniforms, but every man armed with an automatic and a motorcycle!"

"Then if the Motor Cracksman escapes, he's a clever fellow!" exclaimed the plain-clothes man.

"He's already proved himself to be a clever scoundrel," remarked Malcolm. "But he has one fault—he does not credit us with being clever also!"

"I suppose then, that it's just a question of hanging around for the next theft?"

"It is! And with an hour we will have our quarry!"

II

THERE are still parts of England that are akin to the Merrie Englande of five hundred years ago. The village of Smiling Faces was such a place; red roofs sheltered by giant elms, two rows of crooked cottages bordering a smooth strip of green grass, in the center of which still remained the ancient whipping post and stocks. The Waggoner's Arms had been the fourth postage from London; its rafters had echoed to the quips of beaux and gallants, its stables had housed the famous "Flying Grays" and the gay coach of the Birkenhead Buster.

To such places, old-fashioned amusements cling. The circus and the merry-go-round, the Punch and Judy, the stuffed kitten gallery, still retain their popularity. Thus it was that Portman's show lumbered down the street, many green and yellow vans behind two little devils of motor tractors. Brown-faced men and women and children sat on the flat tops and grinned pleasantly at their prospective customers.

Sally Sark, show mistress, swung open the gates of a meadow that lay on the out-

skirts of the village and superintended the operations for the disgorging of the freight. Within two minutes all was hurrying bustle.

Mr. Portman himself, perspiring, stout, loud-voiced, arrived from London in his touring car to make his periodical inspection. It was rumored that Mr. Portman had many shows, and for the main part he sat sweating in a London office and paying much money into the bank.

Yet to Smiling Faces he came, and greeted Sally Sark with a hearty slap on her well-padded shoulder.

And then, after a few brief words, he moved off to the road and leaned against the fence. The last of the evening sun shone through the trees and cast black shadows as he gazed thoughtfully at the placid face of a man who sat on the opposite hedgebank and smoked a pipe.

"Well," asked Mr. Portman with his customary thick voice, "I hear the Motor Cracksman's in these parts. Ever seen him?"

"He is in these parts—and I've never seen him," replied the other cautiously.

"Teck," muttered Mr. Portman to himself, and then aloud: "He must be a bright lad. Seven cars in a night! I'd like to see him try for my little bus. She's a fine car, but she's well looked after. Not that I wouldn't mind the police taking precautions, though. For the Motor Cracksman's too smart for most of us. Come in and have a look at the show? All the latest attractions?" he finished genially.

The man rose.

"No, thanks—busy. Good night," he said.

"Good night," responded Mr. Portman, and walked off toward his paraphernalia.

A quarter of an hour later, with the sound of a bull's bellow, Mr. Portman clattered down the village street to the Waggoner's Arms.

"Where's the police?" he yelled. "I want the police. Are they asleep? My car—stolen—and me within a hundred yards the whole time!"

Superintendent Malcolm nodded swiftly to the plainclothes man.

"Now for action!" he said, and then turned to the agitated showman.

"Now then, tell us all about it. Quick!" he rasped.

Mr. Portman puffed for a few seconds to gather his breath, and then began.

"I arrived from London to inspect my show, the best show in the world, gentlemen, about an hour ago. There was a man sitting on the bankside opposite to the field where the show is, and, like a fool, I told him about my car. I thought he was a teck from the cut of his coat. The car was standing in the road, and although for the most part I could see it, at times it was hidden from me by the show and a large tree that interrupted the view. Then, one time when I looked up, the car had gone. I ran to the gate and looked down the road. There wasn't even a cloud of dust; the car'd just gone, and, as you know, the road is straight as a die for at least a mile."

"How long was the maximum time that the car would be out of sight?" asked Malcolm sharply.

"Two or three minutes."

"The beggar must just have timed it right. However, what about Smith? Smith was on patrol on that road, he's bound to have seen him."

"Smith's having his supper here now," said the plainclothes man.

"Bring him in!"

Smith came quickly.

"That's the man," cried Mr. Portman, his cheeks quivering with excitement. "That's the man I talked to—he's got my car!"

"Don't be a fool," said Malcolm contemptuously. "He's one of my men on patrol."

"That's the man I spoke to; surly he seemed, too!" reiterated Mr. Portman.

"Is that right?" asked Malcolm.

"Yes," said Smith curtly. "I saw his car, too, and walked back along the road for my relief. Larkin came on duty further up the road. Larkin was there before I left."

"Then Larkin must have the man!" cried Malcolm eagerly.

"And I'll get back my car!" exclaimed Mr. Portman.

"Either the Motor Cracksman went up

or down the road," said Malcolm, carefully scanning a large scale map. "There are no side turnings for miles. If he went up the road, Larkin must have seen him, at the very least. If he went down the road, he would have to pass through the village. Let me jot down a description of the car. Sanders, start up my Vauxhall, I'll take a run up the road!"

Ten minutes later the superintendent was cross-examining Larkin, a sturdy, square-jawed patrolman. The more he was questioned the more confused he became, and the angrier became Malcolm. Larkin swore blind that no car of that description had passed up the road. No, he hadn't seen a green car. No, he hadn't seen a car standing outside the field in which was Portman's Show. Yes, he'd waved to Patrolman Smith. Smith had waved back and then turned down toward the village. Then where was the car?

"There wasn't a car!" said Larkin stoutly. "How could there have been one?"

"Smith saw the car right enough; he talked to the owner, Mr. Portman. No, there was a car and it isn't there now."

The patrolman scratched his head in wonder.

"That man's a pedigree devil! How he does the vanishing trick, I do not know!"

A careful search along the road revealed no traces of the vehicle. The possibility that he might have slipped cross country was precluded by the fact that while gates gave entrance to fields, a car cannot leap ditches and hedges. Portman's motor car had vanished into thin air, and it was a highly disgruntled superintendent who, half an hour later, drove up to the Waggoner's Arms. He learned some new words from Mr. Portman and was about to seek the shelter of the private bar, when Smith came up at the double.

"Pemberton's Daimler has been stolen from Ford Lodge!" he cried pantingly.

"Where is Ford Lodge?" snapped the superintendent.

Smith pointed to the opposite side of the street.

"Behind those cottages. It stands in its own grounds of a few acres."

"Go up and get a report; there's going to be no sleep to-night for any of us. *That man must be caught!*"

But there was little to report. The chauffeur had returned from his evening tea to find the doors of the garage open, and the Daimler, one of three cars, missing. The servants had heard the noise of the car being driven out of the yard, but thought nothing of it. It occurred at 7 P. M., and the car frequently went out about that time when Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton were dining out.

Telephonic reports came in from the cordon of patrolmen from time to time. The Daimler car had not been seen. Mr. Portman's car had not been seen. The Motor Cracksman was proving as elusive as ever.

III

SUPERINTENDENT MALCOLM devoted himself to a few minutes contemplation of his own mental picture. That he, chief of all operations directed against the Motor Cracksman, who had declared war on motorists, should have cars stolen under his very nose at the rate of about one every three hours, was unbelievable.

"The Motor Cracksman is still within my cordon," he said. "I'll swear to that! He's running himself into trouble all the time!"

Thereupon he issued fresh instructions to his patrolmen. It was not before eleven at night that the outposts began to close in upon Smiling Faces. The net was drawn tighter. Ford Hall, the Manor House and Mr. Parson's *bijou* residence were hemmed in by two hundred men. If the Motor Cracksman intended to pursue his activities, he would be inclosed in a circle of men so close as almost to touch one another.

"No," said Malcolm to Smith's suggestion, "I'm not going to guard the cars; that would frighten him away. With our ring round the village, he can't get away, and we've given orders to shoot if he won't stop on the road. I want the sergeants to keep up a patrol to impress upon the men the absolute necessity of complete

secrecy and silence. Nothing must be done to indicate the close watch. The Motor Cracksman must have a free hand until he's caught red-handed, so to speak."

Nothing was seen or heard of the Motor Cracksman until 11.55 P. M., when Patrolman Briggs reported to the superintendent that he had heard a mocking laugh from a thicket in the grounds of the Manor House, but a careful search had failed to make any disclosure. In the garage of the Manor House were two thousand-pound cars. By strict orders from the superintendent, the three baits—the Manor House, the house of Mr. Parsons and Ford Hall—were in complete darkness and the inmates had been instructed to go to bed, and on no account to show any signs that a visit from the motor thief was expected.

At midnight a grumbling Mr. Portman watched Sally Sark douse the smoking flares of Portman's Show. The music from the merry-go-round ceased. The few remaining lads and lasses drifted down the road. Smiling Faces went to sleep.

"It's bad enough to have the car stolen," muttered Mr. Portman, as he assisted Sally Sark to count the small silver and copper coins of the night's takings. "But that d-d Motor Cracksman's a show on his own, it's the ruination of trade, blarst him!"

IV

SMILING FACES was asleep, but for one or two of the more adventurous young lads who preferred to sacrifice rest for excitement. Shadows of men flitted here and there, an air of restlessness bred of two hundred men in a confined area, trying to make themselves scarce.

Would the Motor Cracksman come?

Had Superintendent Malcolm been tackling any other man, he would have assumed that discretion would prove the better part of valor. But the Motor Cracksman was famed for daring, lack of discretion, amazing foolhardiness and startling originality. The superintendent, with the knowledge of one who has studied the individuality of the quarry from the deeds of the quarry, guessed that he would come, guessed that not only would he make another attempt to steal a car, but also that his first objective would be Ford Hall itself, in the spacious garage of which still remained two out of the original three sumptuous vehicles of the wealthy Mr. Pemberton.

There was no man within a hundred yards of the garage, yet, within two hundred yards, fifty men peered intently through the darkness and listened for the slightest sounds which might indicate the presence of the mystery thief.

Superintendent Malcolm sat behind the hedge on the opposite side of the road at the gates to the main entrance to Ford Hall. He had ascertained that this was the only entrance to the grounds, at least, the only entrance for a car. If the Motor Cracksman was to steal that night from Ford Hall, he would have to pass through those invitingly open gates, and in full view of the superintendent himself.

Lying on his lap was a twelve-bore shotgun. Between his teeth was an unlighted pipe. The Superintendent was picturing to himself the features of the unknown man. Was the Motor Cracksman an ex-convict, hoary and old? Was he young and powerful? He would know to-night. The Motor Cracksman would have to come onto the road, no matter which house he tackled; he would have to pass by the superintendent.

To the left, the road ran almost straight, without sideturnings, to the village of Marsham. Ten men waited in that direction. To the left, the road forked, the left fork leading into Smiling Faces, and the right fork being a by-pass to Watling Street. Smiling Faces itself rested in the triangle of the three roads, the two of the fork fifty yards from the superintendent and Watling Street. Watling Street was guarded at each end of the village by twenty men.

It seemed preposterous even to imagine the possibility of a man being foolhardy enough to tackle so tough a proposition. Yet such was the glamor of the Motor Cracksman, so firm was the conviction of Malcolm and his men that they had to deal with some super-being, that they were ready to believe in the almost impossible.

Malcolm was meditating deeply, when he started to his feet at the sound of rapid firing.

"Ah!" he breathed. "We got him at last!"

The powerful thrum of an engine rose to a hightoned drone as Mr. Pemberton's almost new eight-cylinder American came careering down the drive in high gear.

Very carefully Malcolm trained his shotgun to that point where he judged the front wheels would pass. He meant to aim for the tires.

Then came the car. Crouched low in the seat was the black-draped figure of a man laughing with delight at the thrill of it all. Malcolm could not hear the laugh, but he fired both barrels at the balloon tires. The car lurched as the steering wheel was spun over, for one second it hovered with its nearside wheels in the farther ditch. Both tires had been punctured, high speeds were impossible and it was only by marvelous driving that the vehicle recovered its position in the center of the road and, zigzagging madly, made off down the road.

Malcolm smiled happily. His knowledge of motoring taught him that the car could not exceed twenty miles an hour as a maximum with punctured tires. His knowledge of his men and their positions told him that within two minutes the great car would be trapped in a cordon.

The Motor Cracksman swerved down the right fork, obviously avoiding the village, and making for the main road. What he intended to do was beyond conjecture. To leave the car and sprint across the fields was his only loop-hole of escape. And the fields were guarded not less closely than the roads. Malcolm had seen to everything.

Men came running down the drive.

"Got him, sir?" came in an excited chorus.

But Malcolm was paying no attention. By now, he should have heard sounds, either those of shots, or shouts, or some indication of a capture or a conflict. Yet conflict there was none. Something had happened. What were the men on Watling Street doing?

Nothing.

They had nothing to do.

They had heard the shots, they had awaited eagerly the coming of a car and a man or a man alone, but neither came. They greeted Malcolm and his men with agitated inquiries.

"Have you got him?"

"Where is he?"

"Never seen him!"

"He didn't pass this way!"

"Has he taken the other road?"

Malcolm was vainly trying to obtain some satisfactory explanation for the extraordinary phenomena, when a portly figure loomed up from the darkness.

"If this is an example of police work, I'm blowed!" said Mr. Portman bitterly. "Have you found my car yet?"

"Your car be——" said the exasperated superintendent. "Did you hear any sounds of a car?"

"I heard a few shots and shouts. I don't believe there was a car, certainly not on Watling Street!" said Mr. Portman. "If you fellows didn't go to sleep, perhaps you'd have him by now. If I could lay my hands on that scoundrel I'd—I'd—"

"So would I!" said Malcolm between his teeth.

V

TWO men lay on bunks in a neatly fitted caravan which formed a part of Portman's Show. The last of the noises had died down. Malcolm and his men were scouring the country.

The one, fat, red-faced, puffing slightly with excitement, sipped a whisky and soda. The other, smooth-cheeked, slim, elegantly clad in Oxford trousers of a fawn color and suede shoes to match, drew in a deep breath of smoke from his *Perfectos Finos* cigarette.

"This sort of thing's too hot for me," said Mr. Stycey, alias Mr. Portman. "It's time we gave it a rest. Eight cars in a night; it's asking for trouble!"

"We now have the spare show vans full, thanks to those very fine inclined skids of your invention," said Basil Lisle with a happy smile. "Stycey, you're a marvel;

you acted splendidly! I have never seen a more perfect showman!"

Stycey shuddered.

"It's awful! The way Malcolm looked me in the eye sent shivers down my back. Why he never suspected, I don't know!"

"Let us make a record of the facts for the future generation of Motor Cracksmen," said Basil Lisle. "Things need explanation. When you skillfully swung open the gates and let me bring in your car, that was good work. It removed suspicion from you, it was work of split seconds. Malcolm's cordon of men five miles away didn't help him in the least when we were garaging our newly acquired vehicles on the premises. The citadel was unprotected from the inside. We haven't got outside yet, of course, but that is simple. Who would suspect Portman's Show?"

"You must have had a deuced narrow shave with that last car!" said Stycey.

"I did," admitted Basil Lisle. "Much closer than I intended, but the thrill of it, Stycey. It was marvelous! When I saw Malcolm pointing his weapon, I confess to the shivers, I thought he was aiming at me. That man's a sportsman, you know! He could have potted me as easily as winking.

"But after that, it was plain sailing. You swung open those gates on the other side of the field—by the way, the field is well chosen—and I came in at a walking pace, just about the time Malcolm would be wondering what on earth had happened. Malcolm is cute, you know. He guessed I'd go for Pemberton's cars again."

"I hope you'll leave this district as soon as possible," said Stycey gravely

Basil Lisle smiled dreamily.

"Stycey, you have proved yourself a great actor, you have done marvels during the last two days, but I'd call your attention to one vital fact which you have overlooked. A hasty criminal falls into trouble. Portman's Show will play here to-morrow night, and the following day we will amble slowly toward London. I myself could do with a rest, and I'd rather like to take a turn at telling the fortunes of the natives, rig me up with a woman's garb!"

"You'd make a good woman, but you're a better man!"

VI

ON a certain Friday morning, two little devils of motor tractors with cumbersome show-vans behind them, lumbered through the streets of London.

The work shops of Messrs. Pershall and Perivale, Limited, motor engineers of Hammersmith, and specialists in rebuilt ex-government vehicles, worked overtime in dissembling their newly acquired stocks.

It is a matter of Basil Lisle history that in due course a highly respectable Member of Parliament purchased a Sunbeam car which contained the back axle and front wheels and steering column which had been components of the beautiful creation previously owned by a Mr. Williamson of the Priory, in the old world village of Smiling Faces.

The history of the other vehicles is disintegrated and remote. Pershall and Perivale had a knack of blending models to suit their requirements.

BUREAU OF CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO RECEIVE LETTERS LIKE THESE, AND HE PASSES THEM ON FOR OTHERS TO SEE

ON TECHNICAL POINTS

MY DEAR MR. FLYNN:

Some time ago Mr. Horace Kephart's story, "The Trail of a Bullet," appeared in FLYNN'S, and since then we have seen a number of readers criticize the same in this column. All of this adverse criticism seems to be centered on purely technical details, which is unfair to the story.

"The Trail of a Bullet" is a good story with a fine plot, well-drawn characters, and the material presented on a very plausible basis. So I don't see any reason for fault finding on ballistic and mathematical points, as the tale was evidently not meant for a treatise on these sciences.

If we dissect all literary production on these grounds, how many will stand the test of technical and other facts? Would not most of the modern detective stories, for instance, make a headquarter dick snort with contempt at the methods applied? Is there a historical novel which does not show a sublime disregard for historical facts?

And the pseudo-scientific tales, how many of them are free from flaws that glare at the man with unemotional abstract knowledge? Take the chemical reaction involved in the arson plot in the story: "The Capuchin Monkey" for an example, *et cetera, et cetera.* But they are all good stories, and I enjoy reading every one of them.

As it happens, "The Trail of a Bullet" marked my first acquaintance with FLYNN'S, the cover design having caught my eye, and I have been a steady reader since. For, like "J. M.," of New York, I also belong to that bunch of "single pellet enthusiasts," for whom shooting means more than a sport.

By the way, J. M. and his authority, together with H. K., are wrong on the automatic revolver question. There is, and has been for at least fourteen years, an arm of this kind in the market. I have owned and shot one that long ago, and the latest catalogue of Messrs. Webley & Scott lists it yet. Another revolver of this type was manufactured in Liege, Belgium, between 1895 and 1900, but died a natural death, due to its original sins.

Wishing you continued success with your fine magazine. H. R., Bangor, Pa.

CHEERING THE EDITOR

MY DEAR MR. FLYNN:

I am using the nearest available paper to write to you to say that, fine and interesting as most of your contributors' stories are, you can take the leading place among those whose work you have published. The former series of articles you published have not been approached—unless by James Jackson—and your closing line in the July 4 issue is positively the most intriguing, to use an abused word, that I've seen in many years.

I hope it is not used as a statement of dismissal. It would be of untold interest to have that matter speculated on and dissected by an expert of your caliber.

Outside of historical matter as the work of Gollomb, Rice, Jackson, *et cetera,* your best stories have British settings. They are the best written and have the most plausible characters, in my humble opinion.

I just wanted to let you know that that last line of yours was a live spark, and your readers, if I am any judge, are dry tinder—all ready waiting. R. D. H., Boston, Mass.

THE SEATTLE JAIL BREAK

MY DEAR MR. FLYNN:

In the July 25 issue of your magazine I read an article, "The Human Fly," describing the escape of a John Doe prisoner from the City Jail in Seattle, Washington.

The escape of the prisoner was a joke played on the police force by some ex-policemen. I happen to know all about it, having business relationship with some of the old bulls.

Seattle built a new city hall and put the jail on the top floor of the building. This story was made of solid concrete and steel. Seattle was to have an airtight jail and if a prisoner did cut his way out of the cells, he would have to jump eight stories to the ground to get away.

As most of the city police officers are Irish and all of the retired policemen were Irish also and like a good joke, they played one on the new city hall and jail.

After the building was completed and occupied the papers in Seattle contained pictures of the building and articles telling of the construction, also describing their fine jail and asserting that it would be impossible for a prisoner to escape.

One old ex-policeman had a son that was a painter who worked on the building. He and another painter, while working about the building, discussed the possibilities of how a prisoner might escape.

This ex-bull lived with his widowed daughter, together with his son, the painter, and when the article about the airtight jail appeared in the paper, the son told his father about the construction of it and the possible chance for a prisoner to escape.

Another ex-bull ran a saloon and poolroom, and a number of the old ex-bulls would congregate there and swap yarns and jokes. The conversation led to the new city building and the airtight jail.

The old ex-bull told the others what his son had told him, so they took a visit to the building and were shown through the jail.

They returned to the saloon and concluded that an escape could be effected, and then and there they hatched a plan to put a joke over on the police force.

They first planned to get up a bet that a prisoner could escape, but abandoned this, thinking the police would be on their guard.

Then they told a reporter of one of the daily papers about the jail, praising it as the best jail in the United States. But adding that if a fire started in the building it would roast all the prisoners before they could get out. The reporter fell for the joke and wrote an article on the possibilities in case of a fire. This created quite a discussion among the old bulls and they formulated their plans.

It was proposed that all the old ex-bulls should visit the jail and give their opinion, so a day was set, and all the old ex-bulls and some friends, the painter, and a party they had picked to break the jail inspected the building from basement to roof and all expressed their opinion to the newspapers present that the building and jail was perfect. The papers told about it, but the matter was forgotten by the citizens and the police force felt sure that they had an airtight jail.

One day the chief of police and a lieutenant came to this saloon, where about half a dozen ex-bulls had congregated for their daily talk, and the conversation led to the airtight jail.

The saloonkeeper and ex-bull made the remark that there never was a safe made but which some one could not open, and there never was a jail made from which a prisoner could not escape. He said that he bet before a year we would see some slick prisoner escape.

The chief spoke up and said he would call that bet, so the saloonkeeper said he would bet the price of his next year's license that a prisoner would escape before a year passed. He and the chief shook hands over the bet and the other ex-bulls witnessed the bet. All had a drink and a cigar and the matter was supposed to be at an end.

The ex-bulls found a man that was an acrobat and stage performer and entered into a proposition with him to pull off the stunt of breaking out of the jail. He appeared one night on the street drunk, was picked up and thrown into the bull pen with other drunks and that night escaped as described in your article. The old ex-bulls called a meeting at the saloon to celebrate the occurrence, and the chief and lieutenant were called down to the saloon on very urgent business, and the joke was told. The papers had told about the escape of the prisoner, but they all agreed to keep mum that it was a joke played on the police by the old-timers.

I understand the chief paid the bet and looked pleasant. The John Doe prisoner is still living in Seattle. I met him there last September and asked him if he had been in jail lately, and he said no, that they had plugged up the holes so he couldn't get out if he should get in.

OLD-TIMER, Portland, Ore.

THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS

MY DEAR MR. FLYNN:

Concerning Old-Timer's explanation of the Seattle jail break:

There were numerous Irish cops in Seattle in my day, as well as numerous Swedes, Americans, English, *et al*. That some of the ex-members of the force might have concocted this practical joke is not impossible, though it strikes me as too elaborate a hoax to ring true. It is the sort of explanation a man might fit to the case after reading about it.

However, there was a saloon across the street from the jail, and I know the chief was on good terms with it. But I do not recall any agitation about the jail being dangerous to prisoners on the score of fire. If my newspaper printed anything about that, it has slipped my memory.

An explanation of the break suggested at the time by a member of the detective force was that some structural iron worker employed on the building—of course, he might have been a painter as well—had figured out such a means of escape and that it had been carried out as a drunken prank.

JACK BECHDOLT. Rockport, Mass.

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