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OCTOBER

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I found the Inkograph all you represent it to be and I was very well satisfied with it. I made a great mistake when I bought the Inkograph, as I did not take out Loss or Theft Insurance on the pen, for the pen is gone. I am writing this to ask that you send me another Inkograph by return mail, charges C.O.D. I can recommend the Inkograph very highly to anyone who needs a pen which will stand up under very hard usage George B. Moore, Columbia, Pa.

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GHOST STORIES

Vol. 3 OCTOBER, 1927 No. 4

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HOW I FORETOLD THE FATES OF GREAT MEN
Cheiro has been a world-famous seer for many years. You will want to read his thrilling personal story

THE DOG WITH A MAN'S EYES
When the little china dog was broken at the séance, it didn't seem a very serious accident, but—

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BURGLARS BEWITCHED
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A SPIRIT DANCED FOR ME
The sisters were dancers in the Follies and they were twins. Their love was stronger than death. When one of them passed on—

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Can one's pillow be haunted? Is it possible for a ghost to lurk among the feathers?

Other thrilling ghost stories and true accounts of contacts with the Beyond make the November issue one that you will not want to miss. On the newsstands September 23rd.

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1—The Importance of Virility
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3—Is Marriage a Necessity?
4—The Age to Marry
5—Selecting a Wife
6—Love Making and Its Dangers
7—Establishing the Intimate Relations of Marriage
8—Marital Mistakes and Excesses
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11—Conserving Love—The Basis of Marital Happiness
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27—Sterility
28—How to Build Virility
29—Exercises for Building Virility
30—Foods that Help to Build Virile Stamina
31—Diseases of Men — Their Home Treatment
32—The Prevention of Venereal Disease
33—Various Problems of Young Men

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Bernarr Macfadden

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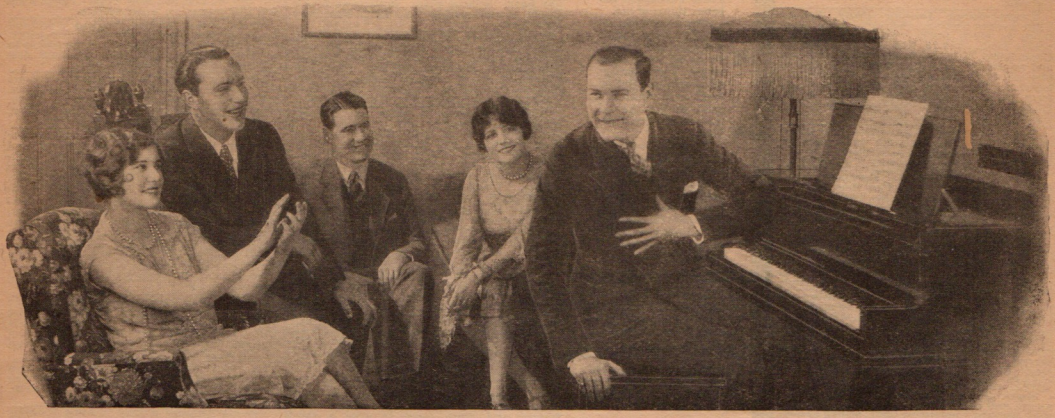
"Watch him make a fool of himself"—*I heard someone whisper*



—*then I started to play!*

IT WAS the first big party of the season and the fun was at its height. The room fairly rocked with laughter as Jim finished his side-splitting imitation of a ballet dancer. Tom, who was giving the party, turned me and said, "And now our young friend re will give us his well-known imitation Paderewski!"

Instantly all attention centered upon me. eigning reluctance, I made as if to beg off, t was forthwith dragged to the piano. lmonitions of "Come on, old timer, do ur stuff!"—"Don't be bashful!"—came m all sides.

hey expected me to do my usual clown- —but I had a surprise up sleeve for them. Just as was about to begin, I rd some one whisper, Watch him make a fool of nself—why, *he can't play note!*"

They thought I was going give them my one-finger ndition of chop-sticks. ut instead I swung into he opening bars of "The oad to Mandalay"—that ollicking soldier-song of ipling's. You should have een the look of amazement hat spread over their faces. his was not the clowning hey had expected! Then Tom began to ing. One by one they joined in, until soon hey were all crowding around the piano inging away at the top of their lungs.

Once started, there was no stopping them. ong after song was loudly called for and as udly sung. Each time I wanted to stop laying they'd beg for "just one more." My ttle surprise was certainly going over big! It was almost an hour before they let e get up from the piano. Then a deluge of questions: "How in the world did you ever do it?"—"Where did you study?"—"When did you learn to play?"—"Who was your teacher?"—"How long have you studied?"—"Let us in on the secret, will you?"

How I Learned to Play

"One at a time, please," I begged, "I'll tell you all about it. To begin with, *I didn't have any teacher.*"

"What! Say, you don't expect us to believe that, do you?"

"Sure thing. But I don't blame you for not believing it. I wouldn't have myself. As you know, I've never been able to play a note. But I always liked music, and many a time when I was pepping up a party with my clowning I would have given anything in the world to be able to sit down at the piano and *really play.*

"But it never occurred to me to take lessons. I thought I was too old, for one thing—and besides, I couldn't see my way clear towards paying an expensive teacher—to say nothing of the long hours I'd have to put in practicing.

"But one day I happened to notice an advertisement for the U. S. School of Music. This school offered to teach music by a new and wonderfully simplified method which *didn't require a teacher*, and which cost only a few cents a lesson.

"Well, boys, that certainly sounded good to me so I lost no more time but filled out the coupon immediately and sent for the Free Demonstration Lesson. When it arrived I found that it seemed even easier than I had hoped.

"Right there I made up my mind to take the course. And believe me that was the luckiest decision of my life! Why, every lesson was almost as much fun as playing a game! Almost before I knew it I was playing simple tunes. And I studied just whenever I pleased, a few minutes a day in my spare time. Now I can play any thing I like—ballads, classical numbers, jazz. Listen to this!"

With that I snapped right into a tantalizing jazz number. No wonder they kept calling for more and more. All evening I was the center of a laughing, singing, hilarious group. And it's been that way at every party I've attended since.

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Spirits, or Mind Reading—Which?

By ROBERT NAPIER

THERE are two main theories which serious persons advance in explanation of psychic phenomena. The first ascribes the manifestations to the spirits of departed human beings. The second theory holds that telepathy, or mind reading, among the living, provides the universal answer.

We may ignore a third school of thought which is so skeptical that it believes every mystery to be the result of deliberate fraud on the part of a medium. Much fraud is practised at séances, but there are happenings on record which cannot be thus lightly dismissed.

Oddly enough, the spiritualistic viewpoint is the one maintained with by far the greater clarity. Your spiritualist says that ghosts communicate by means of the tipping table, the crystal globe, the voice of the trance medium, etc. Grant this, and little remains to be debated.

But the telepathic, or naturalistic, viewpoint is wrapped in confusion. Amateurs are still naive enough to think that there can be no mind reading unless the facts to be obtained by the "reader" are at that moment known to the "sitter"—are present, that is to say, in his objective consciousness.

Telepathy, if it exists, is an affair of the subconscious mind. It would be able to probe into dormant memories, would pick up clues and send the thought of the telepathist leaping through space to get his information from the brain of some person not present at the séance. By tapping a dozen minds, it might estimate the probabilities in a given case and indulge in prophecy. By use of the law of suggestion, it might evoke visions.

If this second theory is the correct one, it will prove to be an even more wonderful thing than the return of spirits from beyond the tomb. Once fully understood, it will revolutionize the life of the world.

In the meantime, the subject provides more thrilling drama than any other for the writer of stories.

The CURSE that

Rogan, of the Foreign Legion, was dogged by earth was not wide enough to shield

By Dick Craig

FROM Algiers on the Mediterranean to New Orleans on the Mississippi is a long way; yet on Canal Street in the romantic Southern city, Rogan and I came face to face with two Arabs of the Sahara—and Rogan knew them both. To see a strong man in mortal fear is an unpleasant sight. Rogan's breath caught in his throat, and his face, bronzed by sea wind and desert sun, turned almost pale. I felt him tremble as we moved on, and I watched his staring eyes fall beneath the flashing gaze from the somber Arabs.

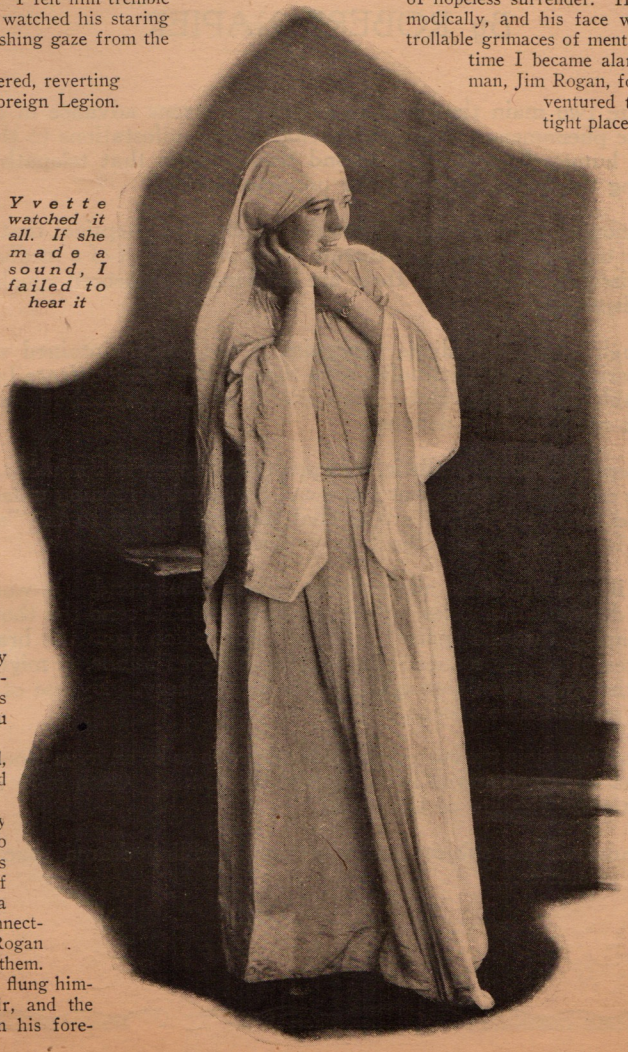
"Mon Dieu," he muttered, reverting to the French of the Foreign Legion. "It is a ghost."

I turned to stare over my shoulder at the soft-footed foreigners who were striding in the opposite direction, looking neither to right nor left. In cosmopolitan New Orleans where the ships of the seven seas cast anchor, these men attracted no attention, although one of them—an enormous, bearded man—wore his native costume, a striped robe and a turban. The other man—a half-breed who looked quite occidental—wore the simple, white cotton suit of the New Orleans native in the summer-time.

"They both look pretty real to me," I said to Rogan. "What the deuce is the matter, man? You act as though——"

"Come," he replied, quickening his pace and seizing me by the arm.

He glanced hurriedly back and, still clinging to my arm, he led me across the broad expanse of Canal Street to the La Salle Hotel. We had connecting rooms there, and Rogan seemed frantic to reach them. Once in his quarters, he flung himself into a wicker chair, and the sweat stood in beads on his forehead. For a time, he made no effort to speak.



Yvette watched it all. If she made a sound, I failed to hear it

"Do you think he—they followed us!" he asked, presently.

"I'm certain they didn't," I replied. "I saw them heading down toward the river."

He spread his big, brown hands wide apart in a gesture of hopeless surrender. His fingers twitched spasmodically, and his face worked itself into uncontrollable grimaces of mental anguish. For the first time I became alarmed. I had known this man, Jim Rogan, for a year, and we had adventured together in a number of tight places. He was an adventurer if ever I met one, a man of the world, schooled and sophisticated. Never, until now, had I seen Rogan register the shadow of fear.

He broke the silence. "It doesn't matter," he muttered, staring at his listless hands. "He'll get me this time—it's *finis.*"

I went over to him and placed my hand on his heavy shoulder.

"Steady, Jim. You've got something on your mind. Better let me in on it, old man. It'll ease the weight."

He buried his head in his hands, and was silent. I stood for a moment, then returned to my chair, stuffed a pipe, and sat waiting. Directly, he raised his head and looked into my eyes. He was haggard and old; and the lips that had ever been so ready to curve in easy laughter, now trembled.

"I've never told you," he began, reaching for a cigarette, tapping it nervously on the arm of his chair, "because—well, because I was ashamed to." He lighted the cigarette, and his fingers shook.

"Men of our kind

CROSSED the World

a ghost with a living guide. And the whole him from the vengeance of that pair

as told to Guy Fowler

don't tell a great many things, Jim," I said, to put him at ease. "Don't tell me now, unless you feel like it."

He nodded. "It wasn't that I was ashamed of the deed," he went on. "I've done other things just as bad, probably. But I was ashamed, Dick—I am now—ashamed of my fear."

"The bravest man I ever knew, was scared to death," I put in, smiling quietly. "Fear isn't the thing to be ashamed of, old-timer. It's only when you fail to do a thing because you fear it——"

"I know." Suddenly he sat upright, flung the cigarette into a tray, and something of his old daring lighted his eyes. "Listen, Dick—" he leaned forward, eyeing me steadily—"do you believe in ghosts?"

Again I smiled. "No."

"Well, I've just seen one."

I waited, saying nothing.

"That bandit, the Arab in native dress—damn it, man, he's dead. I killed him—two years ago."

I betrayed neither surprise nor disbelief, and sat in stolid silence as I had learned to do at gaming-tables and in various emergencies of a wandering career. Rogan was watching me closely. A shade of derision in my expression, a cynical smile on my lips, might have stopped him. Seeing neither, he continued, with a visible effort.

I didn't want any noise . . . I had my knife, and I went after him

"You know that I served in the Foreign Legion—I told you that?"

I nodded.

"But I didn't tell you that I deserted, Dick." He paused and lighted another cigarette. His hands were steadier now. The determination to unburden his mystery had begun to have its effect.

"Well," he went on, after a series of hurried, nervous inhalations, "I did desert. They kill you for that in the Legion. I knew it, of course. But I'd had enough of that hell. You know the desert, Dick? The hot days with blood pounding in your ears; bitter nights; sand in your throat, your eyes. It's bad enough in the deserts of this country, but the Sahara——"

He was lost in his story now, oblivious of me, forgetful even of the Arabs we had seen.

"The Legion is a hard-boiled outfit, Dick. There's nothing else quite like it. There was a Chicago murderer in my squad, along with an Indianapolis banker who had absconded. The officers, poor devils—they had to be tough.

The men in the ranks were scum, for the most part." He was trying to justify his desertion. It was unnecessary with me. I prided myself that I could understand the emotions of a cultured man trapped for a long stretch of service in the Sudan. But I said nothing, thinking that silence on my part would encourage him.

"I could have stood all that." He straightened, and his jaw set. "It wasn't the service that got me. It was a woman."

AS he said that last word, Rogan looked away; his eyes, blue as the sky of his native Ireland on a fair morning, seemed to be staring afar with that peculiar, detached expression that comes to men of the sea and of the wide places on shore.

"Have you ever seen the Sahara at night, Dick?" He caught himself, knowing that I had not. "Of course not," he continued, hurriedly. "On clear nights, you think that you could almost reach up and pull down a star, they seem so close. The dunes turn pale blue beneath the moon and the shadows are black. The air gets cold, but it's pure—burned out in the daylight sun. God, how hot the sun is, Dick. It burns into your soul."

I had never heard Rogan speak with such feeling. Always before, he had been gay or dejected, frivolous or silent, as his Celtic mood prompted.

"I've seen the Nevada desert—and Arizona," I offered. "There's something of the same thing there, I believe."

Rogan seemed scarcely to have heard me.

"Well, I met her on such a night," he mused. "I had twenty-four hours' leave. We were camped outside of Algiers. She was half-French, half-Arab, or I'd never have met her. Those desert dogs don't let their women out of sight. But the French in her gave her a bit of independence. I met her in a coffee-house—one of those low-ceilinged, stone places that looked as old as the pyramids. She was with a Frenchman——"

> "But Yvette, staring at the ghost, suddenly fell back. Her body stiffened. Her eyes were hidden by lids that fluttered for a moment and were still. . . .
>
> "Suddenly, this thing—this Ramacharaka dissolved. It disappeared, and there was nothing. Then——"

ABRUPTLY Rogan left the chair and took a slow turn around the room. He was studying the floor, gathering his memories as he walked. Presently he composed himself and resumed his seat.

"The 'Frog' said something to her," he continued, "and I saw her half-rise. She was angry and—hurt. The Frenchman laughed and seized her by the wrist. I was at the next table. I cracked his wrist with the edge of my hand and his grip broke.

"When he got up, I knocked him down. There were a dozen natives in the place, half a dozen Frenchmen, and two or three Tommies in uniform. You know how it is around there—the Legion has a bad name. Nobody wanted to get into a jam with me—I was pretty sore. It wouldn't have mattered right then what they did. I didn't care. But nobody interfered.

"They carried the Frenchman to a back room and I took the girl's arm, spoke to her in French—asked her to join me at another place where we could talk."

Rogan passed a hand wearily over his eyes as though to erase a recurring vision.

"When she answered—Dick, I'll never forget her voice. It was husky, a voice meant for singing under-stand. I can't tell you how she looked, and I never had a picture of her—she'd never stood for a camera in her life. But the Frenchman should have known, Dick—any man should have known she was square, just by looking at her. She couldn't play a cheap game—it had to be all or nothing, life or death. She was like that—her eyes told you so."

He looked up at me, I think, to assure himself that I understood. I nodded silently and waited.

"Well, it happened before I really understood what it was all about. She spoke to me of her life in Algiers—its inevitable end. Said something about the men who came there—the way they talked to women, the things they did. And she lifted her head proudly—she was telling the truth—when she told me no man had ever possessed her.

"I've never been much of a man for women," he went on, as though speaking to himself. "But it was different with her. I told her about the States—the world outside. We got up and left the place and walked down a narrow, crooked street—came to the eastern gate where a road led outward and lost itself in the sand——"

Rogan shivered and his shoulders seemed to narrow as he bent low, staring at the pattern of the rug.

"While we were standing there, an Arab passed and peered at her. She drew up close to me, frightened. I was for going after the dog, but she held me back.

"'He is nothing,' she told me. 'I have no fear of him. But his master, Ramacharaka——'

"'What of him!' I asked her. 'Who is he?'

"'The man who would make me his slave, if he could,' the girl replied."

Rogan's big hands doubled into fists, and I saw his knuckles grow white with the strain.

"Well, I laughed at her and at this Ramacharaka," he resumed. "I told her I'd take her to America—we'd marry and be regular people. I meant it, too. She knew I did. And she agreed. There, in the shadow of that crumbling old wall, with the desert booming its silence at us, I held her in my arms. Somewhere off a way, the Arab was watching us, but I didn't know that then. I wouldn't have cared a damn, anyway.

"So that night, I made my plans to desert the regiment. When I left her—Yvette—I rode straight back to camp, and passed the first sentry, hours before my leave was up. In the morning I reported. I told the captain what I had told the sentry—somewhere in Algiers I had lost my ticket of leave. It did not matter. I was back. A reprimand was all I got.

"BUT that day, in spare moments, I shaved the writing from the ticket with the sharpest blade of my knife. It left the paper smooth. My captain's signature alone remained. And carefully, I imitated his handwriting—wrote a pass for seventy-two hours, which was the limit allowed. That night, when the desert was blue and black, I used the ticket once more and returned to Algiers."

Rogan was struggling now to tell his story in its chronological sequence. He would clip his sentences, and I could see that he was again living through the night when he and the French-Arab Yvette stole silently out of sleeping Algiers.

"Yvette was waiting for me. Under my armpit, I had the regulation forty-five, but I also carried a knife.

"We had our plan. We went straight to the waterfront, where the Mediterranean laps against the thick, gray walls of the quays. An old boatman agreed to take us to a freighter whose captain Yvette knew. She was certain that this captain would let us sail with him at dawn—when he knew the circumstances.

"The old boatman went up the shore to get his craft. The quay was deserted but for us. Yvette came close and I took her in my arms. As I kissed her, a voice came from the dark.

" 'Yvette,' it said in French, 'make no mistake. You go to death with this Christian dog.'

"I loosed her and wheeled, my hand on the knife, close to the gun. An Arab moved out of the gloom and stood before us, ignoring me. Yvette clung to me, and her eyes were wide. I felt her quivering and saw words choking in her throat. She gasped one word:

" 'Ramacharaka!'

" 'Be on your way,' I said to the fellow and advanced a step."

Again Rogan interrupted his narrative to rise and pace the floor, scowling now, mumbling bastard Arabic beneath his breath. He pulled himself together with no aid from me.

"The fellow leaned his head forward and spat in my face," said Rogan, sharply. The memory sent a heavy, crimson flush over the smooth flesh of his cheek.

"I hit him, of course. Forgot all about the knife, and the gun, too. Even forgot Yvette. But I didn't hit him hard enough. He came at me, and I saw murder in his eyes. His lips were drawn back in a snarl. I knew something about those desert rats. They're game—they're not afraid to die. It's their religion. So I had to work fast. I didn't want any noise, so I ducked and his blow missed. When I came up, I had my knife, and I went after him."

Rogan paused and half-turned to gaze out the window at Canal Street below, as though he were searching for someone in the moving lines of people.

"I didn't bother to draw the knife away," he went on, his voice oddly quiet, without emphasis. "Yvette watched it all. If she made a sound, I failed to hear it. The fellow was still gasping when I leaned over him. I'd heard that rattle in other throats—I knew he'd die. But his face was perfectly calm. He didn't seem to be in any pain.

"And then, he looked up at Yvette and spoke again. 'Yvette, you go to death,' he said. And I'm damned if he didn't smile. Then he turned his eyes up at me, and his voice was steady. 'Death is but an aspect of life,' he said, 'and the destruction of one material form is but a prelude to the building up of another.'

"A moment later, we heard the sound of the old fellow's boat coming toward us. Out in the bay, I could see the riding lights of the freighter. With the toe of my boot I could have pushed this dying Arab into the water. He must have read my thought. He half-raised himself and spoke in

(*Continued on page* 56)

The robed Arab—the man from beyond the grave—stood at his elbow, silent

The Tiger WOMAN

The stigma of a tiger's claws lay, heavy as
And four times he met—disastrously—a

By Noel Ethridge
as told to Allan Van Hoesen

"LOOK, Larry, look! See that woman—the one in the tiger-skin coat and turban? That beautiful oriental woman!"

I clutched my companion eagerly and pointed ahead, into the mass of milling holiday-shoppers which glutted the Fifth Avenue pavement before the Public Library.

"I don't see her. Which one?" he gasped in startled surprise. He crowded against my shoulder and stretched his head high, striving to peer over the heads of the jostling pedestrians.

"There—there!" Again I pointed.

At that instant the woman turned her head and looked back; just for a fleeting second. And her eyes met mine, full. Eyes as bright and glittering as the jewel in the center of her turban, yet black as the midnight hair which peeped from beneath it. And the eyes and her sensuous mouth combined to mock me with a look; a look in which the smile was most tantalizing. Then she had turned away.

And again, as on the other occasions when the woman had appeared to me briefly, only to disappear like a breath of wind, I was seized with a mad desire to reach her. To grasp her and to hold her fast. To learn who and what manner of woman she was.

For, from that far-off day when I first had glimpsed her—startlingly beautiful, voluptuous, as appealing as an Aryan princess—I had yearned to possess her.

Each time I had encountered her in the past, she had given me one swift, flouting smile. Then she had vanished.

But this time she should not escape me!

FORGETTING all else but my desire to overtake her, I darted away from my companion and wriggled my way through the packed throng. Ahead, I still could see her bobbing turban. I was gaining.

The woman swung at the corner and started quickly across the roadway before the halted traffic. Then came a long blast of a whistle, followed by two shrill notes. On the second, the vehicles, massed hub to hub, fairly leaped into motion.

But I was not to be cheated again. Springing from the curb, I dashed ahead, striving to dodge the lines of cars. I caught the rasp of many horns, the bellow of rage from the policeman almost at my elbow. Then something struck me. I stumbled, pitched forward; there came a great rush of waters in my ears—and all went black.

When I recovered consciousness, I was sitting propped against a building. A pressing, chattering crowd was about me. A thousand hammers seemed to be pounding upon my temples. But, dwarfing all else, came thoughts of the woman in the tiger-skin coat. I shot a glance about. She was not there. Again she had evaded me.

Then: "He is all right, officer—just a bit jarred. I'll take him home in a cab. He tried to overtake an acquaintance. Didn't hear the whistles——" It was Larry Fleming speaking. He was beside me, holding me in a sitting posture.

Some one in a blue uniform bent over me. "How do you feel? Shall I call an ambulance?"

"No. I'm just shaken up. My friend here will take me home."

"All right. But don't try a fool stunt like that again. You're lucky you weren't killed."

In the cab I spoke but once. "Did you see her, Larry?"

"No," he replied, then lapsed into silence.

In a few minutes we had reached my quarters, a modest bachelor apartment in Gramercy Park.

As we entered, we encountered Dr. Reynolds, a mutual friend, whose offices fronted the first floor. Noting my appearance—the ugly red bruise upon my forehead, my pallid cheeks and disarranged clothing—he insisted that we go to his rooms. His examination was thorough. My injuries he found were slight; but the bruises and a wrenched muscle or two would cause me considerable pain.

"Take a hot bath; paint your sore spots with iodine; go to bed and relax. You'll be all right in a day or two. Lucky, however, you didn't strike any nearer your temple or——" He shrugged. "I'll drop in and look you over again tonight."

HOWEVER, once in my quarters, I promptly forgot Reynold's instructions. My man was away for the day—luckily. That left Larry and me to our own devices. I brought the decanter, glass, and soda. His drink was a modest one. But he tossed it down, at a single gulp. My thumping nerves required greater soothing. I mixed a regular "toffer," and drank long and slowly.

"How about the hot bath?" he asked, when I finally put down my glass.

"Bother—only scratches." I fastened a wet handkerchief about my head, slumped into a big chair, and lighted a cigar. And for minutes I watched the smoke spirals, while the liquor warmed and quieted me.

"I suppose, Larry," I said finally, looking into the eyes which, I knew, had been studying me, "you consider me a monumental ass?"

"No, not that. But you are emotional and impulsive—inclined to follow snap judgment rather than reason. I have not forgotten certain things—in France."

Such a reply, blunt but not severe, was to have been expected from him. His mention of France brought back many things. In the hectic days which his words recalled, I had been impulsive, perhaps heedless. But so had been innumerable others under the stress of war's pressure. "Mad Ethridge" they had called me. But they also had given me the *croix* and the palms in recognition of the results of my madness.

AND it was on the French fighting front, in those soul-racking days of '15, that I first met Larry Fleming, and we formed a friendship which time ripened into something akin to brotherly affection. As a Britisher, London born, and of a long line of those who had held official posts, I had gone into the aviation forces with the first call to arms. I was just twenty when I first drove a plane over the enemy's lines.

Fleming, my senior by a half dozen years, was a native American. Adventure had claimed him in his youth. The wide world had been his playground. At eighteen he was a General, commanding a Bolivian army of revolutionists.

A year later he was with the Henricksen expedition in

of the PUNJAB

death, on all the men of Ethridge's family. woman who went dressed as a tiger

abortive attempt to reach the South Pole. And, at twenty, he had fought shoulder to shoulder with the Brahmans of a caravan crossing the Great Desert from Bahawalpore to the Ganges, against an assault by Mohammedan yeggs. And so he had lived, gambling with death—and life—until the Great Struggle had called him. He had volunteered on our side. Some shuffling of the cards of war had thrown us into the same corps. Once we had been shot down, at the same time, in a grand assault. I had received the lesser hurts. I all but dragged him back into our lines. And since that time, we had chummed and shared.

When the great guns finally were stilled and we were mustered out of service, he had brought me to America with him. I had remained, because I saw in the great cities of the New World an opportunity to carry out my bent for architecture—a vocation in which I was little more than a novice when the war had interrupted. And I had a hope that we would continue to share a common home. But he could not down the wanderlust in his nature. He joined the exploration forces of one of the city's great museums, going first to the south to search for Aztec relics; then to Egypt, to recover treasure from the tombs of the ancient rulers.

I had not seen him for years, until recently. But in the quarters which I established — quarters which I would have been able to maintain from my considerable income, even had my professional work not proved lucrative— there had, from the first, been a room reserved for Larry. And it was to my apartment, the only place he really could call home, that he had come immediately upon his return to America.

"Come, Noel, snap out of it." Larry's hand fell upon my knee with a suddenness which pulled me from my reverie with a start. "Tell me all about it. Who is this tiger-skin woman you saw—or thought you saw—on the Avenue? Where have you encountered her before? Let me have the whole story, man. Perhaps I can help you."

"I'm going to tell you, Larry—everything. For there's something so devilishly uncanny about this matter that I'm at my wit's end for a solution of the riddle. I'd give a great deal—even several years of my life—if right now I possessed your ability to see a bit further behind the curtain than most of us."

"Ah, ha! Then it is as I suspected. You are not positive it was a woman you saw."

"I'm not positive of anything, except that I've seen—yes, it must be a woman. And such a woman! Beautiful beyond words, and damnably seductive in every move-

She turned and regarded me haughtily. A moment later, she dashed down the steep embankment

ment, graceful, swaying, compelling, like a——"

"A cobra, perhaps."

"You've hit it, Larry. And like a cobra she has charmed and held me, from the day I first glimpsed her years ago. I am always hoping to see her again, to meet her, to——"

"Come back to earth, old man. Give me the story—from the very beginning."

"I SAW her first in the winter of '16, when you and I were flying with the Seventh Corps. We shared in most things then. But she was one thing I couldn't share with you. I remember the day well. It was my twenty-first birthday. We had gone back of the lines, you and I and some others. There were several women there. They had been given a special dispensation to come from Paris to visit their wounded in the field hospital.

"As they were leaving the old chateau which had been taken over for hospital uses, suddenly I saw *her*. She was coming down the steps among them. You were elsewhere. Perhaps it was her costume which caught my eye—a great coat of tiger fur and a turban of the same, with a brilliant jewel, red like a great ruby, gleaming just above her forehead. An Indian princess was my guess.

"Her skin was olive, with dashes of color high upon the cheeks; her lips were brilliant carmine. And her hair was black—as black as night itself. But it was the contour of her features which held me; they were perfectly molded, yet suggested indomitable will. The hint of regal birth was further accented by her eyes, which flamed and sparkled, but never wavered.

"It was but a moment that she looked at me. But in that brief space I was transported—almost into another world. For, as our glances met, she appeared to start, then smiled, and, I thought, nodded, ever so little. Instantly I started forward, intending to make my way through the crowd of soldiers and claim an acquaintanceship. But, before I had gained the steps, there came a shrill blast of bugles. You remember. Word had been flashed that the enemy had just sent a swarm of planes over our lines. All of us were needed back at the front, as quickly as automobiles could carry us. The hateful summons seemed fairly to echo and re-echo all about me. I saw you running toward a car. I turned once, to note if the woman was still there. Again our eyes met. And again she smiled. I waved to her, cursing war and its demands, then raced on and joined you."

"I recall that day, Noel. You were shot——"

"Exactly. I want you to retain that thought as I tell my story. I was shot down, almost as soon as I had driven my plane into the air. That I escaped with no worse than a broken leg, was a miracle. But, even as I was borne half-conscious from the field, I recalled one thing. Up in the air, just before I was raked with the fire which downed me, I seemed to see the woman in the tiger-skin. She passed before me and disappeared into the clouds. But her smile had changed to one of mockery."

"Probably it was your imagination. Your mind simply had retained her likeness; it played you tricks."

"Perhaps. Anyway, that was my guess when I was able to think coherently in the hospital. But I hoped to learn the identity of the woman. You know I never was a ladies' man. In fact, I was rather afraid of the other sex. But the mysterious unknown had fascinated me, though I had seen her but for the briefest of periods. I made inquiries concerning her. No one whom I questioned, either knew or had seen her. I didn't consult you because I wasn't certain what emotion prompted my interest in her. Besides, I feared you might ridicule me."

"Did you try to find her when you recovered?"

"YES. And I learned nothing. But I never forgot her. She had made too deep an impression upon me. And, though I realized that the chance of ever seeing her again was less than one in a million, I was always on the lookout, hoping that Fate would throw us together once more."

"And was today the first time you thought you saw her again?"

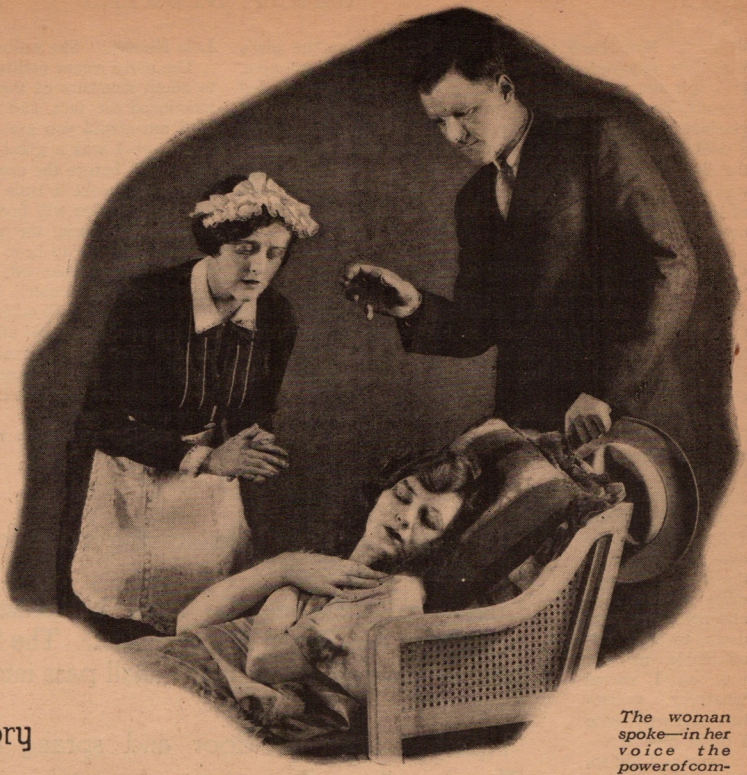
"No. My second glimpse of this elusive woman was in 1919. You were somewhere at the other end of the earth. I went to Paris, on business for my firm. Incidentally, it was in mid-winter. One day I was hurrying along the Boulevard Saint Germain, my mind intent only upon the errand which had taken me out on that raw morning. I had almost reached the Pont de la Concorde, intending to cross the river to the Champs-Elysées, when I got the greatest jolt of my life. For, in the crowd pressing forward against the wind, I noted a woman wearing a tiger-skin coat and turban. The unusual fur was sufficient in itself to make me believe that at last I had located the mysterious woman of the field hospital. And a glimpse of her height and carriage convinced me I had guessed correctly.

Jammu clasped the fingers of his right hand about my wrist

"I tried to overtake her. But, as today, she suddenly stepped from the walk to cross the roadway. A crush of motor vehicles blocked her for the moment. She turned and saw me. A tantalizing, mocking smile swept her features. Then she dashed ahead. I lurched forward, determined to overtake her; but I was knocked flat by a mounted military officer. He had me arrested for my clumsiness.

"However, though I raged mentally at the elusiveness of the tiger woman, I paid my fine with no regrets. For, not only had I escaped serious injury by inches, but my mind finally had been set at rest (*Continued on page* 90)

Madame Nuncia lost her marvelous singing voice—and in the bitterness of her tragedy, she conceived the diabolical scheme of stealing another woman's voice



The woman spoke—in her voice the power of command, "Ilma, wake up"

By
John Miller Gregory

SPIRIT FINGERS

THERE is no denying I was in love with Ilma Berli, for if a "cat can look at a king," a press agent can love his star, even if he would be a fool to tell her. But even if I had not been in love with her, I think I would have come forward to help her in her desperate fight to retain her beautiful voice, for it is one thing to battle material things for Broadway supremacy, and quite another to be a battle-ground for two antagonistic spirits. And that's what Ilma Berli became.

Ilma Berli was the brilliant, beautiful singing-star who burst on blasé New York one night in an amazing première in one of Strauss' operettas. She received an overwhelming public reception that overnight put her name in electric lights over the theater, and emblazoned it on every newspaper first page in the country.

I'm not claiming much personal credit for this remarkable first performance, although I had worked pretty hard as press agent for the company to get a full opening house and a fair chance for the newcomer. The girl's talent and ability, and her marvelous personality, had caught my attention the moment I saw her, and the story of her life made me determined to give her at least a good start on a hard road.

Fortunately I had a personal interest in her, for when the strange ghostly fingers reached from somewhere out yonder to tear her golden voice from her throat, she needed a friend, and I thank God that I was there to help her.

Ilma Berli was the daughter of a famous Hungarian novelist, who was forced to flee to this country by political enemies. It is very difficult to make money as a novelist in Hungary, and so Berli arrived in New York, with his wife and their baby Ilma, with no money and few friends.

Life, for the little family, was filled with toil, disappointment, and sometimes desperate want. But Berli struggled through it, doing whatever came to his hand—a bit of translating, some newspaper work, occasional interpreting in court. They lived, and were so happy their hearts were almost afraid.

BERLI'S wife had been a concert singer in Hungary, but her voice had given out. So her whole attention was devoted to the little golden-haired, blue-eyed Ilma, whose sweet, baby voice occasionally rose like an arrow in the sunlight to make her mother and father gasp with awe and happiness.

To her they devoted all their imagination and effort and whole-hearted help. Hopefully they watched and guarded and prayed; and the little girl's voice grew surpassingly clear and lovely, and her face shone with the beauty of the mother's soul, and the strength and faith of the father.

...ly Mrs. Berli took Ilma to Europe, for the girl's ...ucation required the best the Old Country had to give. Through the years that followed, Berli toiled and denied himself, encouraged by his wife's letters, which predicted glorious things for their baby. But, suddenly, there arrived a wild, heart-broken cable from Ilma, and in a short while the boat brought them back—the girl wide-eyed, staring, white-faced, dressed in stark black; and in the hold of the boat, a gray coffin which bore all that was left of her mother.

SOMEHOW they got going again, Berli and Ilma, and the girl went out to verify her mother's predictions. Two songs and a dashing, animated Hungarian Czardas brought the producer to his feet in her audition, his eyes shining with admiration. The next day she was announced as the leading soprano in the new Strauss operetta.

Then came the première and Ilma's marvelous success. Leaning over the rail in the rear of the auditorium, my eyes fixed on the swaying figure on the stage, beautiful beyond all criticism, I heard her glorious voice rise in the inimitable melodies of Strauss—and my heart went down to her, unattainable as she was, as I vowed whatever protection and assistance I could give her.

Even as I did so, there arose in me a feeling that my vow would be put to a test somehow in the future. For the gifts that had been showered on Ilma were too great to allow her to live her life in ease and comfort.

"Through the door I heard the voice of the dead-eyed woman.

"'Ilma—you can hear no voice but mine. No sound can reach you but my voice. The time is approaching when my voice shall pass into you, Ilma. . . .'

"I pushed open the door and sprang within. There—"

It was exactly two weeks after the triumphant reception of Ilma Berli, that Lola Nuncia approached me in the lobby of the theater just before the night show.

THE theater was packed with the kind of brilliant audience in evening dress which makes the heart of a press agent glow. Every box was filled, and the gallery was a swaying mass of anxious music-lovers. Six rows stood at the back of the auditorium.

For some odd reason, I took particular notice of Lola Nuncia even before she spoke to me. The dark-eyed, rather pathetic woman wore a dingy blue-serge dress, with a touch of color at the waist, and in her ears were the long earrings which appeal to the Latin taste. She stood in a corner, staring around with large, brown, dead eyes, which seemed to lie in the sockets of her pale face like two splotches of dull flat paint. There was not the slightest life in them. They seemed to open on a soul in which all hope and ambition had died.

She was a slender woman in her forties, with two rows of brilliant white teeth, and a square, determined chin. She would have been remarkably good-looking if it hadn't been for her eyes. They focused your attention and stared at you—two great brown tombstones of a dead soul.

When the crowds had pushed through the doorway, and the sounds of the orchestra tuning for the overture could be heard, she glided toward me.

"Are you the publicity agent?" she asked.

I nodded.

"I'm glad," she murmured, her lips parting in a nervous smile. "You recognize the profession, of course. I am Lola Nuncia." She waited very impatiently for me to speak.

The name meant nothing to me, but it was not our policy to admit members of the profession on crowded nights. I mentioned the fact, and she raised her dead eyes to mine.

"I am afraid you are too young to remember me. Ten years ago I was a great opera star. I have sung all over the world, before the crowned heads of a dozen countries." Her voice broke a little at the recollection of her former triumphs. "You will find my name in the newspapers, *mon ami*—Lola Nuncia, the world's greatest contralto."

"I should like to hear you sing," I temporized, "but I'm afraid——" I broke off, and glanced toward the crowded interior of the theater.

"Perhaps you will take me back-stage, *mon ami*. I would not ask you, if I could afford to buy a seat. But I am poor now." Her lips hardened. "Think of it! Lola Nuncia begging a seat like a pauper!" She shuddered, and raised two expressive shoulders. "It would be droll, *mon ami*, if it were not tragic."

A shudder ran down my back. I wished she would not look at me—the sight of her dead eyes sent a weird dread into my heart—an unexplainable fright. There was nothing really to be frightened about, I thought. They were only the disappointed, pathetic eyes of a fallen star.

"Listen, *mon ami*," she implored, her hand on my arm. "I must hear Berli sing, you understand? It may be tremendously important—to her—to me—to the world!" Her face came up, and in the glare from the chandelier, I saw that her eyes had suddenly come alive. They glowed strangely in the golden light. "You will take me back, my friend, if there's no room in front. I do not care to see her, especially. It is her voice I want to hear. Perhaps it is the voice—my voice!" Her eyes were straight in front of her, as if she visioned something kept dark from me.

The woman's tenseness was infectious. Despite my better judgment, I did not refuse her plea, but led her back-stage and installed her in a cubby-hole under the iron stairway which led to the up-stairs dressing-rooms. From this place she could look out on the stage, and would be out of the way of the rushing chorus girls and the lumbering tread of the stage hands.

Out front again, the memory of the woman kept coming back to me—her dead eyes, her racked and seared soul, her career cut short at its height, the strange, yearning expression on her anxious face, and, especially, her odd words: "Perhaps it is the voice—my voice!"

AFTER the curtain descended on the last act, I went back to Ilma's room. Her beauty drew me to her.

"I'm so glad you came back," she said, nervously, after my congratulations. "First, I want you to meet Madame Nuncia—the famous Lola Nuncia. All the world has rung with her fame."

The woman glided behind her, and reached for her hand. "The world rang with it, *carissima*, but now—I am dead; my voice has gone away."

"But, my dear," expostulated Ilma, "you mustn't say that. Your voice will come back. It must come back—it was so glorious."

For a second, the woman's eyes (*Continued on page* 68)

ARMS in the DARK

Doctor Bender, monstrous dissector of souls, overlooked one fact. He forgot that a girl will always find a way to cry for aid to the man who loves her

By Walter Fallon
As told to Emil Raymond

TO me and all other students in the medical school at Vienna the name of Doctor Thorwald Bender was one to conjure with. The greatest surgeon in Europe he was, and more besides. It was before the day of psychoanalysis, but one heard strange rumors of hidden laboratories and secret clinics where much of mystery went on. Experiments were performed on human beings, it was said—and there were tales that made one's blood run cold. Many great names were mentioned when these things were talked of in bated breath in the students' quarters, but Doctor Thorwald Bender was the greatest of them all.

I met him one day by chance when one of my professors at the University sent me to his house with an urgent message that was to be delivered to him personally. I remember how he impressed me even in that moment of meeting as a man who bore the burden of some fantastic quest. Huge, ponderous, expressionless, his eyes stared out at me unseeing from beneath his beetling brows. He seemed like some vast, prehistoric animal, dazed a little by his contact with the world, and seeking readjustment.

How then could such a man be the father of Elise? In the few brief moments I had seen her, the fragile, ethereal beauty of her face had sealed my fate. She had smiled at me while I was waiting for her father, and she tarried for a moment on the errand that had brought her to the room.

"You are an American, are you not?" she said, after I had bowed to her gravely.

It was with an effort that I managed to pronounce my name, Walter Fallon, and to tell her that I was a student at the University. We chatted for some minutes, she entirely at her ease, I in a new-found heaven. Then suddenly her father's rumbling voice came from the hall, and the smile was wiped from her lips and a look of terror crossed her face.

"It is wrong!" she breathed. "He will be very angry."

"No!" I protested sharply. "Tell me, when shall I see you again? It must be soon."

"It is forbidden! You mustn't even try. You hear?" And as his footsteps approached the door, she fled into another room.

"No, No!" she cried wildly, "Father must never know"

I saw her many times later on, while her father was gone on a lecture tour. It was not an easy matter to overcome her scruples, for Elise was hedged in by all the conventions and proprieties of a respectable German family. But she was starving for companionship and the friendship of some one of her own age, for these things had been rigidly denied her by her father.

SO, for a while Elise was happy in the long walks we took in the Vienna parks, or the talks we had in the shade of the trees. She had the gaiety and playfulness of a faun, and she reveled in her new-found feedom. But soon I saw that underneath this outward sparkle was some deep-seated trouble that descended upon her at times like a pall. It would cut short her words in the midst of a sentence, or check the laughter on her lips. I have seen the dancing sparkle die out of her eyes, and the flushed cheeks blanch suddenly at some awful recollection. What sorrow had laid its hand on her so heavily?

I knew the sort of life she had led; for Thorwald Bender was a stern, severe parent. He would be a veritable martinet in his own home, dominating, tyrannical, even cruel. But would that account for the terror that clouded Elise's eyes when his name was even mentioned? It puzzled me at first, and then I became really anxious as I discovered how unalterable was her dread. She never spoke of him but that her voice shook and her body trembled, and at the thought of his return her agitation alarmed me. In vain I tried to pry the secret from her.

"It is nothing, Walter," she would say when I pressed her for an explanation. "Only—that this happiness must end so soon."

"But Elise, are we not engaged? You know it cannot end."

SHE shook her head broodingly. "He will never permit; he will never let us see each other."

I tried to speak confidently. Don't be afraid of that, Elise. There's nothing he can say against me, and when he comes back I'll see him at once and tell him."

The girl turned upon me in a panic. I must not see Doctor Bender; I must tell him nothing, it would be dangerous. She would even try to meet me sometimes surreptitiously if only I said nothing to him. Her eyes were wide with a nameless fear that shook her like a leaf.

It was always the same. Some moments of peace and quiet we would have together, and then the thought of her father would strike Elise dumb with morbid terror. What was it that lay at the bottom of it all? I could not believe that it was merely the outburst of her father's temper that she feared. Surely it was no great crime for her to have spent a few happy hours with me. True, I was an impecunious student in a foreign land, and she the daughter of one of the leading specialists in Europe. But would this account for the frantic terror that assailed her whenever she thought of his return?

I turned it over in my own mind, but could come to no solution. If he had been actually cruel to the girl, I felt sure that I would have found it out. I had tried by subtle means to question Elise about her life at home, but nothing that she had said had led me to believe that her father was abusive. In fact, there was little enough that she did tell. Her reticence about her father was one of the things that roused disturbing suspicions within me. She could not help but know of the reputation he had won, and the respect which was his due; I had often commented myself on the high position he enjoyed. And Elise would listen, silent and brooding, to it all. Not a word could I get out of her.

Then, one day in the park she told me with a sob, after we had been silent for a long time: "This is the last time, Walter! I could not tell you before—but this is the last time we are to meet."

I stared at her, astounded. "What is it, Elise? Why are you sending me away?"

"HE is coming back tonight." I thought a shudder shook her frail young body. "I cannot see you any more." Her words came in a whisper and tears were in her eyes. I took her boldly in my arms.

"What is it you fear, Elise? It is time you told me. Otherwise, I shall go to your father tomorrow——"

"No, no!" she cried wildly, "Father must never know. Promise——"

"I'm not going to give you up," I interrupted ruthlessly. "If there is any reason—something he has done——"

She pressed her hands to my mouth frantically and stopped my words. "You will promise, Walter! You will not go to him!" she panted. "Swear to me you'll say nothing——"

Her breath was coming in gasps and her eyes were staring; I could only sense the depths of her terror. But to question her further in this mood would be hopeless. I made some evasive answer, determining in my own mind to see Doctor Thorwald Bender and have it out with him at the earliest possible moment. I tried my best to be consoling, but was full of morbid thoughts myself. All that day I spent in a gloomy state of mind, trying to reason out the best thing to do, and when I went to my own room that night the problem was still unsolved.

If Doctor Bender objected to my seeing his daughter, what recourse would I have? What influence could I bring to lead him to accept me as a friend? I had visited Elise in his absence; he might easily believe that I had influenced her unduly in seeing her without his permission. My thoughts became vague, and a dull pressure seemed to be oppressing my brain. The lights grew dim, there was a dinning sound in my ears, and I must have fallen asleep in my chair. Shall I be rational, and call what followed a nightmare?

FOR suddenly I became aware of a figure that loomed mistily before me—a figure with bowed head, slowly gathering shape in the darkness. My flesh was creeping; my hair rose on end. I made a wild effort to rise, to flee from the room. But I was numb with horror; my limbs were trembling and would not bear my weight.

With eyes glued on the shadowy figure I watched it suddenly lift its head as if in supplication. And at the sight

"The ghostly visitant was Elise—but what torture had come over that beautiful face? Her features were drawn and twisted, her eyes upraised and protruding . . .

"All at once another spectral image appeared. An arm, with talon-like fingers, clutched at the wraith of the girl. A spasm of indescribable agony racked her slender body. The arm, the writhing fingers, drew closer. And then——

of the features that were revealed to me, every drop of blood in my veins turned to ice. The ghostly visitant was Elise—but what torture had come over that beautiful face? Her features were drawn and twisted, her eyes upraised and protruding. It was such a look of horror as I hope I shall never see again.

Ages seemed to pass while I sat there stunned, my breath coming in loud gasps. All at once another spectral image appeared. An arm, with talon-like fingers, clutched at the wraith of the girl. A spasm of indescribable agony racked her slender body. The arm, the writhing fingers, drew closer. And then she beckoned wildly to me for aid.

The man in me stilled the numbness of fear. I would go to her aid, but as I tried to rise and cry out, my voice stuck in my throat. Not a muscle could I move; it was as if I had been chained to my chair. I strained my limbs in desperation; my head felt as if tight bands encircled it. I made a final spasmodic effort to break the bonds that held me; there was a loud crash, and I fell forward on the floor.

I arose faint and dizzy and sick with nausea, but awake. Whatever the phantom was that had haunted me, it was gone. The lights were burning brightly, everything in the room was in its place and undisturbed. Except the chair—the arm of it had broken. There had been nothing imaginary about my struggle, at least; I was bathed in perspiration, my breath still coming in gasps. And the chair—I had broken it in my frenzy. What was the meaning of this thing that had afflicted me?

Frantic, my thoughts turned to Elise. Could she actually be in danger? But no; such agony as I had witnessed in my dream could never beset Elise. It was a hideous hallucination — the position of my head when I had fallen asleep had brought it on.

Yet I could find no rest until I was certain. I must be sure that all was well with her. I fairly ran to the narrow lane where Doctor Bender lived. What I planned to do, I do not know; I was still, perhaps, a little out of my head. But at the sight of the tiny house dark and silent as the night itself my fears left me. I had come on a fool's errand, indeed. This calm and peaceful house, where all was slumber within, knew nothing of my weird visitation.

I walked home slowly, letting the night breeze cool the fever within me. I would visit Dr. Bender the next day, and tell him in a straightforward manner that I loved his daughter. Strict martinet that he was, I knew that he could find nothing against my character. As for the other things, fortune and fame would come, if I had Elise.

But when I presented myself at the house next day, I found that my task would not be so simple. The servant Alex, who had become familiar enough with me during the past month, only scowled. Doctor Bender was not at home, he muttered, and Fraulein Elise was ill; she could see no one. When I protested, he slammed the door in my face.

I walked away not a little uneasy. If the Doctor had given orders that I was not to be admitted, as seemed evident from Alex' manner, it could only mean that he was already informed of everything. I decided to visit him at his office in the hospital, but there, too, I was brusquely received. Doctor Bender could on no account be disturbed; it was idle to wait except on the most urgent business. I left, feeling more gloomy and depressed than ever.

My cases at the hospital that afternoon suffered from my absent-mindedness. I could not keep my thoughts from Elise and the household in which she was virtually a prisoner. Had there been any connection between reality and the strange experience I had had the night before? The tales I had heard of Doctor Bender and his queer experiments suddenly gripped my mind. Was there truth in those wild rumors, and did Elise know of them? I had my fill of ugly thoughts that day.

But later on I reasoned myself out of superstitious dread. I was a doctor in a school of science, surrounded everywhere by our modern civilization. Such things as young girls imprisoned in the midst of diabolic surroundings were to be found only in the *Arabian Nights*. I had nothing more serious to deal with than an overly cautious parent, and a letter to Doctor Bender would doubtless clear the matter up. I would write to him, and also to Elise.

I posted both letters in time for delivery before nightfall, and I went back to my room, flattered that I had found a solution of my problem. I had dinner with some friends, and spent a few hours in excellent spirits.

I even had a glass of wine with Ludwig Weber, a chum of mine, before going to bed. I turned in rather early and sank into slumber with a sense of profound tranquillity and peace with the world.

I woke suddenly with a start that brought me upright in my bed. I was conscious of some presence in the room, something that was trying to make itself felt. As yet unseen, it was still there, urging itself upon my senses. I say I was awake; there could be no doubt of it. My fists were clenched tight; I could feel the nails biting into the palms of my hands. Faint light from the moon filtered through the lowered blinds, and I could make out every object in my room. I heard the far-off song of some students making their way home. These things registered curiously on my taut and strained senses. I knew that there was more to come.

Even while these thoughts flitted feverishly through my mind, there came the realization of my fears. At the opposite end of the room, near the door, a figure was taking shape. Slowly it took form, dis- (*Continued on page* 59)

I felt a touch on my arm—a hand with strong fingers was guiding me

The SPECTER

Suppose you had planned to avenge yourself way to the crime, you found yourself trailed

By Stinson Hosey

TORMENTED by suspicion, I looked up from the bag I was packing, and shot a glance through the partly drawn portières into Jean's boudoir. I was jealous as well as suspicious.

She stood before a long mirror, studying her reflection critically. A clinging gown of black emphasized the slender beauty of her figure and the creamy softness of her skin. The shaded light above her head made a glory of her burnished brown hair.

I could hear almost every word they spoke, though their tones were low

And, as I glanced at her, I wondered at the result of my carefully-laid plan. Tonight I would learn the truth—and if it confirmed the gossip which for weeks had tormented me, would I be able to fulfill my purpose?

I drew a deep long breath, but slowly, so as to give no sound. For a flush of hate suddenly welled so strongly within me that it was a full minute, with hands clenched so that the nails cut into my palms, before I could crush down the urge to rush upon her and try to force the truth from her.

As I bent and snapped the catches of my suit-case, my indecision vanished. Again I felt the cold calm which had carried me through desperate situations in the past. When the time came, I would not hesitate to kill—if Randolph had betrayed my friendship, if Jean had broken her pledge.

When I walked slowly into the other room, Jean was leaning over a vase, breathing the faint perfume from the bouquet of orchids she would wear that evening.

At my approach she turned suddenly, just a hint of startled surprise showing in her purple-black, petulant eyes, while the palms of her hands went flat upon the table before her, as if to steady her. But she recovered her composure instantly. She gave a shrug of her alert shoulders, and her eyes met mine with the impersonal directness of a child.

"So, *mon cher*, packed so soon?"

"I shall require so little," I replied lightly. "Only two days in Washington—one change will be sufficient. But let us forget the trip, Jean; it is a bore. I am more interested in you. You are positively glorious tonight, my own. Yes, while I continue to age and add to my stock of gray hairs, you actually mock at Father Time and become younger with the years."

She laughed subtly and, for effect, lighted a cigarette. Though I did not betray the anger which seethed within me, by so much as the flicker of a lash, I was acutely conscious that she was nervous—and anxious I should be on my way.

"I suppose I am to ride as far as the Forresters with you?" I queried. "I shall have time. Even then I shall hate to leave you. Tonight you are so bewitching you are positively dangerous."

"What—not jealous, *mon cher?*" Her eyes opened wide in mock wonderment.

"Perhaps. Business has called me away quite frequently of late. But very soon, there will be no more partings. You are too young, too fond of thrills of life, to be left to your own devices for amusement. Have you telephoned for the car, or shall we use a cab?"

"Shame on your jealousy, Stinson. And you are not going

Cuts the ACE

for a woman's infidelity—and, suddenly, on your by your own double! What would YOU do?

as told to Edwin A. Goewey

with me tonight. Jim and Mimi are going to stop for me and drive me to the Forresters. They will not be here until nine, and that will be too late for you."

"So there is—some one else?"

I smiled, and tried to speak banteringly. But there must have been the hint of a false note in my tone. For Jean's cheeks paled, and her brows drew together.

"You have no right to say that, Stinson."

"I'm sorry—I was joking. But my train does leave at eight-thirty, and so I'd better be starting——"

"Listen a moment, Stinson. You and I have seen too much of life to mistake jealousy for humor. Actually, neither of us has a claim upon the other. Our bargain was, you remember, that we would live together for five years——"

"I remember. And if either learned to love another, you or I should be free to go to that other. But—there was another stipulation, you'll recall. Our relations were to be severed only by a fair and open declaration of the fact."

"Exactly," she said, in a half-tired, matter-of-fact tone. "And that pledge shall be carried out—if ever —— But we are talking nonsense. You will be late for your train. If you will wire me, I shall meet you at the station when you return."

I forced a laugh, raised her fingers to my lips, and kissed them.

"I'll keep you posted," I said. I hurried to my room and snatched up my bag and hat. From the door I called to her: "Have a good time at the Forresters. *Au revoir.*"

Her answering good-by echoed in my ears all the way down in the elevator and until I reached the vestibule. There I paused and from the doorway surveyed the street before me. I was too experienced a campaigner—both in actual warfare and in conflicts with and over women—not to give my opponents credit for adroitness. For some time, I had believed that I was followed each time I left the city—at least as far as the railway station.

Across the roadway, parked in the shadow of a great tree at the edge of the park, was a taxicab with only its dimmest lights burning. I suspected it contained the one who was to trail me; who would make certain I had left the city. Reaching the curb, I signaled an "empty" which came along almost upon the instant.

"Pennsylvania Station," I shouted, tossed my grip in ahead of me, and we were off with the clang of the door.

Through the rear window I tried to see if the cab across the street had taken up the chase. But I could not be sure. There were too many cars scurrying through the driveway.

As we swung in and out through the glut of traffic, I was pulled by the wild horses of conflicting emotions.

Randolph urged Jean to make some excuse for leaving the night club and hastening their elopement

Jean Riviere had been mine for three years. And, pledge or no pledge, I intended to keep her as long as I chose. I did not love her; I had never expected her to love me. To her I was simply a middle-aged protector—and a source of money, gowns, and jewels. Her pledge, I believed, was merely an effort to salve a passing qualm of conscience. But she could not trick me. My hands clenched at the thought. I would not be made a laughing-stock. No man

—not even one as handsome and as young as Reed Randolph—was going to take a woman from me—and live. And Jean? She had forfeited all right to continue cheating.

A NEW thought came and added to my anger. She had volunteered to meet me if I would telegraph her the time I would return. I laughed maliciously as I recalled her words. If I did as she suggested, she and her lover would know exactly how long they could remain together without danger of encountering me.

But, clever as she was, I believed I had outplayed her. For, following the first whispers which had reached me, I had absented myself frequently from the city for just one purpose—that she and Randolph would become emboldened, would lessen their precautions. And they had. They met often and openly—but at places where they thought I never came. At the corner of Broadway and Thirty-fourth street, I called to the chauffeur to stop. It was important for me to discover if I were being trailed. I left the cab and walked along the south side of the street, toward the station. I had a purpose in taking that particular side. It was lined with shops, and many of the show-windows contained large mirrors.

Pausing before one such, I pretended to look at the articles displayed. But I really was watching what was reflected behind me. Passers-by were not numerous. A man whom I had no recollection of ever having seen before, but whose appearance and manner suggested a private detective, glanced sharply at me, walked a few steps, then halted and lighted a cigarette. Then I looked again, but more closely. There appeared to be a second man watching me; he was standing within a few feet of the other. But the second "shadow" did not seem a stranger. Something in his appearance was familiar. Then, suddenly, the truth flashed upon me. I didn't know this second man, but in many ways he resembled me—only he was older, more stooped, and rather shabby.

"As I dropped my cards upon the pack and straightened the edges, the phantom cut and exposed the ten of clubs, the card of success.

"Gritting my teeth, I again reached out with fingers that twitched. I was determined to best Fate in spite of herself. But I failed—that time. I cut the three of hearts, the card indicating disappointment caused by one's own imprudence. Then—"

After the first shock of surprise, I smiled grimly. Surely some detective agency, in fulfilling an order from either Jean or Randolph, had blundered woefully in assigning a man whose features so resembled mine that I was certain to spot him. I wondered the shadow had not noted the similarity and kept himself out of sight.

Paying them no outward heed, I looked at my watch. There still remained a half hour to train-time, so I strolled along, pausing before additional windows where there were mirrors. And almost every time I noted the same two men at the curb, though they pretended to be unaware of each other's presence.

LEST they suspect me of some trickery, I finally entered a haberdashery, purchased some shirts, and placed them in my suit-case. Once, when I stole a furtive glance toward the doorway, I detected one of my trailers looking at me.

At the station I took up the ticket and reservation for which I had telephoned, then moved leisurely toward the steep stairway leading down to the train. Purposely I dallied so that another passenger and I reached the gate at the same moment. I swung aside to give the other right of way, at the same time looking about. My shadow was but a few feet distant, pretending to be studying a time-table. He did not attempt to follow me down the steps. The other man—the one who resembled me—had disappeared utterly. If matters had not been approaching a crisis, I surely would have liked to search out this second man and learn something more about him. It was positively uncanny to be trailed by one who, at least in a half-light, might have passed for me. It was a bit like being spied upon by one's own shadow.

With the same lazy stride I had been affecting, I walked along the platform in the direction of the Pullmans at the front end of the train. If my trailer still watched from the upper level, I would supply him with every indication I had left the city. I followed the porter, watched him tuck my grip beneath my berth, and smiled as he did so. For I never expected to see it again. From its contents I had removed all marks which would enable any one to trace them to me. A dollar tip insured me the attention of the porter. Informing him I was going into the club car to write many letters, I told him not to come for me no matter how long I remained away.

BY the time I reached the designated car, I felt certain my man had retired from his lookout post. But I waited until the final "All aboard" echoed, and then jumped to the platform just as the train gained motion. I hurried along it to the far end of the station. This was part of my plan. I had been over the ground thoroughly, and I knew there was an exit stairway leading to a portion of the station given over to waiting-rooms for commuters.

None questioned me. In a few minutes I was again in the street, but in the rear of the building in Eighth avenue. Absolutely certain I had thrown off my trailers, I headed westward and turned into a quiet side-street. After a time, I paused before one of a row of down-at-the-heels, brownstone houses. In it I had rented a room some weeks previous, under an assumed name. And there, in a securely locked trunk, was everything I required for my night's adventure.

I SLIPPED into the house and locked myself in my room. From the trunk I took a complete outfit of evening clothes, a revolver, a box of cartridges, and a silencer which fitted the weapon perfectly. For the last time until I should put them on, I looked over a collection of shabby articles, from a battered hat and broken shoes to ragged underwear and a well-worn suit. In these, following the taking of my vengeance, I would make my escape. I would not try to make my get-away on a boat or passenger-train. It would be safer to take to the roads for a few days as a hobo—perhaps catch a freight to some distant point—before obtaining respectable habiliments and trying to leave the country as a legitimate traveler. I felt certain that I would be far on my way before the police learned that I was not in Washington.

I stripped off the clothing I had been wearing, and tossed it into the trunk. I made certain of the fastenings of the money-belt about my waist. I had drawn my last dollars, amounting in all to several thousands, from the bank that afternoon, and carried them in a strip of chamois. Next, I dressed carefully in the evening clothes. I loaded the revolver carefully and put it and the silencer into my pockets.

Locking the trunk, I glanced around to make certain I

had left nothing which would excite the suspicion of my landlady if she should enter the room. Switching off the light and locking the door, I drew my hat low over my eyes, turned up the collar of my outer coat to hide the fact I was in evening dress, slipped from the house and slunk toward the avenue.

I KNEW all too well where I would find Jean and Randolph. The Forresters served merely as a blind, taking her to places where she could meet Randolph clandestinely. Tonight they would go to the Golden Peacock, one of the most blatant and expensive of the night-clubs. Two days before I had found the letter appointing the rendezvous—for "the evening Stinson goes away." It was that letter which caused me to complete my plans for a show-down.

I did not want to reach the night-club before the crowds from the theaters had begun to swarm into the dance resorts—which would not be for another half-hour—and so I strolled toward my destination instead of taking a cab. I had no fear of encountering acquaintances in that neighborhood. In the theatrical and cabaret area, however, I would be compelled to exert greater caution. If I met anyone who recognized and spoke to me, I could easily get away from them, of course, but such a chance encounter might result in putting the authorities on my trail more speedily than I had figured—might create a handicap which would increase my danger.

As I moved along slowly, I was grateful for the bit of chill in the night air. It cooled the fever in my body and soothed my nerves. For, somehow, as the hour for my vengeance drew nearer, I began to realize I was not the man of steel I had believed myself. In the past I had faced all danger with my nerves under perfect control. Tonight they were positively getting jumpy. Either age was beginning to take its toll or I was learning to experience the sensation of personal fear. More than once the sudden rasping of an automobile siren caused me to start. When I encountered policemen, I fancied they stared at me, and I stared back. But immediately after, I would curse myself for this super-sensitive feeling. Actually the men had not stared. Why should they? No one could guess what was in my mind or that I carried a deadly, concealed weapon.

Finally I swung to the right into the theatrical district. In a few seconds I found myself in one of the brilliantly lighted valleys of the quarter—incredibly crowded and rumbling with a babel of sounds. There were no concealing shadows there—only lights, lights, and more lights. They shone from the bulb-flecked foyers, the dazzling shop-windows, and the myriad signs overhead. Drawing the brim of my hat still further down, I put my trust in Lady Luck.

The dense crowd forced me to move slowly. I tried not to chafe at the delay, but soon the press of rubbing shoulders, the raucous cries, and jangling laughter got to me until I was mentally nauseated.

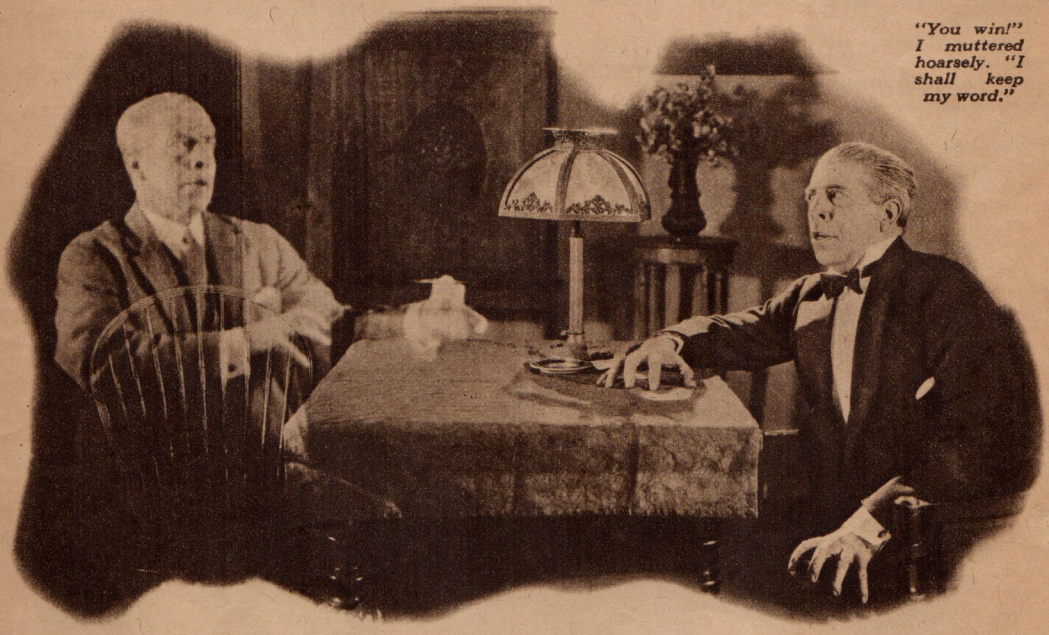
FINALLY, however, I reached the brilliantly lighted entrance of the Golden Peacock. Sidling behind a pillar, I drew a long sigh of relief. There was a considerable crush at the door, and I hung back for a moment while I studied intently the faces of those about me. There was no one I knew.

Falling into line, I worked my way along the garish corridor to the cloak-room, surrendered my hat and coat, then continued on toward the great hall; the rumble of music, laughter, and conversation growing steadily louder. But I had no intention of intruding among the dancers. To do so might mean that I would walk straight into Jean and Randolph. And, above everything else on earth, I didn't want to meet them face to face—then.

I had explored the ground the day before, and so now I turned off into a hallway lined with palms, and mounted the stairway leading to the mezzanine.

I had to take a chance of meeting my quarry on the way up, but fortune favored me. I met none who knew me. At the entrance to the balcony, I slipped a five dollar bill into the hand of one of the liveried attendants and directed him to take me to a private alcove that overlooked the dance floor. In a few seconds I was in seclusion and had drawn the curtains behind me. Then, edging to the railing, I pushed aside a bit of the fringe of palms, so that I could look below but at the same time be concealed from all observers.

(*Continued on page* 78)



"You win!" I muttered hoarsely. "I shall keep my word."

A MOTH—

Hapley could not forgive his brother scientist bring their zestful feud to an

By H. G. Wells

Author of "The Outline of History," "The World of William Clissold," etc.

PROBABLY you have heard of Hapley—not W. T. Hapley, the son, but the celebrated Hapley, the Hapley of *Periplaneta Hapliia,* Hapley the entomologist. If so, you know at least of the great feud between Hapley and Professor Pawkins, though certain of its consequences may be new to you. For those who have not, a word or two of explanation is necessary, which the idle reader may go over with a glancing eye, if his indolence so incline him.

It is amazing how very widely diffused is the ignorance of such really important matters as this Hapley-Pawkins feud. Those epoch-making controversies, again, that have convulsed the Geological Society, are, I verily believe, almost entirely unknown outside the fellowship of that body. I have heard men of fair general education even refer to the great scenes at these meetings as vestry-meeting squabbles. Yet the great Hate of the English and Scotch geologists has lasted now half a century, and has "left deep and abundant marks upon the body of science." And this Hapley-Pawkins business, though perhaps a more personal affair, stirred passions as profound, if not profounder.

The very dread he had of seeing the moth, made him see it

Your common man has no conception of the zeal that animates a scientific investigator, the fury of contradiction you can arouse in him. It is the *odium theologicum* in a new form. There are men, for instance, who would gladly burn Professor Ray Lankester at Smithfield for his treatment of the Mollusca in the Encyclopedia. That fantastic extension of the Cephalopods to cover the Pterpodos—— But I wander from Hapley and Pawkins.

It began years and years ago, with a revision of the Microlepidoptera (whatever these may be) by Pawkins, in which he extinguished a new species created by Hapley. Hapley, who has always been quarrelsome, replied by a stinging impeachment of the entire classification of Pawkins. Pawkins, in his "Rejoinder," suggested that Hapley's microscope was as defective as his powers of observation, and called him an "irresponsible meddler"—Hapley was not a professor at that time.

Hapley, in his retort, spoke of "blundering collectors," and described, as if inadverently, Pawkin's revision as a "miracle of ineptitude." It was war to the knife. However, it would scarcely interest the reader to detail how these two great men quarreled, and how the split between them widened until from the Microlepidoptera, they were at war upon every open question in entomology. There were memorable occasions. At times the Royal Entomological Society meetings resembled nothing so much as the Chamber of Deputies.

On the whole, I fancy Pawkins was nearer to the truth than Hapley. But Hapley was skilful with his rhetoric, had a turn for ridicule rare in a scientific man, was endowed with vast energy, and had a fine sense of injury in the matter of extinguished species; while Pawkins was a man of dull presence, prosy of speech, in shape not unlike a water-barrel, over-conscientious with testimonials, and suspected of jobbing museum appointments. So the young men gathered round Hapley and applauded him. It was a long struggle, vicious from the beginning, and growing at last to pitiless antagonism. The successive turns of fortune,

Genus Unknown

Pawkins for dying. He thought that this must end—but he was WRONG

now an advantage to one side and now to another—now Hapley tormented by some success of Pawkins, and now Pawkins outshone by Hapley—belong rather to the history of entomology than to this story.

But in 1891 Pawkins, whose health had been bad for some time, published some work upon the "mesoblast" of the Death's Head Moth. What the mesoblast of the Death's Head Moth may be, does not matter a rap in this story. But the work was far below his usual standard, and gave Hapley an opening he had coveted for years. He must have worked night and day to make the most of his advantage.

Hapley says the moth is the ghost of Pawkins

In an elaborate critique he rent Pawkins to tatters—one can fancy the man's disordered hair, and his queer dark eyes flashing as he went for his antagonist,—and Pawkins made a reply, halting, ineffectual, with painful gaps of silence, and yet malignant. There was no mistaking his will to wound Hapley, nor his incapacity to do it. But few of those who heard him—I was absent from that meeting—realized how ill the man was.

Hapley had got his opponent down, and meant to finish him. He followed with a simply brutal attack upon Pawkins, in the form of a paper upon the development of moths in general, a paper showing evidence of a most extraordinary amount of mental labor, and yet couched in a violently controversial tone. Violent as it was, an editorial note witnesses that it was modified. It must have covered Pawkins with shame and confusion of face. It left no loophole; it was murderous in argument, and utterly contemptuous in tone; an awful thing for the declining years of a man's career.

The world of entomologists waited breathlessly for the rejoinder from Pawkins. He would try one, for Pawkins had always been game. But when it came it surprised them. For the rejoinder of Pawkins was to catch the influenza, to proceed to pneumonia, and to die.

It was perhaps as effectual a reply as he could make under the circumstances, and largely turned the current of feeling against Hapley. The very people who had most gleefully cheered on those gladiators became serious at the consequence. There could be no reasonable doubt the fret of the defeat had contributed to the death of Pawkins. There was a limit even to scientific controversy, said serious people. Another crushing attack was already in the press and appeared on the day before the funeral. I don't think Hapley exerted himself to stop it. People remembered how Hapley had hounded down his rival, and forgot that rival's defects. Scathing satire reads ill over fresh mold. The thing provoked comment in the daily papers. This it was that made me think that you had probably heard of Hapley and this controversy. But, as I have already remarked, scientific workers live very much in a world of their own; half the people, I dare say, who go along Piccadilly to the Academy every year, could not tell you where the learned societies abide. Many even think that Research is a kind of happy-family cage in which all kinds of men lie down together in peace.

In his private thoughts Hapley could not forgive Pawkins for dying. In the first place, it was a mean dodge to escape the absolute pulverization Hapley had in hand for him, and in the second, it left Hapley's mind with a queer gap in it. For twenty years he had worked hard, sometimes far into the night, and seven nights a week, with microscope, scalpel, collecting-net, and pen, and almost entirely with reference to Pawkins. The European reputation he had won had come as an incident in that great antipathy. He had gradually worked up to a climax in this last controversy. It had killed Pawkins, but it had also thrown Hapley out of gear, so to speak, and his doctor advised him to give up work for a time, and rest. So Hapley went down into a quiet village in Kent, and thought day and night of Pawkins, and good things it was now impossible to say about him.

At last Hapley began to realize in what direction the preoccupation tended. He determined to make a fight for it, and started by trying to read novels. But he could not get his mind off Pawkins, white in the face, and making his last speech—every sentence a beautiful opening for Hapley. He turned to fiction—and found it had no grip on him. He read the *Island Nights' Entertainments* until his "sense of causation" was shocked beyond endurance by the Bottle Imp. Then he went to Kipling, and found he "proved nothing," besides being irreverent and vulgar. These scientific people have their limitations. Then, unhappily, he tried Besant's *Inner House,* and the opening chapter set his mind upon learned societies and Pawkins at once.

So Hapley turned to chess, and found it a little more soothing. He soon mastered the moves and the chief gambits

and commoner closing positions, and began to beat the Vicar. But then the cylindrical contours of the opposite king began to resemble Pawkins standing up and gasping ineffectually against checkmate, and Hapley decided to give up chess.

Perhaps the study of some new branch of science would after all be better diversion. The best rest is change of occupation. Hapley determined to plunge at diatoms, and had one of his smaller microscopes and Halibut's monograph sent down from London. He thought that perhaps if he could get up a vigorous quarrel with Halibut, he might be able to begin life afresh and forget Pawkins. And very soon he was hard at work, in his habitual strenuous fashion, at these microscopic denizens of the wayside pool.

IT was on the third day of the diatoms that Hapley became aware of a novel addition to the local fauna. He was working late at the microscope, and the only light in the room was the brilliant little lamp with the special form of green shade. Like all experienced microscopists, he kept both eyes open. It is the only way to avoid excessive fatigue. One eye was over the instrument, and bright and distinct before that was the circular field of the microscope, across which a brown diatom was slowly moving. With the other eye Hapley saw, as it were, without seeing. He was only dimly conscious of the brass side of the instrument, the illuminated part of the table-cloth, a sheet of note-paper, the foot of lamp, and the darkened room beyond.

Suddenly his attention drifted from one eye to the other. The table-cloth was of the material called tapestry by shopmen, and rather brightly colored. The pattern was in gold, with a small amount of crimson and pale-blue upon a greyish ground. At one point the pattern seemed displaced and there was a vibrating movement of the colors at this point.

Hapley suddenly moved his head back and looked with both eyes. His mouth fell open with astonishment.

It was a large moth or butterfly; its wings spread in butterfly fashion!

IT was strange it should be in the room at all, for the windows were closed. Strange that it should not have attracted his attention when fluttering to its present position. Strange that it should match the table-cloth. Stranger far to him, Hapley, the great entomologist, it was altogether unknown. There was no delusion. It was crawling slowly towards the foot of the lamp.

"*Genus unknown*, by heavens! And in England!" said Hapley, staring.

Then he suddenly thought of Pawkins. Nothing would have maddened Pawkins more—and Pawkins was dead!

Something about the head and body of the insect became singularly suggestive of Pawkins, just as the chess king had been.

"Confound Pawkins!" said Hapley. "But I must catch this."

And, looking round him for some means of capturing the moth, he rose slowly out of his chair. Suddenly, the insect rose, struck the edge of the lamp-shade—Hapley heard the "ping"—and vanished into the shadow.

In a moment Hapley had whipped off the shade, so that the whole room was illuminated. The thing had disappeared, but soon his practised eye detected it upon the wall-paper near the door. He went towards it, poising the lamp-shade for capture. Before he was within striking distance, however, it had risen and was fluttering round the room. After the fashion of its kind, it flew with sudden starts and turns, seeming to vanish here and reappear there. Once Hapley struck, and missed; then again.

The third time he hit his microscope. The instrument swayed, struck and overturned the lamp, and fell noisily upon the floor. The lamp turned over on the table and, very luckily, went out. Hapley was left in the dark. With a start he felt the strange moth blunder into his face.

It was maddening. He had no lights. If he opened the door of the room the thing would get away. In the darkness he saw Pawkins quite distinctly laughing at him. Pawkins had ever an oily laugh. He swore furiously and stamped his foot on the floor.

There was a timid rapping at the door.

Then it opened, perhaps a foot, and very slowly. The alarmed face of the landlady appeared behind a pink candle flame; she wore a night-cap over her grey hair and had some purple garment over her shoulders.

"What *was* that fearful smash?" she said. "Has anything——"

The strange moth appeared fluttering about the chink of the door.

"Shut that door!" said Hapley, and suddenly rushed at her.

The door slammed hastily. Hapley was left alone in the dark. Then in the pause he heard his landlady scuttle upstairs, lock her door, and drag something heavy across the room and put against it.

"Half-way over the down, by the chalk-pits, the moth came upon Hapley again. He went on, trying to keep his mind upon chess problems, but it was no good. The thing fluttered into his face, and he struck at it with his hat in self-defense. . . .

"Suddenly he trod on nothing, and fell headlong."

It became evident to Hapley that his conduct and appearance had been strange and alarming. Confound the moth! and Pawkins! However, it was a pity to lose the moth now. He felt his way into the hall and found some matches. With the lighted candle he returned to the sitting-room. No moth was to be seen. Yet once for a moment it seemed that the thing was fluttering round his head. Hapley very suddenly decided to give up the moth and go to bed. But he was excited. All night long his sleep was broken by dreams of the moth, Pawkins, and his landlady. Twice in the night he turned out and soused his head in cold water.

ONE thing was very clear to him. His landlady could not possibly understand about the strange moth, especially as he had failed to catch it. No one but an entomologist would understand quite how he felt. She was probably frightened at his behavior, and yet he failed to see how he could explain it. He decided to say nothing further about the events of last night. After breakfast he saw her in her garden, and decided to go out to talk to her to reassure her. He talked to her about beans and potatoes, bees, caterpillars, and the price of fruit. She replied in her usual manner, but she looked at him a little suspiciously, and kept walking as he talked, so that there was always a bed of flowers, or a row of beans, or something of the sort, between them. After a while he began to feel singularly irritated at this, and to conceal his vexation went indoors and presently went out for a walk.

The moth—or butterfly, trailing (*Continued on page 92*)

By Harvey S. Cottrell

I caught her arm and the strange, old-fashioned night gown she wore and dragged her back

The Phantom Torturer

If Cottrell had known the secret of the old Slave House, he would never have permitted his sweetheart to enter the place. Within, an ape-like servitor carried out hideous commands

HOW long the bottle had been in the pool, I do not dare say. When at last I succeeded in snaring it with my water-soaked handkerchief, it proved to be a squat, round, brown affair, with a long neck—such a bottle as is seen nowadays only in the antique shops at a good price. Seaweed festoons clung to its stopper, which had been driven in and sealed with red wax.

Carefully I made my way back up the rocks and, with all the pride of a pup retrieving a ball, I handed it to Sheila. Her great, brown eyes danced with anticipation.

She held the bottle to the sky, stripping the seaweed from it with her shapely hands.

"Look!" she cried. "I told you! There *is* a paper in it. Some message from the deep!"

Her delight knew no bounds. She handed it to me quickly, waiting with childlike curiosity while with my knife I picked away the wax and tried to pry out the stopper. But the stopper was in too tight; and besides, the neck of the bottle was so long I doubted if I could reach the paper.

"I'll have to smash it," I cried at last.

Sheila's face clouded.

"It's a shame," she said. "I'd like to keep it as a souvenir of our hike; it's so old and funny. But if you're sure you

can not get the paper out in any other way——"

She'd not need any souvenir of this hike! The memory of it would be lasting enough.

I broke the bottle on a rock. It was tough glass and needed a hard blow. We were like children, with our heads together, in our eagerness to see what the message contained.

It was a yellow scrap of paper evidently torn from an ancient account-book. Upon one side was writing in a feminine hand that would have been dainty and fine if the proper writing materials had been used. But this message had been written under difficulties, with some clumsy instrument—perhaps a sliver of wood. The characters were barely decipherable; and though I did not tell Sheila, I had a suspicion that the fluid in which they were written was human blood.

"Hold it to the sun—this way," Sheila commanded.

I glanced up to get my bearing. The late afternoon sun was passing behind a dark cloud now. The breeze was coming in gusts. I frowned, for the sky was threatening one of those quick summer storms that sweep up suddenly on the Maine coast, with a tearing, wrenching wind and a brief, heavy downpour of rain.

But we were too intent on our find to worry about the weather—then. Heads together still, Sheila's shoulder against mine, word by word we made out the message:

"The black was walking backwards, as though he led Sheila with a strange, hypnotic power.

"And beyond them both, out there on the bosom of the cove, and in the path of the rising moon, was a small boat with a single sail. At its stern was the figure of an old man . . . glowing, illuminated by a radiance of its own . . . As I looked, I suddenly perceived that the figure was intangible—as transparent as a thin cloud of mist—"

Save me. I am in the Slave House, a captive there. Imprisoned in the walls. The master threatens me with death. Help me.

ANNETTE BALLOU.

The Slave House! Why, that was the old mansion close to the high cliff, farther along the shore. We could see its roof just over the rocks. It had a history, that house did. It was built before the Civil War, and its owner, John Richards, an eccentric old merchant, had been an abolitionist. In the days of the "underground railroad," by which slaves from the Southern plantations were helped to escape, this old house was used as a way-station for the fugitives. According to popular belief, there were underground passages leading to the cove where ships from the South had once anchored, and a great room in the third story where the slaves waited until they could be smuggled across the border to Canada.

Sheila knew the story as well as I. It was a popular legend at the Bleecker House.

"What do you suppose the message means?" she asked, seating herself on a rock and gazing thoughtfully out to sea.

"I can only guess," I replied. "Of course, Richards had a bad name in this community. He was supposed to charge the negroes a stiff price for his help. And there were many whispered tales about him and his feminine 'guests.' He died, you remember, under mysterious circumstances in the old house. They said he was frightened to death by the ghost of a woman who had been killed there."

"How terrible!" Sheila exclaimed.

"Oh, that's bunk, I suppose," I said. "Probably he had heart trouble and kicked out naturally enough."

"Hm-m-m," Sheila mused. "I wonder."

Nobody seemed to know who owned the place now. Occasionally there were visitors to it who told of meeting an ancient negro—a giant of a man—who showed them through some of the rooms but was taciturn and uncommunicative. Moreover, he was careful where he took them and he denied that there were passages behind the walls.

Sheila still was meditative.

"Just think," she said. "This bottle has been floating here in this pool for years, going round and round and never getting anywhere. It's like some lives, isn't it? I wonder what became of Annette Ballou, who she was, and why she was imprisoned. Do you suppose she ever escaped?"

"Undoubtedly," I said. "I can't believe a woman was allowed to die in the old house behind walls like that. It would be too horrible."

"I wish we could go up there and look through the house."

"You've got a chance," I said hurriedly.

The sky was darkening fast. High up were mare's-tails—those cirrus clouds switched into fantastic shapes by the wind. Lower down was a stratum of small, puffy, black clouds scudding along in another direction. But close to the earth the breeze had suddenly died away. A mist had settled over the ocean and there was an ominous hush that seemed to portend some cataclysmic happening. I took one look down the bleak, desolate beach, and thought—too late—of the storm, the short two hours before dark, and the four miles between us and the Bleecker House. "Run, Sheila." I cried. "We've just got time to make the old house before the rain comes. Hurry!"

Hand in hand, we sped along over the rocks, jumping, leaping, in danger of slipping. We were breathless as we gained the summit of the higher ground, and paused a moment to look back at the racing storm. Then we hurried on. Suddenly the wind caught us in a great rush, almost sweeping us from our feet. Sheila clung to me for support.

"Isn't it terrible!" she screamed in my ear.

"Hold fast!" I cried. "We'll make it."

Instantly behind the fury of the wind came the rain in a great cloudburst, wetting us through and through.

Fortunately the rain was warmer than the chill breath of the wind and I was glad for Sheila's sake, for her wet clothes were wrapped about her graceful form in a disheartening and hampering way.

Clinging to each other for support, we fought our way to the old house. It loomed above us in the half darkness that came with the storm, foreboding and grim. As we neared it, I could see that the rooms were high studded, in accordance with an old-time custom of house-building, and its second story was high above us, while its third was hidden among the tops of the great elms that surrounded it.

It was built of wood, square and unyielding. Long ago it had been painted a dark color but in the years this had worn away and the broad clapboards had become weathered and gray as an ancient skull. A square, glass-enclosed cupola was on the top, like a sailor's lookout station. And I imagined that, many a time, crazy old Richards had watched there with a spyglass for the vessels that would bring slaves to his home and wealth to his pocketbook.

The wind almost blew us up the broad steps and onto

the deep porch with its great colonial columns. On any other occasion it would have been a delight to visit the place and explore it as far as we would be permitted. But with the wind howling at us and the rain coming in torrents, we had only a mind to gain its shelter and get back our breath.

Hardly had we stepped on the porch before the massive door swung open before us. It was dark within, and I could not see by what device the door worked. Then I perceived there was a human figure in the darkness and a voice, deep and unearthly, was bidding us enter.

We did not hesitate—not with that storm outside. We almost ran through the portal, and quickly the door closed behind us.

"Just a moment, master, and I'll get a light," came the weird voice again. It startled us.

Quickly there was the scratching of a match, followed by the sputtering of a candle set in a bracket at the end of the hall. As the candle's light became steady and my eyes grew accustomed to its glow, I was seized with a shock that nearly unnerved me.

Before us stood a negro. But what a negro! He would have been nearly seven feet tall if he had drawn his stooped frame to its full height. His shoulders were nearly a yard across, and his arms were long, like a gorilla's. His face was wrinkled and mummy-like. He was old—terribly old. Yet he seemed lithe and active—a wonderful specimen of strength.

With all his extreme politeness, there was something sinister about him that I could not explain. I shivered.

Sheila had a similar reaction. She gasped when she saw him, and I could see a look of fear on her face. The negro saw it, too.

"Do not be afraid, lady," he said humbly enough, though I thought I caught a leer in his glance. "Dooman is your servant. He will care for you. Perhaps the lady would like to retire to a chamber and dry her clothes."

He did not wait for her to acquiesce. With grave dignity he led us up the broad staircase to the second floor. The massiveness of the interior was akin to Dooman himself. There was nothing particularly ornate about the place; but great timbers, that might have served for the ribs of a whaling vessel, were exposed in the ceilings, and the floor boards, carpeted with wonderful old rag rugs, were fourteen to eighteen inches across—the heart lumber of virgin forests. Though the wind outside blew a perfect hurricane there was neither give nor creak to the house. It was built to stand for ages.

Dooman led us to a chamber as massive as the rest of the house. In it was a great four-poster mahogany bed that would delight the heart of an antique collector. In keeping with this was other furniture quite as old and beautiful. The neatly made-up bed, like the room itself, was clean to the point of immaculateness. More rag rugs were on the floor and at one side was a great open fireplace.

It was in front of this that Dooman crouched, and in a few moments a cheerful blaze was crackling up its ponderous throat. Rising, Dooman waited. It was apparent he expected me to retire with him.

I hesitated. That look of fear still lingered in Sheila's face. Suddenly she turned to me and whispered.

"Don't leave me," she pleaded. "Oh, sweetheart, don't leave me here. There's something terrible about this house."

"But Shelia, you ought to dry your clothes," I said. "They're wet and you'll catch cold. Take them off and dry them before the fire, and I'll come back when you're ready."

"Oh, no," she whispered. "I'm afraid—afraid of him, afraid of the shadows. It's—it's gruesome."

Dooman had been fumbling in a chest as we talked, but now he stood watching us. He seemed to understand what we whispered.

"The master can wait near by," he said consolingly; "just in the next room."

Again Sheila started to protest, but at that instant Dooman

A new presence hovered above me. Something light and cool as silk touched me

stepped forward, extending to her the article he had taken from the chest.

"Dooman is sorry, lady, that there is not something better," he explained.

I DID not know much about women's things then—that was before I married Sheila. But her fear suddenly left her and she gave a gasp of delight. The article was a feminine night-robe—a lovely thing of soft linen. It had an old-fashioned high neck, and Sheila told me afterward it was so exquisitely sewed by hand that her woman's heart marveled at it and for a moment she was quite lost in admiration.

As she examined it, the giant negro smiled patronizingly and motioned for me to leave. He waited humbly for me to pass out ahead of him. I did, and he shut the door behind us. Opening another door close by, he waited again for me. I passed in. As he was about to close the door after me, he remarked:

"Dooman will call the master when the lady is ready."

There was something ominous about the shutting of that door. It seemed so final. I looked at its stout breadth and an uncomfortable feeling assailed me. I felt as though I were in a prison. The room was a twin of that in which I had left Sheila—with its great four-posted bed, its candle burning in a bracket, its heavy furniture, its fireplace. But the very weightiness of the place oppressed me.

Though my clothes were as wet as Sheila's, the negro had not waited to put coals in the fireplace. There was something strange about that, too. Vaguely I noticed that the fireplace was not blackened with soot. I studied it. It was too clean.

THE silence was depressing. It was as still as though I had been miles from anywhere and even the wind, blowing a gale outside, could be heard only faintly.

Sitting there on the bed, I had about decided to quit this room and stand guard at Sheila's door when there came a soft scraping sound as though somebody were brushing along the wall behind me. With it came the sound of footsteps, measured and slow—the footsteps of an elderly man.

I sprang up and turned to the wall. The sound ceased.

"What the devil!" I exclaimed. This place, with its trick stairways and black giants and what-not, is getting on my nerves."

I started for the door, determined to be out of it. Instantly I stopped still in my tracks. Somebody was staring at me. I could not see anyone; but I had that feeling of being watched. It was a creepy sensation, and shivers coursed down my spine. I turned and faced the wall. It was a great panel of some dark wood, unbroken by even a scratch. Who was there—what was it that looked out of that wall?

The footsteps sounded again. They were descending a stairway—behind the wall!

Slipping around the bed, I applied an ear to the panel. I could hear nothing. I slapped it with my hand. It lacked the hollow sound I expected. It was as solid as stone! Again came that feeling that I was being watched by an invisible eye. I swung around and stared about me. The room was unchanged.

"Damn this place!" I cried. "I'll get Sheila, and storm or no storm, we'll get out."

I THOUGHT I heard a chuckle of amusement somewhere. I listened. For some moments I had been aware of a musty odor that I had attributed to the room's lack of airing. It plagued me—a sickish sweet smell that made my nostrils cringe. The odor persisted, stronger now. It made me drowsy. Standing by the bed, listening again for that chuckle, there swept over me a great desire to lie there for a moment—only for a moment, and then I would return to Sheila. I squared my shoulders trying to throw off the desire. I was so drowsy. Just to lie there a moment would be the greatest comfort I could imagine in this life.

Suddenly the room seemed closing in upon me. My head dropped. My body swayed. Before I could prevent myself I pitched over upon the bed, sinking miles deep into the most glorious, restful slumber I had experienced in many a day. I did not dream. I was conscious only of a great fatigue and blissful comfort on that broad bed. My eyes were as heavy as lead, my body relaxed. I could not have fought off that feeling for the world. I did not want to.

How long I stayed there, I cannot imagine. It seemed only a moment. Suddenly I gave a start. Yet so profound was my sleep that I did not immediately know or care where I was. I was drunk with it, immersed in it.

But as I lay there, my subconscious mind persisted. I must get up. I could not stay. I must!

IN an instant, without any reasoning, I was bolt upright, listening. Somebody had called me. The room was as still as death, but somewhere, somebody had spoken my name. It was as though the last whisper of it still rang in my ears.

I thought I heard a door close softly. I struggled to my feet, tottering, stupid. Through my dull senses I became aware of that soft, scraping sound somewhere in the wall. There were footsteps again, but this time they were light and quick—the footsteps of a woman!

And then I became deathly sick. My head was aching as though a thousand devils beat upon it with hammers. Nausea swept over me and I put out my hand to a bed-post to steady myself. The room whirled about me.

And then I knew. That was not the odor of must. It was ether! Some sort of gas was in that room—and the windows were closed!

I staggered to open them. I tried one after another. They were as securely bolted as the wall in which they were set. The candle was a blue flame. I staggered back in amazement as I saw it was half gone. It had been new when I came into that room. Was it possible I had been asleep an hour—two hours?

But that cry! The recollection of it was clearer in my mind now.

"Harv'!" it had been, "Oh, Harv'!" It was the loving diminutive by which Sheila—and she alone—addressed me. But it had not been Sheila's voice! Then who—and what were they doing with Sheila?

I STAGGERED to the door, my hand stretched out to the knob to throw it open. Tottering, I gave the knob a wrench. My effort and the shakiness of my legs threw me against it.

I looked at the door, uncomprehending. Again I reached for the knob, turned it carefully, and pulled. The door would not open. I tried to shake it. It was as firmly fastened as the windows.

Once more I tried. It would not open. And then it dawned upon my stupid brain. It was locked on the outside!

Moreover, as I glanced downward I saw a stain upon the floor—a stain of some liquid that had been poured under the door. No need to tell me what it was. I knew it for the ether that had caused me to sleep and now made me ill.

I was insane with fear and alarm. I did not think of myself. My thoughts were only of Sheila and her safety. I pounded upon the door. Again and again I strained at the knob.

"Sheila!" I called. "Dooman!"

There was no response.

How my head ached! My tongue was thick, my throat dry.

Air! I wanted air for my constricted lungs, my aching head. I staggered to the windows and tried again to open them. At last, in desperation, I drove my elbow through a pane and with a rush there (*Continued on page 54*)

Mildred Stewart mocked at the perils of the haunted castle. But when she reached the inner chamber, where the terror lurked—

"Don't take ghosts so laughable now, Miss Stewart," the old darky stammered

CAPTIVE SOULS

By Cassie H. MacLaury

DURING my childhood I lived in terror of an old mansion across the valley from our home. It was a gray, sinister house built to resemble a castle and surrounded by dismal evergreen trees. I had been told that a ghost went up in the tower every night and placed a lighted lantern there.

In later years I became familiar with the place—it was the home of my fiancé, Donald Harrison—but I never entirely lost my fear of it.

Shortly after the death of Donald's father and a few days before our wedding was to take place, Donald disappeared. He left no word of explanation. I was told by one of his servants—a tall mulatto—that "Mr. Harrison had gone away and left no address."

It was the bitterest and most humiliating experience of my life. I could not bear to face any one. I spent my time watching the castle and waiting for my lover to come back.

Four years passed. One night I had stayed awake until nearly twelve and, as I got into bed, I saw a light and a floating white object in the tower of the castle. The ghost? When I was a child, the sight would have thrown me into hysteria; but now I was not so easily scared—or convinced.

A few nights later I kept my light on again until nearly twelve, and then turned it off. The ghost appeared punctually. I began to believe that it was appearing solely for me. I decided that there was something worth investigating here.

One night I slipped out of the house, saddled my chestnut mare and set out to visit the castle.

As I neared the tower, I proceeded cautiously. I stopped the chestnut in the shadow of some trees, and stared hard and long at the windows of the castle. But there was nothing to see. The place was as quiet and deserted as though it were uninhabited.

I was about to urge my horse forward when I thought I saw something move in the window of Donald's old room. I held the reins tight—my eyes riveted on the black surface of the glass. Then something did move. A slit of light appeared in that window from the top to the window-sill; it broadened for a fraction of a second, and revealed a passing figure.

I sat rigid with amazement. On the other side of that window was a drape so dark and heavy that the light from within could not penetrate it. The room might be lighted every night in the week, and no one on the outside would ever know it!

I watched the place fifteen or twenty minutes longer but saw nothing else. With a creepy feeling up my spine, I gave the chestnut the signal and we started home.

No one at the breakfast table next morning suspected I had been on a successful Paul Revere ride. I did not feel the worse for it—and what is more, I had learned something of importance.

I decided not to get too familiar with the ghost—besides it needed a rest. I kept the old castle under observation, but without seeming to. Mother and Dad thought I had given up all thought of Donald; but oh, if they had known how eager I was to do the daring thing I had planned! I was waiting only for the courage and strength to do it.

It was late summer now, and the nights were becoming chilly. Once or twice I saw smoke coming from the big chimney which served for the fireplace in Donald's room. But it also served for two other fireplaces on the first and second floors; and so that meant nothing.

One day I was in the village shopping. I had just come out of the drug store, when across the street an old negro stumbled on the rough sidewalk, and fell. He had a number of bundles and they were scattered in every direction. Being the nearest to him, I hastened to collect them for him as he pulled himself painfully to his feet. And then I recognized Adolphus, Donald's butler. He was a negro of the old school, descended from slaves, and he inherited from them the loyalty that characterized and added to the value of the old type of negro.

RIGHT here I gave the entire village fresh material for gossip that kept it busy for a month—I stopped and talked for half an hour with a full-blooded negro servant right on the main street.

He assured me he had no broken bones but "it didn't do his rheumatiz no good."

"You are still over at the castle, Uncle?" I asked.

"Yes, mam, I is. But I wish I nebber done put mah foot in dat house."

"Why?" I said.

He looked at me with wide, rolling eyes, and shook his head. "Dem ghosts!" he exclaimed solemnly.

"Ghosts?" I said, and laughed. "Why you don't believe in ghosts, do you? Besides, you know there was supposed to be only one ghost over there."

"Don't take ghosts so laughable now, Miss Stewart," the old darky stammered. "Serious business ober dah. 'Tain't lak it was when ole Mister Harrison was alive and young Mister Donald was dah."

"Well, what do you mean?"

"Miss Stewart, don' you reckon you could get me job 'mongst some ob dem rich folks you knows?"

"Because of the ghosts? Tell me about them."

"I don' lak to talk about ghosts, but I tell you dere's deep noises and awful queer goings-on." He motioned with his hand above and also raised his eyebrows.

"Up-stairs?" I asked.

He nodded very slowly and ponderously. "Round young Mister Donald's room what yuster be. And dat tower! Dat tower been damned by de Angel Gabriel and Holy Moses himself! I can't stay dah no longer."

"How do you get to the top of the tower?"

"DEY'S narrer stone steps dat's covered wif wet and ain't got no banisters. Dey winds round from de bottom to de top and nobody but a ghost could ebber climb dem. Dey was de idea of de debbil. Nobody but de debbil would ebber have thought ob dem stairs."

"Have you ever been up to the top of the tower?"

"Me?" he almost shouted. "I ain't nebber been near it. I heard 'bout dem steps, but I ain't nebber see dem. Me?"

I kept on eagerly with my questioning. "When do you hear the noises?"

"Mostly at night. Dey ain't nobody ebber goes up dah after dark."

"Would you let me try to rout the ghost, Uncle?"

"You, Miss Stewart? Do you reckon Mister Donald would let you fool wif ghosts?"

"Could you get the key to the front door for me sometime?"

"What you got in min'?" he said, rolling his eyes.

"THE ghost!" I replied, smiling. "I've always wanted to see a ghost. You know, if you aren't afraid of them they can't hurt you. Ghosts go after whoever fears them. They would never touch me—I'd laugh at them."

The negro looked at me astounded. Evidently he had never heard such a statement. He stood motionless, his eyes bulging, his face drawn, not a muscle of it moving for fully a minute. I had started something. This was food for a vast amount of thought and study.

"Dat so?" he said breathlessly, stroking his chin.

"Why, yes. That ghost knows you're afraid of him," I answered, with a laugh.

"And you calc'late you could drive dat ghost outer dah, Miss Stewart?" he asked in awe-struck tones.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised. I'd have to see the ghost first."

"An' you ain't afeared of ghosts?"

"No. I'd just like to have a little fun with one."

The negro couldn't grasp it—the idea of any one wanting to play with a ghost. There would be more fun playing with a keg of dynamite and a torch, from his African point of view.

"Well, den I'll see. Mebbe I kin get dat key. I somehow feels if we can get rid uv dat ghost, young Mister Donald would come back. What time—when——"

"You leave that time me. If you can get it, meet me at the post-office. I'm there every morning about ten. Mind! Don't say one word about it to any one."

"I won't. But you sure you ain't afeared of ghosts?"

"Well, you get the key for me if you can, and I'll show you." I slipped a dollar into his hand.

Half-way down the block he turned slowly and looked back at me, and then over at the tower, which could be seen above the tree tops. Evidently he was filled with foreboding, but was willing to risk anything to defeat the ghost.

EVERY day I was down at the post-office at ten. Each day for a week I went home disappointed after having waited and waited for the old negro. He was so painfully ignorant I doubted very much whether he could secure the key without arousing suspicion. But perhaps he was finding opportunity difficult, and I would rather wait than have him bungle things by hurrying. And then I wondered if he were really trying or if he had changed his mind about giving me the chance to rout the ghost. But one day I was delighted to find him waiting for me.

"I done got dat key, Miss Stewart," he said under his breath. "I'll jes slip it into yo' hand careless-like when you pass. Don' ack like you goin' to talk to me—jes walk right on ahead. I mus' have it back by tomorrer mornin', though."

"I fixed my eyes on the panels near the bed, and I saw one of them move! It was being slowly pushed back!

"When it had disappeared into the wall, a small figure appeared in the opening. A girl stepped into the room, and——"

I did as he bid me and I felt the big brass key slide into my hand. Shivers went up and down my back but I was determined more than ever. I would have liked to have known just how he managed to get it—if he had made any bargain or had just taken it. However, that was not strictly essential, I had the key.

I kept it in my sweater pocket during the day, my hand over it most of the time. I looked at it once or twice, turning it about and wondering just what it was going to do for me. Would it help solve this mystery or would it land me under the spell of the curse?

Evening passed. The night was dark. The wind swept through the branches of the trees, but it was not cold. At ten I started up to my room and met Belinda the maid on the stairs. I had been trying all day to get a chance to talk to her without being overheard.

"I am going out in a little while. Hush! Don't mention it to any one. I will leave my light on and at five minutes to twelve I want you to turn it off and raise my shades. There will be a two-pound box of chocolate maraschinos for you if you do just that and nothing more. But not a word to any one and not a sound!"

Mention of chocolate-coated cherries would always bring Belinda to terms. At a quarter to eleven all was still in the house except the ticking of the cuckoo clock in the hall. I threw my black cape over my shoulders, pulled a velvet tam over my head, and tiptoed down-stairs. A light from Belinda's room told me she was waiting and ready to earn that two-pound box of candy.

The wind caught my cape as I opened the door. I pulled it around me, closed the door quietly, and went out to the stable. The chestnut was saddled and bridled in two minutes and we started away in the direction of the castle across the valley—that key safely tucked in the pocket of my silk sweater.

I had plenty of time, and so I let the horse walk most of the way. The wind blew about us and rustled the trees overhead. Dried leaves scuttled ahead of us and banked against the stone walls on either side. The chestnut shied at every shadow along the road. We passed the bridge, went up the long hill, and came at last to the broad fields beyond which was the castle.

When within a few hundred feet of it, I stopped to watch and listen. It was not yet twelve o'clock, and the light in my room across the valley shone brightly. In the castle there was a dim light in the hall on the second floor. For several minutes I waited. Then a face appeared in the window of that dimly lighted hall. I turned my eyes back to that light across the valley. Suddenly it went out. Faithful Belinda!

I jumped from the back of the chestnut, tied her firmly to a tree, and ran like a deer toward the rear of the castle, hurdling the hedge and dodging shrub and tree. I reached the castle and squeezed myself in between the tower and the walls of the house—one hand still tightly closed about that key in my pocket.

I was just in time, for immediately I heard quick, short steps over the dried leaves. The stone door at the tower base scraped and opened. I saw a tall, slouching man carrying a white sheet and a lighted lantern. I heard the suction of the wind up that tower and smelt the mold. I saw the tall figure disappear within and the heavy door pushed after him. Then the sound of quick feet on those steps within. I reached out and pulled that door toward me, and shoved in place the great stone bolt that held it fast—quietly, noiselessly—and I knew he had not heard. The trap was sprung.

I rushed round to the front of the castle, up the steps, and fitted the key in the door. (*Continued on page* 86)

"Get back, I say," Donald repeated, his voice as wild as that of a maniac

The CURSE of the

And now a deadly adder draws its trail home. Is this the murderer? Can a posse

By Laurence Martinson
As told to Lyon Mearson

AS a collector of precious stones, I was much interested in the great ruby of Bhangapore, but I did not have the slightest idea that I would ever be so fortunate as to possess it. For it was a stone sacred to the Hindus, and was set in the forehead of Buddha. But it was offered to me secretly. Rabindranath Kim brought it to my house in New York soon after I had returned from traveling abroad. I paid him $400,000 for it.

When Kim gave me the ruby in its little box, he warned me never to touch it. Whoever touched it would die, he said. I laughed at his superstitious fears, but I had no desire to test the curse.

A week later I gave a dinner for the purpose of displaying my new acquisition. The guests were Mr. and Mrs. Jessop, my Aunt Claire, Stephen Whitney, a rival collector, and my secretary, Sam Winship. Before I showed the ruby, I told them of the curse.

Sam deliberately picked the ruby up. As he did so, the lights went out and a fiendish scream rent the air above our heads. When the lights came on again, Sam's body lay forward across the table—silent in death. There was a gold dagger in his back.

Whitney, in his rasping voice, cried out that the thing was impossible. To prove it, he picked the stone up. Again the room became dark, and the scream rang out. The lights came on a moment later, and we looked about with wild-eyed fear.

The body of the murdered man had disappeared! And the dagger that had protruded from his back was imbedded in the wall behind Aunt Claire!

Whitney sat unharmed in his chair, but the ruby, too, was gone. He said that he had dropped it on the table, but we found no trace of it.

I called the police. Detective Sergeant Moran arrived and listened incredulously to our story.

Leaving the guests in the care of a policeman, Moran took me as his companion and started to search my house from cellar to attic. We found nothing suspicious until we came to the unlighted attic storeroom that I cared least about entering. A great-uncle of mine had committed suicide there. When Moran tried the door, it seemed to be fastened, but I knew there was no lock on it. We both pushed on the door, and then it opened much more easily than we expected. There was some heavy, soft object propped against it. That was queer,

"There are too many horrid noises in this house"

One-Eyed BUDDHA

across the mystery in young Martinson's snake, in the dark, scream like a Thing ssed?

too. For the door opened inward, and the room had no other exit.

It was only when the detective got out his flashlight and trained it on the object against the door that we realized what we had found. It was the body of my dead secretary.

We stood there in amazement, Dectective Sergeant Moran and I; and the flashlight, held loosely in his hand, cast a small circle of white light on the floor.

Suddenly I saw something edging into this circle, and I felt powerless to scream or to move. It was like a dream where one experiences dreadful dangers but is unable to make any effort to get away from them. I stood there dreaming, though awake, watching with fascinated eyes a coiled adder that lay warily, head raised, ready to strike at the first move. I recognized the adder as one of an Indian variety for whose bite there is no antidote. A single drop of its poison causes an instant and terrible stiffening in death.

And so in this room in the attic of my house in New York we were threatened with momentary and instant death by a serpent whose real home was twelve thousand miles away. Is it any wonder that I felt as though I were in a dream?

What was this serpent doing here? What fiendish hand had loosed him here? The answer came instantly. Some man, or some band, connected with the Temple of Buddha at Bhangapore had traced the famous ruby to my house. I knew that the temple fanatics would stop at nothing to recover the eye of Buddha.

But who were they? How many of them were there? That they were in my house I was ready to believe, although we had come across no trace of them in our search.

All this and ten times as much passed through my mind in a flash. What was passing through the detective's mind I do not know; but for an instant he was as paralyzed as I. He recovered from his stupor at just about the same time as I did, and there was a swift movement of his hand to his hip pocket.

"Don't do that!" I hissed. "The slightest move means death."

It was too late. His hand had plunged into his pocket and jerked forth an automatic. But the serpent did not strike. Even as we looked, it disappeared from before our eyes as though it had never existed.

I could not see the detective's face, of course, but I imagine that it was at least as blank as my own. I know that an involuntary curse broke from his lips.

He turned the light from side to side, and we examined the floor carefully. The snake was gone.

"Curious, isn't it?" I said nervously.

"What's curious?" Moran asked.

"Why, the way that snake disappeared," I said.

I felt that he was staring at me as if I were crazy, or drunk.

"What snake? What kind of booze have you been drinking, anyway? First you tell me you have a murdered man's body disappear, then you have a ruby worth as much as the French national debt disappear, and now you tell me that a snake disappeared——"

"None of you can go now," declared the detective sharply

"Well, it did disappear—" I broke in.

"Well, suppose it did," said Moran. "Let him go if he did disappear. What do you want a snake here for, anyway? Ain't you got enough trouble here without adding a snake to your collection? I tell you I don't see no snake."

"That's fine, Moran, perfect," I said. "Now perhaps you will be able to explain to me why, if you didn't see any snake, you have an automatic in your hand."

"Well, you see, it's this way," he said, "I just had my gun ready for emergencies."

He looked carefully around.

"I'd like to know where the darn little cuss crawled to," he said, training his flashlight in all the dark, dangerous corners.

"Then you did see a snake?" I said.

"Sure."

"Then why did you deny it?"

I DIDN'T deny it," he said. "I just waited until I was sure that you had seen the same thing that I had. I wasn't going to take any chances of seeing things that ain't on the calendar unless some one else saw them, too."

I laughed, although a little uneasily. I had a curious feeling around my ankles at that moment, and I was not at all sure where that snake was. I believed it was somewhere in the room, but even of that I was not positive—for the simple reason that, as I said previously, the snake had not crawled away; it had vanished in the flash of an eye.

It certainly looked like a real snake, but how could real snakes dissolve into air in this fashion?

Even Moran's stolid self-assurance had received a hard shock. He was accustomed to having all sorts of difficulties in locating criminals, but he was not accustomed to having things appear and disappear unaccountably before his eyes.

"I am not worrying so much about the snake," he confessed, "but the thing that gets me is about this body."

He motioned with his flashlight to the dead body of my ill-fated secretary.

"You mean, how he was killed?" I asked.

"Not exactly. The question that bothers me is: how did the body come to be propped up against the inside of this door—when any one can see that the door opens inward into the room? And not only that, how did the man who did it get out of this room which has no other exit but the door?"

AND not only that," I said, "but how did his body come to be here at all—how was it removed from its chair next to all of us and, in the twinkling of an eye, spirited upstairs and deposited here?"

"We will find out about that all right—but it is funny," Moran said.

He examined the room thoroughly. In one corner was a stack of three or four old trunks, of the variety that used to be in vogue forty or fifty years ago. Moran took them down, one after the other and looked into them. But he found nothing that could help him in his search. There were also several small pieces of antique furniture in the room, and a few piles of old books which had outlived their usefulness in the library of my ancestors.

When the search proved unavailing, Moran turned his attention to the walls of the room. He sounded each one carefully.

"What's on that side of the room?" he said, motioning with his flashlight to the left.

"That's an unused servant's bedroom," I replied, "You were in it."

"And the other side?"

"You were in that, too," I returned. "It is also an unused servant's bedroom. There are eight or ten of them which are unused—owing to the fact that I do not care to keep up an establishment with its full quota of servants as in former years."

"Well, these walls appear to be solid enough," he said finally. "I still don't know how your friend, Rabindranath Kim, got out of here."

"Rabindranath Kim?" I asked. "Who said he was in here? Why do you suspect him?"

"Well, you have to suspect somebody, don't you?" he asked. Why not suspect this Hindu who knows all about the stone and who's a foreigner, anyway? I don't believe in ghosts, like you seem to do," he said significantly, and I reddened a little in the darkness, "and so I have to suspect some flesh-and-blood person. The coroner will be here in the morning and I will have to make up some sort of a report. And maybe you're willing to go before his jury and say that a ghost murdered your secretary and ran away with your ruby. But I have a wife and four kids to support, myself, and I ain't taking any such chances."

"Suddenly I felt a soft, clammy touch on my neck. . . . With a cry I faced about, and saw a phosphorescent outline against the black wall of the room. . . .

"The figure had no definite shape, but I could see the vague outline of a body of some sort and a hand which, even as my horrified gaze was fixed by it, began to move, and. . . .

He looked around the room once more, examining it inch by inch.

"Well, I don't seem to be able to find nothing," he said at last. "And all I can say is that that there snake was probably one of them optical illusions."

"Maybe," I assented. "But would you call the body an optical illusion?"

He was silent for a moment.

"I don't know what to call that," he admitted finally. "It's beyond me. It is one of the funniest cases in all my experience, and I have had lots of it."

Even while he was speaking, I felt a strange sensation come over me. I stared into the dark that surrounded us, and suddenly I felt a Presence in the room. There was something thick and unwholesome in the atmosphere.

Struggling to control the panic that seized me, I said: "Let's go down-stairs."

I turned toward the half-open door.

Before Moran could answer, a slight puff of air went past us and sharply swung the door closed.

BOTH of us were petrified with astonishment, and the same thought must have crossed both our minds at that instant. There was no other opening to the room except this door. Whence, then, came this gust of air? It was not like the ordinary breeze—there was something noisome, something fetid about it.

The instant after the door closed, Moran, with an oath, made a leap for it. His action was sudden and not well calculated, because his foot caught on the soft, yielding body of the murdered man and he fell suddenly, striking his head against the door-knob. There was a crash and then I could hear the soft slithering of his body (*Continued on page* 82)

"Only by Mortal Hands"

When John Harcomb was hanged, his last thought was of a hideous plan to cheat the grave. His spirit must find a living victim!

By Henry W. A. Fairfield

As told to Harold Standish Corbin

"NOW that you've bought it, are you satisfied?" queried the salesman, waving his hand in a gesture that included all the old abandoned farm.

I wanted solitude. I wanted to get away and readjust my broken life, to forget those who had brought about the crash of my business, to forget her whom I had loved—and whom I had found to be only their decoy.

"Tramp the hills by yourself," the doctors had told me. "It's the only hope for your sanity."

And here was solitude. Here was peace, the peace of summer, by the door of this deserted farm. Its old-fashioned garden was a riot of vines, rank grass, and the descendants of flowers planted long ago by some woman's hand. The ridge-pole of the house sagged like the spine of a sway-back horse. Window-panes were cracked, plaster was falling from the walls, and the door swung idle on creaking hinges. Old-fashioned furniture stood in the musty rooms; nothing had been touched since the last tenant lived there. We stood on the door-step and looked at the peaceful valley near-by and at the dim, round tops of the Berkshires in the distance. At our feet was a strange rift in the earth and a quaint, covered bridge spanning a brook.

"Yes," I mused, answering the salesman, "I'm satisfied. And I like the quaintness of that old bridge there. Is it ever used now?"

"Bridge?" he repeated, his brows contracting.

"Why, yes, of course," I explained, pointing: "that old bridge there, across the ravine."

He turned and studied me. Then he coughed behind his hand, embarrassedly.

"You mean those old ruined piers?" he suggested. "Probably was a bridge there once. Perhaps the road passed this very door. Lots of old ruins of grist-mills and bridges along streams in this part of the country."

"Ruins!" I expostulated. "Why, man, that's as sound a bridge as ever you or I saw. It may be old and wooden, but my dear chap, it's a solid and trustworthy affair. See—it's a covered bridge, with a sloping roof to let the snow slide into the stream below."

He studied me again and across his face came that air of disquietude we all experience in the presence of the insane.

Quickly he explained that he must return to his office in town. He watched me covertly as we unloaded the gro-

I saw two eyes watching me, unblinking, baleful, malevolent

ceries from his car, and after a hasty handshake he started the engine and rolled away.

I was inclined to be angry with him as I watched the car disappear in a cloud of dust. What did he mean—piers? There stood the bridge as plainly as the house I had bought. Substantially perched on high-built granite blocks pried from the hillside, it was strengthened with hand-hewed beams and covered to make it durable against the storms.

I TURNED from the tiny cloud of dust far down the road and looked again at the bridge.

I could not believe my senses. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. The place was exactly as he had said. Below me, on either side of the stream, was a pile of tumbled stones half hidden by vines and bushes. They might once have been bridge piers, but were ruins now. And the bridge itself had disappeared!

My hand went to my forehead. My brow was wet with cold perspiration. I trembled all over, as if with ague.

"Merciful God!" I cried. "Have I come to madness already? Are the hallucinations of insanity already closing upon me?"

I wanted to run to someone for companionship, for comfort. I started to wave the salesman back, but he had gone. I looked about me. I was alone. Terror shook me—frantic fear. Was I out of my wits already?

"God in heaven! Was I in the grip of some horrible vampire? Was I to be done to death in this ghastly way by some perverted spirit of the nether world?

"Now the Thing's breast was upon my breast .... Its face came closer to my face. Suddenly its lips pressed against mine, and—

And then my better senses prevailed. The doctor had said solitude. This was solitude—here I would find health and quiet. What matter if I were alone? Here I could think things out. Here I would find myself. But that bridge!

I looked again. There was no bridge, but only the broken foundations. I tried to dismiss it. I must not let things bother me like that.

My nearest neighbor was a farmer far down the road, the last survivor of that eternal battle with earth and the elements—the last remaining straggler of that vast army of generations that had striven with the soil and had been beaten. Only the records of those generations could be read—there, in that wind-blown cemetery across the stream. From my door I could just see the cluster of stones, leaning precariously. The thought turned me morbid. I was alone with memories. I had come to a land of phantoms. Even the house itself was a crazy, creaking, decaying thing of the past.

The mood was depressing. But night was approaching and I must prepare for it. I carried the groceries into the large, old-fashioned living room, and made a fire in the big fireplace. With a kettle singing on a nest of coals and a bright blaze crackling on the hearth, I felt much better. I rather enjoyed the labor of cleaning the room and removing the dirt and cobwebs.

DARKNESS came early, and a dull sky and rising wind threatened a coming storm. I ate my supper of canned things by the light of a handsome oil-lamp—the only lamp I could find in the house—and then sat down to read.

Suddenly I felt a sensation of danger. My spine went cold with prickly chills. Despite an effort to control myself, my scalp seemed filled with pins and needles. My breath was held suspended.

Someone—or something—was looking at me! I had heard no sound, but I knew that there were eyes staring at me.

Slowly I turned from my book, hardly daring to face the thing, yet unable to resist. And then I saw.

An ancient chest, not more than two feet high but twice as long and quite as broad, stood there. I found my gaze riveted on it—spellbound. The lid was slightly raised, and from the opening I saw two eyes watching me, unblinking, baleful, malevolent.

It may have been the result of my shattered nerves, or the agitation that followed the mirage of that phantom bridge, but I sat there in that half light, trembling and wanting to shriek. I was broken, cowardly, unstrung. My voice rose—high-pitched, weak, eerily unlike my own. I screamed:

'Who are you? For God's sake!"

And still the eyes stared.

Sometimes in moments of stress like that, there is a frenzy that drives the fear-stricken animal to attack the monster that frightens him. It was that way with me. I sprang to my feet. With wave after wave of chills coursing down my spine, I stabbed my fingers almost into those hateful eyes. I threw open that lid.

An odor of must, suffocating and evil, filled my nostrils. I staggered back, gasping.

I took the lamp from the table; and holding it high, shielding my face from shadows, I peered into the interior of the chest. Dust. At the bottom an ancient coat, discarded years ago. But the thing I looked for—the Thing with the eyes—was gone.

Yet no one had left the room. Shadow, spirit, or hallucination—what was it? I put the lamp back in its place, and started to examine the coat. As I did so, an icy, ghost-like hand clutched at my wrist. Something stood beside me. I could not hear it, I could not see it. Only by instinct was I aware of it—and by the grip of that bony hand. Then, other icy fingers crept over my face, lingeringly, caressingly.

TERROR clutched at my soul. The instinct to defend myself swept over me. In fear—deep, impelling fear—I struck frantically at that invisible Thing. The bony fingers released my wrist and then the lamp flickered and went out. To my ears came a rumbling as of buggy wheels and the hoof-beats of a horse crossing a covered bridge.

But I had no time to speculate on that. The Thing hovered about me like a bat in the darkness. With a wild cry I darted across the room, and out of the door. The rush of cool wind against my face turned me deathly cold. On I dashed. The Thing was close behind me. I could not see it, but I knew it was there. And strangely, before me, gleaming white in the darkness, was a path, well beaten by plodding feet, stretching away I knew not where. Animated by its smoothness under my feet, I flew along it. I had not been there before. I did not know where it led. I did not care. The Thing was behind me, gaining.

In seconds I was at the end of the path. Ahead of me was the bridge. Phantom it may have been at times, but it was substantial now. Into its gloom I darted. There was no time now to think. My running footsteps beat a tattoo upon its floor and set its cavernous interior reverberating with echoes.

Quickly I crossed it. Again a path appeared, vaguely white in the darkness. Again I sought its smoothness. And then misfortune came upon me.

It was a root, I suppose, that tripped me. I plunged

headlong, one ankle giving under me. A pain shot up my leg, encompassing my thigh, my hip. I rolled to one side, gasping, moaning, in terror and agony.

Then I knew I had come—of all places, with that ghastly Thing behind me—to the cemetery. In desperation I had been blind to direction. And now, as my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I saw that I was lying before the open doors of an ancient burial vault. The vault had been built into the side of a hill. The doors, in the process of time, had been concealed by ivy and other creeping vines. But now the vines were torn away and the doors stood gaping, like the entrance of the abode of the damned.

I STRUGGLED to my knees, intent on fleeing from that house of the departed. But as I tried, the unseen, pursuing Thing was upon me. My wrists were seized. I fought to free myself. I failed. Sick with fright, half fainting, I was dragged into that tomb.

And then began the most fearful contest, the most uncanny fight for life, that a mortal ever experienced.

To my horror I could *feel* the Thing that had attacked me. It had weight. It had a body. It had form. My gripping hands told me it had the shape of a man. But I knew that it was entirely invisible.

Across the narrow width of that tomb I was hurled. I tripped over wooden coffins that gave beneath my weight and crumbled into dust. A musty odor rose in strangling clouds. The strange, unseen Thing flung itself murderously upon me. I fought desperately to free myself.

How long we struggled there, I do not know. It may have been minutes or it may have been hours. Gradually I was worn to exhaustion. My strength was giving way. The blood surged in my temples. Pinpoints of light darted before my eyes. My breath came in gasps. The monster was crushing me to death.

God in heaven! Was I in the grip of some horrible vampire? Was I to be done to death in this ghastly way by some perverted spirit of the nether world?

Now the Thing's breast was upon my breast. Now its body covered mine. But there was no rise and fall of the lungs, and though its face was close to mine, no respiration came from its nose or mouth. Even in my state of semi-consciousness, this revelation caused a new and sickening sensation.

The Thing that held me, realized that I could resist no longer. Slowly it spread its body closer over mine. Its face came closer to my face. Suddenly its lips pressed against mine and my body was convulsed in torture as the Thing attempted to draw from my lungs the very breath it lacked itself.

Its lips were cold, ghastly. There was no living warmth in them at all. They chilled me to my very marrow.

My lungs were like contracted bellows, flattened and agonized until it seemed they would be drawn from my body. Those repulsive, clamping lips were robbing me of life itself. My body was drawn upward by them, distorted and misshapen.

I could not breathe. I could not even gasp. I was held as in a vise, mouth pressed against mouth, hideous lips engaging mine.

I was losing consciousness. I felt myself slipping into a void. The hand of death was on me now. I could not escape.

Then suddenly those ghastly lips left mine. For a space I still was held by that unseen Thing. And then, suddenly, I was tossed aside as though that Thing, baffled for some unknown reason, had discarded me in disappointment. Slowly the pain in my lungs grew less. Slowly the oxygen that remained in that foul cavern, found its way to my tortured body. Bit by bit I breathed again, now gasping, now wheezing like an old asthmatic man as the contracted tubes opened in my throat. An atom of strength returned to me. Dimly conscious, hardly knowing how I did it, I dragged myself to the mouth of the tomb and out into the night air.

So much oxygen came with my (*Continued on page* 80)

The rope felt solid under my fingers

The MIND READER

Buwalda's sinister powers reach their high-water mark—and, at a stroke, all New York seems to have gone stark, staring mad

By Hugh Docre Purcell

As told to W. Adolphe Roberts

THE struggle between Daniel Buwalda, the medium on one side, and my brother Owen and myself on the other, began at a séance on Baltic Street, Brooklyn. There, for the first time, I saw Buwalda perform the mystery of "throughth." He passed one solid object through another, and by this act, it seemed, his mind was enabled to reach the minds of other persons and to influence them to do his will.

He led the banker James Griffin to believe that his wife, Coralie, had been unfaithful to him. Griffin thereupon committed suicide. It was murder by suggestion. The medium made Coralie his slave. She was present whenever he experimented with the forces of the unseen.

Owen and I set out to learn the secrets of the sorcerer. We found that he had fled from the house on Baltic Street, but we discovered on the premises an opal and gold brooch belonging to Coralie. In an Armenian restaurant, I met Peter Kanarjian, her cousin, who was in love with her and who eagerly joined in the fight against Buwalda.

Accompanied by Peter, I visited the Stock Exchange and learned that an unknown operator was cleaning up a vast fortune. I guessed that Buwalda was reading the minds of the bankers, so as to "gamble" with perfect safety. But when I tracked him to the office where he lurked, he influenced Peter into thinking that I was Buwalda! I had a fight on my hands, and before I had corrected the illusion in my Armenian friend's mind, the other had escaped.

That evening, I held a private séance at my apartment, with Peter present. The talking table said mysteriously that it would send a girl to see me. Who should walk through the door, a few minutes later, but Anna Wagner, who had formerly been Buwalda's secretary! She was in a state of hypnosis. Speaking through her, the spirit of James Griffin instructed me to attend the funeral of his mortal body.

In the cemetery, Griffin's ghost materialized and guided me to where Buwalda was hiding behind a tomb. The ghost ordered me to kill the medium, but I hesitated to commit murder and my enemy escaped.

I reported the facts to my brother Owen. We were striving to reach a solution of the problem when we were attacked by footpads and Coralie's opal and gold brooch was taken from us.

The morning after our nerve-shaking battle in the fog, I awoke to find gay sunshine streaming through the windows. I lay flat on my back for several minutes, my eyelids blinking in the revivifying light, my mind toying vaguely with the happenings of the past five days. I felt rested, and enjoyed the luxurious indolence of a half-aroused sleeper whose health is good.

Upon climbing out of bed, I followed my customary routine of lighting the gas under the coffee percolator, setting out my breakfast things and shaving. Then I fetched the newspaper from the landing and glanced over it while the coffee bubbled.

The echoes of the sensational raid on Wall Street were still worth a front-page article. Danger of a money panic, however, seemed to have been averted. The mysterious unknown had gotten away with a billion dollars and the Stock Exchange was licking the considerable wound that that implied. But big bankers had come to the aid of the market. I knew as much myself, and did not read farther.

A natural curiosity led me to search out the brief account of the Griffin funeral. It was phrased in conventional language, and consisted mostly of a list of prominent names. I also looked to see whether the attack upon Owen and myself had been mentioned in the notes on crime, but it had not appeared to the reporters to be worthy of a single line.

The principal story of the day, however, was vastly interesting for its own sake. The Mayor of New York City had given rise to the fear that his mind was unbalanced.

AT five o'clock the preceding afternoon, he had summoned the representatives of the press and handed them carbon copies of a letter in which he had summarily removed from office the Police Commissioner, Michael O'Hara. He had thereupon announced the appointment of a certain Henry W. Shaw to the vacant post. The act would in any event have been startling, for Mayor Carter and O'Hara had been working in complete harmony, and the last-named was regarded as the best Police Commissioner in twenty years. So violent a political upset was not without precedent. The secret demands of a party boss can destroy the ties of personal friendship and trust. Anything can happen in politics.

But there were points about the present coup which be-

wildered the public and made Mayor Carter seem little short of a lunatic. The appointee, Shaw, was utterly unknown. He was a middle-aged lawyer from the Bronx, who had never succeeded in building up a practice that would more than pay his living expenses. My paper asserted that it had not been able to find that his name had ever before been printed in a news story. Certainly, he had shown no capacity for executive work and was not an authority on police problems.

SHAW'S obscurity was bad enough, but the Mayor had added to the calamity by giving out a hysterical interview. Pounding on his desk and glaring at the reporters, he had shouted:

> The new Police Commissioner is going to prove the salvation of New York City. No, the appointment was not made as the result of pull. Henry W. Shaw came to see me this morning. It was the first time I had laid eyes on him, or even heard his name. But he sat down and in less than an hour he outlined to me the most marvelous programme for combatting crime to which I had ever listened. He showed me wherein the old methods were wrong. He analyzed perfectly the psychology of the crook, and then did as much for that of the policeman. His is a colossal brain, a master will. He'll know how to stamp out the hold-up men and the gamblers. I count the opportunity to place him in office the most fortunate event of my administration.

In another column, there was printed a statement by the acknowledged leader of Mayor Carter's party. "The organization repudiates all responsibility for the change at Police Headquarters," this powerful individual announced bluntly.

I read all these details, because they were sufficiently bizarre to have human appeal. But politics ordinarily are no concern of mine. Shrugging my shoulders helplessly at the folly of the Mayor, I at last laid the paper aside and went to my breakfast.

The day before, I had stayed away from my office on the excuse of having a sore throat. But I knew that if I wanted to hold my job, as well as do justice to the investigating of Buwalda, I would have to make some definite adjustment of my time. I reported for work at the regular hour, put in half a day and then applied to my chief for a week's leave. I was on the edge of a nervous breakdown, I said with more truth than I perhaps realized, and on this plea the concession was granted. My immediate gain was freedom to attend the tea at the Kanarjians, where I expected to meet Coralie Griffin.

I telephoned to Peter. He answered in his quietest manner that the way had been smoothed. The chief difficulty had been to convince his uncle that it was justifiable to present me under a false name. But the family horror of Buwalda's influence over Coralie had turned the scales.

"I told Uncle Stefan that you were our only hope of getting the Turk behind prison bars, without causing a scandal that would involve our name," he said. "Expect me at four o'clock, to take you to the tea."

"O. K.," I replied, and started for home, so as to have plenty of time to prepare myself. I should have liked to squeeze in an hour for a visit to Anna Wagner, the medium's pathetic ex-secretary, but this was impossible.

Standing before the mirror to figure out some manner of disguise, I perceived once more, as I had on several occasions of late, that the amateur has a hard time of it when he sets out to play the detective. Eventually, by dint of much fussing and experimenting, I succeeded in bringing about a slight change in my appearance. This was due chiefly to the trimming of my rather bushy eyebrows. A make-up pencil, sparingly used at the corners of my mouth and under my eyes, completed the illusion. It earned a smile of approval from Peter, when he arrived.

He seemed more light-hearted than he had been, but it was necessary to let him know that Coralie's brooch had been taken by unknown robbers. I described the adventure of the evening before, though I modified it to the extent of implying that I had been alone when assaulted. In a moment his face darkened again.

I felt like a ridiculous, modern Joseph in the clutches of Potiphar's wife

"Violence at every turn! God!" he muttered. "I tell you, Hugh, this affair won't see its finish until the devil behind it all is killed."

He drove me swiftly to the downtown section of Brooklyn. On Pacific street, he pointed to a new apartment building.

"That's where I live," he remarked. "A bachelor's flat."

I realized then, with a start, that in the fantastic concussion of events since I had met him, I had never asked him for his address, though he had given me his telephone number. It was a fine illustration of my inexperience as a sleuth.

TWO blocks farther down, on Henry Street near Pacific, we stopped in front of a handsome brownstone house, typical of the residences of rich Armenians in the neighborhood. A man servant of nondescript nationality answered the bell. He was probably a half-breed Turk from Asia Minor. Members of my host's race dearly love to employ a person with even a modicum of Turkish blood, in a menial position. The vengeance for the centuries of oppression they have suffered may be trivial, but vengeance it is.

Peter and I were shown into a front parlor too crowded with ornate furniture and costly rugs. The patriarch of the Ararat coffee shop, his huge white mustache looking like tusks in the half light, arose to greet us. He extended his hand to me with a flowery gesture. "Welcome, sir." Then, without waiting for me to reply: "Your enquiry has shown you, has it not, that my niece is guilty of no wrong, except the indiscretion of knowing Buwalda?"

"Why, of course, Mr. Kanarjian. That is all it amounts to," I answered with a bow, though I smiled inwardly.

"Good. I now give myself the honor of having you meet my granddaughters. Mrs. Griffin has not yet come, but we await her at any moment."

He clapped his hands, and in response to the old-world signal the connecting doors between the front and back parlors were thrown open by the servant. Four young girls whose ages varied between sixteen and twenty-one advanced with a fluttering and blurred cooing, as of doves. They were the girls I had seen on my first visit to the coffee shop. And they were very beautiful, very charming girls, I have no doubt. It was my loss that I could not for the life of me give them the attention they deserved, though I appeared to do so. My ears were straining to note the earliest hint of Coralie's arrival. Perhaps I feared that she would not come at all. It would not be surprising if Buwalda penetrated my scheme and halted her at the last minute.

When the door bell rang I repressed a jump, lighted one of Kanarjian's admirable Levantine cigarettes and stood up as Coralie Griffin rustled into the room.

SHE was in black and white, and was cuddled in the folds of a fur coat of surpassing luxury. Her veil was pinned back from her face, the full contours of which were more soft and lovely than on the previous occasions when I had crossed her path. Grief had wholly disappeared from that voluptuous mouth and those melting but shallow eyes.

She hesitated by the doorway and looked faintly astonished at seeing a stranger. But Peter was already at her side and had taken her hand in his.

"How are you, dear?" he said, his love vibrating in the wistful tones of his voice. "I hope you won't mind my having brought an old friend with me this afternoon. He's Frank Marshall, who was at Cornell with me. Haven't seen him for years. I ran into him on the street just now, and I hated to let go of him. Wanted him to meet you, too."

"You did quite right, Peter. I am charmed to know Mr. Marshall," replied Coralie in honeyed accents.

She turned her gaze full upon me, and thereby caused me not a little trepidation. But her amiable smile, the general emptiness of her face, convinced me that if she had ever looked at me before it had been with unseeing eyes. She extended her hand graciously. The palm was softer than satin, almost too soft, and I again found myself wondering what in heaven's name this "harem woman" was doing in the toils of a practitioner of black magic, like Daniel Buwalda. Her limp sensuality was precisely what one would not look for in a medium's assistant. And if the tie between them were solely one of the flesh, how incongruous a pair they made! She was a spoiled daughter of wealth, and he as shoddy-appearing a figure as the barker outside a medicine show!

These thoughts were passing through my mind as Coralie removed her coat and hat. I then perceived with a quiver of amazement that she was wearing on her left breast the opal and gold brooch which had been filched in such unceremonious fashion from Owen's waistcoat pocket. The jewel, to be sure, was her property, and I had assumed that the attack upon us had been for the purpose of restoring it to her. But there was something weird about her displaying it so promptly to me of all people. I wished that I dared to question her about it.

> "I pressed the spoon against the napkin. The latter offered no resistance whatsoever. I glanced down, thunderstruck, to see the bowl of the spoon emerging from the far side of the tightly crushed ball of linen.
>
> "Simultaneously, I experienced a painless jolt in my brain, and a swift series of pictures in action flashed across my inner vision. I saw Buwalda—"

Peter came to my rescue. "Ah, the brooch! You have got it back. I am glad," he said, with just the right touch of interest in his voice. It would have taken a cleverer person than Coralie to guess that he had heard anything about it from a third party.

SHE cupped her hand over the trinket with an acquisitive gesture. "A rough-looking man brought it to me this morning. He'd found it on Court Street, and a jeweler in the block told him I'd been enquiring for it. He wouldn't take more than five dollars as a reward. Haven't I been lucky?"

Mind reading may or may not have had anything to do with it, but I was certain that Coralie lied. There could have been no need for a messenger and a rigmarole story between herself and Buwalda.

She was now giving all her attention to me. "Come here, you nice man, and let's sit in this cozy corner," she purred. "You must tell me all about yourself. If you went to Cornell, you're probably an engineer. I'm sure you've had a wonderful, adventurous life in wild countries."

I played up to her as best I could, romancing mightily about a career far removed from spiritualism. I hoped for no more than to gain her confidence, to be invited to visit her at the Griffin home in New York. In the meantime, the chance to study her personality was precious. But I was not prepared for the turn she gave to affairs before many minutes had slipped by.

After accounting for Peter and her other relatives with a few airy nothings, she nestled in a deep armchair in the corner she had chosen and had me shift my own seat until I had practically cut her off from the rest of the room. When tea was served, she had our cups and cake plates put on a little tabouret which filled the space between her knees and mine, and over which her hands discovered a reason to

hover whenever mine were outstretched. Our fingers touched more than once.

She talked incessantly in her rich, low voice, and rarely expressed anything that could be called an idea. But her eyes were eloquent—her large, moist eyes of an emotional animal—and her mouth gave the constant impression of wanting to be kissed.

"What's the object of all this?" I asked myself. "Why is she vamping me? Is she more cunning than I thought? Does she know perfectly well who I am, and is she trying to trap me into making some dangerous admission?"

It was soon clear, however, that the woman had no motive beyond the primitive one of arousing my senses while catering to her own. Her ankles touched mine, and failed to move aside. Thrilled, according to herself, by an inanity I had uttered, her hand fluttered to my arm, and stayed there.

It seemed that Peter's jealous eyes must be boring into my back. This Coralie was obviously unbalanced on the subject of sex. She wanted to have love made to her by any man she found half-way attractive. But the scandal of her conduct on the very day after she had buried a husband would rest equally upon my head, I feared, in the minds of her Armenian kin.

I contemplated getting to my feet with an excuse of no matter what kind, and addressing myself to old Stefan Kanarjian. But she was talking so steadily, so softly, that it did not appear possible to move. I shut my ears, then, against the things she was saying, and fell to marveling afresh that a psychic could have found her useful. When Buwalda desired to pass tambourines through screens, this amorous babbler was the person who stood ready to receive them. Extraordinary!

A terrible embarrassment took possession of me. I felt like a ridiculous modern Joseph in the clutches of Potiphar's wife.

Both my hands were at that moment in my lap, hidden by the tabouret. I held a teaspoon in one and a napkin crumpled into a ball in the other. Obeying a vague impulse, and for want of something better to do, I pressed the spoon against the napkin. The latter offered no resistance whatsoever. I glanced down, thunder-struck, to see the bowl of the spoon emerging from the far side of the tightly crushed ball of linen. Simultaneously, I experienced a painless jolt in my brain, and a swift series of pictures in motion flashed across my inner vision. I saw Buwalda prowling about a vast unfurnished room, in the midst of which were piled tables, chairs and divans, their legs still in the straw wrappings employed by dealers. He was considering the furniture in leisurely fashion, but suddenly he stiffened, swung around on his heel and seemed to be staring directly at me.

I lifted the hypnotized Anna into the cab, as the murmuring of the distant mob reached our ears

I had whipped my hands apart. The act was involuntary and deplorable, for I had everything to gain by testing the phenomenon. The latter ceased the instant the spoon was drawn free of the napkin. I had had an adventure which closely paralleled my introduction (*Continued on page 62*)

CONAN DOYLE'S PSYCHIC

Doyle declares that this is the mold of a spirit's hand

Do these exhibits—spirit prints, examples of auto prove beyond the shadow they do, the reality of a

By Leonard

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE calls the psychic museum he conducts in London, "The World's Happiest Museum." Why the "happiest" museum? Perhaps the answer will be plain when you have read about its contents.

To reach this room of "miracles" you enter the Psychic Book Shop and Library, facing Westminster Abbey. Sir Arthur is proprietor of this shop, and beneath it is the long room in which he has arranged hundreds of objects, photographs, pictures—a thought-provoking record of certain phases of Spiritualist activities, and of the results of psychic research (between the two is an important difference), for the past fifty years or so.

"My museum may be the smallest in London," Sir Arthur said, "but it is as large as any museum ever need be, for the visitor will have to give several hours to its exhibits if he wishes really to examine them all thoroughly. It is, also, unique. We can give the history of every single thing in it, and I do not think the most hardened sceptic could go

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, surrounded by the records of his psychic investigations

Museum of WONDERS

photographs, finger-matic paintings, etc.— of a doubt, as Doyle says life beyond the grave?

Crocombe over the exhibits and retain any doubt as to the continuity of our life after physical death. That is surely the core of every religion, and my little museum must be doing good work if it proves our survival of bodily death. What is there even in our big brother, the British Museum, which is so important as that?"

It should, perhaps, be explained that the exhibits may be divided into two sections: first, those with a definite evidential value; second, those which although non-evidential, are of interest for the stories attaching to them or—as in the case of a number of paintings—because they illustrate vividly certain dramatic aspects of psychic phenomena, the scientific accuracy of which can be tested elsewhere by all who care to seek advice in the library above the museum.

Let us, then, examine first some of the things which can be labeled evidential. To me, the most dramatic exhibit of this class is the enlargement of the actual photograph of Sir William Crookes, F.R.S., arm in arm with the materialized spirit of Katie King.

Sir Arthur's comments on this picture were: "This photograph is an enlarged copy of the one taken by Sir William Crookes in his own laboratory more than fifty years ago. It is one of the forty-four which Crookes took. Here is another one in which Katie is seen entering the room, and here is a letter of Crookes' in which he shows that Katie and the medium, Florence Cook, were two separate and distinct people. When one considers that Crookes' observations of Miss Cook extended for nearly three years and were conducted in his own house, I cannot imagine how any reasonable being can doubt the truth of them."

Dipping for a moment into Crookes' *Researches,* we find the following paragraphs regarding the particular photograph hanging on the museum walls:

> One of the most interesting of the pictures is one in which I am standing by the side of Katie. . . . Afterwards I dressed Miss Cook like Katie, placed her and myself in exactly the same position, and we were photographed by the same cameras, placed exactly as in the other experiment, and illuminated by the same light. When these two pictures are placed over each other, the two photographs of myself coincide exactly as regards stature, et cetera, but Katie is half a head taller than Miss Cook, and looks a big woman in comparison with her. In the breadth of her face, in many of the pictures, she differs essentially in size from her medium, and the photographs show several other points of difference. . . .
>
> I have the most absolute certainty that Miss Cook and Katie are two separate individuals so far as their bodies are concerned. Several little marks on Miss Cook's face are absent on Katie's. Miss Cook's hair is so dark a brown as almost to appear black; a lock of Katie's which is now before me, and which she allowed me to cut from her luxuriant tresses, having first traced it up to the scalp and satisfied myself that it actually grew there, is a rich golden auburn.
>
> On one evening I timed Katie's pulse. It beat steadily at seventy-five, whilst Miss Cook's pulse a little time after was going at its usual rate of ninety. On applying my ear to Katie's chest I could hear a heart beating rhythmically inside, and pulsating even more steadily than did Miss Cook's heart when she allowed me to try a similar experiment after the séance. Tested in the same way, Katie's lungs were found to be sounder than her medium's, for at the time I tried my experiment Miss Cook was under medical treatment for a severe cough.

A photograph of Sir William Crookes, arm in arm with a materialized spirit form. The unconscious medium was lying on the floor behind the two figures in the picture

The scientist concludes the chapter with the words:

> To imagine, I say, the Katie King of the last three years to be the result of imposture does more violence to one's reason and common-sense than to believe her to be what she herself affirms.

Next in dramatic as well as evidential value I place the now famous wax molds or "gloves" of spirit hands.

"You will see," Sir Arthur explained, "that the wrists are smaller than the breadth of the hands, so that the hands could not have been extricated from the molds save by dematerialization. I defy anyone to suggest any other way. Houdini, the conjurer, and Sir Arthur Keith, a great anatomist, have both tried their skill, and the results, laboriously produced, have only served to accentuate the unique character of that which they tried to copy. And, of course, it must be remembered that men of scientific repute—Richet, Geley, and the Count de Gramont—superintended the whole experiment. On the wall there is a picture illustrating the occasion on which these wax molds were obtained. The medium was an amateur, Franek Kluski, of Warsaw. When you have the palpable proof of the wax 'gloves' on the one side, and the evidence of such expert witnesses as Richet, Geley, (*Continued on page* 88)

OUT of the

"For God's sake, open the box!" the spectral voice cried—he tried to find out the

By Eleanor Carroll

I WAS visiting friends in London several years ago, and became deeply interested in the séances which took place at the home of my hostess once a week. There was a medium at these affairs, and outside of the usual trumpery, such as ringing of bells, writing upon sealed slates, and other phenomena, the woman was really remarkable at times.

I was skeptical, however. So long as a loophole for fraud existed, I could not believe that any of it was genuine, despite several staggering revelations of facts that, I thought, were known only to myself.

It was at one of these gatherings that I noticed an elderly man of striking personality. He had a quiet, thoughtful manner, deep, earnest eyes, and a face that seldom smiled—yet one that held a peace which few men possess.

I asked my hostess who he was, and a thrill passed through me at her reply.

"I'm sure you've read of Arnold Symington; the great chemist of this country," she said with a smile.

"Doctor Arnold Symington!" I exclaimed. "Indeed, I do know of him, and nothing would give me more pleasure than to meet him. Does a man with such a brain as his believe in all this?" And I swept the room with my hand, not realizing how uncomplimentary my words sounded.

But my friend only laughed. "Suppose you let him tell you what he thinks," she answered. And then she led me across the room and introduced me to the Doctor.

After a few moments' conversation, I repeated my question to him.

"Do you truly believe in psychic phenomena, Doctor?" I asked.

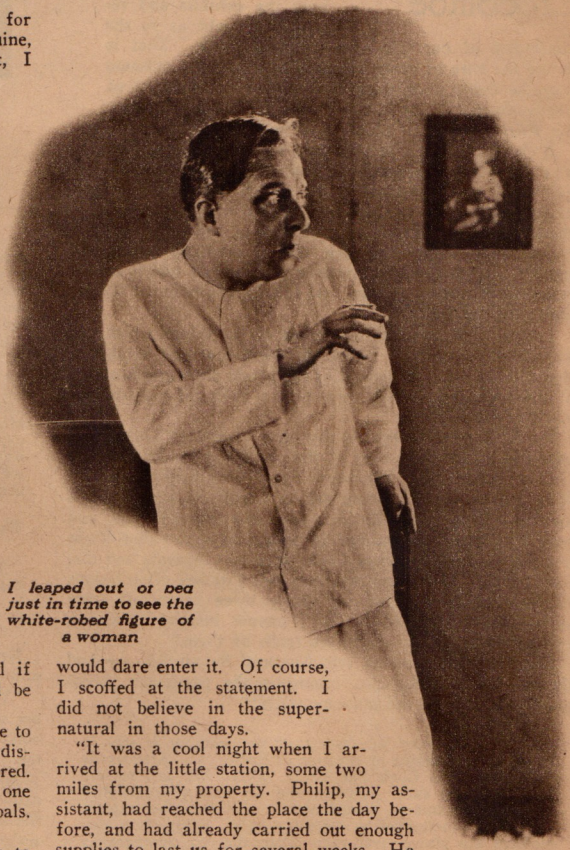
He looked at me with a sad smile, passing his hand over his brow.

"I don't always believe in these séances," he answered slowly. "But perhaps it is because I've seen and heard things far more convincing. Yes, dear lady, I *know* such things are quite possible, and if you'd like to hear a story—a terrible story—I should be glad to tell it to you."

I eagerly begged him to relate it. He beckoned for me to follow him, and led me into a quiet little room some distance from the one in which our friends were gathered. Drawing a chair for me before the fire, he sank into one just opposite, and fixed his eyes upon the smoldering coals.

"SOME years ago, I became engrossed in my work to such an extent that I yearned for solitude," he began slowly. I requested my solicitor to secure for me the most isolated spot in the kingdom, where I might work undisturbed, with only my assistant as companion. I had other reasons for desiring to be alone, but that has nothing to do with the story.

"When my solicitor returned from his search, he described the estate he had secured, and added that the house was a dilapidated old manor-house, which had been in a certain family for hundreds of years. It was ten miles distant from the nearest neighbor, and was still habitable. He explained thoroughly the ominous reputation of the place, saying that not one of the remaining members of the family would dare enter it. Of course, I scoffed at the statement. I did not believe in the supernatural in those days.



I leaped out of bed just in time to see the white-robed figure of a woman

"It was a cool night when I arrived at the little station, some two miles from my property. Philip, my assistant, had reached the place the day before, and had already carried out enough supplies to last us for several weeks. He met me at the station, and we walked slowly toward the estate. I enjoyed the wild and rugged aspect of the surroundings. Now and then a nightbird piped mournfully, and several fleet-footed animals crossed our path.

"About a mile down the road, we turned into a lane, narrow and overgrown with weeds and neglected shrubbery, and Philip informed me I was now upon my newly acquired

Split WALL

but it was an evil day for Doctor Symington when meaning of that cry

property, but that it was yet a mile to the house. This was soon reached, and I could scarcely suppress an exclamation of delight when the old manor-house loomed before us.

"It was a low, rambling structure, built of gray stone, completely covered with moss and ivy. The ancient door had no protecting shelter above it, and we entered directly into a spacious hall, at the end of which was an enormous fireplace, blackened with age and the smokes of many fires. A time-worn staircase led directly to the room that Philip had prepared for me, and I went there at once to refresh myself before exploring further.

"I entered a large room with four windows and several doors. Beyond I could see a smaller room which might easily be converted into a laboratory.

"My room was completely furnished in a period of several centuries past. The large bed was of solid mahogany. Directly opposite it, and built into the wall like a shrine, was a massive box, which appeared to me, in the wavering light of several candles, to be made of pewter. I afterwards discovered it was solid silver, tarnished with age, and I was amazed that it had not been taken away by its former owners—or stolen. Alas, I was yet to learn its secret.

"I crossed to the peculiar box and examined it with interest. The carving upon it was curious and seemed to form hieroglyphics of a language I had never seen, although I am quite a linguist. There was no lock upon it, although the entire front looked as if it had been made to let down, and there was a highly ornate handle at the top. I pulled at this, but it did not move. I had to smother my curiosity temporarily, but I decided that I would inspect the box carefully the next day.

"I took a sponge-bath, changed my clothes, then went down to inspect the lower rooms. Philip met me and threw open the door of the dining salon. I call it a salon because it was more than an ordinary room; it was very large and wainscoted with oak to the ceiling, and upon the walls hung many curious implements of warfare of an age long past. Above the mantel hung a picture which attracted my attention. It was a woman's head and had evidently been the work of a famous master. The eyes were what fascinated me most; they were (*Continued on page* 76)

The next instant, she had disappeared into the split wall

Because Their Bones Were UNBURIED

Always it has been believed that the dead resent the desecration of their graves. But the story of their sorrow has never been told so poignantly as in this letter from Mexico

By
Rosalie Evans

It filled me with an intense pity . . . I said to the girl, "If it would only be quiet!"

THE twelfth of December is the Virgin's Day and a solemn church *fiesta*. On that day the Mendizabels (the former owners of Mrs. Evans' ranch, San Pedro Coxtocan) insisted on a commission to remove the remains of Dona Fernando and Dona Monica, their grandparents, from the chapel on San Pedro. I have resisted for some time, as I feared disrespectful handling of the bodies. Whatever I do or say is judged by the Indians according to the standard of Dona Monica—"Mama Monica" as they call her. She is as alive to them as the day she died.

I gave the order to my administrator, and three of her grandsons, between twenty-five and thirty, drove over in an automobile. I told Iago (the superintendent of the ranch) to witness it—that all was done properly—but he couldn't do much, as they were the grandchildren. The bodies were buried twenty-six years ago, but were perfect in form, though mummified in part. The grandsons had brought two little boxes for ashes and bones. When they found the bodies entire, they tore the flesh off with their hands —parchment-like of course—made my men deathly sick—and broke the bones to the size of their boxes! The cook told me Dona Monica had a little cap on, and her shoes stuck to her feet. I must stop! All this they scattered about the chapel, leaving Iago and my men to pick it up and throw it back into the graves. Then they went to the kitchen, ate their dinner, drank beer and drove rollicking off to Puebla, waving my order when any one tried to interfere.

I reached the *hacienda* the next day and found a ghastly crew. I could hardly listen to the story, but was pleased to hear them all say that had I been there I should have hurled them out. I won't repeat the awful curses I heard put on the impious grandsons. I cannot account for their brutality. The four *peons* who had been forced to help them were all ill in bed. One had lost his sight and begged for herbs from *her* garden to restore it! I gave them—and it did. Now all this I am repeating just as I heard it and repeating only half. I asked if the grave had been properly cemented again over the poor remnants of mummified flesh and faded cloths. They said, only earth. I gave orders to restore all as before, but had such a horror of my desecrated chapel—it is just back of my room—that I did not enter to see, and decided to banish it from (*Continued on page* 75)

The HOUSE of FEAR

Every moment of her tortured childhood Amy Bruns had cringed under the brutal hand of Old Gabe Bruns—and after his death, she found that he was more the tyrant than ever

By Leigh Hunter

as told to Maybel Sherman

I WAS a lad of ten when I first met Gabe Bruns face to face. My father and I were returning from a trip to Wickersham. Our empty wagon rattled and jolted over the rough road, making conversation impossible. It was the time of evening that is more lonely than midnight. The sun had set, and the sky lowered. The dried leaves rustled and whispered, and the trees rubbed their bare limbs together and waved them with a swish.

When we were passing the old Bruns place, I moved closer to my father on the big wagon-seat and whispered:

"Father, is that house haunted?"

"Sho, sho!" he replied. "There ain't no such thing. The only spirit that lives there, is the ugly spirit of old Gabe Bruns; he won't let no one have a soul separate from his."

"But they say——"

At that moment a woman's cry, shrill, terror-stricken, quickly stifled, sounded across the marsh. With a quick jerk on the lines, Father stopped the team. I clutched his arm tightly. He shook me off, laid the lines down carefully, and jumped to the ground.

He bounded to the iron gate, and his boots went *clump, clump* on the broken brick walk. He leaped up the steps to the open door of the house, and went in—without knocking.

I sat and shivered as I looked at the gloomy brick house; it was so squat and old, so misshapen and ugly. The center of the structure was long and low, but there were high, two-story gables at either end. The heavy green shutters hung zigzag. The brick walk that led to the sagging steps of the rotten-pillared porch was cracked and broken, and dog-fennel poked its lacy leaves between the crevices. An old crab-apple tree with blighted limbs stood on one side of the walk, while nearer the house a clump of evergreen shrubs seemed to have been planted for no other purpose than to resemble gravestones when the winter snows covered them.

The croak of a bullfrog, surprisingly near, frightened me so that I leaped to the ground, pushed my way through the gate, and, with throbbing heart, sped toward the door. But before I reached it, it opened. Something hurled itself at me, and the impact was so violent that I saw millions of stars. Blindly I turned and fled, and that something pursued me. I reached the clump of evergreens and dropped. The something that followed me, dropped also. I looked up into the wide, frightened eyes of a little girl. She had the whitest face I had ever seen. She gave me no

"Let me go!" the little girl cried. "I've got to save Aunt Emma from Uncle Gabe. He's terrible this time"

attention, but lay on her small stomach and glued her eyes to the house.

"What—what is it?" I whispered.

"He's after Aunt Emma."

"Who's after her?"

"Sh! There! She's going now!"

The little girl scrambled to her feet, but I caught her by the arm.

"Let me go!" the little girl cried. "I've got to save Aunt Emma from Uncle Gabe. He's terrible this time. She'll have to hide out a long time. I have to take her something to eat. Let go! I have to see where she goes."

She jerked away, and darted like a little wild rabbit across the yard.

In a streak of light, apparently issuing from an open doorway, a woman stood for a moment. She glanced over her shoulder, threw her arms above her head, and disappeared in the shadows. An instant later, a tiny figure scuttled after her, and all was silent.

What was taking place in the house? Had the terrible old man killed my father? I darted toward the door from which the light came, and flattened my small self against the side of the house, the blood pounding in my ears like a great drum. My father's voice, calm, deliberate, as always, finally penetrated my consciousness. But the words! I had never heard him use profane language before. Now, there fell from his lips a string of oaths of whose existence I had never dreamed. Sheer astonishment made me put my head into the open doorway.

It was the kitchen, lighted only by rays of a candle in the room beyond. I stepped inside and tiptoed toward the inner room. On the farther side of this, I could see old Gabe Bruns on his knees. My father's great left hand held him by the throat, causing his little beady eyes to come farther out into the world than they had ever done before. His face was livid in the candlelight; his lips moved as though he would pray for mercy. Father shook him back and forth, from side to side, now and then adding a blow to emphasize some particularly strong epithet. Gabe was far too craven to resist.

"Father!" I cried out in my relief. With a swift glance at me, he flung the old man from him, and, stooping, picked up a long-handled carving knife. He looked at it and then at Gabe. The old man picked himself up, glowering under his bushy eyebrows.

"Don't! Don't, neighbor!" He eyed my father, who was running his finger up and down the keen edge of the knife.

"You're the skulkin'est coward I ever see, to use such a weapon on a woman!"

"I never hurt her none," defended Gabe sulkily.

"Yes, you do. You're murderin' her, that's all; murderin' her in a way the law can't touch you for. You're scarin' her into her grave!"

"I got to keep her in hand." Gabe began twitching his much-worn alpaca coat into shape.

"Try lovin' her a little; it'll work better." Tossing the knife onto a table, my father took my hand and we went back to the wagon.

"They took Uncle Gabe's body to the churchyard, but—just the same—he still lives here," said Amy

AFTER that night, it was years before a member of our family entered the yard of the Bruns place.

When I was sixteen, Mrs. Bruns died, and my mother went over to do what she could. I had just donned long trousers and insisted on going with her. It was on that visit that I took serious note of Amy Bruns.

She had grown tall—very tall and slender. She wore her long, brown hair in coils over her ears. Her eyes were violet blue, quick and restless. The whiteness of her skin reminded me of the mayflowers that grew in the shadow of the leaf. Later, I found that I could cause a tinge of pink to run underneath that smooth, white cheek, and make her lovely with its glow.

But that was the persistent effort of three long years.

After Mrs. Bruns was laid away, Amy assumed the cares of her uncle's household. She seldom went anywhere. She never had visitors. When I suggested one time that I might come of an evening and sit with her on the steps, a look of fear came into her eyes, and she begged me in agitation not to come.

But I had stolen moments with her. I knew when (*Continued on page* 93)

SPIRIT TALES

Timely Topics of Current Interest

By Count Cagliostro

THEY tell character now by the tongue.

The glossomancist is going to get you if you don't watch out. If you don't keep your mouth closed and your tongue behind your teeth he's going to be able to rattle every skeleton in your moral closet and expose to the world your dearest and most secret vices.

The glossomancist is a tongue reader. He is the brother of the palm reader, the head reader and the physiognomist, and he is the very, very latest of the pseudo-scientists. What his colleagues cannot tell you as to your likes and dislikes, your sins and your virtues, what you are fitted for and what you are not, the glossomancist can.

The glossomancist was born in Paris, full grown and full armed, with every ability to penetrate your ego by way of your tongue. Paris went crazy over him, very, very crazy.

M. Henry Placquet was the first of the glossomancists. He set up an establishment, studio, clinic, or whatever you wish to call it, in the very fashionable Avenue des Champs Elysées. Immediately his rooms were thronged by those who wished to undergo the novel sensation of sticking out their tongues to learn what they were. The rooms of the palmists, the cheiromancists, the physiognomists, the phrenologists, and the pilogists (those who read character by the hair) were deserted.

Carriages and automobiles, many of them bearing coats of arms, were drawn up in front of M. Placquet's place morning, noon, and night. Fair ladies and dark ladies let their tongues hang far out over their lower lips while Monsieur Professor observed their conformations carefully, top-side and down-side, and pressed them lightly here and there with a miniature baton in order to make his examination the more complete.

Wealthy women and titled women have from the first been M. Placquet's chief patrons. For those whose carefulness kept pace with their inquisitiveness M. Placquet arranged appointments by letter or telephone. For an extra charge these patrons could enter the studios by a rear door, proceed unobserved to a private room, and there, after masking, could thrust their faces through heavy curtains and be told extremely deep secrets about themselves.

The glossomancists take into consideration every feature and quality of the tongue, its length and breadth and thickness, its texture and its color. Through these things and their combinations they claim they are able to tell absolutely and accurately the character and propensities of any person who will stick out his or her tongue at them.

Generally speaking, a long tongue, according to the glossomancists, shows frankness. A short tongue is a sign of dissimulation. A broad tongue shows unreservedness and a narrow tongue concentration.

When the tongue is long and broad the owner is inclined to be gossipy. When the tongue is long and narrow the person is open and frank. Those who possess short and broad tongues are untruthful; those whose tongues are short and narrow are sly as well as bad-tempered.

But there is much more to glossomancy than this. These statements form only the broad basis of this science of most minute points. Glossomancy can tell you with all the assurance and authority in the world about Associativeness, Sentinelitiveness, Morivalorosity, Autohegemony, Temporinaturalitiveness, Philomonotopicalness and Mnemoniconominality.

Graspativeness or rapacity, according to the glossomancists, is shown by a tongue which is extremely rough. In animals the rough tongue is used largely as a means of drawing food into the mouth. Some of the larger animals, lions for instance, have a tongue so rough that if one of them were to lick a human hand the tongue would tear the skin completely off.

According to the relative roughness of the tongue the degree of the predatory proclivities of the individual can be ascertained. This graspativeness is not confined to the matter of food alone, but comprises everything within the range of human experience on which the grasping faculty can be expended. And this outward sign lies in the tongue.

Associativeness is signified by a tongue that is rather thick and somewhat rounded at the end. Associativeness is a genial interchange of sympathetic thought and feeling, a magnetism and a vital force that spring up in human intercourse and warm up into full action before the extracting influence of appropriate and lovable companionship. To be capable of a full display of this genial effervescence the individual must be well and fully endowed in the matter of vital force. His living action must be in the enjoyment of the freest and fullest play, his animal juices must be abundant, and the whole machine must be throbbing with the exuberance of overflowing life and action. In such a subject the tongue is always of rather generous proportions. This trait is all the more pronounced when the lips are full and protruding and the cheeks plump.

Retaliativeness is shown by a tongue that is hollow in the center. By the term retaliativeness the glossomancists mean principally the returning of evil for evil. It is in fact the reflection back, or reaction, of any set of feelings from one individual to another. It is quite as much to be regarded as the returning of good for good, as it is to be ascribed to any less worthy motive or action. If there is a hollow in the center of the forehead and if the subject is a dark person retaliativeness is all the more pronounced.

Sentinelitiveness, or the precautious disposition that sets one on the watch, to keep a sharp lookout and to give warning of danger, is shown by a fullness of the tongue toward the tip. Great fullness of the forehead immediately above the junction of a long nose with the forehead accentuates this disposition.

Morivalorosity is shown by a long and narrow tongue. Morivalorosity may be described as the higher phase of mere animal courage and it exhibits itself normally in a dauntless reaching forward for what is good and pure and a capacity for overcoming obstacles which may bar the way on its onward progress. A long, prominent nose is an outward sign of this same quality.

On the other hand, a long tongue that lies very thin and flat is the sign of inquisitiveness. The delight of the possessor of such a tongue is to pry into and minutely investigate matters that, to others of a different form, would appear trivial and childish. A person with this tongue makes a good detective.

Ambitiousness is indicated by a tongue that is large—long, broad, and thick—provided the tongue is at the same time well formed. The subject with this tongue will seek assiduously after that for which by reason of the particularity of his structure he will have the strongest proclivity. Napoleon had such a tongue.

Autohegemony is indicated by a tongue which is carried curled back somewhat into the mouth. A high appreciation of oneself is indicated by this sign. Beau Brummel, the fop in the reign of George IV., of England, was intensely egotistical and he carried his tongue in this manner.

Philomonotopicalness is indicated by wrinkles on the tongue. This is the word for the affection for one place, or habit of becoming attached to one situation or locality. Locative habits have their origin in the protracted continuance of a settled and uneventful life, combined with the action of two faculties. Consecutiveness renders the possessor adverse to changes of any kind and this form is always marked by wrinkles on the tongue.

Concealativeness, or the inclination to hide or withhold the knowledge of

(*Continued on page 75*)

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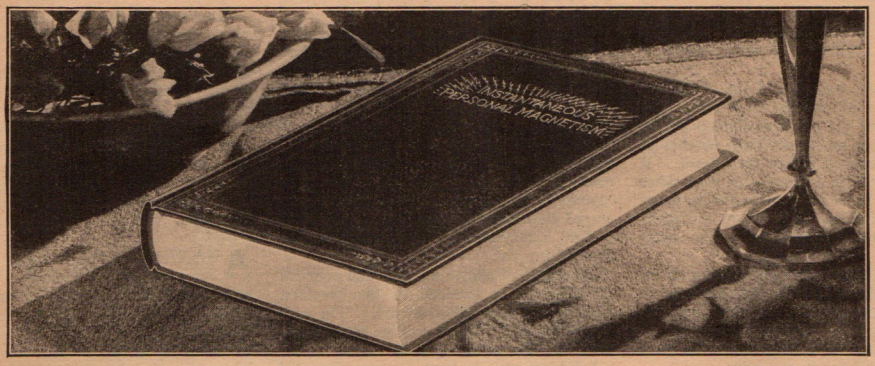

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The Phantom Torturer

(*Continued from page 30*)

came that life-giving air, fresh with the tang of the sea and the cleanness of the rain. I drew it in in great lungfuls. It was like tonic to me. My head cleared; my brain became more active.

But Sheila! I must get to her. With a pillow from the bed I beat out all the glass, and leaned from the window to look at the ground below. It was a good twenty-five feet to the uneven surface there. If I jumped, I was certain to break a leg.

The rain had ceased, and the storm had passed almost as quickly as it came. To my amazement the sky was lighted by the gorgeous rising moon, although patches of clouds still scudded before the breeze. It was early evening, I knew—the time when guests at the hotel were gathering to dance under the soft glow of lights in the pavilion. The hotel seemed very far away now.

I tried to find some way of getting down. I searched the wall. It was as bare as a precipice, the nearest tree-limb ten feet away.

And then, as I looked down into the garden, the blood froze in my veins.

Sheila was down there—Sheila, the girl I loved. She stood below my window. She was all filmy white in the moonlight, clad in that old-fashioned robe that reached to her ankles, her long hair flowing on her shoulders.

Slowly, as if walking in her sleep, she took step after step, feeling her way, yet not conscious. She was being drawn toward the sea by some power greater than her own.

"Sheila!" I cried, fear gripping me until I was cold. "Sheila!"

She did not heed me, but kept on and on, slowly, like an automaton, and always toward the sea.

And as, instinctively, my eyes followed the direction she took, I saw two objects that made me ache with terror.

A short distance ahead of her was that monstrous negro. The black was walking backwards, as though he led Sheila with a strange, hypnotic power.

And beyond them both, out there on the bosom of the cove, and in the path of the rising moon, was a small boat with a single sail. At its stern was the figure of an old man, tall, stately, commanding, his gaze directed at Sheila. He was waiting patiently for her to come to him.

I thought at first that the figure was burnished by the moon's beams. But as I gazed again, I turned sick with the sight.

The figure was glowing, illuminated by a radiance of its own. The radiance was a horrid, sickly, greenish cast against the silver of the moon. And as I looked, I suddenly perceived that the figure was intangible—as transparent as a thin cloud of mist.

I screamed aloud. Cold sweat stood on my forehead.

In God's name, what was it all? Was that the spirit of John Richards, that wicked old monster, that exploiter of women, seeking to drag Sheila in death to some foul existence he had prepared for her soul?

Two hundred yards in front of her was the cliff. If she kept on, led by the negro, she would plunge to her death.

How could I get to her? I must! She could not hear me under that devil's spell. I must save her.

Again I thought of springing from the window. But if I were injured, I could be of no use to her. I must save myself to save her.

Desperately I turned from the window back to the door. The door held fast. Like a madman I ran about that room, shouting, pounding on the walls. There was no way but the window.

As I stumbled toward it I tripped on one of those rag rugs and in an instant I had fallen against the fireplace, my fist crashing upon its side, my head barely escaping its brickwork. But something occurred that made me heedless of any hurt. A dull, hollow sound had followed the impact of my fist.

Quickly I sprang to my feet and pounded on the wall at the end of the fireplace. Again came that hollow sound. The wall was not solid. There was an opening behind it. The secret stairs!

I did not wait to hunt for any concealed spring. I swung a chair above my head to send it crashing through a panel. Again I swung and the panel splintered further beneath my blow. Within was darkness, but I caught the candle from the wall and, shielding it with one hand, I crawled through the opening. Surely there must be some way out of the house at the end of this passage.

The space in the wall was small. Moreover, the passage turned quickly at right angles and I knew now why Dooman had built no fire. The fireplace was false.

Hesitating, feeling my way, I squeezed myself around the corner and peered ahead of me.

A CRY sprang to my lips. I fell back so quickly I struck my head against a beam, dropping the candle. For a moment I clung in terror to the wall beside me.

For as I turned that corner I stumbled upon the bones of a human body.

If the candle had gone out, I should have struggled out of that hole, back into the room. But it sputtered at my feet and gave a faint light.

For a minute I was sick with horror. Gradually my courage returned, however, and the thought of getting to Sheila became uppermost again. Painfully I reached for the candle and picked it up. I held it carefully while I gazed at the skeleton. I knew enough about anatomy to see that it had been a woman. The broad pelvic bones told me that. Shreds of fabric still clung to it as though the clothes that once covered its body had long since wasted away.

I hated to push it aside. I did not like to desecrate the bones of the dead. But Sheila!

And then my blood went cold. Before my eyes a misty figure was forming. It was vague—as vague as that figure out there in the little vessel. It was the vision of a young woman, dressed in the costume of three generations ago. I felt her strange eyes fixed upon me, and I heard the soft whisper of her voice.

"You did not come in time," she said. "My message was so long in reaching you. It was I, Annette Ballou, who sent it, prisoned here after the master had his way with me. It was here I died."

"In here?" I cried, hoarsely.

"Dooman did it—the master's black servant," she said sadly "He got them all for the master—the women. For three quarters of a century now he has got them. But come. There is no time to lose."

I followed because I could not help myself. I was like a sleep-walker. She led me down a flight of narrow steps. I hardly could squeeze my way along. Dust rose about me in a cloud, blurring my sight.

AGAIN we turned a sharp corner, almost too narrow for me. Down another flight and into the cellar we went. Across a dirt floor she seemed to float rather than walk. Into another passageway she led me and I knew we were passing under the foundations of the house. We came, then, to a tiny vault. The ghost woman stood aside for me. She pointed to a small door half-way up the wall. With a gasp, I ran forward.

I shot back the bolt and threw the door open. A litter of dried leaves and dirt rattled to my feet, but above I could see the stars. I dropped my candle and seized the sides of the doorway. Quickly I drew my body through the opening. Now I was in a circle of shrubbery in the garden, but for one bewildered moment I did not know which way to turn. Then I crashed through the shrubbery—and saw Sheila.

She was within a few feet of the cliff—her form white in the moonlight, her steps quickening. In another moment she would go crashing down to the rocks. Out there on the water that strange figure waited—straight and commanding as a general.

And from his spectral mouth issued a low crooning sound that came over the waters as enticingly as the plaint of a mother for its child. But the horror of it! The note of evil desire that was in that voice!

"Sheila!" I cried. "Sheila!"

She was at the very brink of the rocks, but at the sound of my voice she hesitated, groping.

Plunging, slipping, I raced across the uneven ground.

"Sheila!" I cried again. "Wait for me. It's Harv.!"

She would have gone on—to her death—if some frantic note from my voice had not penetrated her reason. As it was, she hesitated. I was almost up to her now. Panting, straining every muscle, I threw myself toward her.

She tottered. One step more and she would fall. My hands shot out. The moss-covered rocks were treacherous and I fell to my knees. But I caught her arm and the strange, old-fashioned nightgown she wore, and dragged her back from the edge of the cliff.

Before I could struggle to my feet, I was entangled in a heavy rope—my arms clamped to my sides, my legs tied. The crafty Dooman had taken me by surprise and my chance of resistance was past. He dragged me toward the house. I caught a last glimpse of Sheila lying stunned on the rocks.

I would not give up. I writhed and twisted with desperate strength. I kicked and struggled. Dooman only laughed.

Up the steps, into the hall, and up the broad stairs he dragged me. He did not stop at the room where I had been imprisoned before, but carried me on toward the top of the house.

Was he, then, going to throw me out of a window? Or would he only lock me in as he had done on the other floor? If he had wanted to kill me, he could have thrown me from the rocks. What was his purpose?

He stopped at last and unlocked a door. We crossed a darkened room to a window lighted by the full rays of the moon. The window-sashes themselves had been removed so that the frames were open. Near the window was a wide, table-like board, tipped back at an angle of twenty degrees, and supported by old packing cases.

My heart failed me. I knew what he intended. I was to be exposed to the elements.

I had read of that. There were, in other days, harsh masters who thought it ill fortune for them to take the life of a refractory slave, much as they desired to do so. But to relieve themselves of any consciousness of murder, yet to produce the same result, they left slaves strapped to such a board, "to the will of the elements."

It was a cruel process. The victim was pinioned on his back, spread-eagle fashion, where sun and rain, wind and cold, thirst and hunger, would cause him to suffer until such a time as he begged for mercy or was released by death.

It was whispered that such a thing had been practiced in this evil house, and now I was to suffer it. It was like being hung on a cross, with my arms and legs held in place by chains.

It was bad enough to be in that strained position long. But the mental torture was worse than the physical when I thought of Sheila. On the board, tipped as it was, I could see by craning my neck the phantom boat in the cove, but the ghostly figure no longer was there. What had become of him? I wondered in agony. And what had become of Sheila?

She was not where I had left her—a white figure motionless on the rocks. What had happened? Had she at last gone over the cliff to her death, her soul to be swept up and carried away by that lustful phantom?

My thoughts were enough to drive me mad. I cursed the black giant who had pinioned me there.

"You think you get away now?" he said, with a leer. "No, you stay till Dooman come for you. The lady we take to the master. After a while I make you a spirit, maybe, so you see how the master so loves his women."

"God!" I swore. "I'd kill you first, you fiend."

"Oh, no." There was vanity in his tone. "You will not kill Dooman. Dooman cannot be killed. He has lived a hundred years, and he will live as many more. The witch-doctor made him that way."

He saw the incredulity in my face and I thought he would strike me. But suddenly he became grave and communicative.

"You do not believe me?" he cried, like a petulant child. "There is only one way to kill Dooman and that you cannot do. I die only by the hand of a woman's ghost. She I killed. Some day she will come for me."

A shudder ran through his great frame. Madman, savage, ghost, or what-not, at that moment he was terribly afraid—afraid of an unseen spirit that hovered somewhere in the shadows. A sudden thought sprang to my mind. Racked with pain though I was, the words crowded to my lips:

"Annette Ballou!"

He almost shrieked in fright at the mention of the name. He dropped to his knees, his eyes rolling, strange sounds falling from his thin lips like the cries of a hunted animal.

But quickly his fear changed. He was humble, obsequious. He bent low, his hands outstretched placatingly. Then a cold, dank gust of air came to me. And footsteps sounded—the footsteps, slow and measured, that I had heard behind the wall! A commanding voice, deep, resonant, broke the silence.

"Dooman, you devil, you linger. Where is the wench? Bring her to me that I may have her soul—before I pluck out your eyes."

I cried out in horror. The odor of a thing long-dead was in my nostrils. I could think only of dry bones and yellow skin as brittle as parchment, or of hideous, brittle creatures crawling about in a tomb.

As I turned my head, I saw him there—the ghost of Richards. If ever there was passion and evil in a face, it was written there. It was only the face I could see—a face hollow and eyeless, with shrunken hawk-like nose and horrible, discolored teeth between grinning, shrunken lips. The rest of him was a dim outline.

"Yes, Master," Dooman breathed, and in an instant he had turned and dashed out of the room, his great bulk fading in the darkness.

I struggled frantically to free myself. Suddenly the stench was no longer with me. One moment the ghost was there; the next he had disappeared.

"Oh, God!" I cried in my helplessness. "Oh, God, give me strength."

A new presence hovered above me. Something light and cool as silk touched me. Suddenly my hand was free. A faint rustling sounded. My other hand was free.

Weary and aching, I dragged myself to a sitting posture. I was shaking with terror, but I was determined to fight for Sheila with my last ounce of strength. I fumbled at the fetters of my legs and as I did so I became aware of how I had been freed. In the shadow, just out of the moonlight, was the ghost of Annette Ballou. Before I could cry out, she was directing me in that soft, sibilant voice like a whisper in the trees.

"Come," she said. "There is yet time and you are brave. You would have saved me if you had lived long ago. I have led her to the house. I will help you save her now. Come."

Painfully I swung off that horrible board. Following her through the darkness as one might follow a vague shadow, I came upon an open panel under a window. The whisper of her voice urged me again to follow and so, bending, half crawling, I entered to find another narrow stairway leading downward.

Gropingly I followed. Down a corridor no wider than a coffin itself, I was led by that ghost of a woman. We passed down another stairway and another corridor. And now the ghost woman stood aside and pointed. Before me was a narrow door with an ancient latch. I understood.

I raised the latch and threw open the door. I sprang into the room—into Sheila's room. And just in time.

The giant black had her in his arms, about to pass out of the door. She was fully clothed in her dried garments, but she lay insensible, white, her eyes closed in a swoon.

"Drop her, damn you!" I cried, and made for him.

He laughed at me. Obsessed with the faith that he could not die, he did not fear me. Stepping to the bed, he placed Sheila there and came crouching for me. His great paws opened and closed as though already they were at my throat. A horrible smile played over his face.

Nearer and nearer he came. As quick as the strike of a snake he caught me by one wrist, twisting me helplessly against him. Then with one hand he held me fast, while with the other he began slowly to press upon my forehead.

Lights danced before my eyes. Bells were ringing in my ears. Back, back went my head. The blood pounded in my temples. I felt that my spine would snap and my throat be torn open from the strain.

And then, with his face close to mine, his eyes suddenly became pictures, as though I looked into a stereopticon, and the scene was a million years ago, before history, when the earth was hot and steaming and the waters of the sea were warm. It was upon the seashore that I looked, where a woman, lovely and graceful, her form wrapped in her flowing hair, stood looking into the water. But behind her, from the edge of the forest, came creeping a great black figure, half-human, half-animal. He was about to spring upon her when she turned and saw him. He cringed away. The animal was Dooman; the woman was Annette Ballou.

And just as death was upon me in Dooman's grasp, suddenly the creature shrieked—that high-pitched, wailing note of fear. The pressure on my head was released. I was dropped to the floor as a boy might drop a toy.

Dimly I saw the giant black cringing in a corner of the room, his face ashen gray, his great eyes bulging. His monster body shook and trembled like a leaf. And in an instant he had leaped to the door and was out of it.

Then something white and dim floated past me, faster than the wind, out of the door, after him. The ghost of Annette Ballou! She it was, he had told me, who only could cause his death!

I heard him go crashing down the stairs. I hear him tear at the outer door and his running, sliding, stumbling footsteps on the uneven ground. I heard his wild cry a moment later and in fancy I could see his body go crashing over the cliff into that horrible whirlpool where lately he

would have led my poor bewitched Sheila.

I did not wait to investigate. I half-dragged, half-carried her out of that house and into the cool night air and under the light of the moon. I did not stop until she awoke and protested, and told me she had had a horrible dream in which a lovely woman at last had come to her.

Then, suddenly nervous, tense, we clung to each other and watched. For out over the sea, far away, barely discernible in the moon's path, was a phantom boat with a gray ghost in the stern and beside it another figure, none the more tangible because of its blackness, but like its master as transparent as glass. And the boat and the figures in it grew smaller and smaller as it traveled into the path of the moon.

They never found the negro's body in that horrible whirlpool. Nor did we ever hear or see the ghost of Annette Ballou again, or ever learn her story.

But as we stood there watching, suddenly a tongue of flame leaped from the old house. It may have been caused by that candle I dropped, or by some defect in the fireplace in Sheila's room—I do not know. In any event, the house was soon a great bonfire that attracted even the guests from our hotel four miles away.

It did not take long for the house to be razed. The flames did their work neatly. No more slaves in the flesh, or ghosts in the spirit, would tramp its encased stairways. Unnumbered tragedies had taken place within its walls. It was just as well that the house should be destroyed.

Friends who came to see the fire took us back to the hotel in their car. We did not tell them the story of that night, for we knew they would not believe us.

Sheila, long afterward, took from among her keep-sakes the letter we had found in that strange old bottle. When she had read it, she looked dreamily into the distance, and I think there were tears in her eyes.

But she did not speak, nor did she answer me when I spoke to her. She did not tell me, but I think she was voicing a prayer for the repose of the soul of Annette Ballou.

The Curse that Crossed the World

(*Continued from page* 11)

Arabic, rapidly, watching me with his glazed eyes. As he fell back, Yvette gave a little half-scream.

"Well, he was dead. The boatman, busy at his oars, did not hear the splash. I saw the robe swirl in the water for a moment, then sink. No bubbles came to the surface. The boatman pulled up hard by the quay, and we boarded, Yvette and I, in silence. We spoke no word at all until we pulled alongside the rusty ship and our boatman hailed the deck watch.

"I paid the boatman double his fare for silence, and we climbed to the rail. The old captain came from his cabin and seemed glad to see us. He remembered Yvette. He understood. He agreed to take us, and I trusted him instantly."

ROGAN stopped, and looked across at me inquiringly. "Am I boring you, Dick? Are you getting the gist of it? I'm—I'm not capable of making a tale of it. It's just as it happened."

"Go on," I said. "I understand it—all of it."

"You do so far," he replied, "but from now on——"

I waited for him to pick up the train of his thoughts.

"We hauled anchor at dawn and sailed away from Algiers," he began again. "Yvette and I sat on the forward deck where we could watch the dawn and the lazy swells ahead. We had no desire to look back to Algiers. That morning, the captain married us. Yvette was desperately unhappy. That was natural enough. A woman can't see murder done and still be calm. It was not until the ceremony was over that she told me the truth.

"'Jeem,' she called me, softening the letter 'J,' 'I have been afraid. You will laugh, I know. But it is not in your country as it is on the desert. We sail now with a curse upon us, my lover—the curse of Ramacharaka, who had no fear of death. To you and to me, he wished the curse of grief and fear—do you understand?'

"I did laugh, as she said. All that day we were happy, because I fought away her superstitions. We came to the open sea; and from there, I knew it would be simple to reach New York. After we boarded an English vessel bound for America, it seemed that Yvette had forgotten Ramacharaka and his curse. But on the outward course her old fears returned.

"'I tell you, lover mine,' she would say, 'I can see Ramacharaka. He is here on the ship with us; he walks on the deck when we walk; he stands at the port-hole of our cabin when we sleep.'

"I laughed at her, but now it did no good. She grew wan and lost the fire that was hers—wouldn't eat. When we would walk on the deck at night, she clung to me and was constantly looking over her shoulder, fearful of something that she thought was hovering in the blackness over the sea and around the ship."

Rogan suddenly halted in his account and again buried his head in his hands. The memory of his torture was breaking him anew, but he regained control of himself and went on with his narrative.

"Three days before we were due in New York, Yvette took to her bed. The ship's doctor tried to give her medicines, but she waved them aside.

"'It is the curse of Ramacharaka, my love,' she told me at night, and the pounding of her heart against mine was like the throb of the engines below. God knows, I did everything I could. She sat up suddenly, wordlessly, pointing to the door of our cabin. It opened slowly and a gust of salt wind swept in——"

He raised his eyes now and peered at me steadily. "I looked—and I saw—that damned Arab—Ramacharaka—the devil we just passed on the street."

I was rigid with horror—like a bird that has been hypnotized by a snake.

"You've seen the Hindus sitting on air," he resumed, his voice droning in a monotone. "You can pass a cane beneath them. How do they do it? You've seen them make a rose grow from a pot filled with dirt—in a few moments. Well, the Arabs do strange things, too. They're old; their ways are old—like the desert. I thought for a moment that my mind was under Yvette's control—it was an hallucination, an optical illusion——

"But Yvette, staring at the ghost, suddenly fell back. Her body stiffened. Her eyes were hidden by lids that fluttered for a moment and were still. Dick, she was dead—there in my arms."

Rogan choked and rose to his feet. He passed his hands over his forehead, then pressed palms to his eyes as though to shut out the vision of that little cabin.

WHEN he resumed, his eyes were wild, and I noticed the deep seams in the yellowish skin of his face.

"I looked up and saw Ramacharaka. He was staring straight into my eyes, and his face was stern. But there was no anger. He seemed calm, unemotional. He wore the same striped robe—and believe me or not, the ivory handle of my knife still showed. The blade was buried——I sat there with Yvette in my arms and saw it."

I thought that Rogan must go mad, if indeed he were not already so. But I schooled myself to reveal nothing, and he watched me with his bloodshot eyes.

"I could not utter a sound. The cabin door was still open, and the salt breeze was blowing in. Suddenly, this thing—this Ramacharaka dissolved. It disappeared, and there was nothing. Then the door swung softly to . . . . "

Rogan looked out of the window again, then turned to me with an appealing gesture.

"You see, old man, I know. That chap in the white suit is real enough. He's the servant of Ramacharaka. He forms the connection with earth. The other one, the robed Arab—that's Ramacharaka. I'd know him anywhere. This is the first time he's bothered me in more than a year. I thought perhaps he had quit. But this time—he'll get me. . . . I'm not afraid of any man, Dick. But God—this thing's got me."

I rose and took Rogan's shaking hand. "I've heard of these things, of course," I said. "But after all, why take it so seriously just yet? We've run out of many a storm. Let us go on the street and look for these Arabs. It would be much better to have it out, if we can. At least, we can get at the truth of it. Shall we go?"

Rogan nodded. "I suppose so. But you believe me, don't you? You saw this—this thing? I can't be wrong this time. You saw it yourself—and you must know I'm telling the truth."

"Certainly," I told him. "But isn't there a chance that Ramacharaka is still alive? I've been told that those devils die hard,

(*Continued on page* 58)

The Fast Can Restore Health Where Everything Else Has Failed

Once Understood, the Theory of the Fast Appeals So Strongly to Your Common Sense That You Are Not Surprised at the Almost Unbelievable Results It Has Accomplished

WHEN food enters your stomach it must be digested. The process of digestion occupies, for several hours, the entire attention of a large part of your blood supply.

Nature fights disease or weakness in your body through the medium of your blood. Blood is your army of protection. When not occupied otherwise it gives its time and attention to fighting disease, killing off obnoxious germs, expelling foreign matter, removing dead cells—in a word to freeing the body of *everything* detrimental to perfect health.

But if practically your entire fighting force is called away to lunch every six hours or so, leaving your front line trenches empty, your artillery without gunners, your aeroplanes without pilots, it is to be expected that the enemy will make marked progress during their absence.

And don't forget this—every time you fill your stomach with food you create exactly the situation described above.

As compared with human beings there is almost no chronic functional disease among animals in the natural state.

When a horse is sick he "gets off his feed." Natural instinct tells him to fast and he obeys. Not another mouthful does he eat until natural hunger returns. And natural hunger returns only when health is restored.

Man no longer recognizes instinct in matters affecting health. Instinct has been replaced by reason and reason is often wrong. Humanity has departed from the ways of nature and is paying a terrible price in sickness, misery, disease and death.

Nature is inexorable to those who break her laws but she is not vindictive. Even in the eleventh hour you can turn to Nature for help and get it and in no way can she help you more than through the fast.

Hundreds of cases of desperate functional diseases have been cured by a careful and skilled administration of the fast after every other means of treatment had failed.

Thousands of other cases, not so far advanced, have responded quickly and easily to Nature's most powerful factor in driving out disease.

There are millions of people today ailing, weak, diseased, discouraged, who could be in perfect health within three months—new men and women—if they knew the wonderful power of the fast to heal and how to administer it properly. If you have a health problem to solve it is very probable that you are one of them.

For many years, Bernarr Macfadden, head of the nation-wide Physical Culture movement has known the tremendous value of the fast in curative practice. Regularly, several times each year, he has renewed and cleansed the tissues of his body by fasts of from three to fifteen days' duration.

IF intelligently administered in accordance with the directions given in "FASTING FOR HEALTH." The following ailments should respond readily to the fast:

Asthma
Biliousness
Bladder Disease
Bronchitis
Catarrh
Constipation
Coughs and Colds
Diabetes
Diseases of the Prostate Gland
Diseases of the Rectum
Diseases of Women
Dyspepsia
Emaciation
Epilepsy
Ear Troubles
Eye Troubles
Headache
Heart Disease
Insomnia
Impotency
Kidney Disease
Liver Disease
Neurasthenia
Obesity
Paralysis
Rheumatism
Skin Diseases
Stomach Diseases
Vital Depletion
Youthful Errors.

At the same time he has supervised and observed the results of the fast upon thousands of men and women afflicted with a long list of diseases, many of them seemingly beyond help and the astonishing results achieved long ago convinced him that if an authentic book on fasting could be placed in the hands of every man and woman having a health problem to solve, there is no limit to the amount of good it could accomplish.

Out of that conviction came the determination to provide just such a book and so, from the wealth of specialized knowledge that is his he has created

"Fasting for Health"

which we believe is unquestionably the most masterly, the most complete and far-reaching work on fasting that has ever been written. We do not know of another man in the entire world as able to deal with the subject of fasting as Bernarr Macfadden. Into "FASTING FOR HEALTH" he has put his heart and mind and soul—the very best that is in him. After going thoroughly into the general aspects of fasting he takes up case after case of the specific treatment of functional diseases so that, no matter what your trouble is, you will probably find the detailed description of the treatment of a similar case so minutely covered, step by step, to the point of complete recovery that your delight will know no bounds.

Mr. Macfadden Wants You to Examine This Book at His Risk

He knows that once you have had an opportunity to go thru it, page by page, you would not think of parting with it. And so, he has instructed us to send copies of "FASTING FOR HEALTH" to all persons wishing to see it, upon a five days' approval basis.

Although the price of this priceless book has been made extremely low—only $2.00—you are not required to send one penny in advance. All that is necessary is to fill out the coupon provided below and mail to us. Immediately upon receipt a copy will be forwarded to you. When the postman delivers it pay him $2.00, plus postage, which will be looked upon simply as a deposit. If at any time within 5 days after receipt you decide for any reason that you do not wish to keep it, return it to us and your $2.00 will be immediately returned.

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***"There is a popular but wholly erroneous idea that one undergoing the fast grows gradually weaker. This is far from the fact. In most instances for a time, the faster actually becomes stronger."*—Bernarr Macfadden.**

even though they're said to welcome death."

"That blade went in to the hilt, Dick. There were no bubbles when he went down beside the quay."

We took the elevator and went down to the lobby. The first sight that met our eyes was that of the two Arabs standing at the desk. The younger, half-breed one in civilized clothes was taking a key from the clerk. The robed Arab—the man from beyond the grave—stood at his elbow, silent. Rogan clutched my arm, and his eyes dilated.

"Steady," I warned him. "Keep cool, man. Don't let them see anything.

He braced himself and we walked across the floor, passing the Arabs as they made for the elevator. They looked straight at Rogan, ignoring me. And I concede to Rogan that he returned their gaze without flinching.

"We'll look over the register," I suggested.

Casually, I turned the book around and studied the scrawled signatures of guests from far and near. Far down the page I came to the quaint, fine script—"Hatha Khabu, Algiers." The other Arab's name did not appear on the book. Rogan, leaning over the desk, trembled.

"That's the slavey," he said. "Ramacharaka is with him. But he wouldn't register, of course. Look, Dick—great God, they've got 864, the room next to mine!"

I squeezed Rogan's arm and smiled to the clerk. "That's an odd couple you've got here," I remarked.

He looked at me inquiringly. "What did you say, Mr. Craig?"

"Those Arabs," I repeated—"they make an odd pair."

"Oh," he said, with a smile, "you mean the fellow who just went up? Yes. Did he have another one with him? I didn't see the second one. He must have met a buddy, eh?"

Rogan and I turned away, and I confess that I felt ill. It was so, then—I, too, was under this spell. Only Rogan and I were seeing this robed figure with the piercing eyes. Rogan sensed my uneasiness.

"Now you believe," he said, almost exultantly. "You've been doubting me, Dick. You don't any more."

We went out to the street. Rogan seemed to have regained his self-control—or perhaps it was the calm of desperation. They say that doomed men, when they are very strong, experience a strange aloofness in regard to mundane things. I've seen men about to die who laughted with their guards and voiced weird jokes about death. Perhaps it was so with Rogan now.

"In the desert," he said, when we were strolling along Canal Street, "I used to study the fakirs and the prophets we'd run across. They did some remarkable things. I always believed they were sincere, however much I doubted them myself. An old desert rat told me something about it, one night. He said that each of us is an ego—a fragment of the universal life, set apart as an individual to work out a share of the universal plan. You are independent of the body; you use it only as an instrument. You are indestructible and have eternal life—you cannot be destroyed by fire, water, or anything at all. No matter what becomes of your body, *you* survive. *You* are a soul and merely have a body. Do you follow me, Dick!"

"Yes, after a fashion. I've read considerable about it."

"About like you read a novel, or a mystery story," he cut in. "You put the book aside and thought, 'How interesting.' Then you let it go at that. Never did much real thinking about it, did you, Dick?"

I had to admit that the subject was one into which I had never delved with any degree of seriousness.

"Well, neither did I until that night on shipboard."

We walked on, each busy with his own thoughts. Presently, we came to the river. The levee was weighted beneath cotton bales, barrels of molasses, package freight. Tied up along the crescent for miles were ships of all shapes and sizes, from great sea-going liners to awkward, low-decked freighters. Negroes sang at their work, while white mates bawled curses from the rails.

"It's an interesting city," said Rogan, quietly. "An interesting world. I don't like to quit it, Dick."

I forced a laugh, but it rang false.

"No, you're not laughing, really. You know now, as well as I do," he went on; "but you're safe enough, I think. You better make your plans to go on alone."

We had come to New Orleans to take ship for South America. There was excitement down there, and money to be earned by those who knew the ropes.

"Forget it, Rogan," I said sharply. "We're going together."

We faced about and walked slowly back to the hotel. There seemed to be nothing to talk about; and for my own part, I had a great desire to be quiet and to think. I went to my room adjoining Rogan's, connecting through the bath. I left the door open and, presently, heard the scratching of his pen.

At dinner he handed me the result of his writing. It was a singularly brief statement relating roughly what he had told me of his life. The concluding paragraph was in the nature of a will in which he left his personal belongings to me.

"You're letting this thing get too deep," I said, and handed the papers back to him.

"Just the same, old man, you'll do me a favor by keeping it," he said, steadily.

I thrust the pages into my pocket. All through the meal we watched the other diners, but saw neither of the Arabs.

After dinner we walked once more, and saw the aged city in the shadows. Out Saint Charles Avenue, we went. We walked a long way—passing many old Southern mansions half-hidden behind drooping Spanish moss. The soft night air was laden with the fragrance of magnolia.

Back in the hotel, Rogan's nervousness returned. For a time the haggard lines in his face had been erased and he had been almost gay. Now he became morose, sullen, restless. I remained with him in his room until a late hour.

"I'm not going to go out easily," he said, just before I rose to go to my room. He opened his bag and removed a heavy service revolver.

"If you come in here tonight, Dick, call out first. I'm going to shoot and ask questions afterwards."

I grinned and patted his shoulder. "Pleasant dreams," I said. "It'll look different in the morning."

But in my own room, I, too, provided myself with a reliable automatic that had served me in other emergencies. And when I turned in, it was with a vague, yet certain premonition that my sleep was to be mightily disturbed. I lay awake for hours, listening to the noises of the city. Finally, voices became less frequent in the halls. The "owl" cars passed only occasionally. When the silence became oppressive, I must have fallen asleep.

I was awakened by the sound of Rogan's voice.

"You brought it on yourself," he was saying in a dull monotone. "Yvette was mine—mine, I tell you. She was white, and you were black. There was a whole world between you. That night on the quay you invited death—to spit in the face of a soldier of the Legion! Oh, yes, I know—I was a deserter, but I was still a man. Go away, you black devil! Oh, go——"

I leaped to my feet, seized the gun, and moved swiftly across the floor without a sound. There was no light, either in the bath or in Rogan's room, and I had left my own in darkness. At the door I paused, shoving the gun in front of me.

Through the gloom I could see Rogan sitting up in bed. His hair was disheveled, and his eyes were staring. His revolver, I was sure, lay on the table beside his bed, but he made no move to get it. He leaned back on one hand, and the other was rubbing ceaselessly at his throat. He was babbling something in Arabic.

A dull sort of illumination came from the window, and I could see the various objects in the room distinctly. There was no one there except my friend. Then I saw that the door was ajar. I leaped across the room and ran out into the corridor. Twenty feet away, the smaller Arab was padding noiselessly down the hall. In two more steps he would be at his own door.

"Come back here," I snarled.

The half-breed turned, gazed at me in the dim light, and I saw his eyes travel to the blue gleam of my gun. Then he moved quietly and unhurriedly in my direction. He halted just in front of me.

"Come in here," I growled, keeping the barrel trained on him.

He bowed a little stiffly and preceded me into the room. Rogan had fallen back on the pillow. I closed the door and, still covering the Arab with my pistol, walked over to the bed. At its head was the switch. I turned it, and the room was flooded with light.

"Sit down in that chair," I ordered. The man obeyed without a word. I put my left hand down and touched Rogan's face. It was hard—and cold. Startled, I looked down at him. His eyes were wide-open, staring up at the ceiling. His mouth was drawn as though he was in torture. His hands, outside the rumpled covers, were twisted and stiff. I knew that he was dead.

I straightened and faced the man in the chair. "Where's your partner—Ramacharaka?" I demanded.

The fellow raised his eyebrows a trifle, but his voice was soft when he replied: "Ramacharaka is dead."

"Why did you kill Rogan?" I asked.

He shrugged. "You are mistaken, Monsieur." He spoke in fairly good English. "Until this moment, I did not know he was dead."

"What were you doing in this room—in the hall?"

"I was passing the door—I had been out with friends—and I heard a man's voice," he answered readily. "It sounded as though he were in trouble——"

"So you came in," I interrupted.

He shook his head. "No. I paused for a moment, but the voice stopped quickly, and so I started toward my room. Then Monsieur came out—with the gun."

Was the fellow laughing at me? I could have sworn there was a curve on his thick lips, a leer in his beady eyes.

"The door was open—you were slipping away—and Rogan has been murdered," I told him. "You will have a hard time convincing the police——"

He shrugged. "There is nothing to fear but fear," he said.

"Did you know this man?" I jerked a finger towards Rogan.

The Arab peered for a long moment at the body and shook his head.

By way of reply, I picked up the telephone and called the desk, taking care to keep the Arab under my gun.

"Send up the house detective," I said briefly, "and a doctor—quick as you can!"

We waited in silence for perhaps ten minutes. It was early morning and in all likelihood the detective was enjoying a few minutes of sleep. He came presently, accompanied by a clerk and a bellboy.

"What's the trouble?" he asked, pushing in when I called.

I told him in a few words. He bent over Rogan, listening for heart beats, then rose, shaking his head slowly.

"He's out," he said. "Was it a knife, or ——" Again he leaned over to examine Rogan's throat. "He wasn't choked," he said, straightening.

A knock sounded on the door and the house physician hurried in, partially dressed, obviously just from his slumbers.

He went quickly to the bed and almost immediately confirmed what I already knew.

"He's dead."

In his business-like, professional manner the doctor bared Rogan's great chest and commenced a hurried examination. The detective stood by, watching him carefully. The Arab sat quietly in his chair, an interested onlooker. The clerk and the bellboy stared with wide eyes, while I stood between the Arab and the door, still holding the automatic.

"Not a mark on him," said the physician, presently. "Was he a sufferer from heart disease?"

"That man never had an ailment in his life," I retorted. "He's been murdered."

They looked at me curiously and the shadow of a smile passed across the sinister face of the man from the Sahara.

"We'll make a closer examination, of course," said the physician, uneasily. "But from what I can find, death was due to natural causes."

I thought rapidly. Did I dare to tell Rogan's story to the western world? Would the occidental mind grasp the strange theories and powers of the Orient? Would I make myself forever ridiculous with a story that had no explanation? They would call me a mad man. I determined to keep silent for the present.

Of course, the police were called in. They held Hatha Khabu for examination, and his alibi was plausible enough. As a matter of fact, he proved that he had been with friends in the Arab quarter that night, and had just returned to the hotel when I stopped him. A consultation of surgeons and physicians was the final act and their decision was accepted as official. Rogan had died, they agreed, from a sudden failure of the heart valves. I told them nothing of the desert ghost. They could never have understood.

Arms in the Dark

(*Continued from page* 19)

tinguishable only in outline from the surrounding vagueness. It was pale, livid, to my straining gaze.

I uttered a hoarse cry and tried to rise. I knew what it was, before the features were revealed. A mad impulse to escape came over me, but my muscles could not or would not obey. I turned my head to blot out the fearful sight, but I could feel it coming on. Then in panic I groveled in the pillows, but some power forced me to look up. The shadow of Elise stood at the edge of the bed.

Some awful struggle was going on within her; her face was contorted with loathing and horror at something pursuing her, and she gave me a wildly beseeching look as she beckoned to me as if for aid. Then she shrank back suddenly, and I saw what it was she feared. The same cruel, menacing arm that I had seen before, with its snake-like fingers, was reaching out towards her.

I summoned all my strength and resolution; the mute appeal in her eyes could not go unanswered. I gave a cry that rang for long moments in my ears. The blood began to flow in my veins again; in a moment I would be myself. But just as I was about to rise, that awful arm drew closer; the figure of Elise made a last imploring motion towards me, crumpled up as under some savage attack, and disappeared. I was staring into space. The moonlight still crept softly through the curtains which bellied slightly in the summer breeze. I was alone.

Footsteps pattered in the hall; there was a rap at my door and an excited question. "Herr Fallon, did you cry out? Is anything wrong?" It was Ludwig Weber who had heard my outcry. I threw open the door; human companionship would be a blessing now. I must have presented a queer disheveled spectacle.

"I dreamt I saw a ghost," I stammered; "it scared me badly."

Ludwig glanced at the clock on my table. "It is bad for the nerves to go to sleep so early. See, it is only half-past ten."

So I had been asleep less than half an hour when this thing had happened. My mind had been at ease when I retired. How could such a visitation follow so close upon a peaceful evening? Surely it must bode some evil to Elise. Queer fantastic thoughts came to my mind, while Ludwig talked on aimlessly. I threw on my clothes with sudden decision. I must solve this menace of the night at once. If not, I would go mad. Despite the protestations of Ludwig, who was certain I was ill, I dashed out on an errand that in my own mind was vague and unformed.

I stood at last before the home of Doctor Thorwald Bender. As on the previous night all was shrouded in quiet and darkness. What evil could be hovering over this silent, peaceful abode? Opposite the house I paused, hardly knowing my own mind. What act of folly was I about to commit? Burst into this sleeping household to trace a supernatural apparition to its lair? Would I not be convicted of idiocy? Would not this cut off the last hope of friendship with Doctor Bender? Would it not place Elise herself in a more difficult position?

At the thought of the girl my wavering resolution returned. Somehow I must make sure that she was not suffering. I stole down a narrow alley that led to the yard in the rear of the house. Trees grew close to the wall of the building and shaded the windows with their foliage. A light was burning in a second-story window! Some one in the house was still awake!

With my breath coming unevenly, I found a spot, half-hidden by a huge linden, where I could see the window plainly. A shadow was pacing back and forth; its outline vaguely depicted on the curtain. Back and forth from wall to window it stalked, never coming close enough for me to identify the shape. That shadow threw me into a sort of frenzy. Who was it keeping this nocturnal vigil? What mysterious work was under way?

Suddenly the shadow paused, its back to the window. The huge outline of Doctor Bender's bulky figure stood revealed against the light. So it was he who was pacing about, nervous and agitated, in the silent house! I felt an overmastering desire to look into that room. I could no longer rest with the unsolved fears that my imagination conjured up. I would risk any cost, any penalty, to free my mind.

A low-branching tree grew near the wall, one of its highest limbs twisting and curling towards the lighted window. If I could climb to that vantage-place I could gain a clear view of the room. I summoned all my gymnastic skill, which had never been very great, and swung myself to the lowest branch. The pitch to which my nerves were wrought lent me strength and skill. I had no fear of falling. Slowly I gained the branch that overhung the window, and cautiously I crept along it. If it creaked and strained beneath my weight I paid no heed.

And suddenly into my angle of vision fell the interior of Doctor Bender's room. Well it was that I had made doubly sure

at every step of my precarious footing; otherwise I must have fallen at the shock of horror. In my wildest dreams I had never suspected this.

Doctor Bender was leaning over a couch against the wall, his profile turned directly towards me. In his eyes was a grim, unearthly light as of one who has seen weird things. One of his arms—an arm huge and bulky, with waving talons of fingers—was outstretched over a figure that lay recumbent on the couch, as if he were summoning something from an unknown void. It was the arm I had seen in my nightmare twice before!

I shivered and with difficulty restrained a cry. Then as I looked again, the doctor turned, and the figure on the couch was revealed. It was Elise, clad only in a nightrobe—Elise with open but unseeing eyes, cheeks pale as death itself, her breath coming in short and feverish gasps. My brain reeled; for minutes I held my eyes tight closed while I fought to keep hold of my shattered senses.

Then reason rushed to my aid. This was no phantasm of my imagination that I beheld; these were flesh and blood creatures that I could deal with. I need have no fear; there were no ghostly apparitions here. And I opened my eyes to take in every detail of the scene. Doctor Bender stood as before, the venomous fingers almost touching the girl's brow. Her lips were moving slightly. Obedient to his command some secret was being torn from her bosom. I sickened at the sight of this human sacrifice.

And now I understood the horror she had shown whenever her father was mentioned. This was the reason for the hysteria and the nervous outbreaks that had puzzled me. Well might she have dreaded this monster of a parent. The whole thing became clear to me. On the previous night and this one, too, Elise had sought my aid to keep her from the clutches of this fiendish experiment. Before she had yielded her soul to him, her shade, her aura—call it what you will—had cried out to me for help. I had not understood.

I was by this time in a frenzy of excitement. At whatever cost to myself I must stop this deviltry. The end of the limb on which I was perched almost grazed the shutter of the window; the ledge was a wide one. With many a slip I crawled to the end; then one precarious step and I stood firmly on the window-sill, clutching at the shutter for support. I paused a moment to catch my breath.

Inside the scene was unchanged. Perhaps the breathing of Elise was a little heavier; the look on Thorwald Bender's face more grim. Quietly I reached for the window-sash, and as it slid easily in my grasp I felt a thrill of victory. Hurling it up, I swept aside the flimsy curtain and leaped into the room.

The look of a wild beast that has been trapped was on the face of Doctor Bender as he whirled around at me. Fear, rage, defeat, madness—all lurked in the expression that twisted his features. I was the first to speak.

"She's dying! Let her go! You are killing her!" I cried.

Doctor Bender recognized me at last. Whether he had thought I was an emissary of the police, or perhaps some ghostly figure summoned by his own fell practices, I do not know. But when he recognized me his terror very promptly vanished.

"Dunce! Idiot!" he bellowed, "do you know what you have done? You may have killed the girl!"

I shrank back aghast; I had not been prepared for this. The stern eyes of the doctor held an accusing look. "Elise is sick; out of her head. You find me in the midst of a cure. You want to murder her?"

Was it true? Had my abrupt entrance really endangered the girl? Yet I had seen the look on his face when he thought he was alone. It was not the look of a physician restoring a patient to health. And the arm that had twice haunted me, and that Elise had feared—could I forget that writhing menace?

"You are lying!" I exploded. "Wake her or I'll have the police!"

A spasm of rage crossed the doctor's face. With an effort he stifled an outburst, but that moment of uncertainty convinced me. Elise was not sick; he did not dare to face an inquiry. His words came forth slowly.

"You are making a mistake, young man; you are too young to know. And with you Americans there is no reasoning. Others are as ignorant as you; they would not understand. I love my daughter; I would not let her suffer."

There was a queer solemnity in his words that I could not doubt. Somewhere in that vast, cruel mind was a tiny space reserved for Elise. He would sacrifice her willingly to his experiments, but he loved her, too. I was silent while he turned to the still form on the couch. He waved his hand lightly and murmured a word or two that I could not hear. I watched, spellbound by this revelation of his mastery over her. She quivered as if she had received a slight shock; then every tense muscle relaxed, her eyes slowly drew closed, and her heavy breathing became quiet. She seemed to have passed into a normal sleep. Doctor Bender turned to me.

"She will sleep this way all night. You are satisfied?"

I could no longer remain in his house; there was nothing further I could do. Yet I was still anxious for her safety.

"You will answer for it if this happens again," I threatened. "Next time I will come with the police!"

A cryptic smile curled the doctor's lips "Next time——"

"I will know if there's a next time!" I thundered. "Elise will let me know, and then watch out!"

His eyelids fluttered; a queer, startled look swept his face. "That is impossible—Elise would tell you? No!" His eyes were searching mine with a curious glitter.

I was troubled; should I tell him the whole truth? Or did he already know of the visitations I received—the warnings Elise had given me? Doctor Bender drew near.

"You mean, Herr Fallon—you have seen her spirit?"

His words were almost a hiss. Before those glittering eyes, filled with a knowledge of hidden things, I could only nod my head. His was the mastery now.

"It is unbelievable! It is a miracle!" There was exultation in his voice. "It is proved, then; it is true. Her soul, Herr Fallon! I have dissected a soul!"

I shrank from this monster who was clutching at me with his hands, but I could not check his torrent of eager words.

"We must go on, Herr Fallon, you and I. We cannot stop at this; it is too new, too great! You see? It is her love for you that makes it possible. We shall work together; we shall continue hand in hand. You will be Doctor Bender's first aide—his associate, Mein Herr! You will know things that no one knows——"

I must have gone mad with fury. This beast was proffering me friendship, fame, success, in return for Elise's soul! My reason left me. I flung myself upon him, flaying him with my fists, reaching for his throat. He was a huge man, but I had more than human strength. Then suddenly a hand like iron fell on me from behind and dragged me off. Alex had come into the room; perhaps he had been watching all the time.

Doctor Bender's hand went to his face; he brushed aside the perspiration and a thin trickle of blood from above his eye. Alex looked at him questioningly as he held me helpless in his grip. The doctor shook his head.

"No damage to him, Alex; that we cannot stand. But he has stayed too long; show him out." A minute later I was in the street.

I slept uneasily that night, and awoke much later than was my usual habit. A presentiment filled me that I had been foolish to leave Doctor Bender unwatched. What assurance had I that he would not continue his deviltry with Elise? Some way must be found to remove her from the power of this arch-fiend, and I determined to see the man at once to press my demands.

It was noon when I arrived at Doctor Bender's house. There was no answer to my ring, and the house seemed deserted. An inquiry among the neighbors confirmed my suspicion; Doctor Bender, his daughter, and his servant had left in a closed carriage that morning.

I felt a boundless sense of defeat—Elise gone, her father able to work his will upon her, I bound by my poverty to Vienna. In a contest of this sort I could not cope with Thorwald Bender. Yet I could learn where they were bound. A figure of his importance could not simply disappear. And from Doctor Tannenbaum, who was guileless enough, I discovered that Doctor Bender had a summer home at Ellenbruk, twenty miles away, where he had gone for a brief stay.

But what good would it be to follow? If he was determined to be rid of me, could he not go to France, to England, to the ends of the earth, where I could not possibly follow? Some time or other he must return to Vienna with Elise, and I forced myself to be content with that.

I sat reading in my room that night, only half attentive to my text, wondering how it was with the girl I loved. Suddenly I grew cold as the same sensation that I already knew so well swept over me. The lights seemed to flicker and go out. A pallid glow appeared that slowly took shape. This time I was in no doubt as to what it was. And how can I describe my feelings as again the face and form of Elise stood revealed, with the same imploring look and gesture that had haunted me before?

I sat there helpless, knowing what would happen. A writhing hand and arm would appear, stretching over her; she would give a final despairing look of anguish, and the

specter would fade. It would mean that her spirit had again succumbed to the compelling force of Doctor Bender; that it had passed into his keeping until he added one more experiment to his awful list.

But this time the vision did not disappear! No threatening arm appeared as before, but instead there was a faint glow which hung motionless above her head. It might or might not have been a hand. And the shade of Elise remained, sad-eyed, piteous, unfading. How long could it last? My blood was ice; every nerve aquiver—flesh and blood could only stand so much. And then as I became frantic with this never-ending torture, I seemed to know what Doctor Bender was about. His full strength was not being exerted tonight; he was permitting the shade of Elise to remain with me!

For what fell purpose? Was he testing me, or her? Or did he only wish to frighten me to death? The answer came quickly. To my maddened over-burdened brain it seemed as if the figure drew nearer to me; that it would actually touch me. I gave a groan and fainted dead away.

When I came to, long after, my head was in a whirl. The lights were again shining brightly; the specter was gone. But I knew that if this should continue my reason would topple. Somehow, some way, I must put an end to this phantom of the night. I must seek out Doctor Bender and free Elise from his dreadful influence. I knew where to find him, and I must act at once.

My preparations were soon made. A livery-stable much patronized by students furnished me a horse and buggy in spite of the late hour. It was about ten o'clock; in four hours I should be in Ellenbruk. I had in my pocket a good American six-shooter that I had brought from home. This time there would be no mistake; I would return with Elise.

What a drive it was, in the silence of the night on my fantastic errand! Who would have believed me if I had said I was on my way to answer the call of a wraith? Was I the crazy one, or Doctor Bender? I turned grim at the thought of that man—better an insane person to deal with than a ruthless scientist. But I had no fear; my goal was certain, and my plan was sure.

It was two o'clock when I arrived in Ellenbruk, and at the single hostelry in the village I was directed to Doctor Bender's chalet, about two miles up the hillside. I changed horses here, for mine was spent, and I knew that a mountain horse would be better on the trail than my city animal. The path was steep and rocky, and my progress necessarily slow. When I finally approached the house, I saw lights in the windows, and hastened my horse's steps. What if something had gone wrong and I were too late?

A long time I rapped on the door without response, and I was seeking another means of entrance when an old servant appeared. With a waste of many precious minutes he stammered his story. Doctor Bender and Elise had departed in their carriage just a short time ago. Where they had gone the servant did not know, but there was only one path they could have taken; I had not passed them, and so they must have taken the trail in the

opposite direction. They were ahead of me.

"Why did they leave?" I demanded anxiously.

The old man shrugged his shoulders. "Alex brought word you were coming. He was watching at the village."

So the doctor had expected me! How could one outwit a man like that? "And is Alex with them?" I fingered my revolver.

"He is ahead, on horseback; the doctor and the fraulein are in the carriage."

I had heard enough. Springing back into my seat, I started in pursuit. My light rig would soon overtake the heavy brougham of Doctor Bender. The road became steeper and more difficult, but once I reached the crest, I gave the horse his head; he could be trusted to follow the winding trail. The moon came out, but revealed only a bleak, deserted mountainside.

I traveled perhaps a mile down the steep declivity; then at a sharp turn in the road, where my horse instinctively slowed down, I heard the sudden, shrill neigh of a horse in pain. From far down the embankment it seemed to come, and I stopped my horse. Taking the lantern from the rig, I stepped to the edge of the road. I had a terrible fear of what had happened.

A huge gap appeared in the shrubbery, and there was a deep indentation of wheels in the loose dirt of the roadside. Some heavy vehicle had fallen down the hillside, and with my heart in my mouth I stumbled down the slope. Half-way down I stopped, petrified with horror. There was the splintered brougham of Doctor Bender—it had crashed into a tree. One horse was quite still underneath the wreckage; the other was thrashing away, entangled in his harness. With the dim aid of the lantern I searched frantically for the two occupants.

Under the brougham where he had been pinned I found Thorwald Bender. His eyes opened as my lantern flung its rays into his face. The pallor of death was upon him; his lips moved faintly and I strained to hear.

"I tried too much!" he breathed. "It is not given us to do too much. Be careful of Elise——" His expression in death was softer than I had ever seen it.

Elise had been flung far from the wreckage; and when I found her at last, she was unconscious and breathing with great difficulty. I fell on my knees beside her, and uttered a groan as I discovered her injury. A fracture at the base of the skull! Nothing I might do on the hillside would be of the least avail; she must be hurried to the nearest doctor's office. And even then——

Far below at the foot of the hill I could make out a cluster of lights—some village where there would be a doctor. With utmost care I lifted the unconscious form and bore it up to my carriage. Doctor Bender—there was no room for him in my little rig. His body would have to lie there until Alec or some one else could be sent back for it. Before I left the scene I drew my pistol and put the injured horse out of his misery; it was the only use I would find now for my weapon.

With my precious burden I drove as rapidly as possible down the road, and at the outskirts of the village I located the local doctor's residence. A doddering old man answered my noisy summons, and at the sight of him my courage sank. How would I ever be able to save Elise—I with my lack of skill and knowledge, and this feeble man my only aid?

I knew what had to be done. An operation, the most delicate in surgery, was the one chance to relieve the fatal pressure on the brain. No time to take her to a city hospital; nothing but to work at once as best I might. I prayed God for guidance, for this was a crisis I had never met before.

The aged doctor was in a nervous palsy; with trembling fingers he laid out his old and rusty instruments, brought me antiseptics, set out his drugs and bandages while I prepared Elise as best I might for the ordeal that was to come. Life or death it was, and I the only one to save her!

It was a dimly lighted room, with the lamplight concentrated on the narrow desk which I had to use as an operating table. Shadows hung on every side. In front of me the old man fumbled with the instruments I would require. Would my own nerves stand the strain? Could I keep my hand steady, my wrist from faltering?

I stood there for a moment dreading to begin. Suddenly I felt a wave of strength pass through me, a sense of power I had never felt before. I knew that what I had to do I would do well and safely. And as I firmly grasped the scalpel, I felt a touch on my arm—a hand with strong fingers was guiding me.

I never turned to look; never for a moment was I in doubt. There was a presence there, an unseen shape, but had I turned I know I would have seen that arm that I had known before, and always as a menace. Now it aided me, quickening my movements, steadying my untaught hand.

My own hand held the instrument, but every stroke, every incision, had the certainty, the decisiveness, the infallible sureness that belonged only to Thorwald Bender.

The greatest surgeon in Europe had returned for a brief space to repair a portion of the wrong he had committed.

Many a year has passed since that impossible night. Elise is in the next room even now, her hair a little gray, her figure a little bent, but sprightly as ever she was in the month when first I knew her. That fine young mind and healthy body survived the awful strain, and came out whole.

Years passed before we could speak of her father; the pain of recollection was too keen for either of us. But his work has been explained by many who mourned his end, and we know now that this grim figure was an earnest though mistaken zealot in the cause of science. That he nearly killed his daughter is a thing for which his soul must have done penance, but surely some of that sin was obliterated on the night when his spirit helped me to bring her back from the valley of the shadow.

The Mind Reader

(*Continued from page* 43)

to "throughth" at the séance on Baltic Street. But it was merely the prologue to events of more sinister import.

When I raised my eyes to those of Coralie Griffin, it was to find that she had gone deathly pale. Her mouth was drooping open and her whole body was trembling She got to her feet unsteadily.

"I—I feel ill," she stammered, addressing the company at large. "I want to go upstairs—alone—please."

Peter sprang to her side, but she waved him away and stepped into the hall. I was left without an excuse to attempt to halt her or to ask for an explanation. On the other hand, Stefan Kanarjian strode over to me.

"You offended my niece—yes?" he demanded. "What did you say to her?"

"Nothing that could have made her angry. Nothing, sir, I assure you."

His thick white eyebrows were drawn together and his lips were stern under the flowing mustache. "We shall see about that when she returns," he growled.

The four granddaughters had crowded together by the mantel-piece like frightened birds. Peter's face was a tormented mask, and whether he held me to blame I could not guess.

"Probably, Mrs. Griffin's heart—" I began.

I was interrupted by the heavy slamming of the front door. Instead of going upstairs, she had left the house. It was a case of precipitate flight—from what? I could not answer the question, but my instinct was to follow her and try to force matters to a crisis.

"Peter, will you come with me?" I cried. He fell into step loyally beside me, and together we dashed to the street.

We reached the sidewalk, to see Coralie already half way down the block, scurrying along on foot. She had come in a car, of course, but the Kanarjian home stood opposite the Long Island College Hospital and parking space in the street was limited. Her chauffeur had gone elsewhere, doubtless with orders to return for her at a later hour.

Peter and I glanced at each other. "It's natural for me to ask her what's wrong," he panted. "She can't resent that. Let's catch up with her."

We broke into a run, but the lead she had on us was enough to bring her to the Amity Street corner first. Then a curious thing happened. A policeman who had been standing on the curb thrust himself between us and the fleeing woman. He was scowling fiercely, and he fingered his nightstick.

"Hey, there, you bums!" he snarled. "She don't want to talk to you. This is a fine way for you to get pinched, the both of you."

"We're within our rights, Officer," said Peter. "She's my cousin."

"Your cousin! Ha, ha! That's a good one!" the cop roared. I realized to my dismay that it was logical for him to look

upon us as footpads or mashers, but there was a wild light in his eye, a sneer on his lips, which I could not account for.

Peter drew out a card. "Here's my [illegible] and address. My uncle lives at [illegible]mber 600 Henry Street, in this block. We were all visiting at his house. My cousin left in a temper over nothing, and I wanted to make up with her, that's all."

"Your're crazy as hell. That lady is the wife of the Governor of the State," declared the policeman angrily.

On the heels of this astounding assertion, he clutched Peter by the collar and shook him like a pup. He grabbed at me, but I dodged successfully.

"Beat it back where you belong, before I run you in," he yelled.

Coralie by this time was out of sight. We turned toward the Kanarjian home, but the apparently insane cop continued to shoo us along, jeering inarticulately.

"Keep on going," I said under my breath to Peter. "We mustn't drag your uncle into this."

Nothing further was said until we reached Atlantic Avenue.

"The Governor's wife!" my companion muttered then, in dazed tones. "Coralie's actions with you, and now this! Is the world going mad?"

I HAD ready a reply which would have given him much food for thought, but my attention was distracted by the signs of a growing confusion that prevailed on the avenue. The Armenian shops were more crowded than usual, and the customers were less concerned with making purchases than with arguing some burning question that led them to gesticulate in each other's faces. The passersby were in desperate haste. Many of them carried newspapers, which they read as they walked. From the direction of Court Street, the clamor of newsboys calling extras came to my ears in a persistent staccato.

A premonition of new evils caused my heart to sink, as I took Peter's arm and guided him to the center of excitement.

We found the streets about Boro Hall Square jammed with citizens, whose state of hysteria could only be ascribed to the threat of a public calamity. The reason was not far to seek. Headlines blacker and more exclamatory than those which had recorded the recent financial coup on Wall Street, now told of grim happenings in the city that day. There had been two outstanding tragedies. I can still conjure up a mental picture of the first "screamer" that caught my eye:

MARINES SLAY AND LOOT ON BROADWAY

I snatched a paper from the nearest newsboy, and backed into the doorway of an office building, where I was partly sheltered from the jostling mobs while I glanced over a report that was substantially as follows:

A squad of United States marines from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, commanded by a lieutenant, had attended the unveiling of the bust of a naval hero on Riverside Drive. At three in the afternoon, the ceremony over, they had marched down 86th Street to take the subway. Upon reaching Broadway, the men had suddenly broken formation and attacked the nearest stores, smashing the windows and plundering the contents. They had shot their lieutenant and all their petty officers when the latter had tried to restore order. Ten civilians and two marines had been killed in the general fracas that followed. It had taken a riot call for the policemen from four station houses to subdue and arrest the survivors of the squad.

"I don't know what got hold of us," a marine had declared later, in an amazing confession. "I guess I'll be set down as a hop-head or worse, but I swear to God that I was struck all of a heap with the idea we were on duty in some Central American town, and that the natives needed a lesson. I thought I'd heard an order to roughhouse them, in retaliation for sniping. When the lieutenant and the noncoms started to yell at us, *I saw them as Chinamen.* Don't ask me why I mixed up Chinks and Central America. I'm looney, I guess."

Meticulously, but with trembling hands, I folded the newspaper, turned it over and read the second story that was agitating New York. It was less obviously sensational, yet the menace to the community was darker because more far-reaching.

At exactly three forty-five P. M., the electricians at the main power houses of the Telephone Company had gone on strike. Improvised leaders had demanded double pay for all employees. They had made the grotesque statement that the President of the Company had promised them this increase. Bruskly rebuffed, the leaders had ordered the men to wreck the system, and had been obeyed. It was a vicious case of sabotage. A few exchanges were functioning with the new dial instruments, but generally speaking the city's telephone service had been cut off at a blow.

"This is a fine opportunity for Mayor Carter's prize Police Commissioner, Shaw, to demonstrate his worth. We know of no other Masked Marvel who has been given such a chance on his first day in office. Disorder is rampant in our midst. We look to Shaw to suppress it masterfully," the paper commented with savage irony.

I passed my hand across my forehead. The connection between the Mayor's strange appointment of Shaw and these later events, the massacre by the marines and the telephone strike, was at last clear to me. Even the behavior of the policeman who had taken Coralie for the Governor's wife must be counted as a minor manifestation of the plot. Daniel Buwalda, the man who could control minds because he could read them, was responsible for everything. But why, *why*, I asked myself in desperation, should he have perpetrated a series of incoherent and seemingly useless crimes? It suggested a mania for cruelty, more ape-like than human.

There were telephone booths in the lobby of the building where I stood. On the slim hope of being able to reach Owen, I entered one of them and dropped a nickel in the slot. But the receiver I placed against my ear was soundless, dead. The local exchange was among those which had been put out of commission.

I felt that I must see Owen without delay. I received a vague mental impression that he was calling to me to come. What to do with Peter, however, was a problem. I could not abandon him in this crisis, when his life had probably been declared forfeit by Buwalda. My brother would have to accept the necessity of meeting him, sooner or later. It might as well be now, I decided. Yet Owen's incognito should be maintained.

"Peter, I'm going to take you to the house of a very great spiritualist, but I cannot tell you his name. I've promised not to mention it to anyone," I said bluntly.

"Why should we go there? I'd rather we searched for Coralie. She may need protection." As he faced me, his eyes and mouth were moody.

"Coralie has been snatched far out of our reach for the present. Don't you realize that, old fellow?" I answered more gently. "She didn't go of her own free will. Buwalda summoned her. The magician is much too strong for you and me. So we'll ask help of a real psychic, and—well, I want you to promise to abide by whatever he says or does."

Peter clasped my hand silently. Behind the quick submissiveness he was always ready to give me, I could sense a smouldering wrath which nothing could stop from bursting into flame, I knew, should he ever meet his arch enemy man to man.

We plunged into the crowd and elbowed our way to the corner of Remsen Street, where we turned west. Progress became easier, though the sidewalks of the ordinary tranquil Heights were thick with frightened people in the gathering dusk. The newsboys had started to shout a fresh crop of extras.

"Judge Murdered in Court Room by Lunatic!" they bawled.

It was an indication of my state of mind that I would not pause to learn the details of this latest horror. One judge more or less no longer appeared to be of consequence.

AT Owen's house, I rang the bell, asked Peter to remain downstairs and hurried to the top floor. My brother was waiting for me on the landing.

"You have brought the Armenian with you," he stated calmly.

"Yes. It was the only thing to do. I will explain. But how did you guess it?"

"I never guess. It was a probability, since you were together this afternoon when hell broke loose. Besides, I sent you a telepathic message to bring him."

"You did, Owen? I was not conscious of it."

"Yet you obeyed. I repeated the warning that my name must be kept from him."

"It registered."

"Good. We have there an example of simple telepathy, such as has been observed for centuries but has never been controlled. I've tried to reach you a dozen times, and have never succeeded before today. Hm! It's scarcely important. Buwalda's method is the one worth knowing. Now tell me what happened at your tea. Make it brief. We can't hold the Armenian downstairs much longer."

"I met Coralie Griffin, all right—" I began. In a few minutes I had recited my story.

Owen's features had been growing harder as he listened to me.

"You passed one solid through another —*you!*" he exclaimed fiercely. "You had that chance, and failed to get an inkling of how it came about! God, I should have been there!"

"Jibing at me won't get us anywhere," I said wearily. "Have you no answer to the riddle? No theory?"

"I—have—none—as—yet," he replied, spacing out his words with bitter emphasis.

"Could it be that Coralie's brooch is the source of power?"

"Anything is possible. I've admitted to you that it might be a factor. But I shan't figure upon a one-hundred-per-cent magic brooch until its reality is forced upon me."

"Do you agree that Buwalda cut in on my session with Coralie, and ordered her away from me?"

"Certainly."

"And the public crimes of the past twenty-four hours?"

"Oh, all that stuff—of course! He is responsible," stated Owen, dismissing with an icy gesture the tragedies which had shaken New York.

"He has been trying out his power. The man is evidently resolved to dominate the world. He has every reason to want his own Police Commissioner in office, as a starter. And seeing that he reads minds and needs no telephones, he prefers that other people should be without the latter."

My head sank. I could find no words with which to comment upon the awful vista my imagination saw opening in front of me. What hope could Owen and Peter and I have of prevailing over Buwalda? I regarded us as being already as good as dead men.

"Come, brace up," said my brother. "We have a lot to do tonight. Get Kanarjian up here. Do you suppose he will obey instructions?"

"I have prepared him for that. He will obey," I answered.

I went to the head of the stairs and called. Peter was with us as fast as he could mount the four flights. I could not help admiring the cool, impressive manner in which Owen received him. My brother stood in the middle of the room, his arms folded in the sleeves of his wine-colored dressing gown, his head slightly thrown back, his countenance as static as carved marble. He looked very much the man of mystery.

"You have confidence in me?" was his first question.

"Because Hugh recommends you, yes," replied Peter.

"I understand you are interested in Mrs. Griffin's welfare."

"Profoundly so."

"You realize that the first essential is to control Buwalda, who controls her?"

"I do."

"Know, then, that Mrs. Griffin has been made practically a prisoner by Buwalda this afternoon. He will not let her out of his sight again."

I started, for I had no idea where Owen had obtained his information, and he would not vouchsafe details in Peter's presence.

"We cannot attack Buwalda—we cannot even locate him and Coralie Griffin—by ordinary means," he went on. "We ourselves are in desperate danger from Buwalda, except in this flat of mine. Here we are safe. I can invoke supernatural protection here."

The skin at the small of my back tingling, I remembered the weird female Presence that had appeared to us both, and was willing to take Owen's pledge at its face value.

Assertions of this stamp, however, were novel to Peter. I feared they would terrify him. Instead, they stiffened his resolve. "I am not afraid. Tell me what you wish me to do," he said, in a sharp, steady voice.

"Very well. I desire you and Hugh to start out at once, to find the girl, Anna Wagner, whom you once saw in a state of hypnosis, and bring her to me here. Try to persuade her to come quietly. Use force, if that should be necessary."

"Can you really mean it?" I demanded. "We are to go the lengths of kidnaping that girl? For what purpose? If you need her as a medium, the worst thing we can do is to antagonize her."

"Ordinarily, an unwilling medium is useless, I grant you," replied Owen. "But we have reached a crisis and must risk many things. We shall isolate Anna Wagner, as a counter stroke to what Buwalda is doing with Coralie. We shall hold her indefinitely as a captive, and you will find that I can make her talk. How is that for ruthlessness?"

"I accept your judgment," I said, and Peter supported me with a vigorous nod. "But don't you think you might come with us? We may have a hard job of it."

"I am sorry to seem to be shirking anything," answered Owen patiently. "The fact is, if I were to leave the apartment now, it would no longer be immune to invasion. We might lose our only refuge. I mean, we might discover upon our return that the protection we enjoy here has been neutralized. I cannot explain it any more clearly than that."

He was no physical coward. Though I like to think of myself as being a man of action in comparison with Owen, I am probably the less courageous of the two. At all events, I hesitated at the prospect of plunging again into the turbulent streets where every policeman might now be a deluded agent of Buwalda.

"Go get Anna Wagner," cried Owen sternly.

"We might just as well pitch in and be done with it, Hugh," added Peter in odd, flat tones, in which I detected an undercurrent of ferocity.

I brought my head up with a jerk. "All right," I said, addressing my brother. "We'll be back as soon as it's humanly possible."

Peter and I turned right-about-face to our task. As we reached the front door, the Armenian laid his hand on my arm.

"You forgot to tell me his name," he remarked.

"It's Doctor Proteus," I replied, giving the first name that came into my head. "A pseudonym, of course, but it fits him excellently well."

SACKETT Street, where Anna Wagner lived, is eight blocks south of Atlantic Avenue. The last named is the dividing line between Brooklyn Heights proper and the district now known as Red Hook, formerly South Brooklyn. The farther one gets away from the avenue the more rapid is the fall in the social scale. Even Baltic Street, where Daniel Buwalda had held his séances, has definitely gone shabby. Sackett Street, three blocks beyond, has seen its old brick mansions sink to the status of cheap rooming houses. The few flats there, were built under a primi tenement law which did not require h ing or hot water, and held it unnecessary that center rooms should be provided with windows.

A curious, provincial neighborhood is Red Hook, remote from the rest of Brooklyn because it has never been tapped by subways or elevated railroads. A single trunk street car line, which runs down Court Street to Gowanus Bay, is its sole link with the heart of the borough. It is apt to be lawless and hard boiled. Its pleasure resorts are the only ones left in Greater New York which suggest the Bowery of the old days. The stranger is not particularly welcome.

In other words, when one gets as far south as Sackett Street, it is well to be on one's guard after dark. That being a fact at ordinary times, I considered the peril at least doubled on a night when the nerves of the city had been shocked.

But Peter and I had no sooner left the house on Columbia Heights than I knew we were to be targets for trouble, whether we invaded Red Hook at once or postponed our errand.

A man stepped from behind a lamp post a few yards down the block, and commenced to trail us brazenly. At the next corner, I halted abruptly. The man also came to a stop. It seemed to be a matter of no importance to him how long I chose to hold up the procession. He merely lounged on the sidewalk and watched me from under a derby hat tilted forward to his eyebrows. I then swung in his direction, with Peter following me. The man retreated at about the same rate of speed that I advanced. He twisted his head around on his shoulder so that he could keep me in view. His hands were plunged into his overcoat pockets, where it was safe to assume that he had weapons for an emergency.

I felt that it would be madness to start a fight in the circumstances. Much better to figure on shaking off so obvious a spy, I concluded. So I signalled to Peter, and we went on our way with redoubled haste.

"The thing I can't understand is why we're allowed to live, by fellows of that sort," I said. "What's the object in shadowing us, when we could be put out of the way so easily?"

"The man is one of Buwalda's agents, of course," muttered Peter.

"We suppose that he is, consciously or unconsciously. The same applies to the cop who prevented us from talking to Coralie a few hours ago. Why did that cop not shoot us, or at least place us under arrest? It's beyond me."

Peter shook his head helplessly, and I said no more for fear of adding to my own bewilderment as much as for any other reason.

The sidewalks became crowded as we approached Atlantic Avenue, and from the Boro Hall section there was a rumble of innumerable voices. I had imagined that we would have to walk to Sackett Street. The distance made it hardly worth while to take the trolley, and cabs are always uncertain in times of confusion.

On the avenue, however, we found three

taxis drawn up by the curb. Two of them were without chauffeurs. Behind the wheel of the third, a young Irishman lolled, his cap on one ear and a cigarette dangling from his lips.

"Can you take us a few blocks?" I demanded.

"Surest thing you know," he replied boisterously. "I may run over a couple of boobs on the way, but anything goes tonight."

"Why do you say that?"

"The town's gone crazy, because of the murders and no telephones. Ain't you read the news? People are running across the streets the way the chicken crossed the road, and the cops don't know who to pinch. Hell, what's the diff?"

"Be as careful as you can. I don't want to land in a station house," I said anxiously. And I gave him Anna Wagner's address.

Peter and I entered the cab and slammed the door. But the driver, in spite of his loud talk, was slow in starting. I could not see him clearly because the glass that separated us was filmed with mist. Impatiently, I rubbed it with my sleeve. A profile leaped up before my eyes. It was that of the chauffeur. He was looking toward the sidewalk, and his lips were moving. I then flung myself over to the side window of the cab. Standing very close to us was the "shadow" from Columbia Heights. With his hand raised to the level of his face, he completed a message directed at the chauffeur in some kind of sign language, turned on his heel and dashed away. At the same moment, the vehicle lurched forward.

"Good Lord! Did you get that maneuver?" I cried to Peter.

He had been looking over my shoulder. "Yes," he answered in a toneless voice. "There is conspiracy on all sides of us—mystery, doom! To think he should have known the driver!"

"He may not have known him. Don't you understand? Buwalda controls his agents mentally, and no doubt can extend his sorcery to strangers the agents meet."

I HAMMERED on the glass and yelled to the chauffeur to stop and let us out. But he merely turned his head, grinned broadly, threw the clutch wide open and sent his car careening up the avenue at a speed that mocked at all regulations. He swept around the corner at Court Street like a fire engine, and ate up the long blocks to Sackett Street in less than a minute. Then, seeming to fear he had drawn official attention, he dodged down another street, completed a rough circle and landed up at the door of the house to which we were bound.

Peter and I had been hanging on to each other, to minimize the formidable bumping of the cab. We now tumbled out to the sidewalk, and I at least was fighting mad.

"What do you mean—" I began, thrusting my face towards that of the chauffeur.

HE threw up his hand and slashed it down again in a scornful gesture, the palm outward.

"Keep your shirt on!" he said. "I done you a favor, if you only knew it. Instead of bawlin' me out, you should be singin' a 'Hail Mary!' to rejoice that I hate the cops the way I hate them."

"You may think it revenge on the cops to break the speed limit, but I don't," I said angrily.

"Shoot! I don't mean that," he chuckled. "I'm thinkin' of the big bull on Atlantic Avenue, and what he wanted me to do with you."

"At the time we got into your cab?" I asked, as the connection clicked in my brain.

"Sure. That hefty captain—"

"Was he really a police captain?" I insisted curiously.

"Hell, yes! Didn't you see his cap, and the gold lace and all? Well, he says to me: 'Drive those two bums over to the Poplar Street station and give 'em in charge. They're wanted for burglary. I can't go along with you, but if you pass an officer on the way tell him the facts and let him make the arrests.' That's what he says to me, and he follows it up with a high sign the bulls use down here in Red Hook when they mean business."

"He picked the wrong man for the job, eh?"

"You said it. I acted as if his wishes was O. K. with me, but I was thinkin': 'I hope you choke, you big stiff!' And as for you bozos, you may be second-story workers for all I care s'long as you don't forget to slip me a good tip."

I looked hard at his humorous, freckled Irish face and felt certain he was speaking the truth. He had been in contact with one of Buwalda's illusions, but at second hand it had not been powerful enough to dominate him. His own obsession against the police had been the stronger, and thus a situation had been created that might be turned to our advantage.

Pulling a ten dollar bill from my pocket, I pressed it into his hand. "That's just a starter," I said. "If you stick by us this evening, I'll give you twenty more."

He winked. "Suits me."

"What's your name?"

"Tim Nolan, of Pioneer Street, this section."

"All right, Nolan. We're looking for a girl in this house, and we expect to take her away with us."

"Rough stuff, huh?"

"Not unless our plans go wrong. Any way, I want you to wait for us. Keep your eye open for anybody who seems to be on our trail, and warn us if there's real danger. Will you do that?"

"Surest thing you know. What am I to call you?"

"My name is Hugh Purcell," I answered quietly, for I saw no reason in the extraordinary circumstances to conceal my identity. "My friend here is Mr. Peter Kanarjian."

Nolan nodded, slouched down on the small of his back and lit a cigarette. "Bring on the jane," he said flippantly. "I'm with you to the finish."

PETER and I ran up the steps of the dingy brick house, and I rang the bell. A woman in a frowsy wrapper came to the door. She looked at us apathetically while I explained that we were friends of Anna Wagner and wished to see her.

"Second floor rear. I guess she's home," she mumbled, and turned away.

In Red Hook, the niceties of announcing visitors are seldom observed.

We mounted the stairs and knocked. A light, dragging footstep approached the

door from the other side. Then Anna opened to us. I had taken it for granted that she would receive us sympathetically. We had rescued her from the streets, or at least had appeared to do so, on the occasion of her arrival at my flat. She had invited us to go to see her.

But Anna was now a very different girl from the victim of hypnosis on whom I had been banking. She was once more the mouse-like creature I had first observed taking tickets at the séance on Baltic Street. The color fled from her face when she saw us standing before her. She shook all over. Yet her lips tightened with a suggestion of that stubbornness of which weak people are often capable.

"May we come in and have a chat with you, Miss Wagner?" I asked.

"I'm all alone. Wh—what do you want?" she stammered.

"I happened to meet some one who saw you near Prospect Park when you were sleepwalking the other night," I lied. "Thought you'd be interested. The man is a doctor and may be able to give you some good advice."

"I don't need advice. Nothing of that kind will ever happen to me again."

"Won't it?" I said sternly, perceiving the necessity of overaweing her. "It's a mistake to be too confident. Your health is at stake."

My words scared her beyond reason. She stepped backwards, wringing her hands, and we improved the opportunity to follow her into the room. I felt a deep pity for her, and not a little shame at myself, as she scurried here and there seeking vainly for a way of escape. Finally, she sat on a rickety divan, and raised pale blue eyes to meet ours. Tears were trickling slowly down her cheeks.

"You must not be frightened of us. We come here as your friends," I declared as convincingly as possible.

"It—it is not true. You are enemies," she surprised me by retorting.

I knew then that Buwalda had somehow re-established his influence over her. It would be useless to ask her whether she had seen him, for she would surely deny it. The reasonable assumption was, that he had not had the time to give to a physical interview. But if he had taken the trouble to reach out for her mentally, he would not want her to fall into our hands. He would be aware of what was happening at the present moment, and he would act. We were lost unless we accomplished our mission with utmost speed.

"Miss Wagner, the doctor I mentioned would like to treat you for sleepwalking," I said bluntly. "Will you go with us to his office?"

"No, no, no!" she wailed. "I won't go anywhere with you. I'll let you kill me first."

I MOVED my face closer to hers and gazed steadily into her eyes. My object was to beat down her will in a normal, human way. But to my astonishment I saw all the muscles of her face start to relax, while the luster faded from her eyes. I remembered then that, in awakening her from her last trance, I had told her she would forever be subject to hypnotism at my command. It is a scientific fact that an order issued to the subjective mind under such conditions takes precedence over any other influence that may be brought to bear.

"Anna Wagner, you will now pass into a trance similar to the one that possessed you two evenings ago," I intoned solemnly. "You cannot choose but obey me."

She offered no resistance. Her head swayed on her thin neck, then steadied to complete immobility. Her mouth softened, and her stare became fixed. Her state of hypnosis seemed actually to be a continuation of her earlier experience, and I thought it likely that she had been placed instantly *en rapport* thereby with the spirit of James Griffin. I longed to question her, but could not risk another minute's delay.

I glanced at Peter. His brooding melancholy had grown stoical, as if nothing could startle him any more. He bit on his lower lip and shrugged one shoulder. "You, too, are a magician," he muttered.

"Come with us, Anna," I said, ignoring his remark.

The girl arose without a word, put on her hat and coat, and walked between Peter and myself through the doorway and down the stairs to the street.

We found Tim Nolan pacing the sidewalk, his hands hanging by the thumbs to his trouser pockets.

"Looka here, boss, there's a gang collected at the Court Street end of the block, and they're not overlookin' what happens around this cab," he said, addressing me.

"We don't have to leave by way of Court Street, do we?"

"We do not. But there's just as big a mob at the other end," he announced, in plain enjoyment of the dramatic suspense.

"HOW do you know they're interested in us?" I demanded, worried.

"Scouts from both sides have been down here given' me the once over. I can 'most always smell trouble, and I smell it now."

"Nonsense. If they wanted us, they'd rush us at once. They wouldn't have to bottle up the street."

Nolan gave me a pitying look. He stepped on to the running board of the cab. "I'll be askin' you just one thing. Are you dead set on makin' a getaway?"

"Certainly."

"Well, leave it to me."

I lifted the hypnotized Anna into the cab, as the murmuring of the distant mob reached our ears. Peter followed more slowly. Nolan moved into his seat.

"Go easy, now. Slip through the crowd without any trouble, if you can," I said.

Nolan grimaced comically at me over his shoulder. Swinging the taxi around until it was in the middle of the roadway and headed for Court Street, he sent it gliding smoothly forward for a few yards. But, as I might have guessed, the fighting Irish lunatic had no notion of managing the situation with diplomacy. Suddenly he launched into a wild burst of speed that far outdid his exploits of the outbound trip.

"Whoopee! On to the Rhine! And damn the casualties!" he yelled.

I have never learned to this day whether we killed any of the gangsters who tried to stop us as we thundered around the turning. The car bumped over obstacles that almost capsized us. I prefer not to know whether they were the bodies of human beings. Shrieks and curses clamored in our ears. A dozen revolvers were fired. Bullets pierced the hood of the machine, and fragments of wood and leather were sprinkled upon us. I caught vague glimpses in the darkness of twisted faces and hands that clutched at us in passing. But none of us were wounded, and the peril merely gave a new stimulus to Tim Nolan's reckless soul. Once clear of Sackett Street and speeding northward, he broke into peal after peal of laughter.

Bizarre as was the chauffeur's conduct, however, there was something even weirder in going through such an experience in the company of Anna Wagner. Sitting bolt upright and staring ahead of her, she had seemed unaware of the tumult. This girl as timid as a hare, who ordinarily would have fainted if a gun had been fired in her direction, had maintained the poise of a visitor from another world to whom human strife was meaningless. It could not have been otherwise, since she was hypnotized. I shivered, nevertheless.

When we reached Boro Hall, I leaned forward and gave Nolan the number of the house on Columbia Heights. He doubled into Montague Street, but halted of his own accord at the near corner of Owen's block.

"There's that big bull again," he growled.

On the sidewalk directly in front of the house stood the "shadow" whom Nolan saw as a captain of police.

"Never mind him," I said. "We'll fight our way by, if we have to."

"But I do mind, boss," drawled the young desperado. "Just watch me learn him a lesson."

He drove the taxi slowly down the street, skirted the sidewalk across the way from Owen's house, and proceeded several doors beyond the point where he should have stopped. Obviously surprised and curious, the spy started to cross the roadway, Then Nolan reversed his engine, and sent the car lurching backwards with a violence that strained its gears to the breaking point. He missed his man by inches. The spy reeled in his tracks, fell his full length on the asphalt, then scrambled erect again and fled in the direction of Pierrepont Street.

Nolan was chuckling as he landed us at our door.

I paid him the twenty dollars promised. "You're a good scrapper, even if you *are* crazy," I said. "Do you want to work for us some more?"

"You bet."

"There are no telephones, so the best thing is for you to call here tomorrow at ten and ask for 'Purcell.'"

He saluted and drove off.

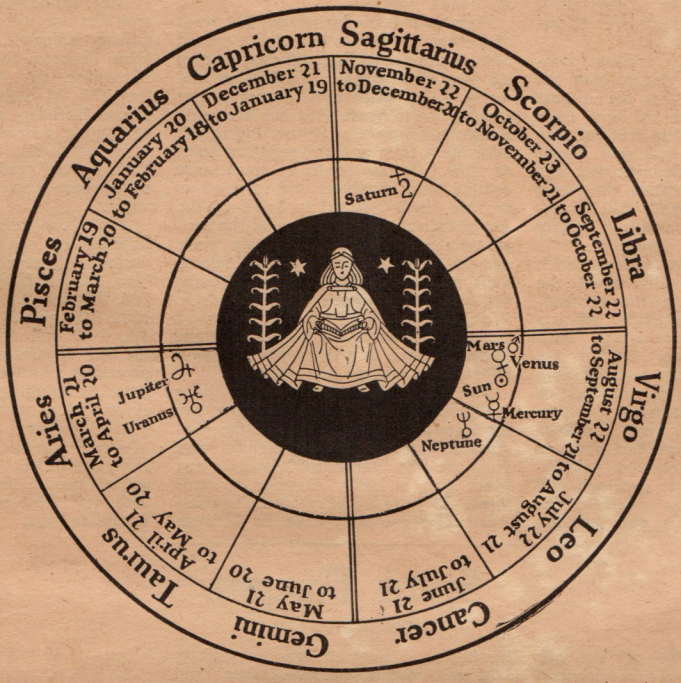
As Peter, Anna and I mounted the stairs to Owen's flat, the roaring of a distant explosion shook the city.

Owen holds a second seance, of which Anna Wagner serves as the medium, and ghosts appear in amazingly dramatic fashion. The Purcells learn essential facts about Buwalda and the source of his power. The battle begins to seem less unequal. But Owen's control, the weird succubus Vulpia, what of her? Is she an ally? Or is she one no longer? Read what happened in November GHOST STORIES. *On sale September 23rd.*

Were You Born in September?

Let the Stars Indicate Your Fate

By "Stella"



THE CHART TO GUIDE YOU TO SUCCESS

FROM the full bloom of Summer we pass to the time of Harvest, when the Sun is in Virgo and the earth yields a rich harvest of mellow beauty. Yellow goldenrod and purple asters line the wayside, rosy-cheeked apples and dark clusters of luscious grapes hang before us invitingly, and acres of ripe grain repeat once more the promise that seedtime and harvest shall not fail.

Each year, from August 22nd to September 21st, the Sun passes through Virgo, the sign of harvest. And just as the fruits of the earth are now ready to be gathered, you who were born under the rule of Virgo are destined to glean knowledge from the varied experiences that life brings. You are intellectual, conscientious and hard-working, smarter in many ways than most of your companions; critical, very fastidious, and gifted with an extraordinary power—which can be very irritating—of knowing just how anything done by anyone else can be improved upon. You are the doubting Thomases, demanding constantly, "Why?" and "What is the Use of it?"

Virgo being the healthiest of all the signs, this should be your slogan—"Health of Mind and of Body." Take it as your motto in life and you will achieve both Success and Happiness.

Youthful Mercury watches over your destiny and, with the help of Venus and the Sun, is doing all he can to give you a happy and prosperous time. He will help you in your studies and in your business and is always specially interested in contracts or writings of any kind. The Sun increases your vitality and gives you hope, confidence and courage, and lovely Venus promises you lots of pleasure and success in social affairs, love and sympathy in your home, and financial success.

Mars also is interesting himself in you just now; he gives you energy and enthusiasm and if you are engaged in mechanical work of any description, it is Mars who urges you on to greater and greater achievement. If your birthday comes between the 15th and 22nd of September, this martial vibration may be almost too much for you and in consequence you may be rather excitable and irritable—or you may be too adventurous and even reckless. Watch your temper and take sensible precautions against possible accident

during the first two weeks of September, and prove to yourself that you can control the more destructive side of the vibrations from fiery and aggressive Mars.

Those born during the last ten days of August are now receiving powerful vibrations from Saturn and may find themselves face to face with annoyances and obstacles which prevent them from accomplishing what they wish to do. They may feel depressed and unable to see things from a commonsense point of view. With some of them, tears will be very near the surface and the more they give way to depression the worse they will feel, for an adverse Saturn is like a heavy cloud which will settle right down over us unless we get away from it.

Anything to do with writing, contracts, and travel will tend to turn out rather badly just now for the August Virginians, but if they will keep their minds firmly fixed on the brighter side of life—if they can—and will accept things as they come, realizing that this is only a temporary condition, the power of this Saturnian influence will be lessened and they may even be strong enough to dissipate it altogether.

Thoughts being things, worry—which means thinking constantly about the worst features of the matter demanding our attention—naturally attracts the very thing we wish to avoid. Turn your thoughts deliberately towards the beneficent rays of Venus and the Sun, mix with your friends, do not think or talk of your worries, but when you have to face them, use all your commonsense and do the best you can, and you will find that your mountains will become mole-hills and your own self will be all the stronger for whatever experience you have had to pass through.

Extreme caution is advisable in all matters which concern real estate, shipping, mining or contracts because these come directly under the jurisdiction of Saturn and of Mercury, your ruler. Also, while under this Saturnian influence, you should spend as much time as possible out of doors and thus build up your vitality.

Geminians born about the 23rd of May and the Sagittarians whose birthday comes during the last week of November should be especially careful about taking cold. Elderly people born about the same time are advised to take every precaution against the possibility of falls or accidents which might result in broken bones.

Piscarians born during the last week of February will also experience a good deal of annoyance and difficulty during the next few weeks. Depression and worry being their arch enemies, they should take to heart what has been said about the influence of Saturn and should cultivate a calm and philosophical point of view. Sorrow seems so much more definite than happiness and most of us are too much inclined to dwell on the sorrowful rather than grasp all the happiness that we can. The Stars point out our good times and, if we listen to their warnings, teach us how to make the best of our more difficult periods. We are not ruled by our stars; they are meant to guide us to success, but we ourselves have to make a great enough effort to overcome the obstacles.

The Taureans and the Capricornians are favorites of fortune just now, for the stars are with them. Like the Virginians, they are receiving helpful rays from the Sun, Venus and Mercury, and Mars also is kindly disposed towards them. If your birthday comes between April 21st and May 16th or between December 21st and January 16th, therefore, you may expect an enjoyable time for the next few weeks. Your health will be good and you will be filled with energy and enthusiasm, your business affairs will prosper, and from every point of view things will go well with you.

This is a good time for Capricorn to gratify its ambition and to consolidate its success and for Taurus to overcome its fatal habit of procrastination and to find a proper outlet for some of its latent power.

Venus is busy preparing all sorts of pleasant things for you and will see that Cupid does not pass you by.

The Taureans born between May 16th and 21st are still under Neptune's tantalizing influence. Like the Scorpions born between the 18th and 21st of November, the Aquarians born about the 17th of February, and the Leos whose birthday comes about the 21st of August, they are full of dreams and a vague unrest. Cupid does not pass them by; he sends them a nasty, two-edged dart—then he laughs and runs away.

The days when the planetary influences are most generally fortunate during August and September are the 11th, 23rd and 31st of August and the 2nd, 7th and 27th of September. The 12th, 14th and 30th of August and the 4th, 14th and 18th of September are the least fortunate days in so far as the planetary vibrations are concerned. If there is anything in which you especially wish to succeed, try to begin it on one of the good days. For the people of Virgo, the 6th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 20th, 23rd, 25th, and 26th of August and the 1st, 2nd, 6th, 7th, 16th, 17th, 20th, and 23rd of September are also favorable days.

Spirit Fingers

(*Continued from page* 16)

flashed. "It shall come back," she said, almost fiercely. "Once again the world shall hear Nuncia sing."

If I could have foreseen the future, I would have driven her from the room, and Ilma would have been saved weeks of torture. For this woman had put her hand into eternity, and wanted to bring back to life a thing that had died. Only God can do that, and it is madness to try.

Then Ilma brought me up with a start. "My maid was taken ill a moment ago," she said hurriedly. "She's over behind that screen—lying on a couch. I think we had better call a doctor, or perhaps the ambulance."

"The ambulance would be better," said Nuncia, slowly. "She is very ill, I'm quite sure."

The assurance in her tone made me look quickly at her. She met me with a slow look from her dead eyes, and stepped aside to withdraw the screen. "You may see for yourself, *mon ami.* The girl is very, very ill."

I WENT to the couch and bent over it. The little Hungarian maid was lying as if dead, her face white and still, her eyes closed, her hands limp and nerveless on her breast. Plainly, she was unconscious.

"I can't imagine what's the matter," said Ilma, anxiously. "When I went on for my last scene, she seemed all right."

"She was laughing and talking," interposed Nuncia.

"Were you in here?" I asked quickly.

"I had just introduced myself to Miss Berli. I wanted to tell her how lovely her voice was."

"But I couldn't wait," Ilma spoke up. "I had to go on for the last scene, and it required a change of costume. We chatted while I made my change. Then I begged Madame Nuncia to stay here until I came off, but when I got back, Kreska was lying on a couch complaining of a frightful headache that had come all at once."

"Fortunately I had some headache powders with me," said the dead-eyed woman. "She will sleep now, but I'm afraid she is very ill."

"Then please call an ambulance and have her taken to the hospital," Ilma asked me. "I wouldn't have her seriously ill for anything; she's such a dear."

"Of course," I replied, and went to the door. "You'll have to get another maid to help you temporarily, Miss Berli. Can I be of assistance in finding one?"

A peculiar, throaty chuckle came from Nuncia. "Ah, *mon ami,* it will not be necessary, for Miss Berli may do me the honor. I should like so much to assist her—just to be near her—just to hear her wonderful voice." She turned to the astonished Ilma. "You will allow me, Miss Berli?" she asked.

"Oh, no," expostulated Ilma. "Not you—not Lola Nuncia as my maid."

Lola Nuncia laughed. "You must remember that I am very poor. The place would be a godsend for me. Besides, it is only for a short time—until your maid comes back, Miss Berli. Until then, it will give me so much pleasure. Promise me—please." She held out both hands, and Ilma, after a moment's hesitation, grasped them.

"You're so kind, Madame. It is such a favor."

Lola Nuncia threw back her head and laughed. "A favor! My dear, you haven't any idea!"

There was something dreadful to me in her laugh. It caught me up like a sudden smash between the eyes, and from that moment Lola Nuncia changed for me. Instead of a pathetic, disappointed woman,

she became someone filled with a strange, impenetrable evil. It was cunning and sly. It hovered over her like the curse of a slanderous whisper. From the time I closed the door of Ilma's room, Lola Nuncia and I stood against each other—something told me she had seen my opposition and resented it. Heaven only knew how or when she would revenge it.

There followed two weeks in which I used all the arts of the press agent in broadcasting the fame of the beautiful little Hungarian-American with the golden voice. The critics and artists raved over her. But Ilma took it all as might have been expected—she had known what dire poverty was; and now, while she stepped overnight into the fame of Broadway and the luxuries which success brings, she remained the wistful, appealing, tender little girl who had come home from Europe broken-hearted, wide-eyed, and frightened, bringing her mother in a gray coffin.

I used to run in during the performance and worship her from the rear of the theater, but I found no chance to speak with her. Then, one night, I went back-stage, after the last curtain, and rapped at her door. The voice of Nuncia, strangely hushed, bade me enter.

ILMA was lying on the couch, her eyes closed as if sleeping. Nuncia—in a maid's dress—hovered over her, and again I felt that spirit of evil which she seemed to embody. Her dead eyes rested on the girl's face, and it seemed they held, deep in their brown depths, a strange power of fascination, which even I, hard-boiled as theater-life had made me, could feel.

The woman spoke—in her voice the power of command. "Ilma, wake up! Someone wants to see you."

The girl stirred, a quiver going over her body. Her eyelids fluttered.

"Wake up, Ilma, wake up. You're are feeling much better now. All your weariness has gone. Come! Wake up!"

Slowly Ilma's eyes opened. She sighed deeply, and raised herself upright. Over her face went a wan smile, and she held out her hand to me.

"I must have been sleeping. I didn't hear you come in."

The dead-eyed woman took the words from her mouth. "Ilma hasn't been feeling well, lately, and so I try to get her to take a little rest when she comes off. Just a moment or two of sleep—what you call 'forty winks.'" She smiled, and turned to the girl. "How do you feel now, *carissima?* Well—and very happy?"

"Oh, I'm quite all right now," said Ilma, and raised her white face to the light. "Isn't it absurd—my growing tired? I can't imagine what's happening to me. I've only been feeling like this the last few days."

"Perhaps you'd better see a doctor," I suggested.

But Nuncia put off the idea, with a positive shake of her head.

"Oh, you men! The first thing you want a woman to do, is to see a doctor. Doctors! Pouff! What do they know of artists?" She touched the bronze hair of the singer lightly—as if it were sacred. *"Mon ami,"* she went on, "Ilma is an artist. What she gives to the public, she must feel herself, and it is exhausting. She grows weary, giving—giving—giving. But that is her life. She must always give, and her body will pay. But it is nothing, my friend, nothing. The true artist loves to pay, if she can keep giving. Is it not so, Ilma?"

Ilma smiled brightly. "Let's forget it," she said. "I'm all right now—perfectly wonderful."

I told her what I wanted her to do for a little extra publicity, and graciously, as always, she agreed to my suggestion. Then I turned to Nuncia.

"I hope you wont let anything happen to her, Madame," I said, pointedly. "She is very precious, you know, and if anything should happen, the public might hold you responsible."

SHE regarded me for a long while through heavy, half-closed lids, then shrugged her shoulders. "You need not worry over Ilma," she replied, coldly. "Whatever will happen to her, will be for the best. Of that you may rest assured."

I left them, but the words of Nuncia stuck in my mind. They seemed to have a double meaning; and the one which was not openly apparent, pointed to the fact that something was going to happen to the girl. Brooding over it, it seemed to me that it would be something horrible—that it might affect her career, perhaps her life.

I didn't like the fact that Ilma was sleeping when I went to her room—sleeping in a kind of stupor, still as a corpse, her hands and face as white as death, her breath coming with an occasional deep sigh. Neither did I like the command in Nuncia's voice when she woke her, nor her suggestion that Ilma would be well and happy when again in her right senses. I had seen hypnotists wake their subjects with the same suggestion.

The whole thing looked wrong to me. Around it was the dank atmosphere of a poisonous swamp, but there was nothing on which I could put my hand. Not long afterward, my suspicions were heightened by a talk with the musical director. I found him in the musician's room, just before the curtain went up.

"I'm worried about Berli," he said, with a frown between his eyes. "When she opened, I thought she would be a great star. She had the voice, the looks, the temperament—everything. But the last two weeks, something is holding her back. I don't know what it is."

"You mean she isn't singing as well as she ought?"

"I don't mean she isn't singing as well, but—she's afraid. That's it—she's afraid. She doesn't grasp it as she used to. She trails along on her high notes, as if she's afraid she won't reach them."

"But she can do it," I argued.

"Of course she can, and that's why I can't understand her. Why should she be getting afraid now, I'd like to know?" he demanded, with some heat. "For three weeks she was glorious, wonderful. Her voice rose like a golden arrow. Now, suddenly, she has started to go back. For the last two weeks, she's been nervous. Her eyes hardly leave me. There's a fear in her voice."

"The last two weeks," I said musingly—"ever since Madame Nuncia has been with her."

He looked up quickly, his gray mustache jutting forward. "Nuncia! what do you know about her?"

"Nothing, except that she used to be a great opera singer."

"I know." He nodded, sagely. "I knew her years ago. She was a great singer, a marvelous contralto, and a very beautiful woman."

"It appears she went all to pieces," I began, but he took the words from my mouth.

"I REMEMBER all about it. She was married to a physician, a despicable man, who became interested in psychical subjects. He was said to be quite a hypnotist, but gradually lost his practice because of the strange things he tried to do to his clients.

"He was insanely jealous of his wife, and used to hang around the theater, glaring at everyone who noticed her. And she had a lot of admirers, I tell you. But suddenly, something happened to her voice; it began to crack. The first time it happened, the woman went almost crazy. She raved and ranted in her dressing-room like a wild thing, while her husband simply stood and stared at her, with his great black eyes like sparkling coals of fire. But, after a while, she quieted, and they left the theater together.

"For a time, the man stayed away from the opera; then suddenly he appeared again, sitting out front in the same seat at every performance, glaring at her. One night, in a big song, she went suddenly smash on a note. She stood in the center of the stage, clutching her throat, her face terrified. Then she rushed from the stage to her dressing-room, and, after a while, her husband came back. The people on the stage told me they could hear them talking in low, venomous words. Once, the man's voice rose to a shout.

"'You'll never sing again,' he screamed. 'Never—never! I'll take your voice with me.'

"Madame Nuncia flung open her door and rushed out, her hair streaming, her gown torn open at the throat. Then there came a single shot from a pistol in the dressing-room, and the woman fainted.

"They found him in the room, dead, with a singed blue mark in his temple, from which the blood was flowing, and the pistol in his hand. When Lola came to, she stared at what had been her husband, then tried to sing. But the only sounds that came from her throat were coarse, raspy notes. Then she laughed, with a man's laugh, and grasping her coat she fled out the door and disappeared. They never heard from her after that."

I was on my feet, as the bell sounded for the overture. "She's back again now, Cardini, and she's brought the evil, horrible personality of her dead husband with her. I don't know what's happening to Ilma, but I'll find out, and if there's anything that woman is doing to ruin her, she shall answer to me personally."

The director shook his head. "Better go slowly, young man. You're delving into something that you have no right to inquire into."

"I'm going to help Ilma Berli, no matter what it does to me," I said, emphatically.

THE director looked at me quizzically, then shrugged his shoulders. He must have seen in my eyes the love I bore her, but he said nothing until he reached the little door which led up to the orchestra pit. Then he stopped, and turned around.

"If you need any help, you can call on me," he offered. Then, after a slight hesitation: "I mean, of course, if it's anything human. I wouldn't like to deal with Nuncia's husband."

I gritted my teeth. "I will," I said.

As I thought over the problem confronting me, I saw no way to prevent Nuncia from going ahead with her evil designs. I had nothing to prove against her, and it was easy to see that she had ingratiated herself into the affections of the motherless girl. A bare accusation against her, without proof, would bring forth only a smile of disbelief. But I felt that Nuncia's association with Ilma would prove her ruin in some way or other, and I was half-mad at my powerlessness. Then, all at once, I was brought into action, because I became convinced that delay would mean the destruction of Ilma Berli, that every moment would count.

I had gone back to see her after a Monday's evening performance. She had seemed terribly frightened while she sang. Leaning over the back rail, I had watched her, and I had seen that her eyes were wide with terror; that she was trying, feeling, grasping for her high notes, as if fearful they would escape her.

I approached her door quietly, and held my ear to the portal. Perhaps you will say this was not the proper thing to do, but it was no time to consider anything but Ilma's safety. Through the door, I heard the voice of the dead-eyed woman. Her words were tense with meaning—a dull, steady repetition of one idea.

"Ilma—you can hear no voice but mine. No sound can reach you but my voice. The time is approaching when my voice shall pass into you, Ilma. You will become what I was, the world's greatest contralto. He said he'd take my voice with him, but he can't keep it, Ilma. It will come back to you—to your throat. You will be Lola Nuncia again—young, beautiful, with the glorious voice that was mine. He cannot keep it from you, Ilma. He cannot."

I pushed open the door and sprang within. There on the couch lay Ilma, her face white. She was sleeping, as before, and over her leaned Nuncia.

The dead-eyed woman, drawing in her breath like a snake's hiss, got to her feet and stepped across to me soundlessly.

"Why are you here? Why did you not knock?"

"What are you doing to her?" I gasped, my eyes on Ilma, my hands clenched.

Lola Nuncia merely smiled. "Oh, *mon ami*, you are so impulsive. Ilma is taking her forty winks. Go—please. Do not interrupt her, she is very weary."

On the couch Ilma was as still as death. "Ilma," I shouted, and louder: "Ilma."

Nuncia shook her head. "She cannot hear; she is too tired. Go—please—I ask you."

I stared at her, trying to delve into her evil mind, but she met my gaze, a smile on her face, her finger on her lips.

"I don't know what you are doing to Ilma, Madame," I said, "but whatever it is, I shall find out. And if it is what I think, I shall have you taken away from here and kept out. Understand that, please."

She shrugged her shoulders. "I think you must have been drinking. Go at once, and I shall not tell Ilma. Otherwise——" She raised her shoulders, suggestively.

Angrily I went from the room, and she closed the door behind me. Then I heard her command, sharply, quickly given.

"Ilma! Wake up! Quick, Ilma, wake up!"

I dashed away. I wouldn't trust myself to go back just then.

THE balance of that week was a torture to me. Night after night I stood in the rear of the theater and watched some strange things happening to the woman I loved—with no possible way to find out what they were, or how to combat them. Something was grasping at her golden throat, tearing at the angel's cords within it, trying to take from her her marvelous gift of song. And I was helpless.

Ilma grew pale and lost weight. She seemed to be in a kind of hypnotic state, or what I thought was hypnosis. She came on the stage as if fearful, as if grasping for the support of something—someone outside her. Time after time she glanced toward the entrance, where I knew Nuncia was standing. When she sang, her voice would falter. She was afraid of the high notes. She groped for them. She reached them trembling, her face tortured, her body shaking.

One night the producer came to the theater. He looked at my haggard face and circled eyes, which nights of sleeplessness had given me, then called me into a private room behind the box-office, and asked what was troubling me.

I was glad enough to tell him. I'd been anxious to talk over the matter with someone for some time, but my love for Ilma made me reticent. The producer, however, was a man of great experience and rare insight. He listened in silence until I finished.

"I knew something was wrong with Ilma," he agreed, when I brought my story to its end. "You should have come to me before this. However——" He broke off, and scribbled an address on the back of one of his cards, which he handed me. "Go to the party whose name I have written here, and perhaps he can tell us what to do. He is a psychiatrist, and one of my very good friends."

GLADLY I took the card and arose. My work was finished for the night; so I went at once to find the professor, whose name the producer had written. He welcomed me to his study in his small apartment near the University on the Heights. With his brow furrowed, his gray, keen eyes alight with interest, he listened eagerly to what I told him, and when I finished, he spoke with confidence.

"I'm sure Ilma Berli is hypnotized," he said. "Everything you have said, points to that conclusion. The husband of Nuncia, you say, was interested in Psychic subjects, and she must have learned something about them from him. He died a suicide, swearing he would take Nuncia's voice with him. Doubtless, because of his jealousy of her, he was trying to rob her of her voice through suggestion. If she was aware of this—and she must have been—the shock of his death may have thrown her off her balance and actually caused her to lose her voice. Such things have happened in moments of particularly great shock."

"But how can a dead man affect Ilma?" I asked.

"The suggestion he left in Nuncia's mind

might affect her," he replied, judiciously. "Nuncia had made a great success in her art. Suddenly her voice left her and did not return. Horrified at its loss, despondent, half-crazy, she eventually became obsessed with the idea that it would return to someone else. The idea dominated her so that she could not withstand it—did not want to; so she began to look for some other singer, a young, beautiful woman, from whom she would like to hear her wonderful voice again. She found this person in Ilma Berli, and wormed her way in by hypnotizing and sending the maid to the hospital."

"You mean that she is hypnotizing Ilma—suggesting to her that her voice is changing to a contralto—to Nuncia's own voice?"

"Exactly that," replied Professor Myron. "But—she is not only trying to supplant Ilma's voice by her own voice; she is trying to force her spirit into Ilma's body. I believe she is driven to this by the evil spirit of her husband, which has passed into her own body. For such spirits only seek to spread discord and unhappiness and final ruin."

"But such a thing can't be possible," I demurred, angrily. "How could the spirit of a dead man enter a live woman's body—and the spirit of that woman enter Ilma's body?"

"There are many things which we cannot now fully explain," said the psychiatrist, patiently; "only we know that they are done. For instance, there is the story in the New Testament, where the spirits of the demons entered the bodies of the swine. We psychiatrists call it 'obsession.' The spiritualists call it 'possession.'"

"But such a person would be insane?" I objected.

"The medical doctors might call it that," he agreed. He smiled, a little cynically. "However, I am convinced that the evil spirit of Nuncia's husband is working in her, striving to do evil through her to Ilma. And he will succeed, unless something is done to stop him."

I was on my feet, my hands clenched. "What can be done, doctor? I'd do anything for Ilma—anything."

"You love her?" he asked.

"More than anyone on earth," I replied, simply.

"Good," said the doctor. "Does she love you?"

"I don't know. I never asked her."

"Let us hope she does," he replied, "for love and faith are the greatest forces in the whole world. Ilma would have succumbed to the evil forces of Nuncia's husband before this, if he had not been prevented by some other spirit who was fighting for Ilma."

"Her mother," I suggested.

"Exactly," said the doctor. "The beautiful, loving spirit of her mother must have been struggling against the evil spirit of Nuncia's husband. Only Ilma can bring about the victory for her mother. She must fight with all her will against Nuncia—hypnotism and suggestion can have no effect if she fights against them. We call it autosuggestion, and it is stronger than any outside suggestion. Ilma must pray for strength, and you must keep Nuncia away from her. It is the fight of good against evil, and the good must win."

I thanked him as well as I could, and went out, my brain whirling with the thoughts he had put in it. I vowed that I would save Ilma, even if I had to use force to keep Nuncia away from her.

I could hardly wait for the evening performance, but when the time came, I rushed through my work and went back on the stage. Once more I put my ear to the door and listened for the sound of Nuncia's voice. It came throbbing with intensity.

"Tonight, Ilma, your voice will be mine. Understand! Mine! You will sing as I used to sing. My voice will be yours! You will be what I was. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said Ilma, so softly, I could hardly hear.

"Good! Then wake up, Ilma! Wake up, and when you sing, you will remember."

In another second I stood by their sides. Ilma slowly opened her eyes, and arose from the couch. She stood swaying a little, her hand to her throat, her eyes staring in front of her.

"Ilma!" I cried. "You must not let this woman influence you. She wants to take your voice away from you. She wants to ruin you."

Nuncia's voice hissed at me. "So! You would stop me?" She pointed toward the door, her face distorted angrily. "Go—quickly—before I kill you."

With a bound, she was at the dressing-table, and faced me with a long narrow scissors flashing in her hand. But I paid no attention to her. I grasped Ilma by the shoulders and shook her.

"Ilma! Listen, dear. I've been worried about you. There has been something troubling you, and it's showing in your work. It's driving me nearly frantic, I love you so. I didn't know what to do until last night, when I went to see Professor Myron."

I TURNED and pointed an accusing finger at Nuncia. "That woman is ruled by the evil spirit of her husband, Ilma. He committed suicide, and told her he would take her voice with him, so that she would never sing again. She has let this obsession work on her, but now she believes by hypnotizing some other woman she can bring back her own voice. She has been trying to do that, Ilma—trying to take away your marvelous voice, to supplant it with what she believes is her own. But it's a horrible thing. Ilma. You can't undo the things God has done, and He gave you your voice. You alone can stop it, Ilma—you've got to stop it."

Ilma stared at me, her eyes wide with fright. "It has been so horrible," she muttered. "I thought I was losing my voice. I don't know what to do. Tell me, please—what can I do?"

Outside, I heard the applause of the audience. A buzzer under Ilma's dressing-table sounded the warning for her call. In a moment, she would have to face the crowd.

"You must have faith, Ilma," I told her, tensely. "You must pray for strength. Your mother's spirit is fighting this evil spirit, and she needs you to help her. You'll do that, won't you, Ilma?"

The discordant voice of Nuncia broke in. "You cannot, Ilma. You must sing as I told you to sing."

"No, no, Ilma," I implored. "For your mother's sake—you must not."

Her blue eyes lifted to mine, and I saw the fight that was going on in her soul. Timidly, she put out her hand and rested it on my arm. Once more the buzzer sounded.

"I'll ask my mother for help," she said, softly. "I'll do it for mother—and for you."

Quickly she stepped toward the door, but Nuncia was there before her.

"Ilma! Ilma! Listen to me!"

I caught her arm, and swung her around. "You stay here," I demanded. She drew back her hand and lunged at me with the scissors. I stepped quickly aside, grasped her wrists, and forced her into a chair. "You stay here," I ordered, as Ilma passed through the doorway. "You've failed, Nuncia."

She spat a horrible oath at me, but I swung through the door and locked it behind me. The next instant, I was standing in the wings, just as Ilma stepped on the stage.

The audience thundered its applause, but Ilma did not seem to hear it.

For a moment she stood still, her head up. Then she turned slightly, and over her face went an expression I had never seen. It was ethereal. Her eyes opened wide, her hands raised a little, and I caught the word "Mother" on her lips. She began to sing. Clear and beautiful her voice rose, swinging aloft as it had done on her first night's appearance, and the audience, hushed, leaned forward expectantly, while Ilma sang like an angel.

I STOOD entranced, praying with all the fervor of my soul for her—not using any words that I can now recall, but just asking help against the evil which had threatened her. She finished on a cold, clear, high note, as faultless as a tone from a silver bell, and the crowd in the blackness of the auditorium burst into a din of applause. Then, from the direction of Ilma's dressing-room, I heard a horrible scream, like a man in torture, and rushed toward it.

Inside I found Nuncia lying on the floor, her body quivering helplessly. Gently I raised her to her feet, but she backed away from me. Slowly she sank to her knees, and buried her face in her hands. When she raised it after a moment, she seemed different. No longer were her eyes dead. They seemed normal—human—the eyes of a live soul.

"Ilma," she gasped—"what have I done to her? Where is she?"

"She's out there singing, Madame," I replied.

"Singing—like I used to?" she asked, a tremor of fear in her voice.

"Singing in her own glorious voice," I said, happily, "singing as she has never sung before."

Tears ran down Nuncia's face. "Thank God for that," she said. "I don't know why I did it. I think I must have been mad."

I said no more, because I felt that the evil that had been living in her soul had gone out in the horrible scream of the man's voice. Afterward, Professor Myron told me that, in all probability, I had been right. At any rate, never again did Nuncia speak to Ilma of the voice that died, even though they have since become the closest of friends—and never again did my wife fail.

But I think I forgot to tell you that Ilma is my wife.

TRUE GHOST EXPERIENCES

Have you ever seen a ghost? Have you ever had a message from the dead?

Nearly every person has had some experience which could be classed as psychic. Not everyone would recognize a ghost, or would understand a message or warning that purports to come from another world—but most people have had at least one thing happen which could not be explained logically.

This department is for readers of GHOST STORIES Magazine who believe they have had some contact with the spirit world.

Write in and tell us what you have experienced. If you give a full account of a really remarkable happening—such as the one printed below—we may accept it to lead the department in some future issue. In that case, it would be paid for at a fair rate.

But we shall publish, also, extracts from the more interesting letters received. We do not undertake, editorially, to solve "supernatural" problems, but we want to put our readers in touch with others all over the world who are interested in the subject. Correspondents may answer each others' questions through this department, which is to be a clearing-house of psychic knowledge and a friendly meeting place for spiritualists.

GHOST STORIES wants the account of your experience. Send it to True Ghost Experiences Editor, GHOST STORIES Magazine, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

On the Frontier of the Unseen

By Wilbert Wadleigh

SOMETHING like seven years ago, I was discussing the experiences I am about to set down here with a group of men in the projection room of the old Paramount studio in Hollywood. Among the members of the group was Harry Houdini, who was being featured in a serial at the time.

Houdini, of course, though his forte in life was to deceive others by ingenious and elaborate tricks, believed only what he could see, photograph, and tabulate. Spirits? Ridiculous!

"Spiritism is a refuge for the weak-minded," he remarked. "Grief-stricken people, the naive and credulous, are easy prey for the fakers who pose as mediums. It is all trickery. Your experience at San Diego," he continued, referring to the manifestation I had witnessed, "was similar to thousands, and offers no salient facts upon which to base any credence. Scientifically, it proves nothing."

In vain did I point out that I had been an absolute stranger in San Diego at the time—that the facts disclosed at the séance were not known to any of my friends.

"The old story. You were either duped by certain forms of trickery or coincidence, or your imagination ran away with you. There is no such thing as communication with the dead."

Thus the discussion came to a deadlock.

In mentioning the Houdini episode, I anticipate the skeptic who may glance over what follows with a surly and cynical eye. If you, like Houdini, have already made up your mind that spirit manifestations are impossible, there is no use in your reading further. As for others—I will relate my experiences for what they may be worth.

WHILE delving into philosophy and psychology some years ago, I came across various hypotheses concerning the projection of thought.

One evening I was playing cards with a group of friends, and it occurred to me that the game presented an ideal opportunity for testing these theories. I would try to suggest to my partner through this medium that she play cards of certain suits; and I would carefully note the result.

I proceeded to concentrate on the suit I wanted her to lead. I formed the thought much as one would shout it—but without actually speaking. "Spade, spade, spade, spade——"

My first attempt was a complete success—though, of course, you may call it a coincidence.

Admitting that there were certain difficulties—as, for example, the fact that my partner might not have any cards of the suit I wanted, or could play other cards to better advantage—nevertheless, at the close of the evening, I was satisfied that the thing had worked. On a surprising number of occasions during that game and the ones that followed, she had played the suit I wanted.

A few days later, I tried the experiment in a game of "matching" coins. There was a negro janitor whom I had often seen matching coins with the boys, and he had a method of concealing his coin in the palm of his hand while he reflected over which side to have up when he placed the coin on the table. He never "trusted to luck," but always deliberated in this fashion.

I took him aside, and smilingly challenged him to match coins against mine. He was delighted—at first! And I—I was amazed at the end of a half hour. I had beaten him on almost every turn!

Here was what took place. I would place my coin down—with, say, the head up. While he was deliberating, I would mentally shout: "Tails, tails, tails." He would guess that I had tails up, and proceed to slap his own coin down, with the goddess of liberty ignominiously caressing the table-top.

"Too bad, Zack," I would say, promptly putting another coin down and holding my hand over it while he pursued his usual deliberative course. Again and again, at one time something like twelve times in succession, he failed to "match" me.

Then, Zack—much worried at the way the game was going—wanted to change the process. He would "match" me. This meant, of course, that somehow I must pick his thought out of the ether, and place the right side of my coin up.

At first the results were not promising. But I realized that his thought might either apply to what side he had up, or the side he wanted me to disclose. It was some time before I reached the conclusion that the latter was true.

Accordingly, and striving to maintain an open mind through it all, I proceeded to match him. My success, while not as pronounced in the negative state as in the positive, was gratifying and startling.

Poor Zack was quite crestfallen when I had won his last penny, but he was amazed when I gave it all back to him.

He went away thinking that I was both a trickster and a fool. But I was positively convinced that there was such a thing as thought-transference.

I could relate a number of instances concerning what are termed premonitions, for my mother possesses definite clairvoyant powers, and is at times given to vivid mental images. Once, when we were living in San Francisco, she had a strange vision that seemed to presage flames and ruin. A few days later, that whole city lay in ruins. Mother had, partly because of her vision, decided to go with me to Idaho, never realizing the terrible disaster that was actually to befall the bay city shortly after our arrival in Boise.

More recently, I was motoring through the country around Los Angeles, and came upon a bed of wild larkspur. I picked several, and when I reached home that evening, I placed them in a vase. I never dreamed that these flowers would, within a few

hours, bring about an impressive psychic manifestation.

I occupied myself for some time in my study, and at a late hour I passed through the living-room and noticed the larkspur.

"I think that I shall take Dorothy some in the morning," I mused, thinking of a young lady whom I was to visit, and who loved flowers. For a while, I stood regarding them—and recalling the hills where I had picked them.

But the next day I left home in a hurry, and forgot to take any of the blooms. Shortly before noon, I called upon the young lady mentioned. The moment I appeared, she greeted me with these words:

"Good morning. I had a dream about you last night. Fancy!"

"Is that so?" I said with a smile. "Tell me about it."

"Well," she said lightly, "there wasn't much to it, but it may amuse you. I dreamed that you were picking larkspur. Not thinking of getting married, are you?" she finished laughingly.

I did not laugh. I told her gravely that I *had* been picking larkspur. We discussed the incident for a while, and marveled at it. Houdini would have termed it "another coincidence," but I solemnly believe that here was a clear case of thought-transference. While I had stood regarding those flowers the evening before, recalling how I had gathered them, thinking of the young lady, a fragment of my thoughts had gone out and had been picked up by Dorothy's subconscious mind, while she was asleep!

On another occasion I was driving in the district where a friend lived, and decided to pay him a visit. It was about nine o'clock at night.

When I slowed down before the house, I noticed that there was another machine parked in front. From the cottage, which stood on the rear of the lot, I could hear voices, and conjectured that my friend had company.

I turned the car around, drawing up to the curb on the opposite side of the street, where I stopped to consider whether or not I should see my friend, or return later in the evening. I was quite undecided on the point, and sat there thinking the matter over for several seconds. I had a number of things I wanted to talk over with him, but in private. I wished that it were possible for him to leave his company for a moment. As I thought of the business I wished to discuss with him, and of how much I'd like to see him for a moment or two, this wish became intensified.

Suddenly I heard someone walking across the street. It was quite dark; a line of trees on both sides cast dense shadows, and I could not see anyone. The footsteps sounded in back of my car, and suddenly the face of my friend appeared at the window of the car!

Now, bear in mind the fact that the street was dark; my machine could *not* be discerned from my friend's house, and only very dimly from the sidewalk opposite. I had not honked my horn; I was not expected by my friend until later in the week, and he was occupied with company at the moment I arrived.

"That's funny," were his first words; "so you're here! I thought I heard you call, but I never dreamed that you were calling from such a distance. Why did you park on this side of the street?"

"I told him that I hadn't called, but had been debating whether to walk over and drop in on him. He was as surprised as I. He had been conversing with his callers when he thought he heard my voice calling to him just outside the door. Excusing himself, he had left his guests, opened the door, and found no one there.

"But something seemed to draw me across the street," he said. "I left the house, and reached the sidewalk. Your car was not there, but I saw the outlines of a machine under the shadow of this tree. It might have been any car, of course, but something made me cross over."

BUT my most amazing experience is concerned with my father. It is the one that Houdini disbelieved—because I could not tell him the name of the medium, and a few other details.

My mother and father separated shortly after I was born. He went to the Klondike, and my mother told me later that she had heard a rumor to the effect that he had died there.

However, on January tenth, 1916, twelve American miners were robbed and killed by some of Villa's bandits just across the border in Mexico, and my mother saw my father's name on the list of those murdered.

She had married again, and kept the matter to herself. She thought it probable that my father had died years before, anyway, and that this other name must be that of someone else. But several weeks later, she mentioned the incident to me. While I had never known my father, and while he had been more or less a closed topic between us, the incident aroused a certain pity and morbid curiosity. I decided to visit the files of some newspaper and read the item—perhaps make an investigation, without telling my mother.

But events conspired to force the incident out of my mind. I was caught in the whirlpool of patriotism that followed the declaration of war, and left for a training camp near San Diego with my artillery unit.

One evening in May, 1917, I was visiting San Diego, and while walking up E street with a friend, I saw a sign announcing a spiritualistic séance for that evening.

We decided to attend—"to see what it is all about," as my friend remarked.

I have never had the opportunity to ascertain the name of the medium, but an investigation would disclose this. He was a man past middle age—small, slight, anemic, and partly bald—and of course an utter stranger to us. As a matter of fact, we had been stationed near San Diego for only a few days.

The séance started with the placing of personal effects on the medium's table. This, the man said, was necessary if we wished to communicate with spirits beyond the veil.

I left a ring on the table, and it was the first thing that the medium picked

up. He held it in the palm of his frail, womanish hand for a moment, and said:

"There is a spirit of a man trying to convey a message to me. He—he seems to be calling from there."

He pointed in my direction, and walked toward me, halting at my chair.

"Yes, he is standing right here," he continued, looking at the space at my side. Then his eyes encountered mine.

"You are quite psychic, young man," he exclaimed; "I feel a strong suggestion of skepticism that seems to emanate from you."

I smiled somewhat sheepishly. I was skeptical; in fact, it was the first séance I had ever attended, and I had heard all sorts of stories about how mediums imposed upon the public.

"This man," he resumed, passing his hand over his eyes, as if striving to sort his impressions, "says that he is your father. I—I seem to get an appearance of wounds—terrible wounds."

AS he paused, I felt a creepy sensation that sent a chill through me.

"He was murdered," the medium resumed; "he says that it was in Mexico. I see wounds, but some of them are long like knife slashes, and others seemed to have been caused by bullets. He wants me to tell you that he——"

The medium paused again, and I waited breathlessly for him to continue.

"He is going away," the medium exclaimed suddenly. "Now—he is gone."

It was over, as far as I was concerned. I sat through other "manifestations" of a similar nature, and at the close of the séance I accompanied my friend thoughtfully out of the place.

"Rather amusing, was it not?" he exclaimed. "Funny, the way he picked upon you. But was your father killed in Mexico?"

"I don't really know," I replied gravely, "but I'm going to find out."

I told him of the item that my mother had read. He was considerably impressed.

In the hectic months that followed, it was not possible for me to obtain access to newspaper files. When I returned from abroad, however, I went to a newspaper office and searched for accounts of the murder. There, in that newspaper office, I learned for the first time the tragic details.

I append brief excerpts from the news accounts of the outrage:

"On January 10th (1916) the following miners were taken from a special train of the Cusihuiriachic Mine by Villa bandits headed by Rafael Costro and Pablo Lopez; robbed, stripped of their clothing, and shot and bayoneted to death: . . . ."

Following was a list, and among the names was that of Charles Wadleigh.

"And bayoneted!" The medium had mentioned knife-like slashes. The account stated:

"Charles Wadleigh was shot through the head at the left temple, and through the body, and bayoneted through the chest. . . . . The bodies were examined by Doctor G. I. Clark of El Paso. . . . ."

Yes, I am certain that thought-transference exists—and if it exists beyond bodily limits, why not after the body ceases to function?—and I know in the depths of my soul that, on that evening ten years ago, the spirit of my father tried to speak to me.

We are on the threshold of a vast, unseen world, where the departed souls of all the ages, freed from mortal coils, walk the phantom streets of the infinite —where mind is all, and the rest is cosmic dust.

THE MEETING PLACE

"While attending to my books and finishing up the closing of the ledgers for the end of the month, I turned my head to see what opened the door. There standing in the open doorway was a little child dressed in white loose robes down to its feet. It looked at me so sad. I was just going to get down off my stool and take it in my arms. When my foot reached the floor, the child had gone. I rubbed my eyes and looked again, but there was nothing there.

"I tapped my pencil on the window of my office and called one of the clerks, asking him if he had seen any child around such as I described. He said, no. I then told him what I had seen and that man told me some one belonging to me would die.

"I went home and told my dear mother about what I had seen. Mother was cleaning the knives at the table when I told her, and she said: 'Sis, I guess that poor little woman next door, who has the consumption, will die.'

"But mother was dead just three days after. I have often wondered, was that a warning to me. It happened in 1905.

"I will write you some time and tell you about Dad and the woman in black. The woman in black was my own father's great-great-grandmother."

F. E., Montreal, Que., Canada.

"Is it possible to organize in New York City and vicinity a group of persons who wish to study—very seriously —the higher manifestations of the occult?' H. R. H., New York City.

"This happened to me while on a visit to Roxbury, Mass., on Townsend Street. I was sleeping in a room, in the front of the house. The bedroom door was locked. I am a sound sleeper, also a healthy person.

"In the night I was awakened by whizzing sounds right in my ear. I woke up at once and there standing right side of the bed close to my head was a white figure or phosphorescent effect, of a young lady in a flowing gown. I found that I was about to fall out of bed, as I was on the very edge of a high old-fashioned bed. The ghost slowly passed across the room, and right through the wall. It did not go near the door. So, as soon as I got up in the morning, I told the friend I was visiting.

"She was not surprised at all, as she said her daughter who died used to sleep in that room. She certainly saved me from a bad fall, which might have been my death blow. Who knows?"

A. W., Edgewood, Rhode Island.

"There are plenty of examples of demonism today. Take that monster in Germany who was executed for killing a lot of young men for no cause whatever. Listen to his words:

"'I do not know why I do it. There is no pleasure in it. I don't want to do it, but I believe if I was turned free again I would keep on doing it. I think it is better that I should die.'

"Sounds rather pitiful. Just like a good, weak soul in the hands of an Evil Spirit."

C. S., Parkside, Sask., Canada.

"In New York City about thirty years ago, an old man roomed in a small hotel. It required a latch key to open the outside entrance door. This venerable gentleman habitually visited his niece every evening. He would walk to his home at a precise time. Just as regularly he would leave for his rooming house to be there at 9:30 p. m.

"On the particular evening of this narrative his niece gave her uncle a piece of apple pie.

"After partaking of it, he complained about pains in the stomach. In his distress, he had to lie on the couch on which he soon expired, evidently from acute indigestion.

"Now comes the mysterious part of the story.

"At the precise time of his usual homecoming, the clerk in the office saw him going by, then ascending the staircase to the upper floor.

"The old man's ways being very punctual and methodical, he would arise as regularly as he retired.

"The next morning, he failed to appear, and his room was found vacant. His latchkey was outside on the floor in front of the entrance door.

"THE question was asked: How did the key get there? A student of the occult knows that the etheric body is dense enough to be seen by many, especially clairvoyants. The etheric body evidently can carry material substances. The persistency of habit, even when free from the physical body is demonstrated in this particular case.

"Has anyone another explanation of how this happened?"

F. D., Pasadena, Calif.

"It we have faith, the real friends on the other side can come easily into *rapport* with us. I had a strange experience about a month ago. I went to my first trumpet séance at Mr. Britton's (he was highly praised by Conan Doyle) and was asked to assist him at the table.

"A 'Harvey' came and was claimed by several people, but 'Harvey' began drumming on a trumpet, and I at once exclaimed, 'Why, that's the telegraph key he is imitating. I wish I could read it.'

"All at once, it dawned on me that my brother used to talk about a 'Harvey' in the Radio Service. . . . I asked if 'Harvey' was my brother's telegrapher friend, and he answered through the trumpet, 'Yes, tell him I'm so glad to get a message through to him. . . . Tell Peter I sent him my best.'

"He had died of tuberculosis, and had been my brother's closest friend."

"Electra," Seattle, Wash.

Spirit Tales

(*Continued from page* 52)

things or thoughts, is indicated by a thin tongue which is generally held close to the roof of the mouth or pressed against the front teeth.

The inclination to frugal and economical management of affairs is found to be associated with a broad or a square-tipped tongue. Careful and judicious behavior accompanies this form. Benjamin Franklin was one who possessed such a tongue as this.

Accumulativeness, or the desire of possession, is shown whenever the tongue is rather broad in the center. If at the same time the face is broad in the center and has a long prominent nose the tendency to accumulativeness is very great.

Monoerocity, or the disposition to love one only, is shown by a tongue with a rounded end. A person with such a tongue rivets his attention upon one being and lavishes love and affection upon that one. A round form of eye accentuates this sign greatly.

Strength of will and power to execute it are always present when the tongue is full and broad at the base. If the subject has fullness at the posterior part of the neck near the point of junction with the head he will be a typical "pig-head."

Philonepionality, the love of the young or the characteristic of feeling pleasure in the young, is shown by an unusually moist tongue which is somewhat thick at the end, so it is said.

Solicitireputativeness, or the desire for approval, is shown by a tongue that is very thin and very red. Decorativeness is shown by a tongue that is very full and which is inclined to arch as the person talks. A tongue that is short and round shows soundness of judgment and shrewdness. A wide tongue round at the end gives its possessor ability to barter and trade well. Mechanical talent is shown by a square tongue.

THEY are always accusing the scientists of being humbugged by clever mediums; yet a patient study of the record will show that scientists have detected fraud more often than magicians.

There is the classic example of Pasquale Erto, to whom much attention has recently been directed because of his alleged phenomena. He is an Italian medium, a young man about 28 years of age, and has been under scrutiny at the International Metapsychic Institute (Paris). The séances were conducted under the usual thorough precautions, the medium being completely stripped, re-clothed in garments provided by the Institute, a lead-sealed veil over his head, his hands being in some cases inclosed in laced and sealed boxing-gloves.

The ostensible phenomena were of two kinds—luminous flashes quite different from the phosphorescent lights that are not uncommon accompaniments of physical mediumship, and fingerprints on photographic plates in sealed enclosures, resembling those used as identifications in criminology. It seemed inadvisable to publish a full account of these, pending more complete information; and this reticence is justified by the event. The Director of the Institute, in view of the publicity already given in some quarters, has sent the letter here translated, to a Paris journal:

"It is my painful duty towards the readers of *Le Matin*, and the friends interested in our studies, to furnish the following information.

"The latest experiments at the Metapsychic Institute show that the luminous phenomena produced by the medium Erto can be imitated; and, moreover, serious presumption has been established against their authenticity.

"Despite our precautions against fraud, I have had persistent doubts of the genuineness of these luminous manifestations because I have never observed them when the medium's hands were held by me. I have therefore deferred publication till some revelation should be made by others than myself. For some time since, with the valuable collaboration of some eminent chemists and physicists, we have at the Institute sought to reproduce these luminous phenomena by artificial means. After

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Because Their Bones Were Unburied

(*Continued from page* 48)

my mind. I did not think of the matter again that day.

This was the thirteenth of December and I stayed ten days. That was my last happy week before the confiscation orders I got on my return. (Mrs. Evans' ranch had been in dispute for years) My cook is very nice-looking, almost fair—I suppose a Spanish father. Next morning she was pale. I asked what had happened. She said just as she was going to bed something screamed in her ears. I asked what the sound was like. She looked troubled and told me:

"As of some one who had gone mad. It slowly died away." I hope you remember I told you that once the same thing happened to me at San Pedro when Harry (Mrs. Evans' late husband) was ill. The most inhuman sound I ever heard. Now, she had never heard that story, but she used my very words in describing my experience years ago.

I WAS very busy all day on horseback with the wood-cutters, and my own mind and conscience unusually still. Each day the watchmen and maids would say they could not sleep—the spirits sobbed so. I thought they were frightened by the cook's tale and did not heed them. I heard nothing myself, and had in the room next to me my maid from Mexico City. We both slept peacefully. On about the fifth night I awoke in a horror, not thinking of anything until I remembered the spirits.

The agony continued until, in my own mind, I addressed them, saying that "their grandchildren had done it, not I, and I had had their remains buried as best I could" and much more. That calmed me and I fell asleep, but according to the maid, I soon screamed. Poor maid!

As if in a fog—one on either side of the bed— Don Fernando and Dona Monica stood, while I revolved in my mind what they wanted. In despair I asked if perhaps my orders had not been carried out and their tombs repaired? I woke up then and told the girl. The curious part, both of us were instantly calm and slept quietly until morning, when every one had a new story to tell of weeping and strange sounds —almost a rebellion.

So I told my dream and found they had not obeyed me. You should have seen Iago and the men bringing bricks and stones! The old *trojero* (he who keeps the barns) said it would not do until a priest came and blessed the tombs and had a mass for their souls—but I heeded him not. Several days more passed and I slept quietly—but with the door well open into the maid's room—for the awful part is that not even Brunhilda (a dog) wakes in these uncanny scenes.

The last night I was there, I had been in bed an hour perhaps and was growing drowsy when I heard some one crying at my window. The most gentle attenuated sobbing: the most pitiful sounds you ever heard. I never for a minute thought of the spirits, but called the girl to light the candle. She heard it too—but the strange part is, I said it was at the back window and she heard it at the front, and neither did she think of spirits. As she opened to see who was there, IT came in sobbing—and we looked at each other and closed the windows. Perhaps you think we were frightened or horrified? I can only answer for myself—it filled me with an intense pity. I only wanted to comfort it and I said to the girl: "If it would only be quiet!" I then promised to have mass said and invite the people, and it left, sobbing. And we, of course, both went to our beds to sleep dreamlessly till morning.

Now fill in this space with my two other letters for Christmas. When I opened Obregon's (former President of Mexico, who confiscated Mrs. Evans' ranch) orders, unsuspectingly, the first thing I thought of was the sobbing spirit.

In Mexico City, even to me, the impression grew dim and I smiled when on my return the old *trojero* said the spirits still wept and wandered.

The very next day at table, where all were jesting, General Ryan said: "To make things perfect, do you keep an an-

cestral ghost too?" It made even Ezio look pale. He then told us:

"I will swear I was waked by a ghost dragging the chains of eternity up and down the room last night." That's all. Others heard it too. The next day was for the *fiesta* and races, but when at night around the fire I told the tale, even the scoffers firmly wanted a mass said. As you sagely remarked, money could never buy the things I gave them on the ranch!

Early next morning, before the priest came, I made Rosemary and Hope help me cover the graves with calla lilies, and Ezio, as penance for the bad grandchildren, put a big bunch of them on the tombs. The ceremony of blessing the graves was most touching. The old *trojero*, who knew and loved them, kneeling with the priest and making the responses. Ezio, the general and I felt it most. No one has since heard them (the spirits of the Mendizabels).

NOTE: About a year and seven months after this letter was written, August 2, 1924, Rosalie Evans was shot to death by the agrarian Indians to whom she had refused to surrender her ranch—*The Editor.*

(Reprinted from "The Rosalie Evans Letters from Mexico," Bobbs-Merrill Co.)

Out of the Split Wall

(Continued from page 47)

deep-set and of a vivid blue, and so put upon that canvas that anywhere one stood, they seemed to be watching every move—in fact, there seemed to be a wavering twinkle in them. The furniture of this spacious room was meager, but in excellent taste; in addition to a massive table, there were a heavy old sideboard and high-backed chairs.

"Philip served me with a splendid meal; and greatly refreshed, I bade him good night, deciding to retire at once and inspect the rest of the house on the following day.

"It must have been nearly daylight when I awoke suddenly. I fancied I had heard a footfall in the room. I sat up in bed, and gave a quick glance around the room. It was gray with the approach of dawn, but all was still. So I turned on my pillow and prepared for another nap.

"GRADUALLY I became aware of a faint tapping, as if behind the wall someone was at work. I attributed the noise to rats, however, closed my eyes, and fell asleep. I dreamed a short, peculiar dream, such as one is likely to dream when it is nearly day—half-dream, half-reality. I thought that one portion of the wall opposite me had opened and in the aperture stood a woman—the one whose painted face hung over the mantel below. She had a lighted candle in her hand. She appeared to float across the room until she stood directly before the silver box; then suddenly she turned and looked directly into my eyes, her lovely face lined with despair. I distinctly heard her say: 'For God's sake, open the box!'

"And then I was fully awake. I leaped out of bed just in time to see the white-robed figure of a woman. The next instant, she had disappeared into the split wall, which closed after her.

"I arose with a troubled mind, but by the time I had had my breakfast, the events of early morning had passed away—just as all dreams dissolve in the bright light of day. Then I was ready to inspect my property.

"The house was constructed as were many in the century in which it was built; four large rooms below, and on either side of the main structure, a wing. On the east side the wing was filled with antiques, and the long windows were covered with dust and cobwebs. I did not tarry long there. Then I went across to the west wing and stood in the wide doorway, amazed at the size of the enormous, quite empty room. It had evidently been a ball room, and I almost fancied I could see the forms of the dancers of centuries past flitting across the floor to the sound of faint, ghostly music.

"I was entranced with the old house, and after going from cellar to attic as eagerly as a boy, I decided to have a look about the grounds. These were large, and covered with dense shrubbery. There were summer-houses, now gone to decay, and broken and discolored fountains. I could well imagine that here had been many happy gatherings of lovers and merry-makers who now were gone forever.

"I strolled down an almost obliterated footpath until I reached a small grotto, built of stone. The composition holding these stones together, was of a peculiar gray substance, with flecks in it like gold. Inside was a seat of stone, and on it I detected some chiseled marks. Peering closely I made out the letters: 'A.B. and J.I. 1-3-58.' Evidently, lovers of the long ago were not unlike those of the present day, I thought.

"When I returned to the house, I found Philip in conversation with an aged man who had brought our luggage from the station. He called to me, saying: 'This man wishes to talk to you concerning the place, Doctor.'

"I invited the old man into the dining salon. He gazed about him, then opened the interview by saying: 'It must be stout hearts ye both have to live here.'

" 'Why do you say this?' I asked.

" 'Why, there ain't been nobody able to live here for nigh a hundred years. They say 'tis ha'nted. That woman there'—he pointed to the portrait above the mantel—'traipses about the house and grounds, moanin' all the time, or so my wife's sister told me. She heard it from her grandmother, who was housekeeper here many many years ago. The Wellsfords lived here then, or tried to live here. They had to move out a week after they got here, and nobody's stayed in the house since.'

"I asked him to tell me the story, thinking I was humoring an ignorant, superstitious old person. He hesitated before he spoke, then told me that the specter would float around the bedrooms of the Wellsfords, wailing one sentence, over and over: 'For God's sake, open it!'

"I WAS astounded at this duplicate of my dream. It did not unnerve me, however. It was really a welcome diversion, and more than ever was I determined to open that strange silver box. So, not long after the garrulous old man left, I went back to inspect it again, this time more closely. And I was surprised to see that it was cemented together with the same substance I had noticed in the stone grotto; a substance so hard that the blows of a hammer upon a chisel did not even make a dent.

"I spoke to Philip of my curiosity concerning the box, and together we decided to compound a chemical later on, which would melt this cement. But for a time the box was forgotten.

"A night came, in early December, when the forest around moaned in the cold blast and the grounds were covered with snow. We were busily engaged in one of my new experiments, however, and worked until exhaustion sent both of us to bed. But I could not sleep. The loud rush of wind and sleet against my windows kept me awake.

"About the hour of two I became aware that I was not alone. I felt a chill in the room, a chill not caused by the cold air—an intangible something I could not define. I sat up in bed, my eyes fixed upon a form that stood at the foot of my bed—the form of the woman of the portrait! She was staring at me with hollow, beseeching eyes, her hand extended imploringly. Again came the words: 'For God's sake, open it!'

"I leaped from bed and went up to her. She remained in the same position, her eyes following my every move. My very marrow seemed freezing in my bones, but I forced myself to answer her.

"I am going to open it, I told her, going still closer, reaching out my hand to touch her outstretched one. But just then I felt a terrific impact, and fell to the floor.

"How long I lay there, stunned by my fall, I do not know. But when I regained my senses I was still on the floor; the cold, winter sun was shining into the room, and my muscles were as if paralyzed. The experience proved a disastrous one, for I spent ten days in bed with rheumatism. Philip knew nothing of the cause; I could not bring myself to the point to telling him. But he insisted upon my moving across the hall to a small room that adjoined his. And from my new bed, I directed his work upon the chemical composition to open that tantalizing box. I merely stated that, until it was opened, I could not devote myself to the more important things then in progress.

"ONE night I was awakened by Philip, whose ashen face and trembling hands bespoke terror. He was shaking me gently.

" 'Do you think you can get up, Doctor?' he whispered. 'There is something wrong going on in your chamber across the hall.'

"'What is it?' I asked quickly, rising with difficulty, and pulling on my bathrobe.

"'The commotion over there is dreadful, sir. There is a hubbub as if the very walls were being torn down. Come with me, Doctor. I am armed, and will go ahead.'

"We crept across the corridor, each with a candle in hand, and paused before we opened the door. All was quiet within, so I pushed the door open, and we went in. A scene of destruction met my eyes. The huge bed was thrown over to one side, the mirror above the chest was shattered from one end to the other, and my books were thrown helter-skelter. Nothing was as it had been—except the silver box in the wall.

"Philip and I looked at each other.

"'Let us get away from here,' he cried. 'I've heard tales of this old house, and laughed at them, Doctor, but human hands never moved that bed. Let us leave tonight!'

"'No, Philip,' I answered firmly. 'I am going to open that box before I leave this place, if it's the last deed of my life. Tomorrow we will make the attempt. Surely you'll stand by me?'

"He made no reply, but followed me back to our quarters. I went to bed again, but I could not sleep.

"How it happened, I do not know; but suddenly I was in that old ball room below, in the midst of a crowd of gaily dressed men and women of several centuries past. There were festivities of some nature in progress. I saw the woman of the portrait who seemed to be the center of the assembly, and beside her stood a man whose face I did not like—an evil, leering face. He watched her closely, with a suspicious glance, and often she looked longingly toward the window.

"SUDDENLY a face appeared at the casement. It was a young man of perhaps twenty-five, I should say—a fair-haired youth with sunny curls, worn long and tied back with a riband. His eyes were those of a poet—soft, dark, and dreamy.

"The woman saw him. I observed a signal pass between them, and with a hasty glance around the room, she slipped from the door into the court outside. It was not the gloomy, dilapidated court that I had become familiar with. The fountains were playing merrily, and gorgeous flowers were in bloom. She stole down the flagstone walk, holding her trailing garments with a small, jeweled hand. She hurried down to the grotto, I following closely. The youth was there, and I watched him take her in his arms—heard him say: 'My beloved, at last, at last!'

"Her beautiful hands strayed to his hair. 'Oh, Arthur, the years have been so long, so long. See, there it is—our broken troth.' And she pointed to the letters carved on the stone seat. 'Arthur Bealsley and Janice Inglehart,' she murmured.

"Then I heard a sound outside the grotto, and saw the evil-faced man peering in upon the lovers.

"And in a flash I knew I was looking at a scene in which I once had taken a part!

"THEN it all faded. I seemed to be transported into the old manor-house once more. The halls were now deserted—silence everywhere. Now I was in a room which I recognized as my former bedroom. The beautiful Janice was there, and she evidently suffered under some mental strain, for she was wringing her lovely white hands together. When she crossed to the window and looked out, I followed her and stood by her side—though she did not seem to see me. Below us was a shadowy figure swiftly climbing the vines. It was the youth she had called Arthur. A moment later he was in the room, and had taken her in his arms.

"'Hasten, beloved,' I heard him implore; but she delayed for a moment—her hand stroking his hair, her dreamy eyes upon his eager face. I was under some terrible tension, and kept watching the door. I saw it open softly, unobserved by the two lovers; and the evil dark-faced man came in stealthily. In his hand he held a terrific knife, wide of blade, sharp as a razor.

"I tried to warn the lovers, but not a sound issued from my frozen lips. He was directly behind them. He raised his arm. With one stroke of that gleaming sword he had cut the youth's fair head from his shoulders—and with it, the white hand of the woman!

"The next instant, I lost consciousness.

"I awoke with a start. The sun was high in the heavens now, and a mechanical glance at my watch showed me the hour was ten o'clock. My head ached and my limbs felt like lead. I called Philip, but there was no answer. I arose and dressed hastily, went out into the hall, and discovered that the door of the haunted room was open. I hurried inside. Philip, who had evidently been testing the chemical on the silver box, lay on the floor—unconscious.

"The silver box was open.

"I rushed over to it, gave one glance, and then shrieked aloud. God! Was I going mad? For inside, on a velvet cushion, reposed the fair head of the youth of my dreams, mummified, but still recognizable—and upon the golden curls rested lovingly a small white hand, covered with jewels!"

DR. SYMINGTON paused at the conclusion of his horrible story, his chin resting on his clasped hands, his deep gray eyes fastened on my startled countenance. For a tense moment neither of us spoke. I finally found my voice.

"You—you said you had seen this Arthur Bealsley somewhere, before your vision at the manor, Dr. Symington. Can you explain why you thought this?" I asked, waiting breathlessly for his reply.

There was a long pause. Then came his answer, crisp and decided:

"I do not think so now. I know! I was Arthur Bealsley, myself, and there is no doubt in my mind about it."

Don't miss in the next issue

"How I Foretold the Fates of Great Men"

By Cheiro, the world-famous seer

The GHOST FORUM

Pro and Con of Spooks in Literature

NO person interested in occult tales or detective stories should miss the best of the spring thrillers *The Astounding Affair on Torrington Road.*

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I shan't tell you a thing about this story; it's too good to spoil in advance, but I close as I started, by advising everyone who gets a thrill out of a good mystery and detective story to read *The Astounding Affair on Torrington Road.*

THERE comes to us, from Portland, Ore., a new book on spiritualism, under the title *Immortality Victorious.* The author is a medium, J. R. Hermann, whose portrait adorns the frontispiece. One pauses to study the face of the man. Earnestness—that, we may be sure, gleams from his eyes. We approach the book itself with some heightened interest because we have looked into the eyes of the author.

We find that the book is practically the experience of one man as a medium. How much of it shall we accept? We read of one baffling séance after another, of voices through trumpets, of prophecies fulfilled; of all the reported phenomena of the occult. We may say and you may say that you reject it all, and remain well within your rights. But how can you explain that this book, and so many books like it, came to be?

In this there is a riddle greater than a trumpet voice, a spirit face, or a materialization.

You may explain away some of the phenomena, but after you have explained them away, the books keep on coming.

For once, you may ask in a wholly scientific and inquiring spirit, How come?

J. A. V.

The Specter Cuts the Ace

(*Continued from page 23*)

My vigil was not prolonged. First I noted Ned Forrester and his wife at a table at the very edge of the dance floor. Following their gaze, I saw Jean and Randolph, swaying to the strains of a waltz. Slowly they came in my direction until almost below me. What I observed sent a hot flush of hate over me, and I muttered an oath. For if ever a woman looked into the face of a man with eyes of love, that was how Jean looked at the man who held her. She never, even in the first few weeks of our infatuation, had looked at me like that.

Involuntarily my hand sought the pocket in which the revolver nestled. And my fingers closed involuntarily upon it when Randolph bent closer and whispered something which caused her to smile happily.

IN the succeeding hour I was half-mad with hate. My outraged pride urged me to obtain open vengeance without further delay. But I managed to hold myself in check, though my fury grew with the minutes while I watched them laughing and love-making, even when at the table with the Forresters.

Finally, with a laughing aside to their friends and a nod toward the balcony, they walked away, arm in arm. They, too, were coming to the mezzanine in search of privacy. Upon the instant I seemed to regain my accustomed calm, and set myself coolly to counter their further moves with every atom of craft and cleverness I possessed. Watching through the curtains, I saw when they gained the balcony. Next they passed so close I could have reached out and touched them. Many others were passing to and fro. I fell in behind a group which screened me, and followed.

Jean and Randolph went to one of a series of tiny balconies which faced upon an inner courtyard. Below was a fountain upon which colored lights played. Screening each of these miniature love-nests were great banks of palms and blooming plants. Slipping to the balcony next to the one where they had sought seclusion, I hid myself behind the partition. I could see them, but they did not see me. I could hear almost every word they spoke, though their tones were low. And what I heard steeled me to my purpose.

I cannot repeat their conversation, their plans to outwit me; for the hate in my heart seemed partly to blunt my understanding, and their embraces and words of love drove me mad. But I understood their purpose. They had been planning for a long time to run away. Randolph had been waiting only for a considerable sum of money which he had directed his solicitors to forward. It had reached him that day. Already his possessions were packed for flight. But, though the Forresters had chaperoned them in their clandestine meetings, Jean and her lover had not dared confide their intention.

Now, with me out of the way for two days—the report on me had been that I actually had left the city—they felt free to carry out their purpose and would be a long distance on their way to Japan, their goal, before I would return and learn the truth. Randolph urged Jean to make some excuse for leaving the night-club and hastening their elopement. She demurred. To her, she said, it was the one really happy night of her life—the one night when she felt absolutely free to do as she wished. She wanted to remember it, after they were married and had put the gay, careless life behind them for all time. They must dance, she insisted, until the early morning at least. After that, in the gray period preceding dawn, they could pack and begin their journey.

LATER I recalled that nothing they had said or done, had so stung me as her statement that she and Randolph were to marry. I don't know why. A man of my type probably couldn't advance a good reason. But it just did.

Finally it was agreed that they should remain at the Golden Peacock and dance until two. That would give them ample time to reach my home—and Jean's—before three. When I was absent from the city I frequently called her over long-distance telephone at that hour—a time we had fixed upon when she would be in our apartment. She wanted to be home by then, in the event I called. She also insisted that Randolph accompany her and help her pack, an arrangement to which he readily agreed.

I'm certain a sardonic smile twisted my lips when I heard this latter arrangement. It suited me, absolutely. I would wait for them—at home. It would be better than waylaying them in the vestibule when they were bidding each other good night. Also, it would be safer. With the silencer, there would be no sound which would bring persons to investigate. And I was so sure of my markmanship I knew there would be no outcry. Then, too, no one would find them until morning. By that time, I would be far out along the road toward safety.

Then came a new thought. I might rob them, making the killings appear the work of interrupted burglars. This would give me additional time before the authorities discovered that I had not been in Washington and the finger of suspicion began to point toward me.

Realizing that Jean and Randolph might return to the dance floor any moment, I slid from my place of concealment. But, instantly, I drew back. A cold sweat broke out all over me. In the hallway, leaning against a pillar and not ten feet from me, stood one of the watchers I had seen in Thirty-fourth street—the one who had resembled me. But he was not looking in my direction. I wondered if he had been watching me, if my elaborate efforts to lose my trailers had failed. I hoped not, wouldn't believe it. My final guess was that a portion of his duties was to keep close to Jean and her lover, to protect them should I suddenly appear.

Impatiently I again peered out through the palms. The man had disappeared.

I slipped away in a flash, mingling with a party of laughing young people heading for a stairway. A few seconds later, with my hat and coat hiding much of me, I was in the street. A close scrutiny convinced me that the shadow was not hanging about. I entered a cab, gave directions, and slumped into the seat—truly more than a bit unnerved. All about me appeared to be a humid, yellow mist that was stifling. Only once in the journey up-town did I become fully aroused. Then I recalled why I was heading for home, and I felt to make certain the revolver and silencer still were in my pockets.

WHEN I reached the apartment-house, I entered it through the tradesmen's entrance. I raced up the stairs and gained my rooms without meeting anyone. After I had sealed all the windows so that no glimmer of light could be detected from without, I snapped on the electrics. Placing my coat and hat where I could snatch them up quickly, I walked through the rooms—for the last time. Then I dropped into a chair, again examined my weapon to make certain it worked freely, adjusted the silencer, and placed it on the table before me within easy reach.

But despite my efforts to keep a check on my nerves, my limbs actually trembled. And the silence all about me became abysmal. In an effort to calm myself, I began pacing the room. It was no use. The air had become stifling. I turned on the electric fan. Then I cut it off again. Its whirr fairly tortured my raw nerves.

Again seating myself at the table, I took a pack of cards and began playing solitaire. But luck was against me. Time after time I failed. I tossed the cards in a pile, dropped my chin upon my chest, and waited in an agony of uncertainty and suspense.

Suddenly, though I detected no sound, I became conscious I was not alone. Each hair of my head appeared to be tugging at the roots. I looked up—and the blood seemed to freeze in my veins. For directly across the table, seated, his arms folded over his chest, was one of my shadows, the one who resembled me.

Though my tongue was swollen and I felt as if I were choking, I managed to cry out. "How—how in God's name did you get in here?"

"As you did—through the doorway." Not a muscle of his face moved. But his piercing, deep-set eyes seemed to be boring into me—searching my very soul.

I tried to speak, but suddenly I became conscious of something I had not noted before, something which forced a terrified gasp, made me wonder if I had gone mad. For, though I could see the man plainly, his every feature, even a great red welt on his temple, I also was looking through him—at the back of the chair upon which he sat, at the hanging in the rear of him. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. He was still there. The occult—anything not to be explained by natural causes—had always seemed to me only a matter for ridicule. But this man, this thing before me, was not human. I knew it.

"Why—have you followed me tonight?"

"I have been following you for years, but it was not until tonight that I permitted you to see me."

"Permitted? In the name of Heaven tell me—who and what are you?"

He bent forward until his elbows rested upon the table, his eyes holding me as though I were hypnotized. Then he said, "I am your better self."

"You—are what?"

"You heard me; your better self. You drove me from you when you were hardly sixteen—when you ran away from home, broke your mother's and father's hearts, began your selfish career of debauchery—and worse."

"But—you followed me?"

"Yes. I always hoped to rejoin you. However, my hopes were in vain. You became worse with the years. And I grew older, and more shabby; for each of your wilful, heartless acts robbed me of something. You have taken from others as you pleased; lied and deceived them. Do you see this scar?" He touched the welt upon his temple. "You put that there when you deserted little Arline in London. Poor little Arline, the one woman who truly loved you, who would have followed you to the earth's end without a thought of reward. But you left her, mercilessly."

"I—I didn't think, didn't realize," I blurted. "I'm sorry now. Can we not come together again, as when I was a boy? Is it too late? Tell me!" I implored.

He shook his head, and I read a fearful sorrow in his eyes. "You ask me that; you, who sit there with murder in your heart—waiting to kill two persons in cold blood?"

His words snapped me back into my fury of fever and hate. "So that's why you are here?" I snarled. "You would stay my hand. You came to save them. Well, I won't listen. They lied, cheated and tricked me. Jean, whom I have cared for—as a wife."

"But you didn't marry her."

"No, but I might have. But it is Randolph I hate most—Randolph, whose life I saved once. He's double-crossed me."

"You always were a poor sport, Stinson. You are whining now, not because another has really learned to love Jean, but because your pride is hurt, your rotten pride, fed only upon selfishness. You would murder just to satisfy its demands, crushing down any thoughts of mercy or decency. Yes, you're a bad sport, always were, always tried to obtain a sure advantage——"

"That's a lie. As you've said, I've done a thousand things of which I should be ashamed. But I'm a sportsman. In every game I ever played, I played square."

"You played square if the odds favored you. If they didn't, you wouldn't play. You never had the nerve to take a risk when the odds were even, when it was fifty-fifty you'd lose."

"Again I say, you lie."

The other—the specter—smiled wearily. Then he reached out, gathered up the cards and stacked them close together. "All right, I'll test you. But I don't believe you're game. We'll cut these cards, alternately, until one or the other cuts an ace. If you show an ace first, I shall leave without another word, leave you to kill these two defenseless creatures whose only offense is that they have learned truly to love each other."

"But why didn't they act fairly?"

"Because they knew and feared you. Knew that you would do just what you have planned to do—kill them both rather than surrender anything which had come into your possession."

"Never mind that," I snapped, drawing my chair closer to the table. "If you cut an ace first, what then?"

"You are not to molest them. You are not to see them again. You are to go from here immediately and leave the country, never to return. Is it a bargain; or are you afraid?"

"But you—you will trick me. I am only mortal. I cannot match your skill."

THERE was something more than a look of sorrow in his eyes as he held up a hand to check me. "You forget—that I am your better self. You are judging me by what is left of you—the worst. The cuts shall be fair, absolutely. And you shall shuffle the cards."

I knew he spoke truthfully; that I would have an equal chance.

"All right. For once in my life at least I'll prove, even to you, that I am a real sportsman."

With a calmness more forced than real, I took up the cards and shuffled them slowly, deliberately. Then I placed them on the table midway between us.

"You first," he said.

Tensing myself, I grasped a portion of the deck with steady fingers, then turned my palm upward. I had cut the king of diamonds.

I thought I noted a twitching about his mouth as I looked up. For I had cut the card which fitted me best; the card indicating a man cunning and dangerous, one to be feared.

As I dropped my cards upon the pack and straightened the edges, the phantom cut and exposed the ten of clubs, the card of success.

Gritting my teeth, I again reached out with fingers that twitched. I was determined to best Fate in spite of herself. But I failed—that time. I cut the three of hearts, the card indicating disappointment caused by one's own imprudence.

Then, without a glance at my adversary I rearranged the cards, and bent over them with burning eyes, my every nerve pounding, to watch the cut. His fingers slipped down the sides until near the bottom of the deck. Then he turned his hand over. It exposed an ace; the ace of spades, the black card of disappointment which meant complete defeat for me.

"You win," I muttered hoarsely. "I shall keep my word."

He said nothing but picked up the revolver and snapped it open, permitting the cartridges to drop into his hand. Next he placed it on the mantel, and then drew aside the draperies, opened a window, and tossed the shells into the shrubbery below. Closing the window and readjusting the hangings, he returned and resumed his chair, facing me.

"I shall sit with you a while longer, until you have recovered your composure. Then we shall leave, but by different routes for the time being. Later, I hope, I shall be able to rejoin you and that then we will continue as inseparables—until the end——"

I did not see him depart. I must have become unconscious.

SUDDENLY I came to my senses, with a start. I couldn't tell whether I had dropped asleep or what. I looked across the table. The chair was there; but it was empty. I passed trembling fingers over my throbbing temples. Had I dreamed? Had the specter—the cutting of the cards—my pledge—been only portions of a terrible nightmare?

I looked at the table. The cards were there as they had been left after a cut. The ace of spades faced me.

I couldn't hold back a cry. My eyes swept the room—looking for the other one, the phantom. He most certainly was not there. Surely I must have dreamed; cut the cards in my sleep. But I would not be tricked.

Then again I went cold. My revolver was missing. I recalled. He—my other self—had emptied it, left it on the mantel. With shuffling steps I staggered across the room. The weapon was there, on the shelf. I snatched it down and snapped it open. The chamber was—empty.

DULLY I wondered how long I had been unconscious. I looked at my watch. Fifteen minutes after two. Jean and Randolph might come at any moment. Then, suddenly, my brain seemed to clear. I had regained mastery of myself. I picked up a newspaper and spread it open at the page containing the ship sailings for Central and South American ports. There was a vessel leaving about daylight for Rio. I could make it.

In a moment I had drawn on my coat and vest, buttoned an outer coat about me and jerked my hat down over my eyes. I had almost reached the door when I paused, then turned back to the table.

Pulling paper and pencil toward me, I scrawled:

Reed Randolph:—

I am going on a long journey from which I shall not return. You will understand when I tell you that for weeks I have known everything. Try to make Jean happy. She deserves it.

Stinson.

Then I switched off the lights, locked the door of the apartment, and hurried out into the night.

Only by Mortal Hands

(*Continued from page* 39)

first full breath that it was like a million burning needles in my lungs. The torture was almost unbearable.

A splash of raindrops, like the cooling hand of a nurse, fell upon my face. The rain was clean. Gratefully I felt it wash away the foulness that was upon me. I lay there, reviving, thankful for its kindly caress. As it fell faster, my body drank it in. My clothes became soaked and I was glad.

Then it occurred to my returning senses that I must not stay there. The rain would chill me and take away the last bit of my strength.

Wearily I struggled to my feet. That injured ankle would not bear my weight and I fell. I found the dead branch of a tree, and with this as a crutch I hobbled away. Where was the Thing? I turned to peer through the rain. I no longer could feel it anywhere. The rain splashed me again. I could not loiter.

THE path lay dimly before me. I followed its course to the bridge, and across the bridge I made my halting way, back to the dark house. I dragged myself in and toppled to the floor. And then I felt myself slipping, miles deep, into unconsciousness. The garish experience held me no longer. I had reached the limit of human endurance. I fainted.

The warmth of a late afternoon sun was streaming through a window directly on my body when I awoke. I was stiff and cramped, with an ache in every bone. I gazed about me, hardly knowing where I was. Then I saw the open chest by the window, and realization came all too vividly as I thought of that awful fight.

Slowly I dragged myself to my feet, forgetful of that injured ankle until it once more gave way under my weight. Examination showed it already discolored and I knew there were weeks of limping ahead of me.

The odor of must still lingered in my nostrils, and still I felt the impress of those horrible lips on mine. But I hobbled outside; and cool water from the well dashed upon my face, gave me a sense of cleanness and new vigor.

Peace lay upon the countryside basking in the sunlight. The rain of the night had served to scrub and scour it into fresh beauty. Bees droned among the blossoms, and haze lingered still in the direction of the Berkshires. The phantom bridge had vanished, and only the ruins of its foundations remained, vine-clad and hidden.

Had it not been for my sprained ankle, I might have thought that my hideous experience was only a horrible nightmare. But the twitches and pains that shot up my leg, were real enough.

As best I could, I put things to rights in the house. I thought of hobbling to my neighbor's, three or four miles away, to enlist his aid. The effort seemed too great to contemplate. I decided to stay and get what rest I could through the night, and go away on the morrow, when more strength had returned to me.

But what if that evil spirit returned in the night hours? How would I resist him? I could not. It would mean my death. I was too weak to go through another such encounter. As the shadows lengthened, this thought troubled me more and more. I again debated setting out for my neighbor's, but I could not face the pain and effort I knew it would involve. Dispirited, ill, I was reaching the point where I did not care any more. I would face whatever the night had in store and if death overtook me, at least it would be the peace for which I longed. Yet——

I did not want to die. A new thought occurred to me. I could fight that evil genius with fire! I had heard that spirits were not impervious to that. In the yard were plenty of broken limbs from the trees; and laboriously, perseveringly, I set about gathernig a great pile of them in the kitchen, determined to keep that fireplace alight through the night and never once to close my eyes until daylight came. Moreover, I found several iron bars about the place and I prepared to heat them in the coals. Though my own strength was meager, I could aid it with red-hot irons!

By the time I had completed my slow and painful labors, the sun had gone behind the hill at the rear of the house and darkness once more was settling down. I prepared a frugal meal and ate it. It gave me additional strength and a new feeling of courage.

SHADOWS crept across the floor to merge into the gloom of the corners. Night insects began their whirring, noisy chorus. The light of the lamp grew brighter as the blackness outside my windows increased. I took down an ancient book from a shelf above my head, and seated myself by the fireplace, the room fairly ablaze with light and my back to the wall. Within quick and easy reach were

the irons I had placed in the coals. Now let the spirit come if he must.

The book lay idly in my lap. I did not even know its title. I could not concentrate upon it. The chest in which I had seen those peering, baleful eyes, sat against the opposite wall, its lid wide-open. I had assured myself that nothing but the folded coat was in it.

As I waited, I felt my nerves growing taut again with suspense. The moments sped on. I could not keep my eyes off that chest. It fascinated me. I wished to high heaven the Thing would come. It was not so much the actuality of danger but the apprehensive waiting that tortured me.

And then into my consciousness there came the rumbling sound I had heard on the previous night, as of buggy wheels and a horse's hoofs beating on the floor of that covered bridge. Fear of the unknown held me chained to my chair. I did not dare to look out!

The rumbling ceased. The carriage had crossed the bridge. I waited for the sound of its wheels before my door. And still I waited.

In that intense silence slight noises were exaggerated. The snapping of a burning branch was like a pistol shot. The whirring of crickets was the click of a gigantic telegraph. The turning of leaves in a book——

But the book was closed on my lap! I had not turned the leaves.

And then I saw him sitting there, beside the table!

He was an elderly man, dressed in the apparel of possibly seventy-five years ago. He was portly, with an air of geniality about him. He appeared kindly, whimsical, born to command. Could this be the phantom I had fought? Were there others? Was this a habitation of ghosts?

With the courage of desperation, I leaped from my chair and faced the specter. He raised his eyes, studying me intently, but he said no word.

"For God's sake, speak!" I cried, reaching for one of my irons. "Let's see what your voice sounds like and I'll burn it back into your throat."

Again he studied me intently.

"Put it back," he commanded, nodding towards the glowing iron.

I hesitated. There was authority in his tone. Strangely, I did as I was bidden.

"I've come to help you," he said quietly, his tone soothing and deep. "Listen to me. I am a spirit, it is true, but not the spirit you think. I am Doctor Marshall. I spent my life in this countryside, going about with my horse and carriage to alleviate pain and suffering, to heal ills if I could, to comfort the sad ones when death came. Once error entered my life. It does not matter what. For that I am paying, condemned for a season to wander between the worlds. I cannot tell you more. Mortals would not understand.

"THE evil spirit that attacked you last night will come again soon. I, too, came last night, but I could not help you then. It was decreed that that other spirit must first meet with disappointment. But again he will try to regain the breath of mortal life that was strangled from him when he was hanged. The thought that prevailed in his mind at the last moment of living still lingers with him. It is the desire for breath—the will to breathe.

"I know his story. He was hung for a deed he did not commit. He loved a woman devotedly—his wife. He does not realize that years ago she passed on, to a greater glory. He wishes to return to her and it is his fallacy that, by absorbing breath from the living, he again will live. Do not judge him too severely. His spirit mind was broken by his tragedy. He will come again tonight, but perhaps we can help him."

When he finished, my gaze reverted to the chest. Above it, hovering, wavering in the half light—for the fire, neglected while the doctor spoke, had grown low—were those baleful, unwinking eyes, peering at me, hypnotizing.

But the doctor had seen them already. Rising, he stood for a moment gazing at them. He spoke:

"John Harcomb!"

Slowly the eyes left mine and, searching, at last settled upon the doctor's face. There was tragedy, as the doctor had said, deep-rooted in those eyes. They were troubled, worried, haunted.

For a time neither the eyes of the Thing nor those of the doctor wavered. A battle, silent, unseen, uncomprehended by me, was taking place. The eyes of the Thing blazed with hatred and rebellion. The doctor, who all his lifetime had been compelling, paternal, in his attitude towards others, did not flinch now. His was the stronger personality.

The battle of wills reached a climax. Slowly it subsided. The eyes of the Thing wavered; and though it is hard to judge emotions by the eyes alone, without the expression of the face, I felt there was disappointment, defeat, and sorrow in them now.

"John Harcomb, stand forth!" The doctor's voice was even and low.

From out of the air—out of nothing, a mist grew. Below and round about those eyes, a shadow appeared. At first there was only a face, indistinct and vague. Then the mist increased in volume and, congealing, merged into the semblance of a human form.

The form was that of a young man in glowing manhood. There was strength in his frame—ah, well I knew. The virility of life in the open lighted his face. He was finely formed, a wonderful specimen of manly quality and resolution. He was of such sturdy stock as blazed a path in the wilderness and paved the way for civilization and progress. He was such a man as a woman would love.

Slowly the doctor crossed the floor and took both hands of the young man in his own.

"John Harcomb," he said, and sympathy was in his voice, "poor, unfortunate, troubled spirit, you cannot go back to life again. It is useless for you and me. We have passed beyond the veil.

"Nor is Martha here anymore. She has gone away. She is waiting for you in another world. Do not try any more. Life is behind us. We must attain to a more glorious existence than this. We must go on."

FOR a moment, opposition again stirrred in the young man's soul. But in the presence of the doctor's kindly look he seemed to gain new control of himself.

The doctor turned to me, pointing to the young man's throat. And I saw the hang-

man's noose still tight about his neck. The rope was worn and frayed, but the knot below the ear held its strands secure and taut, encircling the throat.

"It was put there by mortal hands," the doctor said to me, "and only by mortal hands can it be released. If you wish us well, take it off."

The thought of our terrible battle in the tomb came to me again. I was horribly afraid. I hardly could compel myself to draw near that figure, much less to touch it. And a phantom knot! How would it feel beneath my fingers? Loathsome? Horrid?

With a desperate effort to control myself, I stretched out my hands to the rope. I fully expected they would pass through it —or, if not, that I would find in my hands particles of hideous mold, like the scrapings from the wall of a tomb.

But my tingling fingers encountered a real substance! The rope was solid, as material as my own hands! The part I touched was almost as sound as when new!

How could that be—a substantial rope about the throat of a ghost? I do not know. Though it was shadowy and immaterial to the eye, the rope felt solid under my fingers, and it was with difficulty I undid it from that strange being before me.

And then an amazing thing happened. As my trembling fingers loosened the hangman's noose, suddenly color mounted to the wraith's pale cheeks. Animation invigorated him. Before my eyes his breast heaved, and quickly began to rise and fall in the rhythmic motion of breathing. The color surged deeper. New energy seized him. He turned his gaze upon me. Hate no longer was there. Gladness and appreciation were mingled in his look.

"Come," said the doctor; "we must go on."

He caught the young man's arm. Together they passed the length of the room. I watched them going, two shadows from the vale of phantoms. It was a strange scene. At the door the doctor turned finally to me.

"You have done more than you know," he said. "Many blessings will come upon you now."

Still, uncomprehending, I waited. The fire was dying low. The shadows danced in the corners but I was not afraid any more. Suddenly I heard again the rumble of buggy wheels and the hoof-beats of a horse on the bridge. They were retreating this time—towards the cemetery. The doctor, ever bent on errands of mercy, was carrying a vagrant soul back to its grave.

I FOUND the graves later—that of Doctor Marshall and, set apart from the others, the one of John Harcomb. The dates were ancient, the letters indistinct on the stones, the stones themselves old and unseated by the elements. I found the tomb in the hillside, its doors still resisting the storms and covered by a mass of vines, that, growing and twisting, had formed a network as strong as iron over them. They showed no signs of having been opened for generations. I grew faint with horror at the sight—for I knew that if those doors were opened, I would find the crumbling coffins desecrated in that hideous fight.

More interesting than the graves, however, was that faded coat in the old chest. Its fabric was rotted, and without careful handling it would have fallen to pieces. In the breast pocket I found a paper which, upon careful study and deciphering, proved to be a letter—the last, perhaps, to John Harcomb. It read as follows:

My Own Loving Husband:—

They have wronged you terribly. They are committing a most grave and unjust error. But I can do no more. All day I have pleaded with them. They will not believe me. Whether or not that man should have died, I leave to the judgment of a Power higher than I. But they will not believe you did not kill him.

Tonight they are going to take your life for the deed you did not do. I would have you in my arms and comfort you, but they will not let me. Hence, I can commend you only to that same Higher Power of which I have spoken.

I have asked them to send me a memento of you, your coat, perhaps, against which I have lain so often in your arms. They have agreed. I will treasure it, dearest love.

Wait for me, dear husband, on that other shore. I shall seek you there. And know that always my love shall be with you—now and forevermore.

Be strong. Be brave. I can write no more. Farewell.

Always, eternally, your loving wife,

Martha.

The letter's closing was blurred and dimmed as though the signature had been washed with tears. I thought of my own sad experience and wished that I, too, could have known the love of a woman as loyal as this.

WITHIN my hands lay the evidence of broken lives. It was as though I had stepped into a sacred precinct where the holiness of a woman's love pervaded all things. I returned the letter to the coat, and as carefully as I could, I refolded the garment into the form in which a woman's loving hands had placed it. And then, for fear that at some future time less understanding ones might find it and desecrate it, I put the garment back beneath the lid and dragged the chest to the fireplace.

And as the flames reduced it to ashes, I voiced the hope that in some fairer clime John Harcomb might already have found solace in the arms of Martha.

I never have seen the phantom bridge since that strange night. Nor have spirits troubled me more. My ankle healed surprisingly fast, and in the pure air and among the blossoms of the countryside I have found quiet, strength, and peace.

BUT as I recount this story, there lies, in my desk, a memento of a weird experience. It is a hemp rope, and one end is coiled into the intricacies of a hangman's noose. That end, as though held in that position for years, always remains in a circle—about the circumference of a man's neck. The rope is stained and old, but it is very strong and substantial.

Sometimes I take it from my desk to show to visitors. They test it by pulling and tugging at it, and they marvel at its strength.

Yes, it is the rope, which materialized to the eye as well as to the touch, the moment I took it from about the throat of the ghost—as strange a souvenir as mortal man ever possessed. That and my memory are vivid reminders of the strange events on that old, abandoned farm.

The Curse of the One-Eyed Buddha

(*Continued from page* 36)

down to the floor, and I did not have to approach him to know that he was unconscious. I had heard also the clatter of his automatic and his flashlight on the floor. And now I was left in utter darkness in a haunted room with a murdered man and an unconscious one for company—to say nothing of a poisonous snake.

I groped my way to the recumbent bulk of Moran and bent over him. Suddenly I felt a soft, clammy touch on my neck, as of moist, cold, fluid fingers trying to attract my attention.

I was wide-eyed with horror. Over my body appeared the goose-flesh that I had not experienced since I was a child, and I took a firm hold on myself in order not to let go of my overstrung nerves and lose my head completely.

At that moment I wished more than anything else physical companionship. I stood up from the body of Moran and reached for the handle of the door, to pull it open. I found the handle instantly and pulled. For a moment I could not breathe—something was happening which was quite beyond my reckoning.

The door did not open.

Now this was curious, for as I have taken pains to point out, there was no lock on this door, and it opened inward. How, then, could it be that it was locked? Was some one holding it? Or was I in the grip of an hallucination that was stronger than the flesh?

Again I felt the touch of ghastly fingers upon my neck. With a cry I faced about, and saw a phosphorescent Thing that moved slowly toward the black wall of the room.

My hair almost literally stood on end and the blood turned sluggish within me.

The figure was faint—and yet at the same time so distinct that I knew it was not a figment of my imagination. The figure had no definite shape, but I could see the vague outline of a body of some sort and a hand which, even, as my horrified gaze was fixed by it, began to move, and I saw that it pointed in a direction which my eye could not help but follow.

Every nerve within me was taut and on edge, every sense was alert, and I do not mind telling you that the emotion uppermost in me at the time was fear. I was alone in a room—nay, worse than alone—for with me were an unconscious man and a dead one, and before me in the

darkness was a figure that was not of this earth. It is no wonder, then, and no shame to me, to say that for an instant I trembled like a leaf.

I cursed myself for a coward even as this emotion coursed through me, and I bullied myself into a frame of mind where I was able to see what was happening. The hand of the specter—with long, bony finger extended—was pointing upwards at the junction of wall and ceiling. While I gazed at it, the figure faded slowly, and I was left alone in the darkness—a thick, impenetrable darkness such as one must live through in order to be able to imagine.

I WAS roused by a groan near me, and was so startled that I jumped. It was a perfectly human groan, however, and came from the throat of Detective Moran, whose existence I had forgotten for an instant in the terror and wonder aroused by the ghastly sight I had just experienced. I turned to him, but he was already scrambling to his feet roughly.

"Where's that flashlight of mine?" he was saying, and he was groping on the floor for it. I heard his hand encounter the flashlight and the automatic, one after the other.

"I must have been knocked cock-eyed for a minute, I guess," he said, rather sheepishly. "Who closed that door?"

"I don't know," I said. "It is fastened tight."

"Fastened?" he echoed. "How can that be?"

He was beside me in a moment. His hand shot out and pulled at the door-knob. The door stuck for an instant but opened.

"That's funny," I said. "It was fastened a moment ago."

"Fastened, my eye!" he said. "Who was there to fasten it? It was just closed."

"Well, what I'd like to know," I pursued, "is, how did it close?"

"How did it close?" he echoed. "Why, you felt the draft that closed it as well as I did."

"So I did," I admitted. "But where could the draft come from? The room, as your examination proved, has no exit except the door."

He was silent for a moment.

"It's funny," he said at last.

He was so puzzled and temporarily tractable that I was almost tempted to tell him about the apparition I had just witnessed. But his hard, matter-of-fact way held me off, for I knew he would scoff at what I said. I mentally marked the spot where the bony finger of the specter had pointed, and I planned to come back later and examine it.

As we stood there in silence, we heard a light footfall in the next room.

"What's that sound in——" I started to whisper, but was choked off by the hand of Moran, which gripped my wrist as if in a vise.

He turned to the door, silent as a cat, and was out in the hall immediately. I was through the door and after him in an instant, and in the dim reaches of the hall I saw him overtake and grapple with a vague, shadowy figure.

I rushed to his assistance but he needed none.

"Come out of there, you!" growled the voice of the detective and he half dragged, half forced the figure into the light.

Before my eyes I saw the distressed face of my butler, Sinton.

"Oh, it's you!" said the detective. "What were you doing in that room?"

"What room, sir?" replied Sinton, recovering his composure and deferential bearing instantly.

"You know very well what room," shouted the detective at him. "The one next to that one there."

His finger pointed to the one we had just come out of.

"Why, I was not in there, sir," replied Sinton calmly.

"Don't lie to me," came back the detective gruffly. "I heard you."

"It wasn't me you heard, sir."

"What were you doing up in this hall?"

"Why, I was just going to my room, sir," replied Sinton.

"Where is your room?"

The butler pointed down the hall in the direction he had been walking. Moran turned to me.

"That's right," I admitted. "That's his room."

"What were you going to do in your room?"

"Well, sir, I have been on duty for a long time," said Sinton frankly, "and I just wanted to have a little smoke. You know how it is, sir, when you haven't smoked for a long time; you feel the craving for a puff or two."

The detective gave him a hard look and then turned away.

"All right, Sinton, you may go," I said.

"Thank you, sir," he said, and with dignity he took himself off to his room.

Moran turned to me.

"I heard some one in the next room," he persisted. "Let's take a look."

We examined the room carefully but could find nothing. It was just as it had been before.

"Well," said Moran at last, "we don't seem to be able to dig up anything here. Though, that butler of yours——" He shook his head doubtfully.

"Nonsense," I returned after a space. "He's no criminal."

"M-m-m. Maybe," he assented. "Still, you never can tell. Did this butler of yours know about the ruby?"

"I DON'T know, really. Naturally I told him nothing about it. I keep my stones in a specially constructed safe in my library, and I allowed no one to handle them except myself. It's entirely possible, though, that he may have seen the ruby when I have had it out——although I am not certain that he would know its value even if he saw it. He knows about my collection, of course, and——"

"And he would know that any stone in which you were interested was likely to be worth a great deal of money, eh?" put in the detective.

"Exactly," I said. "But really, I hardly think you need be so concerned about him——"

"You don't know anything about it," cut in Moran. "And neither do I," he added, with a blunt honesty. "But I've been long enough in this business to know that no clue is too small to be of use. However, let's go down-stairs, and look over the ground once more. Maybe I can let your guests go home. I am sure they will want to."

In the dining room we found all as we

had left it. The occupants sat as we had left them an hour or more before, and talk among them seemed to have dwindled down until it had stopped completely. All seemed to be in the grip of the horror of the situation.

Whitney was the first to speak.

"Well, did you find out anything?"

"Yes," I replied. "We found the body of poor Sam up-stairs."

There was a swift gleam of interest in the eyes of all of them. It was my aunt who spoke first this time.

"Is he—is he——?" she inquired, hesitating at the word.

Moran answered. "Yes, he's dead, all right. There's no doubt about that."

THEY settled into a silence again, a sigh escaping from the lips of all. Moran went to the knife that still remained in the wall, firmly imbedded.

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in," said Moran, and the door opened to admit Sinton, the cook, and the housemaid. The two women seemed scared, but determined. I looked at them in inquiry.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but we've come to give notice," said the butler. There are too many horrid noises in this house."

"Give notice?" I echoed.

"Well, the ladies feel kind of nervous about staying here, sir, under the circumstances, and so do I. You can understand how I feel about the matter——"

"None of you can go now," declared the detective sharply. "You'll have to wait until tomorrow, anyway. The coroner will want to see you in the morning. Take my advice and don't try any nonsense."

"Yes, sir," said the butler.

They went out, with somewhat fearful looks about them. I was sorry for them, for I knew they were scared—the women, at all events—but I had too much on my mind to waste sympathy on them. After all, it was only a matter of hours for them, and they would be well out of it. As for me, there was still the matter of my secretary's death to solve—and this strange, spectral house to live in until that was accomplished.

My guests sat quiet, waiting for whatever disposition the detective chose to make in this case. Aunt Claire sat a little apart from the others, her hands clasped in her lap, her head high, and a pallor like death on her face. She sat well away from the wall, as though not knowing at what moment the lightning might strike her, but her mouth was closed in a firm line and her breath came regularly. She was afraid, I knew, but she kept herself rigidly under control.

The Jessops sat close together and seemed to take comfort from their nearness to each other. Whitney, grim and silent, had kept his place at the table; in front of him his half-empty glass of wine glowed red against the white table-cloth. He alone seemed to be fully aware of the surroundings and of all that went on. He was self-possessed and calm.

At the window stood the policeman, an image of stone, only his small eyes alive in his large and rather rough face. His gaze was fixed on his superior, Moran, and he waited for the next move with an Irish stolidity and a lack of fear that came from his lack of imagination just as much as from courage, it seemed to me.

I turned to Detective Sergeant Moran.

"Do you think you'll need my guests any longer?" I queried. "You know, these ladies and gentlemen are all well-known in New York, and you'll have no difficulty in seeing them again whenever you wish. I'll answer for the appearance of every one of them."

Moran gave me a straight look. "You'll answer! I don't want to seem rough, but you know I'll probably have to hold you yourself, first of all."

"Why?" I questioned. "Do you think I would kill my secretary myself in order to rob myself of a famous ruby that belongs to me, anyway?" I put this question with a kind of heavy sarcasm, but he passed it unnoticed.

"Don't know—never know, in a case like this." The detective nodded slowly, giving every one present a long, lingering look—as though he suspected each and every one there.

"Well, I guess you can all go—for the present," he said finally. "But you'll have to be here, every one of you, for the coroner—tomorrow morning at eleven. Do you understand that, all of you?"

"Perfectly," said my Aunt Claire, and the others chimed in their assent. There was a general movement in which all rose and started to straggle to the door.

In the hall outside, as they put their wraps on, preparatory to descending to their automobiles, there was a little desultory conversation which kept strictly away from the subject uppermost in the minds of all of them.

"I'm sorry, Aunt Claire," I whispered to her as I shook her hand in farewell. "But, you know——"

"That's all right, Laurence, it was nothing that you could help."

"Will you be all right, getting home?" I asked, and she nodded.

"Of course:" She said quietly. "Why not? My car is right outside the door, and I'll be home in ten minutes, thank the Lord."

I could not repress a quiet smile at the heartfelt way in which she said this, nor could I blame her for her wish to be out of this place, either.

Whitney shook my hand next. "Sorry, old boy," he said. "See you tomorrow—you and the coroner. Good night."

The Jessops were equally sympathetic, but they hurried away as quickly as they could.

When I was left alone, my first impulse was to go up-stairs and investigate the small room where the body of Sam lay. I considered this for a moment. There was something for me to see there—of that I was sure. Else why the vision that had been vouchsafed me? The skinny, pointing finger, which had appeared to me alone?

I would have taken my way immediately up to this room, if I had not thought of the detective. If he should happen to find me there, his suspicions would know no bounds. I decided to postpone my visit until a little later—when my investigations stood less chance of being interrupted.

I went back to the dining room and found Moran inspecting the dagger minutely. By the table sat the policeman, stolid and calm. Moran was taking great pains not to touch the dagger, for fear, evidently, of obliterating any possible finger marks.

"That's pretty funny," said Moran, turning to the policeman.

"What's funny?" returned the stolid figure.

"Why, don't you see, stupid? The slightest touch on that handle would make a mark—and you'd think there'd be fingerprints of some kind on it. It must have been gripped pretty tight to drive it into the back of a man——"

"Sure must have," interposed the policeman.

"And still tighter to pull it out and shoot it over here, into the wall. And yet there's not the slightest mark on it."

The policeman stood up and inspected the dagger with him.

"That's right," he said. "Not a mark. That's funny."

Moran turned to me in inquiry. "Are you dead-sure no one touched this dagger after you people saw it?"

"Absolutely sure," I replied. "The people here wouldn't have touched it with a forty-foot pole. Why?"

"I dunno," said Moran. "Only—it's so clean you would think some one had took a rag and wiped it that way." He regarded me a little suspiciously.

I flushed, though I had no reason to. This man had the faculty of making every one feel guilty, no matter how innocent he might be.

He looked at me significantly. "Maybe," he said at length, "maybe, I ought to have had them all searched——"

"Who? My guests?" I laughed shortly. "Don't be silly. I don't think you could get any one of them to touch the blamed thing if I gave it to him for nothing. After what they saw tonight——"

"Maybe," he said again. "It wouldn't be so easy to do anything with a stone of that value, anyway, I guess."

"It would be impossible. To cut it up would be to destroy the value. No collector would do it—and these people are all very rich and could have no interest in it except a collector's interest."

"Well, then, it's damned funny where it went to—that's all I have to say."

"Damned funny," echoed the policeman.

THERE was a silence between us for a few moments, the while I could see Moran ponderously making up his mind what step to take next. I broke the silence myself.

"About the—the body," I offered. "It seems to me that it ought to be taken down here, where the murder was committed, rather than——"

"I think you're right," put in Moran. "Let's go up and bring it down. The coroner will want to see it where the murder occurred, when he comes in the morning."

We all arose and moved toward the door. Moran turned to me.

"You can wait down here," he said. "We'll be able to handle him, all right: I guess he isn't so heavy."

Relieved, I sank into a chair. In truth, it was a job I was not too anxious for. These men had no nerves about such a thing, but then it was just routine to them, whereas to me it was a hideous tragedy, the marks of which I would probably carry within me to my last day.

They left the door open as they went up, and I could hear their heavy footsteps tramping up the stairs and getting fainter

and fainter, as they receded from my hearing. I could picture them opening the door of the small, dark room where Sam lay on the floor in the beginning of a last, long sleep. As though I were with them I could visualize them bending over the body, one of them at the head and the other at the feet, the arms and legs hanging grotesquely and stiffly, the pale face fallen back.

I LOOKED around at the dagger, and a faint recollection awoke in me as I regarded it.

Where had I seen that dagger before? As I looked, the memory became intertwined with the precious ruby that I had lost tonight—it seemed to me that the dagger and the ruby somehow went together.

I thought on the matter, and wondered in what way the ruby was connected with the dagger in my past. Was it in this life, or was some race-memory awakening in my mind, some memory of another life? As I pondered on this, the explanation flashed through my mind and all suddenly became clear in a white, revealing streak. It was as though I stood again in the temple that overlooked Bhangapore and gazed at the ruby in the somber and brooding forehead of the one-eyed Buddha. That was it! I remembered now!

I saw it all clearly. At the side of the Buddha was a thin, graceful spiral column of gold, or some other yellow metal, marvelously worked by hand; and on top of the column was a gold plate.

On the gold plate lay two things. One was a small branch of olive—in gold—symbolizing the blessed peace that came from the all potent One. The other thing that lay on the plate was a steel-bladed dagger with a smooth gold handle, symbolizing swift and inevitable vengeance for any affront to the sacred memory.

That dagger was the same one that was now before me—quivering in my wall like a live thing!

So that was it! It was the dagger of the Buddha himself—the dagger that had been as much a part of the Buddha as the ruby. How had this been done, then? Had the events of this night been caused by some supernatural force? Had my friend been struck down by a hand that was not human—by a hand that hovered between heaven and earth, between material and spiritual states?

If I had never seen the stone, my friend would now be alive, instead of on his way to a premature grave. I groaned. The stone had been cursed with the wrath of a god, and well had they told me that evil fortune was the lot of whoever had anything to do with it. I did not believe in the Buddha; I could not believe in a pagan god—yet, how else could I explain what had happened?

I had been warned, and I had braved the wrath of a god where wiser men than I might have hesitated. Was there not a wisdom in the East that eluded us? I was tempted to believe that there was, when I subconsciously reviewed the things that had come to pass. We of the West are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as being in the van of the civilization of the world, but the word "civilization" is susceptible to more than one meaning. And while we go on in our loud way, talking of our deeds and conquering the world with our flags, the East lives calmly on, as it lived before Egypt and before Rome and before Greece, and as, perhaps, it may live calmly on after we have passed with our new gods and our new locomotives. It lives on, quiet, changeless, perhaps slightly amused at us, if it notices us at all, and above all, seemingly fully aware of the inevitable futility of it all, and the inevitable end.

And, I, a puny figure from the Western world, with a passion for precious stones and the ability to gratify that passion because certain ancestors of mine had known how to gather up gold—I, new and shiny as the Western civilization, had braved the wrath of gods who were old when the world was young. As though one could take an eye from a god and, having thus blinded him, prevent him from finding his own again, and from visiting a terrible vengeance upon the poor fool who had been so fatuous.

My mind swayed beneath the thought, and was brought back to itself gladly by the slow footsteps coming down the hall. For the moment I was glad not to be alone, even though I knew those who approached bore a grisly burden in their arms.

I arose and went to the door. Moran and the detective bore the body of Sam, as I had pictured them bearing it, Moran at the head and the policeman at the feet.

The right arm of Sam stuck out, rigid in death, for *rigor mortis* had already taken possession of his mortal frame, and the forefinger of the right hand was extended as though answering some question not given to us to hear in this world.

"Here, get a couple of those chairs together," directed Moran, as he backed in through the door, "and we'll lay him on them. He's heavier than I figured."

I hastened to put three chairs together, but as they swung the body around to lay it straight on the seats of the chairs a curious incident occurred. The rigidly extended arm of the dead man struck the glass of wine that was resting on the table in front of the place where Stephen Whitney had sat. The crimson fluid was spilled on the white cloth, and the fragile glass crashed to the floor and was shattered into countless splinters.

"Here, be careful!" directed Moran. "Trying to break the furniture?"

THE policeman grunted in response, and they laid the body down carefully on the improvised couch. As we turned away, our eyes were drawn to the deep red mark on the white cloth, where the wine had spilled, and what we saw there held us transfixed for a moment, for we all saw it at the same time.

There, in the middle of the deep crimson, lay the ruby!

For a moment we were speechless. Moran finally found tongue.

"There's your half-million-dollar stone!" he said at length.

I nodded. It was plain where the ruby had been—and very simple, now that we had the explanation.

It had fallen from Whitney's nerveless fingers—not on the table, as he had thought, but into his wineglass. The wine was as red and as glowing as the ruby, and in that setting it was invisible.

"That's the kind of friends you have," remarked Moran.

"Why, what do you mean?" I returned, though I knew at once just what he

uneant. It was absurd to suspect Whitney. He knew I understood. "You know very well what I mean. But if you insist on my making it plain, I'll do so. Your friend, Mr. Stephen Whitney, dropped the stone into his wineglass, knowing you'd never think of looking for it there. That's all." He sneered.

"Nonsense," I insisted. "If he did that, why didn't he take it out later? He had plenty of chance. The fact is, that he had no idea it was there. It fell from his fingers,—as he told me himself—when that strange light filled the room."

"Maybe," said the detective non-committally. "I think I'd better take charge of it now, however." And he stretched out his hand to the blood-red stone.

I stopped him with a nervous gesture. "Wait," I said. "Don't touch it—yet."

I picked up the small box that had contained the gem, and with the cotton wadding I lifted the stone, wiped it clean, and put it into the box—without touching the ruby with my fingers.

"There," I said, with a sigh of relief, as I snapped down the lid of the small jewel-box. I placed it on the table.

"So you believe that rot, too." He smiled grimly, and looked ironically at me.

"What rot?"

"Why, about touching the ruby with your fingers——"

"Well, I don't say I do," I defended, reddening a little. "But neither do I say I don't. If you had seen what we've seen tonight, perhaps——"

He laughed. "What bunk! Here, lemme show you about that."

He stretched out his hand and picked up the box. I watched, saying nothing, for there was nothing I could say under such circumstances. He snapped the cover of the case open, and his eyes almost popped out of his head in astonishment.

The ruby was not there!

"What kind of black magic is this?" burst out from Moran's surprised lips, just as soon as he could speak, and the policeman crossed himself hastily.

"It's gone!" was forced from my parched lips.

And at that moment our blood was turned to water, for above our heads rang out a fiendish scream, the same scream that I had heard before—once at the temple at Bhangapore, and once tonight before the soul of Sam had been sent hurtling to it's Maker. It was the scream of a woman.

Our heads went up in alarm.

"In the name of God, what's that?" cried Moran.

"Look!" came a hoarse cry from the policeman, and we followed the direction in which he was pointing, behind us. Time seemed to stand still in the room for that instant.

We were looking at the spot in the wall where the dagger of the Buddha of Bhangapore had stuck, quivering. But the place was vacant.

The dagger was no longer there!

Detective Moran is sure that he will find a flesh-and-blood criminal. But is there any natural cause that would account for the weird and brutal murder of Sam Winship, the disappearance of the fatal ruby, and the horrible apparition that appeared to Laurence Martinson? What is the secret of that attic room where so many unexplainable things have happened? Read in November GHOST STORIES *of the amazing discoveries that follow Martinson's visit to that room. On the news-stands September 23rd.*

Captive Souls

(*Continued from page* 33)

I turned it slowly, carefully, and then opened the big door silently. All was still—painfully so, except the wind outside.

I felt my way along the wall till I came to the stairs. The whole house was black, for the dim light in the upper hall had been turned out. A board creaked, but I put most of my weight on the banister and walked up one, two, three, four steps, my feet sinking in the heavy carpet. I stopped and listened, and then went on again. At last I reached the top. Not a sound, just blackness.

AGAIN I felt my way along the wall and found the second stairway. Up this I ran noiselessly—my heart beating madly and breath coming hard—wondering if I would ever come down again. And now I was on Donald's floor. I followed the wall until I touched the knob of the first door. Then I went on to the second and finally to the third. That was Donald's. Well I remembered.

I stopped, my hand on the knob, my ear to the key-hole, but I could hear nothing. Slowly I turned the knob. What if the door were locked! I had not thought of that. All my pains and plans would be for nothing!

I kept turning and then pushed gently inward. It was not locked! With infinite care I opened the door far enough to admit my head. A clock ticked from within but there was no other sound. Gradually I drew myself in, while I held my breath and clenched my fists. I pushed the door to noiselessly but not so as to make it catch.

The only light was furnished by a few red embers in the fireplace. I stood for a moment looking about me and trying to make out the different objects. Black, black curtains of velvet hung from the top of the window down to the floor, the great fold covering completely both window and frame. A black scarf hung from the mantel and fell to the floor at both ends. The floor was covered with black, heavy carpet. The woodwork was painted black, the furniture was black, and the panels of the wall, that had been green, were black. What gloomy, death-like surroundings! I tiptoed across the room till I was beside the fireplace; I crouched in the corner where the light from the dying embers could not betray me. From that position I saw the dresser and upon it a photograph of myself, silver-framed, and beside it one of Donald.

And I saw, too, a bed—Donald's bed. The faint flare from the fireplace played about it—and then under the covering I saw a long form. The back of the head was turned toward me, the face half buried in the pillow. In spite of the gray-streaked hair, I recognized Donald!

In the darkness of that corner I was unable to move. I was almost paralyzed but I wanted to scream. I felt stifled and I clenched my hands—till the nails cut into the skin. My heart seemed right in my throat, my lungs refused to function, and my knees knocked together.

Minutes passed. The clock ticked incessantly. I could hear Donald's steady breathing and could see the rise and fall of his shoulders in the faint red light. How different the appearance of that room from what it was the last time I had seen it—more than four years ago. I remembered the deep green of the panels and the electric light button near the door. I could see it now—the white button stood out against the black background. I wondered what would happen if I pressed it.

The curtains excluded even the sound of the wind. All was deathly silent save the voice of the clock. And Donald lay unconscious of my presence. Tick-tock, steady, regular. Then a distinguishing sound! A light scraping, then silence. Again that sound—but where did it come from? I listened, holding my breath. Donald lay motionless. Again it came, that sound, like a light footstep, slow, hesitating, cautious. But it sounded as though on bare wooden steps, and those in the halls were heavily carpeted.

I listened again, my nerves tense, my eyes straining to pierce the darkness. Nearer the footsteps came—softly, slowly. They did not come from the direction of the hall, and yet there was no other door. Another step and silence for a moment. Then a scraping, a low, rolling sound. I fixed my eyes on the panels near the bed, and I saw one of them move! It was being slowly pushed back!

When it had disappeared into the wall, a small figure appeared in the opening. A girl stepped into the room and softly pushed the panel back in place. Was she also clothed in black? Had she a black veil about her head?

SLOWLY she advanced toward Donald's bed, hesitatingly, timidly. She was evidently acquainted with the room, for even in the dark she avoided the furniture. She was at the head of the bed when Donald, aroused by the slight sound of her movements, raised himself to a sitting position instantly.

"Get back, get out—you black devil!" he cried in a voice that chilled me. She drew back as though struck by an adder.

"I must speak to you, sir," she said, in a low voice, but it sent shivers up my spine.

Donald had called her black and her tones, though not harsh or coarse, belonged to a person of that color.

"Get back, I say," Donald repeated, his voice wild as that of a maniac. The girl

drew back further toward the panel whence she had come. She paused a moment, looking toward Donald and then turned slowly away. There was a hopeless resignation in her actions and voice; and so, before she reached that panel, I leaped for the light button and pushed it. In another moment I was between her and the panel.

Donald started and drew back, his eyes fixed upon me.

"Mildred," he began, "how did you——"

But the girl now took my attention—she was a full-blooded negress of West Indian type! She was much more frightened than surprised.

"Why are you here?" I demanded, without raising my voice. To my surprise an expression of relief came over her face.

"Lady," she said plaintively, "get me out of this—please, lady, help me."

I turned to look at Donald, who was now standing beside the bed in dressing-gown and slippers. But he was still bewildered, evidently unable to grasp the situation.

"I haven't done anything, lady. I can't stand it any longer. I'll die if you don't help me."

A glance told me the girl was sick, for she coughed frequently and seemed exhausted.

"What do you mean—what help do you want?" I asked. She kept her eyes on the door, and nervously clasped and unclasped her hands.

"I'd tell you, ma'm, only——"

"Sit down here and tell me," I said, pushing a chair toward her. But she was apparently in terror of some one. I made her tell me who she feared, and I learned without surprise that it was the mulatto servant, named Derman. When I assured her that the object of her terror was safely and securely locked in the tower, she began to talk.

"I am twenty-five years old," she said, "and was born in Porto Rico. I knew Derman from the time I was a baby and he a grown man, for he is very much older than I. He left Porto Rico and came to the United States, returning in a few years. We were married. He had a peculiar influence over me, but I never really cared for him. He then returned to the United States saying he would send for me later. I wrote to him frequently, but after a while he quit answering my letters.

She paused sadly before going on: "After a few years I borrowed the money for my passage to the United States and came here to see him. He was furious when he saw me, demanded my reason for coming here, and even threatened me. He was different in Porto Rico. I guess he—he just got tired of me and wanted to be rid of me. I came here nearly five years ago—just after the master died. Derman locked me in the laundry and the next time I saw him he unfolded his scheme."

Here she paused and rested her head against the back of her chair. She spoke good English, though she talked slowly and hesitatingly. Her story was long—but was of absorbing interest to me.

That night, in the laundry Derman told her he had purchased and drugged a bottle of rare wine and that he was going to offer it to Donald as a gift from his dead father. Donald's father seldom served wine in his house, but this was a bottle of a brand that he did serve on rare occasions. Being very intimate with the senior Harrison, Derman knew more about him probably than members of his own family.

A single glass of the wine would make Donald unconscious for hours, and would permit the mulatto to carry out his diabolical plan. The next day, when Donald should be in his right senses or nearly so, Derman was to convince him that he had drunk the whole bottle and had been in a violently drunken state. Under the influence of the liquor he had made love to a little black girl, Derman's daughter, who had just arrived in this country on a visit to her father. Derman's just and righteous soul had been stirred to fury by his daughter's tearful story, and he had forced Donald to marry her that night.

To prove it the mulatto was to produce a marriage certificate—spurious, of course—but sufficiently convincing in appearance. The girl was to verify all that he said. Donald, of course, would refuse to accept her as his wife when he was in possession of his senses again, and for three or four hundred dollars a month she was to promise to keep silent about it.

The plot seemed to be promoted not only by the mulatto's desire for money but also by a strong antipathy which he had always felt for Donald. He resented very deeply Donald's taking his father's place both as head of the house and in the church. That he was devoted and loyal to the elder Mr. Harrison cannot be disputed.

The plan was carried out with fiendish ingenuity. While Donald sank into unconsciousness, the mulatto talked persistently of the little black girl and stamped her picture indelibly upon his young master's mind.

When Donald awoke from his stupor, he was stunned and horrified by Derman's story. There was in his mind the hazy recollection of the girl, but nothing else. It might all be true. His father had always valued Derman highly; Donald knew nothing against him and did not once suspect him. He thought that any father would have done the same as Derman, under the circumstances. When he saw the girl and the marriage certificate, he was completely convinced.

Knowing Donald's pride and sensitive nature, I understood how crushed, mentally and physically, he must have been. To have such a marriage annulled would mean publicity and the admission of drinking and debauchery in his own home—he a minister expecting to take up an important pastorate in a few days. The strait-laced and puritancial inhabitants of a New England town would never accept an explanation. No one would ever believe, but that he was an habitual drunkard. It would mean, of course, the loss of his clerical robes and the church that his father had really built. It would mean disgrace to him and to his dead parents.

Whether the marriage were annulled or not, he would lose his fiancée, the girl whom he had known from the time they were both children. There was no use running away. It would not alter the fact that he had a negro wife, nor could it make him forget. There was no relief, no remedy—nothing to do but see the horrible thing through to the end.

But he could face no one, for he could not explain. People would loathe and despise him. So morose and desperate did he become that he could not bring himself to leave the house, and was willing to tolerate anything that would save him from exposure. He soon lost all desire to live and would have welcomed death, as the only relief. This led to a mental state borderng on insanity in which he felt he was being punished for imagined sins. In atonement for his crime, he imprisoned himself in his room and had furnished it entirely in black. All this added to Derman's feeling of personal security.

The black girl was made to stay in a dark, unventilated, secret room below Donald's. This was part of Derman's scheme, and every threat on Donald's part to dispossess her was met with one to expose Donald, if he did. Her presence there was to be continual reminder to him of the fact that she was his wife and that he must pay four hundred dollars a month for her silence. The girl herself was threatened with merciless treatment unless she followed the mulatto's instructions.

Donald loathed her so violently, as to make the girl mortally afraid of him. And so she was slowly dying in her prison room, one man hating her so as to make him blind to the condition of her health, the other lost in his lust for money, and not caring. It was a question as to whether the girl's health or Donald's sanity would have held out the longer. Had the latter broken first, it would probably have placed Donald's entire possessions, including the castle, in the hands of Derman.

I could easily understand how the presence of the girl—and of Donald, too—was kept from the knowledge of every one. The other servants were so frightened by Derman's tales of ghosts that they never came up-stairs except to bring food to the mulatto, who had taken quarters on the third floor in the front. Derman himself brought food to Donald and the girl.

At the conclusion of her story the black girl lay back in her chair—exhausted. Before daylight, I had her on the way to a hospital and I had relieved her mind of some of the ideas that Derman had given her. He had convinced her that the laws of this country make a wife the legal property of her husband and that rebellion on her part would mean imprisonment, banishment, or death, if not all three.

Before telephoning for the constable, I ripped down the black curtains, flung up the shades, and opened the windows. The sunlight poured in, for it was now early morning, and a warm breeze blew through the room. A few late birds sang gaily.

I shall not forget old Adolphus's face when he saw Donald there. And it was wonderful, too, to witness the indignation of all the colored servants when they learned the truth. They felt, naturally, that Derman had not only done a terrible wrong to their beloved young master, but that he had also taken an unfair advantage of the weakness of his own race. For, of course, Derman had been well acquainted with the traditions of the old house, the curse, and the ghost, and he had used

them to further his own vicious ends. As for me, my watching the castle from across the valley led him to believe I was skeptical and he decided that a little jolt in the form of a ghost now and then might dampen my desire for an investigation.

The colored help accompanied the constable to the tower where the mulatto was imprisoned. He was cowering at the foot of the stairs, thoroughly convinced that something was wrong when the officer opened the door, Derman ran up the stairs toward the top of the tower while the colored folk below looked up and shouted threats. The constable started up after him.

The mulatto reached the top step, swung himself to the top of the wall, and stood waiting. But the constable continued to climb, revolver pointed at him. And while Donald and I watched from his window, Derman tried to leap the distance between the tower and the roof of the house—fifteen feet or more—and he failed by more than a foot. We heard the terrible thud of his body three stories below. With him went the ghost in the tower.

It was some time before I could mention the little black girl to Donald. But his feeling against her lessened with time. I induced him to pay her hospital bill and the expenses of her weeks of convalescence in the mountains. Then she boarded a boat for Porto Rico and sailed home, the happiest and most grateful passenger aboard.

It was a number of weeks before the open air and sun began to affect Donald's health—and then what a different Donald! He was again the young man of five years ago except for the streaks of gray in his hair. And he was ready to take up his career as a minister at last.

Mother and Dad did not mind the hours I spent with him, and they forgave me the fright they experienced that night when they discovered my empty bed at home.

Donald and I moved into the rectory the following year. Adolphus and Lily went with us. Lily never forgot Donald's weakness for her hot rolls and corn-pone and waffles.

The most beloved and respected of clergymen is young Doctor Harrison, whose popularity and influence bid fair to rival if not to exceed his father's. The most enthusiastic and perhaps the most appreciative of his congregation is young Dr. Harrison's wife, whom Donald says is the ideal of everything that embraces sportsmanship, backbone and womanliness—and he ought to know!

Conan Doyle's Museum of Psychic Wonders

(*Continued from page* 45)

and de Gramont on the other, I think the case is proved."

There is space to tell only very briefly and incompletely how these wax gloves, and others, were obtained. Dr. Geley, of the Institut Métapsychique, Paris, and Professor Richet had prepared a bucket of warm paraffin, and upon the appearance of a materialized figure—that of a smallish man—the request was made that the spirit should plunge his hand into the bucket. This, the sitters declared, was done, and the spirit's hand was thereby coated with paraffin. When the figure dematerialized, a cast of the hand was left on the table. As Sir Arthur said, the glove is of solidified paraffin and is so narrow at the wrist that the hand could not have been withdrawn by normal means without breaking the mold.

After showing that none of the sitters could have made the gloves, Doctor Geley concludes his comments on the séance with the following words:

> Finally, there is the hypothesis that the gloves were brought by the medium. This is disproved by the fact that we secretly introduced chemicals into the melted wax, and that these were found in the gloves. The report of the expert modelers on the point is categorical and final.

While I was making my notes on the gloves, Sir Arthur fingered a large vase.

"THIS room is full of incredible things," he said, when I rejoined him—"things which, in the old days, would have been called miracles, or the results of miracles. A miracle, now and always, is simply the intrusion of some natural force which we do not yet understand. We can show you results here, but we are not yet able to explain their causes. But it is incorrect to use the words 'supernatural' or 'supernormal' in connection with the manifestations of powers of whose methods we are as yet ignorant. Everything in Nature is 'natural' and 'normal,' whether we understand it or not."

"Now examine this big jug, or vase," Sir Arthur continued, handing it to me. "It came down suddenly, inexplicably, on a séance table.

"This is what we call an *apport*—the French word for something brought. *Apport* phenomena include all manner of objects—live birds and fish, fresh fruit, dew-laden flowers, coins—that are brought from a distance, through walls, closed windows, locked doors, and so on, into the midst of a group of sitters. Darkness is not always essential; neither is a professional *apport* medium necessary.

"No one could say that the medium had this large jug hidden upon her person," Sir Arthur said. "I happen to know a good deal about the medium. She was an amateur. From first to last she—or, rather, the spirits who used the psychic power she supplied—brought through about two thousand objects of various kinds—Chinese and Indian lamps, amulets, Thibetan pots, all manner of queer things—and among them all I do not think there was one that could have been got in England. This jug, for example, is Syrian ware. She was quite a poor woman, but she would not sell her *apports*. She just left them with the sitters. Of course, it is all very fantastic, but it is true."

Sir Arthur next called my attention to a number of smaller *apports* which had appeared in his own presence under test conditions.

"Look at this pile of Turkish pennies," he directed me. "There are about thirty of them. They all crashed down on the table during a test sitting I arranged in Melbourne. Now, you might hunt Australia from coast to coast and you would not find a Turkish penny. How, then, could the medium have got these? We asked the question of the medium's 'control' and were told that they had been brought from a well in Asia Minor. They had been hidden behind some bricks and were part of the hoard of some poor peasant who had probably been murdered. Such was the story; but, of course, there was no proof at all of their origin—except, perhaps, the very slight corroboration provided by the fact that some of the coins are, as you see, green with rust, and this seems to show that they had been left in a damp place for a considerable time.

"The only thing that is perfectly certain, is that they were not on the medium's body, for I stripped and searched him; also, such coins, as I have said, could not be got in Australia.

"It is easy to make fun of such things, but facts are facts, and it is impossible to explain them.

"THIS other exhibit—a Babylonian clay tablet—fell upon the table during the same sitting. The inscription on it is, I think, correct. The control seemed to be a very wise spirit, who discoursed in a most learned manner upon Assyrian and Roman antiquities and psychic science. When I asked him how an *apport* was brought, his answer was:

"'It involves some factors which are beyond your human science and which could not be made clear to you. At the same time you may take as a rough analogy the case of water which is turned into steam. Then this steam, which is invisible, may be conducted elsewhere to be reassembled as visible water.'

"I should add that I had the tablet tested at the British Museum and that it was pronounced to be a forgery. Upon further inquiry, it was ascertained that these forged tablets are made by certain Jews in a suburb of Bagdad, and, so far as is known, only there. The matter is not much further advanced, therefore. To the transporting agency it is at least possible that the forged tablet, steeped in recent human magnetism, is more easily handled as an *apport* than a genuine one taken from a mound. This same medium had, at one time or another, brought not less than a hundred of these imitation Babylonian tablets through.

"But that is enough about *apports*.

"Of course, one has to look out for frauds. That applies to every form of mediumship—and to other human activities. Take your own profession; we have had dishonest journalists. You are a journalist, but, so far as I know"—here Sir Arthur thoughtfully collected those Turkish coins and replaced them under lock and key—"you are an honest man. Still, the

other day the Spiritualists caught an *apport* 'medium' who had small stones stuck by plaster behind his ears. We've no use for that sort of *'apport'* merchant; the conjurers can have him!

"ONE must not be credulous. But one must not be too incredulous. The man who believes nothing, is just as foolish as the man who believes everything. Test and ponder each case for yourself, comparing it with the result of others. There are many rogues in psychic circles, as there are in more mundane circles, but the true mediums, amateur and professional, far outnumber them. By the way, one of the best *apport* mediums in this country will never accept payment for a sitting. If he could do by trickery the marvelous things he does through his psychic power, he would be making a large income on the stage. Curious, isn't it?

"But in these days the gifts of the Spirit are becoming more mental and less physical. They are refining all the time. The coarser phenomena were mere signals to attract our attention. We have hardly a single good materialization medium in England now, while we have many excellent clairvoyants."

We next turned our attention to some finger-prints recorded, by request, by spirits who rapped with materialized fingers on a piece of smoked glass. The finger-prints of all the persons present at the séance, have also been recorded, and can be examined by any visitor to the Museum. None of them coincide with the spirit finger-prints.

Sir Arthur next told me the facts concerning some of the most striking of the many spirit photographs in his collection. First, he showed me a picture of a group at a séance, and related the following incident:

"Doctor Gustave Geley, who had probably gone as deeply as anyone into psychic science—his great book, *From the Unconscious to the Conscious,* will probably stand the test of time—had arranged to sit with Mr. Hope, the photographic medium of Crewe, for a portrait on which he hoped to obtain what is called a spirit 'extra.'

"Immediately before the date fixed for the sitting, Doctor Geley was killed in an aeroplane accident. That was on July 15th, 1924. The séance with Mr. Hope was nevertheless held on the appointed day, and, as will be seen, Doctor Geley, too, kept his appointment, for his face can be very clearly seen above the sitters. In the top right-hand corner can be seen also part of the secret mark made by the manufacturers on the negatives before they were packed, in order to prove that the same negatives were used, and there is a certificate that the medium was never allowed to handle them. Readers desiring the full details will find them in *Psychic Science* of October, 1924, and in the *Revue Métapsychique* for the same month."

Two large photographs which every visitor to the Museum should inspect closely are of a Mr. Walker of Derbyshire. One shows him as he was on earth and one as a spirit; the features are identical.

THIS Mr. Walker was a friend of W. T. Stead, and he went with the great journalist to bid him good-by before his voyage on the doomed *Titanic.* Stead's last words to Mr. Walker were: "I will try to keep you posted." The message proved memorable.

After the sinking of the *Titanic,* and the drowning of Stead, Mr. Walker went to be photographed by Mr. Hope of Crewe. In the portrait then taken can be seen, written round Mr. Walker's head, the last words he heard Stead utter: "I will try to keep you posted," followed by the signature "W. T. Stead." And the writing is identical with Stead's.

Sir Arthur called my attention to one of the many interesting documents framed on the walls. "Here is a letter from Oscar Wilde written to me in his lifetime. Below you see a written communication from him many years after his death. It came by automatic writing through the hand of Mrs. Hester Dowden, the psychic daughter of the eminent Shakespearean scholar. Now look at the signature; look at the fine points of resemblance in the two scripts. When, in addition, one learns that the complete manuscript, which your readers can get under the title of *Psychic Messages of Oscar Wilde,* is full of characteristic prose, and contains numerous little-known allusions to his own life, one surely must admit that it is difficult to explain the facts save by the hypothesis that it is actually Wilde who is behind it.

"Over there you can examine portions of the original automatic script given through the hand of the Reverend G. Vale Owen and published in his wonderful volume. *The Life Beyond the Veil.*

"This slate, on the other hand, bears evidential testimony to the fact that there is such a phenomenon as *direct* spirit writing. The passage is ancient Greek, and was produced on the slate in the presence of the medium Slade in 1876. Slade was not well-educated and knew no Greek. Authorities on Greek assert that only a great scholar could have placed the accents correctly, as they are placed on this slate.

"Now look at these complex flower designs." Sir Arthur pointed to a beautifully colored wreath. "This design is a specimen of yet another phase of psychic phenomena called 'precipitations.'

"How long do you suppose this intricate design took to do? A matter of hours, certainly, one would say. Well, as a fact it was done completely in seventeen seconds! Naturally, we cannot expect everyone to believe that! Still, when we look at the corner of the paper we see the names of all the witnesses—reputable people in their day.

"By some power, which we can only vaguely call psychic, the whole picture was thrown in those few seconds upon the paper. Incredible, of course—but perfectly true, none the less!"

In the top left-hand corner of this "precipitation" the following is written:

> We whose names are hereto appended do certify that we were present and witnessed the production of the picture in seventeen seconds. Done on Saturday, April 13, 1861, through the mediumship of Mrs. E. J. French in New York.

Among the five signatories was the late Judge Edmonds, of the Supreme Court of New York.

"Now this," said Sir Arthur, pointing to a striking seascape, "is what I should call a specimen of the higher mediumship. This water-color was done by a woman who had no knowledge of art, but

was controlled or obsessed from time time, according to her own account, by e spirit of a Dutch water-color painter. came across her in Los Angeles. She is not allowed to sell the splendid results of her obsessions, but she gave me this picture. Did you ever see such a sense of movement in a seascape? And yet normally she could hardly draw or paint at all."

THERE are several other good specimens in the museum of automatic painting, stated to be far above the normal power of the painters. There is, for instance, a large picture or design, in wondrously delicate colors. It was done in 1925 by a miner in France—a laboring man with no art training whatever and no knowledge of Egyptology or Oriental design. He was in a state of semi-trance when he painted it. How, then, was it produced? Telepathy? Thought-transference? His own subconscious mind?

This account of the museum would not be complete without a reference to the illustration of one of D. D. Home's miracles. The incident on which the picture is based, is vouched for by the Earl of Dunraven in his book, *Experiences in Spiritualism with D. D. Home.* Home, while entranced, told his friends not to be afraid, and then went out of the room, which was on the third floor. He was heard to throw the window up in the next room, and presently he was seen to be floating in the air outside. He then opened the window and walked in quite coolly. A few moments later he repeated the manifestation, going through the open window "head first, quite rapidly, his body being nearly horizontal and apparently rigid. He came in again feet foremost."

These extraordinary happenings took place at Ashley House, Victoria Street, on Sunday, December 13th, 1868. The witnesses were Lord Adare (afterwards Earl of Dunraven), the Honorable the Master of Lindsay, and Captain Charles Wynne.

"All honorable men," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle remarked. "And," he added, "there are more than a hundred instances of Home's levitation. It is strange how a Christian can say such things are utterly impossible and yet easily accept the account of Saint Peter walking on the waves two thousand years ago. These psychic facts greatly reinforce the Biblical miracles, and some day the New Testament will be believed in, not in spite of but on account of the miracles. Look at this photograph of a small table suspended in the air. If a table, why not a human being?"

I turned to look through one of the many photograph-albums which the museum contains, and I came upon enlarged prints of those fascinating and now world-famous photographs of fairies.

"Fairies?" Sir Arthur echoed. "Well, we don't reckon them to be a part of Spiritualism, do we? But they are a part of the Universe, although they have no connection with human evolution. These little creatures are separated from us only by a very slight difference of vibration, which can readily be pierced by the clairvoyant, and occasionally—as in the instances when these photographs were taken by those small girls—needs no piercing at all.

"The Cottingley fairies have held their own entirely and there has never been any damaging criticism at all. The two girls were perfectly honest and the photographs are unquestionably genuine. The negatives have stood every expert test.

"Here you see another fairy photograph which came from an adult source. It was taken in Devonshire a couple of years ago. The queer little fellow seen leaning against the tree is a tree spirit. We have always been told that they draw their strength from trees while leaning against them, also that they preserve a semi-wooden appearance. You get both conditions in this photograph.

"The fact is that we don't begin to realize the possibilities of the world in which we are living. A man discovers a new sort of insect and is hailed as a genius. Mr. Gardner and I have helped to discover a race of sub-humans, and people smile, shrug, and say, 'Fake, of course!' I consider that the book, *The Coming of the Fairies,* may some day be reckoned an epoch-making event—for it is, so far as I know, the first time fairies have been seriously dealt with and their existence proved with reliable photographs."

We left the fairies, and returned to our talk of things spiritual and psychic. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's last words to me were:

"Fresh evidence for our survival of bodily death and for Spirit return, under certain conditions, is not needed. If only the existing evidence is examined, it will be found to be overwhelmingly on the side of the angels. Unlike every hypothesis put forward by those who have proved the phenomena but are in doubt as to their origin, Spiritualism alone covers all the facts satisfactorily."

The Tiger Woman of the Punjab

(*Continued from page* 14)

concerning my mysterious charmer. She was a real woman. I had not been nursing an hallucination conjured by my war-racked nerves. I remained in Paris two weeks longer than I had intended, but I failed to locate her.

"Two years ago I was in London, making sketches of some of the old buildings there. And again I encountered the tiger woman. It was a bit after dusk of a January night. There was some fog. I was making my way along the embankment, when suddenly I came face to face with her. She smiled—jeeringly, I thought—as my startled glance met hers. Before I could recover from my surprise, she had passed on. The next instant I turned and hurried in the direction she had been going. But she had disappeared. I ran through the fog, looking desperately on every side—and then I caught sight of her.

"SHE was walking rapidly, apparently bent upon losing me. Her hat was blown away, but she had not stopped to recover it. Swiftly I sprinted toward her. When I was within a few feet of her, she turned and regarded me haughtily. A moment later, she dashed down the steep embankment toward the river. I leaped after her, missed my footing, and went hurtling—bringing up only as I reached the water's edge."

"And your tiger woman had vanished—into nothingness, eh, Noel?" Larry said.

"Exactly. The same as she did today—as on each occasion when I had encountered her. Tell me, Larry, am I half-mad? Is there a part of my brain which war has shattered—or have I actually seen something?"

"I wish I possessed sufficient knowledge to speak definitely. When I was in India, there were friends who tried to teach me the secrets of the occult; but I lacked the qualifications to go far in the study."

"Then you can make nothing of my experiences?"

"Well—I feel certain that this woman you have seen, is not of flesh and blood; that she must be a phantom. The motive behind it all, I cannot even guess. But your common sense must make one fact stand out above all else—each time you ha--- seen this tiger woman, each time you have attempted to follow and overtake her, you have encountered disaster. Therefore, should you see her again, you must follow a different plan. You must walk away, strive deliberately to avoid her. In that course lies a measure of personal safety."

"Perhaps you are right, that this—thing—which I have seen, intends evil to me. But I hate to give up, without learning something definite. It goes against me to turn my back upon—— Wait, Larry, I think my eyes have been opened. There is a certain hateful significance connected with this woman to which her beauty has blinded me."

"I don't grasp your meaning."

"It is the coat she always wears, a covering of tiger skins. And her turban, with the jewel in the center. Don't they suggest India to you?"

"I am not sure that I understand what you are driving at. Your father and grandfather both served in India as commissioners representing the British Crown, did they not?"

"Yes. But right here I must make a confession, an admission that smacks of cowardice—or inherited fear. My father and grandfather both were killed in India—by tigers. I know little of the circumstances. The awfulness of their deaths cast such a spell of horror over others of our family that the tragedies seldom were discussed. About all that I know, is that my grandfather was killed when a comparatively young man; when my father was but a boy. My father met a like fate when I was still an infant. My mother had brought me to England on a visit at the time, and she never returned to India. And, until she died, she always advised me against ever going there."

"THAT is why you did not enter the Colonial service?"

"Probably. No doubt her promptings had their influence. But—and here is a

most significant point—the very sight of a tiger has always turned me numb with fear. Truthfully, I am no more afraid of death than the average man. However, my nerves simply go back on me at the sight of one of these animals. I avoid the zoo—even circuses—as you would a plague. I have fought against the feeling, but have been unable to overcome it. It must be an inherited fear."

"And yet you followed this woman, in spite of her tiger-skin covering."

"I don't recollect that I thought about it. Perhaps it was part of her fascination for me. Isn't it possible that my subconscious mind governed me, that it kept urging me on, in an effort to overcome my fear? But now—well, I don't know what to do. Your advice to turn and run, is sound. But a sort of revulsion has taken place within me. I hate to be a quitter, even though I more than half-agree with you that I have been struggling against some force beyond my grasp—even though I know there is a special and sinister significance in the fact this woman has worn tiger skins each time we have met."

"And if this evil genius of yours again appears? Will you heed my warning, or will you follow her, though death may be at the end of the trail into which she leads you?"

"Larry, I don't believe I can turn tail until I know the truth. If she is a woman, I want to meet and know her. If she is—something else—I feel I must learn what it all means."

For some time, Larry sat watching me without speaking, obviously trying to read my innermost thoughts. Then: "You won't take my advice, Noel. I know it. Your pride has been stung. You are writhing under your personal belief that you have acted in a cowardly way by avoiding the things you hated. Perhaps you are right, and I am wrong. But I intend to find out. I am going to seek assistance of one to whom the meaning of your experiences should be as an open book. If he will speak, I shall take you to him. His words may carry weight where mine will not."

"Who is this person?"

"No doubt you will recollect my telling you of one of my experiences in India. As one of a caravan, I helped to fight off a Mussulmans' attack. In that struggle I saved the life of a Brahman, a holy man named Jammu Singh. He became my friend and adviser. He tried to mold me to his beliefs. But I could not remain with him. I was of too restless a nature. However, he taught me much. And, frequently in the succeeding years, I have seen him.

"JUST before leaving the other side for New York, I learned that he had come here on some mission of which I am in ignorance. There are many worshippers of the God of the Brahmans in this city. Perhaps he has come with a message for them. I had little difficulty in locating him soon after my arrival. As Doctor Jammu he is living in seclusion, far down on the West Side, where there is a considerable settlement of peoples from all portions of the Orient, except China and Japan.

"You require rest right now, more than anything else. I am going out for a few hours—to give you opportunity to relax and sleep. Before I return, I shall see Doctor Jammu, ask him to hear your story, and advise you. If he consents, we shall see him tonight. I am anxious for your safety. Like you, I now want to know the truth. Then we can plan to combat any evils which the future may bring."

It was well along in the evening before I awoke. Larry had returned some time before, but had refrained from waking me. His mission had been successful. Jammu Singh would see and counsel me at any time we chose to visit him that night. Larry had told him that I was a dear friend and in trouble. My story he had left for me to relate. I was sufficiently familiar with both the Brahman and Buddhist ascetics of India to realize that this was the best course—that they preferred to deal first-hand with those they would help.

My desire to meet the holy man—to hear his explanation of the circumstances which long had plagued me—was such that I paid but scant heed to my hurts while preparing for the night's adventure. Nevertheless, I was so sore and stiff in every muscle that, after I had descended the steps from my quarters, I was glad for a little rest and settled back thankfully into the dubious comfort of a taxi-cab.

Neither of us spoke until we had reached the street where Jammu lived. It was a narrow thoroughfare, walled by shabby buildings, and was within a stone's throw of the river. Dismissing the cab, we covered a few blocks on foot, so that we might slip into Jammu's quarters without attracting undue attention. The neighborhood was strange to me. As I stumbled along over the rough pavements, leaning heavily upon Larry, I noted with some surprise that upon the steamed or frosted windows of the adjacent stores, most of the lettering was in Arabic, with a scattering of Sanskrit characters.

We entered a dingy hallway next to a coffee-house, and by such light as was supplied by an occasional wheezing gas jet, made our way up three flights of stairs. As we reached the top, a door was opened—as though we had signaled—and a gigantic brown boy, in white from his turban to his sandals, motioned for us to enter. A short walk down a narrow passageway, and we stood before Jammu Singh, in a brilliantly lighted room, warm and comfortably furnished. A striking touch of the Oriental was supplied by a great bronze statue of Brahma, with his four heads and four extended arms, standing atop a small altar.

THE Doctor came forward to greet us, touching each upon the forehead with his right hand, while his left rested over his heart. He was a man below medium height, dressed in a flowing robe of white. A scarlet cloth twisted about his head, emphasized the parchment-like texture of his skin. It was impossible to guess his age. To judge by the wrinkles which cobwebbed his features, he might have been anywhere between eighty and a hundred years old. But, belying all the signs of advanced age, were his eyes, great, black, and shining, alert and all alive. Behind them, it seemed, lay the knowledge of the ages.

"You are not unlike Major Ethridge,"

he said, when we were seated by a table. "The same height, blue eyes, fair hair——"

"You knew my father then?" I asked eagerly.

"Yes, intimately. I would be glad to help his son, even if my dear friend, Sahib Fleming, had not come to me. I am at your command. You are in trouble?"

"Yes. And I'm at my wit's end to know what move to make next. Larry said you would understand and give me the advice I must heed. I am here."

While I was speaking, his eyes held me with hypnotic intensity, as if they were looking into my very soul. Then, without shifting his gaze, Jammu clasped the fingers of his right hand about my wrist. For a few moments we sat thus, neither speaking. Then he nodded his head.

"So, she has appeared to you. It was to be expected."

The Brahman's words so startled me that I jumped. In some manner Jammu had read the purpose of my visit. He knew of the tiger woman. His fingers continued their hold.

"Your people should have told you everything," he resumed—"not concealed most of the past. Then you would have been on your guard. Still, nature has endeavored to overcome their neglect."

"I don't understand."

"From infancy you have feared tigers. The sight of one of them turns you sick with dread."

I nodded.

"Besides, there are five red marks upon your chest, upon the left side, near the heart. Your father bore similar marks. And so did your grandfather."

"Good God! How did you know I was marked?" My left hand unconsciously clutched at my shirt front.

"I can see them. Those five livid spots are as though you once had been wounded by the claws of a tiger. They are the symbol of the curse of Sumahal."

"Sumahal?"

"Yes. That is a woman's name—a woman of India. It is the name of the woman of the tiger skins."

"Then—she is a woman?" The question came from me in a hoarse whisper.

"She was—many years ago. For your understanding, I must define her as a phantom. To us, who know, she is more. She can assume human guise. At times she comes in the flesh; she can breathe, smile, talk, and move at will. One can even touch and hold her."

"And—for some reason—she has appeared to me—tried to harm me. And I thought I loved——"

"WAIT, my son. I shall explain everything in good time. But first, tell me all you know. Not only of the times when Sumahal has appeared to you, but what has been told you concerning those of your family who perished in India."

He had released my wrist, folded his arms, and leaned back in his chair. His gaze was fixed on some point over my head.

I did as he requested, my sentences being slow and stammered at first but more certain when I warmed to a recital of the efforts of this tiger woman to lure me to my death.

For a time after I had concluded, Jammu sat silent, without the flicker of a muscle or the quiver of a lid. He was like a person in a trance. Finally his eyes again came level with mine.

"You are in extreme danger, my son, a thousand times greater than you have guessed. Sumahal has fastened upon you as she did upon those who came before you. And, sooner or later, she will lure you to your death—unless you take steps to save yourself. At this time she is aware that you know a portion of the truth, and never again will she be able to tempt you in her human guise. But she will try other means to destroy you—and your son after you, if you have a son before she strikes you down."

"In heaven's name, tell me more! I seem more in the dark than ever."

"Listen, my son, and carefully. For you can be put on your guard for the future only if you understand the past. Afterward I shall advise you."

Three generations of the Ethridge family have fallen victims to the cruel, inhuman vengeance of Sumahal—can Noel Ethridge escape? With the wild courage of youth, he must follow the terrible tiger woman even into the jungles of India. The November instalment of his remarkable story will hold your nerves taut with suspense! On the news-stands September 23rd.

A Moth—Genus Unknown

(*Continued from page 26*)

an odd flavor of Pawkins with it, kept coming into that walk, though he did his best to keep his mind off it. Once he saw it quite distinctly, with its wings flattened out, upon the old stone wall that runs along the west edge of the park, but going up to it he found it was only two lumps of grey and yellow lichen.

"This," said Hapley, "is the reverse of mimicry. Instead of a butterfly looking like a stone, here is a stone looking like a butterfly!"

Once something hovered and fluttered round his head, but by an effort of will he drove that impression out of his mind again.

In the afternoon Hapley called upon the Vicar, and argued with him upon theological questions. They sat in the little arbor covered with briar, and smoked as they wrangled. "Look at that moth!" said Hapley, suddenly, pointing to the edge of the wooden table.

"Where?" said the Vicar.

"You don't see a moth on the edge of the table there?" said Hapley.

"Certainly not," said the Vicar.

Hapley was thunderstruck. He gasped. The Vicar was staring at him. Clearly the man saw nothing. "The eye of faith is no better than the eye of science," said Hapley, awkwardly.

"I don't see your point," said the Vicar, thinking it was part of the argument.

THAT night Hapley found the moth crawling over his counterpane. He sat on the edge of the bed in his shirt-sleeves and reasoned with himself. Was it pure hallucination? He knew he was slipping, and he battled for his sanity with the same silent energy he had formerly displayed against Pawkins. So persistent is mental habit, that he felt as if it were still a struggle with Pawkins. He was well versed in psychology. He knew that such visual illusions do come as a result of mental strain. But the point was, he did not only *see* the moth, he had heard it when it touched the edge of the lamp-shade, and afterwards when it hit against the wall, and he had felt it strike his face in the dark.

He looked at it. It was not at all dream-like, but perfectly clear and solid-looking in the candle-light. He saw the hairy body, and the short, feathery antennæ, the jointed legs, even a place where the down was rubbed from the wing. He suddenly felt angry with himself for being afraid of a little insect.

His landlady had got the servant to sleep with her that night, because she was afraid to be alone. In addition she had locked the door, and put the chest of drawers against it. They listened and talked in whispers after they had gone to bed, but nothing occurred to alarm them. About eleven they had ventured to put the candle out, and had both dozed off to sleep. They woke up with a start, and sat up in bed, listening in the darkness.

Then they heard slippered feet going to and fro in Hapley's room. A chair was overturned, and there was a violent dab at the wall. Then a china mantel ornament smashed upon the fender. Suddenly the door of the room opened, and they heard him upon the landing. They clung to one another, listening. He seemed to be dancing upon the staircase. Now he would go down three or four steps quickly, then up again, then hurry down into the hall. They heard the umbrella-stand go over, and the fanlight break. Then the bolt shot and the chain rattled. He was opening the door.

They hurried to the window. It was a dim gray night; an almost unbroken sheet of watery cloud was sweeping across the moon, and the hedge and trees in front of the house were black against the pale roadway. They saw Hapley, looking like a ghost in his shirt and white trousers, running to and fro in the road, and beating the air. Now he would stop, now he would dart rapidly at something invisible, now he would move upon it with stealthy strides. At last he went out of sight up the road towards the down. Then, while they argued who should go down and lock the door, he returned. He was walking very fast, and he came straight into the

house, closed the door carefully, and went quietly up to his bedroom. Then everything was silent.

"Mrs. Colville," said Hapley, calling down the staircase next morning, "I hope I did not alarm you last night."

"You may well ask that!" said Mrs. Colville.

"The fact is, I am a sleep-walker, and the last two nights I have been without my sleeping mixture. There is nothing to be alarmed about, really. I am sorry I made such an ass of myself. I will go over the down to Shoreham, and get some stuff to make me sleep soundly. I ought to have done that yesterday."

BUT half-way over the down, by the chalk-pits, the moth came upon Hapley again. He went on, trying to keep his mind upon chess problems, but it was no good. The thing fluttered into his face, and he struck at it with his hat in self-defense. Then rage, the old rage—the rage he had so often felt against Pawkins—returned once more. He went on, leaping and striking at the eddying insect. Suddenly he trod on nothing, and fell headlong.

There was a gap in his sensations, and Hapley found himself sitting on the heap of flints in front of the opening of the chalk-pits, with a leg twisted back under him. The strange moth was still fluttering round his head. He struck at it with his hand, and turning his head saw two men approaching him. One was the village doctor. It occurred to Hapley that this was lucky. Then it came into his mind, with extraordinary vividness, that no one would ever be able to see the strange moth except himself, and that it behooved him to keep silent about it.

Late that night, however, after his broken leg was set, he was feverish and forgot his self-restraint. He was lying flat on his bed, and he began to run his eyes round the room to see if the moth was still about. He tried not to do this, but it was no good. He soon caught sight of the thing resting close to his hand, by the night-light, on the green table-cloth. The wings quivered. With a sudden wave of anger he smote at it with his fist, and the nurse woke up with a shriek. He had missed it.

"That moth!" he said; and then, "It was fancy. Nothing!"

All the time he could see quite clearly the insect going round the cornice and darting across the room, and he could also see that the nurse saw nothing of it and looked at him strangely. He must keep himself in hand. But as the night waned the fever grew upon him, and the very dread he had of seeing the moth made him see it. About five, just as the dawn was gray, he tried to get out of bed and catch it, though his leg was afire with pain. The nurse had to struggle with him.

On account of this, they tied him down to the bed. At this the moth grew bolder, and once he felt it settle in his hair. Then, because he struck out violently with his arms, they tied these also. At this the moth came and crawled over his face, and Hapley wept, swore, screamed, prayed for them to take it off him, unavailingly.

THE doctor was a blockhead, a half-qualified practitioner, and quite ignorant of mental science. He simply said there was no moth. Had he possessed the wit, he might, still, perhaps, have saved Hapley from his fate by entering into his delusion and covering his face with gauze, as he prayed might be done. But, as I say, the doctor was a blockhead, and until the leg was healed Hapley was kept tied to his bed, and with the imaginary moth crawling over him. It never left him while he was awake and it grew to a monster in his dreams. While he was awake he longed for sleep, and from sleep he awoke screaming.

So now Hapley is spending the remainder of his days in a padded room, worried by a moth that no one else can see. The asylum doctor calls it hallucination; but Hapley, when he is in his easier mood, and can talk, says the moth is the ghost of Pawkins, and consequently a unique specimen and well worth the trouble of catching.

The House of Fear

(*Continued from page 51*)

she filled her pails at the windmill, and many times I stood behind the shocks of corn and talked with her. On rare occasions, when I had seen Gabe pass our place on his way to town, I spent brief moments with her under the crab-apple tree, and although I could not misread the welcome in the pink of her flushed cheeks, she never asked me to enter, and I had to acknowledge that my departure was a distinct relief to her.

Before I went to France, I wanted to tell her what was in my heart, but try as I would, I could find no opportunity. I told her I would write, but she begged me not to, saying her uncle would be sure to get the letter. It was evident that her fear of Gabe's anger outweighed any feeling she had for me.

But after I had been across the water almost a year, I received a brief note from her. Her uncle had fallen dead in a fit of apoplexy, (which I interpreted as being a fit of rage), and had been buried beside the wife he had sent to the churchyard five years before.

GABE BRUNS was dead! As I thought of it I smiled, for it meant that Amy was free. I thought how I would swing the old iron gate and let it rattle and bang, as I had ached to do in my boyhood days. I would go boldly up the brick walk and knock loudly at the door. Amy would come out to meet me without fear.

But when the time came and I reached the gate, I paused. The feeling of fear that had possessed me as a child, took hold of me. The house was a thing of utter gloom. The great basswoods at the rear of it seemed to be reaching out to gather its walls into their cold, dark embrace.

The black trunks stood like sentinels, lest something escape from the house.

The desire to heave a rock up into the crab-apple tree had left me. The crunch of my boots seemed like the echo of my father's boots, clumping up the walk so long ago. Before I had time to ascend the steps, the door opened. The look on the face of the girl who stood there, made my heart stand still.

Amy was only the shadow of the girl I had left. She was taller and whiter than ever. Her face was thinner and her eyes larger. As she stood there, framed in the blackness of the open door, she seemed like some specter emerging from an open vault.

"Amy! You have been ill!"

She moved toward me so softly that her footsteps made no sound on the rotten boards of the steps. She held out her hand. Her voice expressed nothing of the joy I had hoped it might.

"I'm not ill; what makes you think so?"

"Nothing—only——" I had dreamed of taking a pink-cheeked girl in my arms and making her smile. I took her hand, but could find no words.

"Will you—will you sit down?" She motioned toward the steps. She sat down—after a quick, frightened glance toward the door—and I sat beside her.

Our conversation dragged with commonplace questions, punctuated by long, conscious silences. This was probably my fault. So many thoughts were hurtling through my mind that I could not stop any of them long enough to put them into words. After all, what was the use? I had known for a long time what I was going to say. Why not say it now? I moved nearer to her.

"Amy," I began, "I've had my mind made up for the last four years that I would ask you to marry me. The five acres of orchard next the river are mine. I'm going to build a little white house in it, a little house full of big windows, with sunshine in every room. And it's for you, Amy, for you and me. Will you come?"

"Oh!" she cried softly, as I covered her hands. Her eyes looked into mine, wondering, frightened. Suddenly she pushed me away and rose to her feet.

"I can't!"

"You shall!"

"But I can't!" She wrenched her hand away from me and sprang to her feet, as she gave a swift, frightened glance over her shoulder.

"Please don't!" she pleaded. "Please go away and leave me!" Again she glanced over her shoulder toward the door.

"Who's in that house?" I demanded.

"No—no one," her eyes dropped.

"Are you telling me the truth? You're not—not married, are you?" The possibility struck me like a malignant blow.

"No, no, not that! Not that!" She came nearer in an eagerness of denial.

"Then what in the name of heaven is the matter? Why do you keep looking at that door? Who's inside?"

I HAD unconsciously raised my voice. She laid a trembling finger on her lips.

"Amy, I know how you felt about your uncle. But, he's dead, now. What else have you to fear?"

"He's not—not so very dead," she whispered.

"What do you mean?" I caught her by the arm and drew her down beside me. "Are you crazy? A man who's dead, is dead, and that's the end of him."

"Oh, Leigh, you'll think I'm crazy if I tell you. . . . . But you'll think I'm crazy if I don't—so, I'll tell you."

She moved a little nearer as though for protection. "They took Uncle Gabe's body to the churchyard, but—just the same—he still lives here," said Amy.

I looked into her eyes long and steadily. I gently pressed her hands, and prayed for wisdom.

"Will you tell me about it?"

"There's nothing to tell." Her tone was one of utter resignation. "He is here, and I must obey, as always."

"May I see him?" I asked, falling in with her mood.

"He hates strangers," she said positively, but after an apprehensive glance backward, she leaned toward me and whispered. "He comes to his doorway when I go to my room at eleven; he's always there." She pointed to Gabe's old bedroom, which opened into the dining room.

"Why don't you lock the door?"

"I tried it once, but he was terribly angry. I had to step over the threshold to shut it." She shivered at the memory.

"I've never been into his room since—since they took his body away."

"You shall not stay in this house another night!" I rose and grasped her arm firmly. "We shall go to my mother."

"No, no, let go! I can't! I promised——"

"Promised what—who——?"

"Promised Uncle Gabe. He made me swear—no one is to be here but me."

"But he's gone, now, Amy; he won't know!"

"You do not understand. He *will* know. He is here."

"All right, if he's here, I'm going to see him. I'm coming in. I'm going to have it out with him."

That seemed a very ridiculous statement. Then I began to wonder what I would say if I should see Gabe. I remembered what my father had said to him. I recalled, as though it had been but the day before, the look of the old man as my father's hand tightened on the thick neck, and I still heard his whining plea for pity, as he cowered under the fierce cursing. After that wilting under my father's rough handling, the old man had never, in my eyes, regained his pedestal of fearful power. But Amy had not seen the tyrant wilt under another man's wrath. She had never seen the streak of cowardice. It was then I hit upon my plan.

A FULL moon began peeping over the edge of the distant wood. The katydids called to each other, and the bullfrogs croaked in the marsh. We sat silent. I consulted my watch from time to time, and when it was almost eleven, I rose.

"Amy, remember you are not responsible. I'm going into the house without your consent. If Gabe Bruns finds out that I'm here, we'll settle the matter. You say it is in the doorway of his bedroom that he appears?"

She nodded. Her lips trembled.

"Now go in, Amy, and do just as you always do."

She passed into the house, not without many evidences of misgiving, and in a moment I followed.

I went at once to the dining room. The moonlight came in at the window and left long streaks of light across the floor. There was an old hickory rocker which I pulled to a dark corner. Opposite me was the doorway in which my father had brought the old bully to his knees. Beyond the door, it was dark, but I could make out the dim, black shapes of the furniture in the room.

THE Awards to Readers for Opinions of GHOST STORIES, Issue of June, went to:

1st award of $10.00

MISS KATHLEEN GHIKAS

of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

2nd award of $5.00

MISS AMELIA ANDREWS

of Indianapolis, Indiana

3rd award of $3.00

MR. JOSEPH C. DIESON

of Atlanta, Georgia

I heard the sputter of a match in the kitchen, and caught a vision of Amy's thin, white face. Then, with candle before her, she came slowly into the dining room. As she reached the threshold, her eyes turned expectantly toward the doorway of Gabe's room. I felt, rather than saw her start and stiffen, and her candle fluttered. Her lips were firmly pressed together, and the big eyes grew rounder and rounder as she came nearer and nearer the door. She kept her eyes steadfastly and fearfully upon it until she was almost past; then, with a swish, she ran to the foot of the stairs like a child running from the night shadows.

"Amy!" I cried. "Wait!"

The candle dropped from her hand and the room was in darkness except for the streaks of moonlight across the floor. But I knew that she was standing rigid on the bottom step, and that she had turned to look at me. I rose from my chair and advanced toward the doorway of that black, silent room. There was no sound except the clatter of my shoes on the wooden floor.

"Gabe Bruns," I cried, and my voice echoed weirdly in the emptiness of the room, "you're a skulking coward! You ruled your wife body and soul while she lived, and you drove her to her grave as surely as though you had thrust a knife into her heart. Why didn't you fight my father when he choked you? It's because you were a coward! You were afraid, and you whined and cringed like a whipped cur. Your harsh words are driving Amy now. While you lived you dominated her completely, and she believes you have power over her still. You have stolen her youth, and now you are stealing her right to love. Love is greater than fear, and it will conquer. I'm going to show Amy you are a coward, and then she'll never be afraid of you again!"

I tried with all my might to conjure up the vision of the man as I remembered him. I concentrated my mind steadfastly on the scene of long ago and tried to repeat it. My hand went out to clutch his throat; I began to see his little beady eyes, and his straggly beard. I shook him up and down and back and forth; I cursed him; I called upon Amy to witness that he was cowering; that he was begging for mercy.

Then something happened—to this day I do not know exactly what it was. But suddenly I felt that the room was no longer empty, and my hair stood on end.

For a moment I could neither move nor speak, and then every muscle in my body came into play as I tried to whirl about and leap back from the doorway. But my head went crashing against the doorpost, and I fell headlong over the threshold into the haunted room.

The next I knew, I was lying on the porch in the moonlight. Amy was bending over me and chafing my hands, and—was that fancy?—I felt her lips touch mine, and they were warm and moist and sweet and filled me with delight.

Slowly I opened my eyes to see if it were true.

"Does it hurt very much, Leigh?" she asked. "I've had to patch your forehead; you cut it against the door."

"Bungled my first appearance," I murmured, trying to make light of what had happened.

"You'd better lie down awhile. You're dizzy yet."

I got to my feet—and without warning I took her in my arms and kissed her.

I wonder who suffered more that night from mental aberration, Amy or I. Had I not cause? For love of me she had ventured over the doorsill into the haunted room; her love had given her the strength to drag my dead weight across the dining room out through the long hallway and on to the porch.

I did not let her see how much I dreaded to leave her alone in that terrible house.

As I walked slowly home in the moonlight, I tried to convince myself that my nerves had simply played a trick on me as I stood in the doorway of Gabe's room. But I slept very little that night.

Next day as I worked down in the west field, I wondered how Amy fared. In the twilight I made my way toward the old brick house. Evidently she had been watching for me, for she ran down to the gate, and there was a ring in her voice that made my heart glad. She did not resent my drawing her arm through mine as we walked toward the porch.

"You slept well?"

"Wonderfully well! You will come in again tonight, won't you?—to make sure that he is gone?"

"Of course—if you wish me to."

We sat on the steps again. Our conversation was disconnected. There were long pauses when we said nothing. The occurrence of the night before filled our minds to the exclusion of everything else.

We became a little more cheerful after awhile. I told her stories of my adventures over seas and she even broke into a low laugh now and then. The moon came up and went overhead, and I forgot the time until I noticed Amy was replying in monosyllables.

"You're all right?" I asked anxiously.

"Yes, all right. But—you're coming in while I light my candle——?"

I promised. She went inside. I followed in a few moments. I sat in the old hickory rocker, and listened to her footsteps in the kitchen. Then she appeared in the doorway, with her lighted candle.

"Amy," I called boldly, "don't look toward that door. He's not there. There's nothing there. You know I frightened him away last night. Don't recognize that he's there!"

She tried to obey. Fixing her eyes upon me, she advanced slowly; then, compelled by some force she seemed powerless to resist, she turned swiftly and faced the door.

"Tell him to go!" she cried. "Tell him to go!"

There was no resisting her appeal. I strode to the door and again consigned the spirit of old Gabe to the nether regions. This time nothing happened.

When I had finished, I turned to find my audience of one standing on the lower stair, her candle in her hand. The look on her face told me my performance had been all she had expected. She gave a sigh of relief and yielded herself to my embrace.

Each night she came further down the road to meet me. Her improvement was so marked that I felt it was now only a matter of days until she would consent to let me take her home. There was a spring in her step; the buoyancy of youth began to assert itself. And yet, when the time came each evening for me to take my leave, she would become silent and ill at ease. In spite of special gossip reserved for this particular time, I could not arouse her interest. Apparently, I became as one absent. Then would come the question:

"Will you come in while I light my candle?"

Each night I stood in the doorway and delivered my defiance to the dead man—and always I felt a tremor of fear though my words were bold enough. In the light of day I despised myself for my nervousness.

I put the memory of that one terrifying moment far back in my mind, and made myself see that the whole thing was a ridiculous farce. Here was I, a grown man, in the possession of my right mind, fighting with tongue and hands a shadow that existed only in the mind of an overwrought girl. And I began to realize that I was *not* helping Amy. The very fact that I spoke and acted as though conscious of Gabe's presence, confirmed in her mind the belief that the delusion was a reality. I made up my mind never to play that Don Quixote rôle again. And so it was that when she began, "Will you——?" I interrupted her with:

"No, Amy, I will *not* go in with you while you light your candle. I have been a fool. Instead of helping you, I have injured you by yielding to your foolish request. There is no such thing as the spirit of Gabe Bruns in that house. I have pretended, because I wanted you to believe in my power to frighten him away. You *do* believe that he is afraid of *me;* the thing to be done is, to make him afraid of *you.* Amy, that thing is only a fantasy of your mind. Gabe ruled you while he lived, because you turned your will-power over to him. That will-power must be brought back; the price of it is courage—more courage than you have ever been able to summon in all your life. You yourself must overcome that fear that possesses you."

"How?" she asked faintly.

I could not answer, so I parried. "There is one thing greater than fear. It is love. Do you love me, Amy?"

"Yes, yes!" she whispered.

I had been waiting always for that word. Now that it came I must stand motionless. I knew if I touched her I could not remain firm in my resolve. I dared not pity her.

"Then if you love me, you must defy Gabe's will and come with me."

"I can't! I can't!"

I steeled myself for what I knew must come. "Then you yourself must tell Gabe Bruns to go to the devil where he belongs. If you master your fear enough to tell him that, he will never bother you again. God knows I would help you if I could, but there are some things my love cannot do for you; your love for me must do this. Good night!"

"You're not going? Not—really?" she cried in dismay.

"Yes. You may come with me—but I will not stay."

Summoning all the courage at my command, I turned my feet in the direction of the gate and kept them moving. I walked as quickly as I could down the moonlight road; I ran or stumbled my way across the broken fields, until I stood panting at the fence of the west field. Then I paused and looked back. The Bruns place stood an inky splotch against the distant sky. The trees that enfolded it, formed grotesque figures with shaggy heads tilted back-

ward as though in fiendish laughter; their far-flung branches mocked and beckoned like eerie arms. Again, their flaunting tops seemed like funeral plumes waving dolefully over a bier.

Cursing myself for a deserter, I turned and stumbled back over the rough-plowed fields, my utmost efforts at speed seeming like the slow clumsiness of a snail; momentary harrowing visions that flitted across my mind were so real, so poignant, that they seemed like never-ending nightmares. I pictured Amy crumbled in a heap before the doorway, paralyzed with terror; I saw her at the foot of the stairs, her face a death-mask of horror; I imagined her lying cold and white upon her bed, a red stream flowing from her heart, dead by her own hand; I glimpsed her wandering under the whispering old trees, her hair disheveled, her eyes wild, muttering and gibbering, bereft of reason.

But worse than these, I saw her moving about in that settled, deadly calm of conviction, accepting her self-imposed fate, her mind and soul turned over to the unseen powers of darkness, her body a thing of marble that moved mechanically to do the bidding of old Gabe Bruns. But through this brain confusion, two questions clamored for answer. Should I go in and fight the battle, not once more, but over and over again, that the girl, through her belief in me, might have peace? Or should I take her away by force, trusting that all would be well?

I had come to no conclusion when I stood panting under the basswoods. The place was completely wrapped in darkness. Had Amy lighted her candle? Had she made her way up-stairs and extinguished it? Had she——?

Suddenly I became aware of a flickering light in the north gable. It was so small, so uncertain. It advanced and retreated like a will-o'-the-wisp in the marsh. Then all at once it burst into a warm yellow flame, and as quickly became blotted out.

I sprang up the walk, pushed open the door, and felt my way down the long black hall until I reached the dining room door. Then I stood transfixed by the sight of the figure which appeared in the kitchen doorway.

Amy's long braids almost reached the hem of her white gown. Her face was paler than I had ever seen it. Her slender body was upright. She held her head high and there was a slight curl to her lips. Her eyes, which seemed to outshine the candle, looked straight toward the door of Gabe's room. She advanced, and holding the taper high above her head, searched every nook and corner of the haunted room. Then her voice, clear and resonant, thrilled me with its quality of command.

"Gabe Bruns," she said, "Uncle Gabe—you ruled me while you lived, but that was because I did not know you had no right to take my mind and soul. I know now that you have no right to steal my life. You shall not steal my lover, who is more to me than life itself. He is mine! I take back the vow I made. I'm going to leave your house forever, and you can leave my life forever! Go!"

"Amy!" I cried softly.

Slowly she turned toward me, her big eyes questioning; then a smile, the sweetness of which I had never seen before, trembled on her lips. In a moment my arms were about her, her head was lying on my breast, and her low voice said in my ears:

"Leigh, dear Leigh! Let us go!"

Spirit Tales

(*Continued from page 75*)

having successively rejected electrical apparatus, radio-active and phosphorescent substances, and explosives, we succeeded with ferro-cerium handled under certain conditions. One of our colleagues has been able to construct a minute instrument with which Erto's lights have been reproduced to perfection.

"We concentrated our investigations on this and established the following facts:

"1. A small rectangular block of ferro-cerium one centimeter long was found in the siphon of a sink in which Erto washed immediately after a séance and before the final X-ray examination which Erto was to undergo.

"2. Analysis of the working of the medium revealed the presence of minute but unmistakable traces of ferro-cerium.

"3. At the close of the last séance he refused to allow himself to be examined at the level of the pelvis by the doctors present.

"4. A circular hole, large enough to enable a small pencil to be pushed through, was found in the tights he had worn, at this level.

"Such are the facts. I give them without comment; adding that the medium vehemently affirms his innocence and declares himself ready to submit to new tests.

"As to the phenomenon I have previously communicated to the readers of *Le Matin*—finger-prints on photographic plates in closed and sealed slides—this remains unexplained. It will, however, be prudent to hold this in suspense for the present.

(Signed) G. Geley, Director of the Metapsychic Institute."

I WAS amused to read in the quarterly transactions of the British College of Psychic Science a note regretting the passing of one of the biggest fakers of modern times. My reference is to Professor Bert Reese—the old mind-reader whose tricks were completely exposed in this magazine by Mr. Samri Frikell. Although this exposure was given international prominence, we find the world's foremost journal devoted to psychic science, stating, in its obituary notice, that Reese had "a remarkable gift."

It is disheartening.

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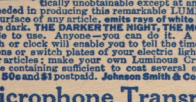
The very latest discovery in the scientific world. Hitherto, practically unobtainable except at an exorbitant price, we have at last succeeded in producing this remarkable LUMINOUS PAINT, which, applied to the surface of any article, **emits rays of white light, rendering it perfectly visible in the dark. THE DARKER THE NIGHT, THE MORE BRILLIANT IT SHINES.** Quite simple to use. Anyone—you can do it. A little applied to the dial of your watch or clock will enable you to tell the time by night. You can coat the push buttons or switch plates of electric lights, match boxes, and innumerable other articles; make your own Luminous Crucifixes, Luminous Rosaries, etc. Bottle containing sufficient to coat several small articles, **Price 25c. Larger sizes 50c and $1 postpaid. Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. 863 Racine, Wis.**

Microphone Transmitter Button

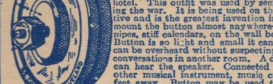


$1.00 POST-PAID

You can easily make a highly sensitive detectophone by using Transmitter Button to collect the sound waves. You can build your own outfit without buying expensive equipment. It is simple and inexpensive. You can install an outfit in your home and hear conversations being held all over the house. You can connect up different rooms of a hotel. This outfit was used by secret service operatives during the war. It is being used on the stage. It is ultra-sensitive and is the greatest invention in micro-phones. You can mount the button almost anywhere—card board boxes, stove pipes, picture frames, on the wall behind a picture frame, etc. Button is so light and small it cannot be detected. Persons can be overheard without suspecting it. You can listen in on conversation in another room. A deaf person in the audience can hear the speaker. Connected to phonograph, piano or other musical instrument, music can be heard hundreds of feet away. Button may be used to renew telephone transmitters often makes an old line "live-up" when nothing else will. The ideal microphone for radio use; carries heavy current and is extremely sensitive. Amplifies radio signals. Countless other similar uses will suggest themselves. Experimenters find the Button useful for hundreds of experiments along the lines of telephones, amplifiers, loud speakers, etc. Many fascinating stunts may be devised, such as holding button against the throat or chest to reproduce speech without sound waves. $5.00 is given to anyone who sends in a new suggestion for the use of the Button providing the manufacturers find it suitable for use in their literature. **PRICE $1.00 POSTPAID ANYWHERE.**

REAL PISTOL — Miniature Watch Charm Pistol

Shoots Blank Cartridges



Exact reproduction of a real pistol: actually fires Real BLANK CARTRIDGES of miniature size. Illustration is actual size. 1½ inches long. With ring at end for attaching to watch chain. Looks like a regular pistol. Pull the trigger and it goes off with a loud bang. Pistol is break-open type; illustration shows position for loading. Made entirely of high grade steel, nickel plated, octagon barrel, handsomely engraved handle, complete in box with cleaning rod. **PRICE $1.75.** *or with* **pearl handles. $2.50. BLANK CARTRIDGES 50c** box of 25.

EXPLODING MATCHES

More fun than fighting with your wife. Look just like ordinary matches. Put up in boxes just like regular Safety Matches. As the victim tries to light one he gets quite a surprise. **PRICE 10c per box, 3 boxes for 25c, or 12 for 75 cents. By express.**

ANARCHIST BOMBS

One of these glass vials dropped in a room full of people will cause more consternation than a timburger cheese. The smell entirely disappears in a short time. **30c a Box, 3 Boxes for 25c**

INVISIBLE INK

The most confidential messages can be written with this ink, for the writing **MAKES NO MARK.** Cannot be read unless you know the secret. Invaluable for many reasons. Keep your pass and other private memorandums away from prying eyes. Great fun for playing practical jokes. **Only 15c Bottle**

MIDGET BIBLE — GREAT CURIOSITY

Smallest Bible in the world. Size of a postage stamp. **200 Pages.** Said to bring good luck to the owner. A genuine work of art. Must be seen to be appreciated. Make good money selling them to friends, church acquaintances, etc. PRICE **15c** each, **3** for **40c, 12** for **$1.35, 100** for **$7.50.** Also obtainable in Leather Binding, with gold edges. **Price 50c each, 3 for $1.25, $4.50 per doz. Magnifying Glass** for use with Midget Bible, **15c.**

K K K

Everything about the **Ku Klux Klan** told in a clear fearless manner. Book tells all—How it started and was suppressed in 1871—The New Ku Klux Klan—How organized—How members are enrolled—Oath of the Klan—**Questions for Candidates**—Creed—Objects of the Order—Obligation—Fidelity—Pledge of Loyalty—**Ku Klux Klan and the Masons**—The Jews—The Masons—Real K. of C. Oath—The Negro—Ku Klux Klan, etc., etc. Latest and most complete book on the Klan published. **Price, 35c,** postpaid.

MAGICIAN'S OUTFIT

Apparatus and Directions for a Number of Mysterious Tricks Enough for an Entire Evening's Entertainment

ANYONE CAN DO THEM 75c

It is great fun mystifying your friends. Get this Conjurer's Cabinet, and you will be the cleverest fellow in your district. It contains the apparatus for seven dexterous tricks, including The Disappearing Rose, that, when placed on the lapel of your coat, vanishes completely at will; the Magic Vase and Ball Trick (a Wooden Ball is placed inside, and upon removing the lid has disappeared and is found in someone else's pocket); The Magic Nail with which you can apparently cut your finger almost in two; the Wonderful Card Trick (a card is placed in an envelope, and when open an entirely different card altogether is found); The Disappearing Coin Box (a coin is placed in the little wooden barrel, and, when opened again, is found to have vanished entirely, or can be made to change into a coin of another denomination); The Famous Dissolving Penny Trick; The Glass Goblet and Vanishing Coin Trick (a coin is dropped into a glass of water, and when the water is poured out the coin has vanished). With the tricks described above we send full printed instructions for performing each trick, so that anyone can readily perform all the tricks to the great amusement of their friends or the public. Any boy of ordinary intelligence, with this Cabinet of Tricks in his possession, can give a parlor entertainment not inferior to some regular magicians. Besides the tricks contained in the Cabinet, there are many other feats and illusions fully explained with full printed instructions, for which you easily make or procure the necessary apparatus.

ONLY 75 CENTS POSTPAID

A DeLuxe Editionof our new 1927 CATALOG mailed on receipt of 25c. Only book of its kind in existence. 550 pages of all the latest tri-ks in magic, the newest novelties, puzzles, gam-s, spo-ting goods, interesting books, curiosities in seeds, plants, etc., unprocurable elsewhere. Unused U. S. & Foreign Stamps accepted.

STAGE MONEY

With a bunch of these bills it is easy for each person of limited means to appear prosperous by flashing a roll of these bills at the proper time and peeling off a genuine bill or two from the outside of the roll, the effect created will be found to be all that can be desired. **Prices, postpaid: 40 Bills 20c, 125 for 50c, or $3.50 thousand postpaid.**

Wonderful X-Ray Tube

A wonderfullittle instrument producing optical illusions both surprising and startling. Withit you can see what is apparently the bones of your fingers, the lead in a lead pencil, the interior coming in a pipe stem, and many other similar illusions. A mystery that no one has been able to solve since it was first sold. Price 10c, 3 for 25c, 1 dozen 75c. **Johnson Smith & Co.**

Good Luck Ring

Quaint and Novel Design

A VERY striking and uncommon ring. Silver finish, skull and crossbone design, with two brilliant, flashing gems sparkling out of the eyes. Said by many to bring Good Luck to the wearer, hence its name, **Good Luck Ring.** Very unique and you will take a pride in wearing. **ONLY 25 CENTS.**

Exploding Cigarettes

JUST LIKE ORDINARY CIGARETTES. BUT SUCH REAL STARTLERS! The box contains ten genuine cigarettes of excellent quality. They appear so real, but when each cigarette isabout one-third smoked, the victim gets a very great surprise as it goes off with a loud **BANG!** A great mirth provoker yet entirely harmless. **Price 25c per box.**

Popular Watch Charms

15c

ONLY 3 for 40c; $1.35 doz.

Very pretty little curiosities and decidedly novel. Fitted with Magnifying Lenses that enlarge the object to a very surprising degree; in fact, it seems almost incredible that a clear picture can be possible in such a small compass, and how sharp and distinct they show up when you look through. Come in assorted views—Actresses, views of Panama Canal, Lord's Prayer in type, etc.

CIGARETTE MAKER

Roll your own and save money. Makes them better and quicker besides saving more than half the cost of ready-made. Pocket size, weighs ½ oz. Made entirely of metal, nickel-plated. **Price 25c postpaid.**

MAGIC FLUTE

Wonderfully Sweet Toned and Musical

Post Paid 15c

The **Magic Flute, or Humanatone,** is a unique and novel musical instrument that is played with the mouth and fingers combined. There is just a little knack in playing it which, when once acquired after a little practice will enable you to produce very sweet music that somewhat resembles a flute. There is no fingering, and once you have mastered it you can play all kinds of music with facility and ease. When played as an accompaniment to a piano or any other musical instrument, the effect is as charming as it is surprising.

Novelty Badges

Kissing Permit 10c. Garter Inspector 10c

Two very novel metal badges, nickel plated, that you can wear, giving you fun out of all proportion to their trifling cost, **10c, each badge, 3 for 25c, or 75c per doz. p.p.d.**

BLANK CARTRIDGE PISTOL

Protection against Burglars, Tramps & Dogs

Special Offer

1 Blank Cartridge Pistol, 100 Blank Cartridges, 1 550-page Novelty Catalog

$1.50

The Lot Shipped by Express Only

Cash or C. O. D. Only

Only Revolver Style

Well made and effective, modelled on latest type of Revolver; appearance alone is enough to scare a burglar. When loaded it may be as effective as a real revolver without danger to life. It takes standard .22 Cal. Blank Cartridge—obtainable everywhere. **Special cash with order offer:** 1 Superior quality Blank Cartridge Pistol, 100 Blank Cartridges, and our new 550 page De Luxe Catalog of latest novelties; all for **ONLY $1.50.** Shipped by Express only. Cannot go by parcel post. Extra Blank Cartridges **50c** per 100. Special Holster (Cowboy Type) for pistol **50c.** No C. O. D. shipments.

JOHNSON SMITH & CO., Dept. 863 RACINE, WIS.

Sneezing Powder

Place a very small amount of this powder on the back of your hand and blow it into the air, and everyone in the room or carwill begin to sneeze without knowing the reason why. It is most amusing to hear their remarks, as they never suspect the real source, but think they have caught it one from the other. Between the laughing and sneezing you yourself will be having the time of your life. **For parties, political meetings, car rides,** or any place at all where there is a gathering of people, it is the **greatest joke out. Price 10c or 3 for 25c Shipped by Express Only.**

Mystic Skeleton

10c pd.

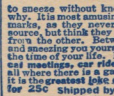
A jointed figure of a skeleton 14 in. in height, will dance to music and perform various gyrations and movements while the operator must be some distance from it.

Serpent's Eggs

Box contains 12 eggs. When with a match, each one gradually hatches itself into a snake, several feet long, which curls and twists about in a most life-like manner. **Price per box 10c ppd.**

BOYS! BOYS! BOYS!

THROW YOUR VOICE



Into a trunk, under the bed or anywhere. Lots of fun fooling the teacher, policeman or friends.

THE VENTRILO

a little instrument, fits in the mouth out of sight, used with above for Bird Calls, etc. Anyone can use it.

Never Fails. A 16-page course on ventriloquism, and the Ventrilo, ALL FOR **10c** postpaid.

ITCHING POWDER

This is another good practical joke; the intense discomfiture of your victims to everyone but themselves is thoroughly enjoyable. All that is necessary to start the ball rolling is to deposit a little of the powder on a person's hand and the powder can be relied upon to do the rest. The result is a vigorous scratch, then some more scratch, and still some more.

10c box, **3** boxes for **25c** or **75c** per doz boxes. *By Express*

KEYLESS LOCKS

25c Postpaid

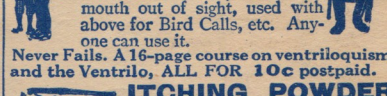
These clever locks cannot be opened unless you know the combination. No key necessary. For your locker, bicycle, tool chest, mail box, thousands of uses. Shackle and numbers nickle plated. Weighs trifle over one ounce. Small, yet strong. Secret and full instructions with each lock. **PRICE 25c or 3 for 65c postpaid.**

SQUIRT ROSE

25c

A REAL STARTLER. This is the most popular of all squirt tricks. The flower in your coat looks so fresh and sweet that everyone is tempted to inhale the delightful perfume. Then is the moment to press the bulb. Gewwhilkers! Don't they jump? There is a very long rubber tube that easily reaches to the pocket of your coat or trousers, and the bulb is large enough to make a dozen squirts with one loading. **PRICE 25c each, or 3 for 65c** *postpaid.*

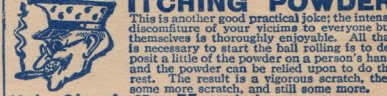
COMIC CELLULOID BUTTONS



These Comic Celluloid Buttons provide subjects for pleasant jokes and amusing conversation and thus smooth the way to a more friendly acquaintance and friendship. There are seventy different titles altogether, all very wittily worded and quite unobjectionable. Wear one yourself and see the others. All buttons illustrated above will be sent postpaid to any address for **ONLY 20c** or a **dozen,** all different, for **45c.**

PISTOL, OPERA & FIELD GLASS

PRICE POSTPAID **$1.00**



It is made in the shape of and looks like a regular Automatic Pistol No one is likely to stop and ask you whether it is real or not. That t is likely to prove itself very handy in an emergency. On pressing the trigger it opens up, as shown in the illustration at the right, revealing nine most useful articles—Opera and Field Glass, Telescope, Mirror, Magnifying Glass and Burning Lens, Reading Glass, Sun Dial, Sun Compass, etc. In the handle of the revolver there is a place for various pocket necessaries, such as First Aid Articles, Buttons, Pins, etc. The Pistol is of sheet metal, blued finish, that can be carried comfortably in pocket. **PRICE $1.00.**

ADDRESS ORDERS FOR ALL GOODS ON THIS PAGE TO

JOHNSON SMITH & CO. DEPT. 863, RACINE, WIS.

Postage Stamps Accepted

600 MEN AND WOMEN Agents Wanted

WRITE me today and in one week you can have a position that should pay **$14.85 A DAY** You can make $2.00 an hour in your spare time. Be your own boss. No experience or capital necessary and a Big Income right from the very first day. Our famous Wilknit Guaranteed Hosiery is sold through our authorized agents only. This is a Real Honest-to-goodness proposition. Send for sworn proof about our full time, energetic agents making $14.85 a day and more, or $2.00 an hour in spare time. Our agents say that

Wilknit Guaranteed Hosiery stands supreme head and shoulders above all others, no difference what is claimed.

This is the reason our agents can make such large sales and tremendous profits. Mr. H. Wessburg of 1332 Nelson St., Chicago, sells from $1,000 to $1,500 worth each month. Bruice of New Jersey sold $77.00 worth the very first week. Many of our representatives make from $40 to $60 a week. Write at once for territory. Introduce most wonderful new line **Guaranteed Hosiery** you ever saw. 126 styles, and colors of men's, women's and children's finest pure thread Japanese silk, all fancy combinations of silk and lisle, novelty and sport numbers, full fashioned, chiffon, wool, etc., **guaranteed to wear six months** or new hose free.

New Tested Selling Plan

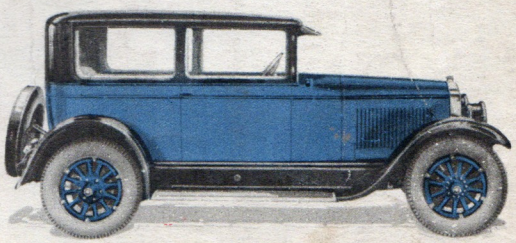
WE have a new and tested selling plan that brings you amazing profits right from the start. You deliver or we deliver—suit yourself. No experience needed. No license to pay. We protect our agents. Credit given. Exclusive territory. Extra bonus. Samples furnished.

The new patterns, the high quality, the new low prices and our written guarantee assures you big sales and wonderful profits. You owe it to yourself to investigate the possibilities of this big money making proposition. Write me today. Use the coupon, or mail letter and I will send you full details at once.

Wilknit Hosiery Company
L. E. WILKIN, *Gen. Manager*
No. 960 Greenfield, Ohio

This BUICK Car Given

In addition to our regular commission—paid daily and generous bonus, we give you an opportunity to get this Buick Coach without cost. Write for complete details of this new offer.



L. E. Wilkin, Gen. Manager
Wilknit Hosiery Company
No. 960, Greenfield, Ohio

Send me at once, full details of your Guaranteed Hosiery offer, also state how I can obtain the Buick Coach without any expense to me.

Name.....

Address.....